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THE

GOSPEL STANDARD.

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VOL. XXX., 1864.

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JOHN GADSBY, GEORGE YARD, BOUVERIE STREET.  
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# THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

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JANUARY, 1864.

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

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## ADDRESS TO OUR SPIRITUAL READERS.

NOTHING, as a visible record of the lapse of time, more sensibly reminds us of the passing away of life; nothing, among the ever-changing aspects of surrounding nature, more vividly brings before our eyes the certainty of death than the close of each succeeding year. *The end of the year!* What a funeral knell is in the very sound! What a warning emblem of the end of life! As the year was born, so were we; as the year had its joyous spring, its glowing summer, its fruitful autumn, so had we our merry boyhood, our aspiring youth, our sober manhood. And now what lies before us? The corpse of the departed year. For several weeks we saw it gradually droop. We marked its daily decline, until its last hour struck, and in a moment it became a thing of the past. So shall we, when our appointed time comes, droop, decline, and die; our body will fall into its native earth, as the past year has sunk into its grave, and we, like it, shall go hence and be no more seen.

But besides this striking emblem of death, presented to our view by the dying year, there is something in the very season at which the year dies which is peculiarly fitted to remind us of our own mortality. The dark and gloomy days; the rapid setting in of night; the mists and fogs which lower over the earth; the general death and decay of nature, lately so bright and fair; the frost which chills our blood, or the storm which beats against our windows; the melancholy musings which often fall upon our spirit at this season of the year, as if prompted by, and in unison with the wintry scene, all tend vividly to bring before us the solemn conviction that our life here is but a shadow, a dream, a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. In this musing mood, which is not altogether without its chastened calm or its profitable influence, we look back through the year now for ever gone, and seek perhaps to recall more vividly to our mind some of those circumstances in it which have left a deep and abiding mark on our memory.

1. Our first thoughts turn to *the memory* of those personal friends, or *beloved relatives*, whose well-known faces we shall see no more, whose familiar voices will never again sound tenderly in our ears. Have not some of you, dear readers, been spoiled during the year

now past of one or more of your most cherished household treasures? Our very monthly Obituary testifies that these lines will meet the eye of many a weeping widow, of many a mourning husband, or bereaved parent. Tears are due to the memory of the departed. At the grave of Lazarus, Jesus wept. Grace does not forbid the tear, but it bids us "sorrow not, even as others which have no hope." Would you wish the dear departed back? Would you, if you could, recall them to life? Even if there were no hope in their end, must we not still bow to the sovereignty of the Almighty? "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Why, then, tear open the wound by dwelling too long or too deeply on the irrevocable past?

2. But we may have been spared these cutting strokes. Death may not have come into our home and torn away that beloved head of the family, that tender wife, that idolised child, whose absence has made the Christmas season so mournful a blank. Still the last enemy may have made an inroad into our midst, the effects of which we shall long deeply and increasingly feel. He may, as in our own peculiar case, have *come into* our church, and borne away members with whom we had been long united in church fellowship. They are gone, and have left us still to struggle on in the wilderness. But though we would not wish them back, for they are with Christ, which is far better, yet we miss their presence in the house of prayer and at the Lord's table; we miss their prayers, so simple and fervent, their kind words of sympathy and affection, their friendly intercourse, or their forcible example.

3. Our thoughts then, perhaps, turn to those dear and highly-valued *servants of God* whom we knew personally or by favourable report, whom he has taken home to himself, and we wonder how their places can be supplied. We think of their widowed churches and scattered flocks, and feel what an almost irreparable loss a faithful and experienced servant of God is to his church and congregation. Dark is the cloud that hangs over Zion. Men of sterling, experimental truth, sound in the faith, godly in life, able ministers of the New Testament, are fast passing away. Some the Lord is taking home to himself, and others he is laying aside by sickness or infirmity. But look where we may, how few do we see raised up to take their places. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." Meanwhile error abounds and spreads; and many are deeply infected with it, who, from prudential motives, keep it at present out of sight, or disguise it under a form of sound words.

4. Nor, whilst in this musing mood, in harmony with the season, does busy memory forget the various incidents which have more or less strikingly marked the past year as regards our *own personal experience* of sorrow or joy, affliction or consolation. Mercies as well as miseries strewed the path—a hundred mercies to ten miseries, were faith allowed to make up the reckoning, and strike out unbelief's figures. Illness may have laid us on the bed of affliction; but were there no mercies here? Did no kind hands nurse the body? Did no



kind words cheer the spirit? Were no prayers offered up on our behalf by Christian friends; no solicitude for our recovery; no desire that the affliction might be blessed to the soul? Was there no secret support given on the bed of languishing; no submission granted to the will of God; no faith drawn forth on the word of promise; no sweet hope in the Lord of life and glory; no love to his dear name? Nor was recovery denied, or the blessing of returning health and strength refused to prayer, or the willing mind rejected to give time and strength and what remained of life more unreservedly to the Lord and his people.

5. Other trials may have marked our path, *such as church troubles*, the heaviest of all next to those which more peculiarly touch the soul's own immediate interests. But even these, we trust, though they sorely tried the mind, will be found eventually to work for good to those who love God and desire to walk in his fear. There are few keener tests of men's spirits than the way in which they bear themselves in those strifes and divisions from which few churches are exempt. Nowhere is more manifestly seen the difference between the spirit of wrath and the spirit of meekness, the spirit of strife and the spirit of peace, the violent, contentious, unforgiving spirit of some, and the forbearing, forgiving, and yet firm and faithful, spirit of others. Thus, even by these painful things, grace is tried, the approved made manifest, and the thoughts of many hearts revealed. (1 Cor. xi. 19; Luke ii. 35.)

6. Nor let us forget, dear friends and brethren, amidst our many rich and unspeakable mercies, that eminent favour of the *maintenance of divine life* in our breast. O what have we not done to quench the sacred flame? With what sacrilegious hands have we piled dust and rubbish on God's altar! What unbelief, what infidelity, what earthliness and worldly-mindedness, what pride and covetousness, what abounding evils of every shape and name have worked in our carnal mind to bring forth fruit unto death. How these and a thousand other evils, too base to name, would have effectually damped, if not destroyed, the life of God in the soul, had it not been maintained by Him who first gave it. But how sweet the promise, how sure its fulfilment, "Because I live, ye shall live also." The various revivals, then, and renewals of the life of God in the bosom, those seasonable helps by the way, those refreshings from the presence of the Lord, those gracious visitations whereby he preserves our spirit, have been some of our choicest past year's mercies; for where would our soul not have been without them? Into what depths of carnality would it not have sunk? Under what loads of darkness and death would it not have been buried? The sweetness and delight sometimes felt in the word of God, as the eyes of the understanding were enlightened to see, and faith was raised up to mix with the divine testimony; the life and liberty, access and power enjoyed in secret prayer; the rays and beams of divine light which sometimes shone upon the glorious truths which are the very foundation of our most holy faith; the meltings of heart felt before the throne, under a sight and sense of our cruel sins and of the

Lord's goodness and mercy; if a minister, seasons of enlargement, of boldness and faithfulness in handling the word of life; if a hearer, blessings communicated under the ministry, to make the soul revive as the corn and grow as the vine—to have been thus, as if miraculously, kept alive in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, was not mercy here? Has 1863 passed away and left none of these mercies to be thankfully recorded? Does not the Lord say to us, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" (Jer. ii. 31;) and must we not answer, "No, Lord; thou hast not been this to us during the year now past?"

7. But is it not a mercy also to have been in any way *kept from evil that it should not grieve us*; to have been in any measure preserved tender, circumspect, simple, and sincere; to have brought no distressing, overwhelming guilt upon our consciences by giving way to unseemly lusts; to have caused no grief to the dear children of God by open inconsistency? We are deeply conscious of many wanderings of heart, much inward backsliding from the Lord, many infirmities of the flesh, much darkness of mind, coldness of affection, and deadness of frame; but to have been kept from conscience-wasting sins is no small mercy, when we feel ourselves tempted to them on every hand.

8. To have been *preserved from the abounding errors* of the day, and still to hold the truth with firm and steady hand; to have walked in any measure separate from that loose, ungodly profession which so marks the present day; to have enjoyed any union and communion with the real saints of God; and to have loved and cleaved to them as the excellent of the earth—has 1863 left no such testimonies in our favour, which we wish to bear in mind, not with the boasting pride of the self-righteous Pharisee, but the thankful acknowledgment of our deep indebtedness to superabounding grace?

But your path may have been one of deeper trial, more painful exercise, and more severe temptation, than that which we have thus sketched out. Be it so. Then if your afflictions have been greater, greater have been your consolations; if your miseries have abounded, your mercies have superabounded. You have been further and deeper in the wilderness, but have gathered more manna; have felt more of the storm, but have seen more of the sun; have had more fellowship of the sufferings of Christ, but have known more of the power of his resurrection. Thus are we even. You who have gathered much, have nothing over; we who have gathered little, have no lack.

We have struck, then, the key note of our Address;—the Old Year and the New; for as we have taken the departed year as the emblem of death and decay, so will we now take the New Year as the emblem of life and resurrection. For as the departed year is but a shadowy emblem of death, so death itself, with all its gloomy accompaniments, is really but the shadow of a shade. Has not the Lord "destroyed death and him who had the power of death, that is, the devil?" (Heb. ii. 14.) Has he not "abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel?" (2 Tim

i. 10.) If death then be "destroyed" and "abolished," it can have no real substance; and if it have no substance, it can have no shadow. But it often casts, you will say, a very gloomy shadow over our feelings. It is true; but why? Because we are not raised out of its shadow into the light of the Lord's countenance. That there is something naturally appalling in death, all must admit, for it is what all must feel. The very surroundings of the grave have in them something terrible to nature. The coffin, through whose lid we almost seem to see the pale corpse in its last shroud; the open grave into whose mouth we look as its dark and chilly bed; the earthy smell of the damp mould on which we stand, as if it breathed the very odour of death; the mourners in their weeping or subdued agony; the falling of the clods when all is over, the last prayer uttered, and every other sound stilled, and nothing now remains but to bury the dead out of sight;—all these trappings of death, like the dark hearse and the funeral pall, speak so strongly to our natural senses, that to look through them, and beyond them, needs a special act of faith. Apart, too, from these sights and scenes of woe, in which most of us have taken a perhaps never-to-be-forgotten part, there are internal causes why death casts at various times over the mind a chilling gloom. Unbelief, darkness of mind, guilt of conscience, the doubts and fears with which most are exercised; the natural apprehension of death, the innate love of, and clinging to life; the strong ties of flesh and blood, perhaps a young wife or little family for whom there is but slender provision; peculiar circumstances in business which need all the activity and skill of personal management, and without which wreck and ruin seem imminent; the place at present occupied in the church of Christ, with its binding claims; the desire to live a little longer for the glory of God and the good of his people—who can enumerate the thousand bonds which knit the heart to life, and produce a natural shrinking from death? But why else the need of Jesus on a dying bed? Who need the support of everlasting arms but the sinking? Who wants the rod and the staff, but the traveller through the valley of the shadow of death? It is but reckless insensibility, or bold, presumptuous confidence, veiled under the name of strong assurance, which looks death in the face without shrinking, unless the Lord himself whisper, "It is I; be not afraid."

But how mercifully and graciously are these very exercises of mind overruled for spiritual good, and what a profitable influence do they often produce upon the heart. To die daily is a needful part of Christian experience. To have the loins girt, and the light burning, and to be waiting for the Master's return, is the most fitting posture of a disciple of Christ. We are especially warned to "take heed to ourselves, lest at any time our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon us unawares." (Luke xxi. 34.) It will be then our wisdom and mercy "not to sleep as do others, but to watch and be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation," in the sweet confidence that "God hath

not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." (1 Thess. v. 8, 10.) If he died for us that we should live together with him, he is "our life;" and so far as he is our life, the life which we now live in the flesh will be by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us and gave himself for us. There is no other way of dying to sin, to the world, to the things of time and sense, and of living unto God. The deepest convictions may still leave us under the power of sin; the heaviest trials stir up only rebellion and fretfulness; the most distressing temptations only toss us up and down like the locust; and the acutest griefs cause only the sorrow of the world which worketh death. But one believing sight of the Son of God, one discovery of the King in his beauty, one manifestation to the soul of his Person and work, grace and glory, at once lifts it up to himself; and thus, whilst faith is in active exercise, bears it up above the world and all its sorrows as well as joys, its carking cares as well all its passing vanities. To have a blessed revelation of Christ to the soul, and to enjoy union and communion with the Son of God, is the one grand secret of vital godliness.

But if it be so, and to this all the saints of God set to their seal, how is this personal, experimental knowledge of Jesus, this union, this communion with him, this living faith in his Person and work, to be maintained alive in the heart? O! Here is the grand fight of faith. On this narrow ground the hostile armies meet. Here unbelief, infidelity, guilt, doubt, and fear; pride, lust, and covetousness; rebellion, murmuring, and fretfulness; coldness, carnality, and death; sloth, torpor, and fleshly ease; enmity, filth, and devilism; darkness, desertion, and despair: here are they all ranged in their different regiments, but all under one flag—the black flag; and under one commander—the prince of hell. How slippery the ground with blood! What advancements, what retreatings, what hopes, what fears; what cruel wounds, what horrid sights, what faintness of heart, what almost certainty of defeat! What, O what can the soul do but look up to the Captain of its salvation and implore his help? Who can save but He upon whom help has been laid, as one that is mighty? Timid soul! Is not this look, this cry, the very look, the very prayer of faith? The battle is not thine, but the Lord's; and is not he even now thus teaching thy hands to war and thy fingers to fight?

Now, as we are brought to this point, we see and feel our need of "the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand." We beseech you, then, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation from one who is indeed the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; and yet one who earnestly desires your spiritual profit.

Our Lord is risen from the dead, and was thereby declared to be the Son of God with power. (Rom. i. 4.) And we, too, who believe in his name and have vital union with him, are risen with him; for God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in hea-

venly places in Christ Jesus." (Col. iii. 1; Eph. ii. 6.) But what is our evidence of this? How do we know we are indeed risen with Christ? By the communications of his grace; by the work and witness of his Spirit; by the discoveries of his Person; by the faith which lays hold of him; by the hope which anchors in him; and by the love which flows out towards him. What but a living Christ will do for a living soul? He is "the resurrection and the life;" so that "he that believeth in him, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in him shall never die." (John xi. 25, 26.) Let us not, then, tarry among the tombs. Why seek we the living among the dead? He is not here; he is risen.

On this ground, then—the ground of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, would we address a few words to those living souls who are risen with Christ, and are setting their affections on things above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Let us, then, not in a spirit of dictation, but of brotherly love and affectionate counsel, drop a few words that may seem suitable to the present occasion. We assume that your soul is exercised on the weighty matters of eternity, that you are not settled on your lees or are at ease in Zion, still less have a name to live and are dead. To such we have no message, except it be a word of solemn warning, to consider in what a perilous position they stand. But to those whose souls are in any measure alive unto God, and who are willing to receive a word of exhortation from us, we would, in the love and spirit of the gospel, address such counsel as we would desire to lay up in our own heart for our own profit and direction.

1. The first point to which we would direct your thoughts is—the *claim that the word of God has upon our study and attention*. We live in a day of great outward religious profession, and yet of bold and rampant infidelity. Thus we are surrounded as if by two fires. On one side is the professor with the Bible in his hand, but with no one word of grace or truth in his heart; on the other stands the infidel with the Bible under his feet. But this would not so much matter to us, or at least would not be so dangerous, if we could merely look on as spectators, or pass indifferently by them, as we get through a crowd without troubling ourselves about what has collected it together. This, however, we cannot easily do; for our own heart is too much like a city without gates or walls, lying as it were open to every attack; and there is a traitorous party within, who are at league with every assailant without; so that had not the Lord built for himself a little citadel in the very centre of the city for his own habitation, we should long ago have been sold into the hand of our enemies. Where, too, these foes cannot prevail by open violence, they seek to overcome by subtlety and craft. Thus sometimes formality would persuade us to be satisfied with the mere letter of truth, with the bare doctrines of grace, without so much seeking and longing after the power; sometimes infidelity would urge us to give up both letter and power together. Difficulties also and objections sometimes present themselves which we cannot dismiss, and yet cannot answer. Reasonings, either from our own mind or accidentally

met with in books or conversation, similarly force themselves upon our thoughts, the tendency of which is either to confuse our judgment, or assault and overthrow our faith. Thus we get puzzled and perplexed, envying the simple faith of those tender-hearted children of God who believe with all that childlike, confiding trust which we so admire in them, yet cannot attain unto ourselves. Amidst all this conflict of thought we see and feel how life is fast passing away; the things of time and sense slipping from under our feet; the world a scene of vanity and trouble; sin everywhere running down the streets like water; and, alas! what is worse, running through our own heart, ever grieving and defiling our conscience. How deeply, amidst all this conflict and confusion, this hubbub of voices without and within all clamouring to be heard, we want a strong prop on which the soul may firmly lean, a directing light to shine before the feet; and as none can give us any help in this dark path, where "we often grope for the wall, like the blind, and grope as if we had no eyes," we feel our urgent need of some strong and friendly hand to guide us right and bring us safely through the tangled maze. This we find, and find only in the word of God, as made life and spirit to the soul by Him who graciously inspired it. How safe, how sweet it is, after such restless tossings to and fro as we have described, to rest in the sure word of promise, and to take refuge in the two immutable things—the word and the oath, in which it was impossible for God to lie. (Heb. vi. 18.) What a debt of gratitude, then, do we owe to the God of all grace for the gift of his holy word, to be to us this light, this prop, this guide. And how do we best show our appreciation of, our gratitude for this divine gift? By binding it close to our heart; by searching it daily, as for hid treasure; by studying it, and seeking to penetrate into its inmost mind and meaning, pith and marrow, spirit and power; not scuffling over it as a schoolboy over his task, or some drudge over her work; not reading it with a listless eye and wandering mind, glad enough to close its pages, and put it back on the shelf; but feeding upon the milk and honey, the meat and marrow, and sipping the cheering wine with which the Lord of the house has furnished his table. The longest life, the most unwearied search, the deepest study of the Scriptures would leave us but learners still. How, then, can we expect to understand them, penetrate into their holy wisdom, have our heart and conscience brought under their influence and power, see their beauty and connection, feel the impress of God's authority in them, be cast into their heavenly mould, and believe, admire, and adore the voice of the Lord speaking in them to our inmost soul, unless we take some pains to make them our bosom friend and counsellor? Take the word of God out of our hands and heart, and we wander in shades of thickest night.

2. Connected with this daily study of the word of God, we should earnestly desire *to be well established in the truth as it is in Jesus*. How many in a profession of religion are "ever learning, and never able to come to a knowledge of the truth;" whilst others, scarcely less numerous, are "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind

of doctrine." Not a novelty can show its face in the religious world; not a daring novice or presumptuous wretch broach an old heresy under a new name; not a vile or damnable error can come flying abroad on the wings of the wind, but some are caught by and entangled with it. And who are sometimes the very first to entertain it, hug it to their breast, and move earth and hell to spread it? Why, some of our old Calvinistic professors, men and women who have sat under the sound of truth for years. These are "the unstable souls" whom erroneous men "lie in wait to deceive," and whom they love to beguile; especially if they have a little of this world's goods to fill their purse or gratify their pride. But what a lamentable sight it is to see old professors, who ought to be pillars of truth, rocking to and fro under the gusts of error, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind; or hurled headlong into the very slough of some damnable doctrine. And why? Because they were never rooted and grounded in the truth by the teaching and testimony, work and witness of the Holy Ghost. How needful, then, if we would escape such an awful downfall, it is to be well established in the truth; for these winds of error often blow with great violence, and from most unexpected and dangerous quarters. We need, then, ever to be drinking wisdom at the fountain head; to be ever looking unto the Lord for his special teaching, and to get all that we have immediately from him. The Lord Jesus of God is made unto us wisdom, (1 Cor. i. 30,) and he communicates it by his Spirit and grace. We shall find, therefore, more and more that all our wisdom is in him and from him; and that every divine truth which he makes known with power to the soul testifies of him, and centres in him. His glorious Person, as Immanuel, God with us, is the object of our faith; and from him, as the glorious Sun of righteousness, every ray and beam of divine truth is shed abroad in the heart. He illuminates the written word with the beams of his glory; he is the sum and substance of every doctrine, the ground and centre of every promise, and the life and power of every precept. His divine Sonship, his finished work, his atoning blood, his justifying obedience, his death and resurrection, his ascension and glorification, his present advocacy and intercession at the right hand of the Father, his royal government, his universal presence and power, and his second coming in the clouds of heaven, all form the food of faith, without which it droops and languishes, and loses its activity, energy, and power. How needful, then, to be well established in the truth, that it may be our meat and drink, and we be daily living in the realisation, if not the sweet enjoyment of it. But this will not be our abiding experience until deep necessity has made us feel how destitute before God, how needy before man, how naked before our enemies, how unable to live, how unprepared to die we are without a vital interest in, without an experimental knowledge of the truths of the everlasting gospel. What darkness there is in the mind, when the light of truth does not shine into the heart! What confusion in the thoughts when there is no clear view, no believing apprehension of the grace of the gospel; what unbelief when the Person and work, love and

blood, presence and power of the Lord Jesus are out of sight! But as the precious truths of the everlasting gospel are brought near, and we, seeing light in God's light, embrace them in faith and affection, for faith works by love, they become the very food of our soul, our hope, our all. God did not send his dear Son to bleed and die for poor lost sinners that they should trifle with his bleeding, dying love, nor with their own immortal souls. God did not raise him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, that men should speculate and argue about doctrines in the letter, or neatly arrange them into a creed to be carried about in a pocket-book, or be hung up in the vestry like an old almanack. God did not send apostles and prophets to proclaim a glorious gospel, nor did he reveal it as with a ray of light in the Scriptures of truth, nor does he now raise up his own servants to preach the word of life, that some should oppose it, others despise it, and others hold it in unrighteousness. The sun breeds maggots in a dunghheap, and draws up fever and pestilence from the noisome marsh; but the sun was not created for that purpose. So God sent his dear Son to save a chosen race, and that he might have a people in whom he should be eternally glorified. There will be maggots in dunghill hearts, there will be pestilent doctrines in churches and congregations; but this is the abuse, not the use of gospel light. How bound then we are by every sweet constraint of his love to believe in his name, to look unto him, to live on him and unto him! But they cannot be enjoyed without another blessing, to which we would next call your attention.

3. *A spirit of prayer and supplication given and maintained by the God of all grace.*

There is the closest and most intimate connection between every grace in the soul and the spirit of prayer in the breast. Indeed, the life of God in the believer's bosom sinks and rises, ebbs and flows in exact proportion to, in thorough unison with the incoming and outgoing of the Spirit of grace and supplication. Faith and prayer go hand in hand to the throne, mutually strengthening each other in their advance to the mercy-seat. The more I have of the spirit of faith, the more I have of the spirit of prayer. Faith eyes the blessing, prayer pleads for its enjoyment; faith strengthens prayer to ask; prayer enables faith more firmly to believe; and their union brings the mercy into personal possession: "What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." (Mark xi. 24.) When Moses held up his hands, Israel prevailed; when Moses let down his hands, Amalek prevailed. (Exod. xvii. 11.)

But as this spirit of faith is easily damped, for even Moses, the man of God, could not hold up his hands long at a time, it will be our wisdom and mercy

4. *To avoid those things, which we know, from past experience, weaken faith and hinder prayer.*

*Entanglement in worldly matters beyond what is absolutely necessary is one of the surest hindrances to the life of God which*



can well come across our path. Some of the family of God are so circumstanced in business or in their daily employment that they must necessarily have much to do with the world. But this will be neither their temptation nor their sin if they are not entangled in, nor overcome by its spirit. Joseph in the court of Pharaoh, Daniel as the first of the three presidents to whom a hundred and twenty princes gave their accounts, maintained not only their worldly position, but their divine grace. It is not then being *in* the world, but *of* the world in which the danger lies. Keep the world at arms' length, and it will not hurt you; allow it to embrace you, and you will soon yield to its seductive influence.

But *worldly professors* are almost more dangerous than the world itself. Six days the world may claim your body, even though it may not entangle your heart. But the Lord's day is all for the soul. What then? Must we lose the Lord's day too? Must we sacrifice that day of days to the same worldly company and carnal spirit which have made the heart sigh and groan all through the week? Shall they follow us into the house of prayer, dodge us up and down in the chapel, haunt us in the vestry, and rob and plunder us in the very street? And yet, what are many places of worship but mere worldly assemblies? In dress, in deportment, in the merry faces, in the absence of all reverence and solemnity, in the levity of the pulpit, in the carelessness and listlessness of the pew, in the vain conversation before and after service, what difference is there between the sermon in the chapel and the lecture in the Mechanics' Institute? Even when separate from such abominations, in places of clear doctrinal, experimental truth, there is often much to grieve the spirit, if not altogether to entangle the heart of the child of God. Keep separate, then, ye who value your own souls' good, from those worldly professors who are ever to be found where truth is preached. You will soon discover them by the way in which they will be felt to rob and plunder your soul. If you have heard with a little real feeling, and if your heart is softened and melted under the word, and your soul is in the sweet enjoyment of a blessing, or at least solemnised and impressed with the weight of eternal things, you will be robbed before you have gone a hundred steps, if you drop into conversation with one of these thieves. Take then as much care of your blessing as you would of your purse in a London crowd; be as wary of your discourse as a modest female is of hers in a railway-carriage full of men. The Lord's day is yours and the Lord's; have it and keep it all to yourselves. His presence is worth having, his blessing worth cherishing, his love worth enjoying. Don't barter all these choice mercies away for a little chit chat, even though your chatty friend sit in the same pew, praise the same sermon, and extol the same minister. And remember that the Lord's day does not end with the services. How sweet to go to bed with the savour of the day of the Lord on the spirit, and to lie down in the enjoyment of that rest of which the Sabbath is but a feeble type!

But we shall weary you with our long and prosy advice. Much, therefore, must be left unsaid which might well afford subject for our

Address. But we cannot close without adding that we esteem it a favour and a privilege that we are again allowed to open the year with this friendly greeting to our numerous readers; and if we have, in so doing, rather seated ourselves in the teacher's chair, forgive us this wrong. We have only laid before you such things as we have ourselves proved the value of; and we desire to take to ourselves, if the Lord would enable, all the advice which we have given to you. The blessing of God, which maketh rich, rest on our pages; the eyes of the Lord be upon us for good from the beginning of the year to the end of the year; and as we trust we desire his glory and his people's good, may he not deny us the continual request of our lips.

Brethren, pray for us.

Your affectionate Friend and Servant,

THE EDITOR.

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A TRIBUTE OF AFFECTION.

My father dear! O! Art thou gone? And is thy spirit fled, While I am left alone to mourn, And life's rough path to tread?	Safe cross'd the boisterous sea of life, And gain'd that peaceful, happy shore.
I would not now thy soul recall From those bright realms of bliss; Nor wish my father back again, In such a world as this.	And I, whatever storms may rise To that blest port, through grace, shall come, [skies, Shall find, at length, beyond the My father and my heavenly home.
But O! Thy loss, how keenly felt! Remembrance will not die; Each day I miss thy soothing voice, And thy bright sparkling eye.	Yes! There's my home, a glorious rest, Though now a weary pilgrim here; Then why, my heart, so much dis- tress'd,
Affection's voice greets not my ear; No eye now beams on me, The lone, unheeded, silent tear, My father, flows for thee.	So lone, so sad, so fill'd with fear? Jesus, who loved my soul and died To save from endless woe, Will surely all I want provide, While travelling below.
The year has run its annual round, Since thou wert call'd to dwell above; And I to tread a stranger's ground, Away from all my heart could love.	The shinings of his lovely face Can cheer my lonely lot; And fresh supplies of sovereign grace Make all my griefs forgot.
For though affection fain would rise With those I daily see, I feel, alas! within their breast, There's not a place for me.	Lord, pardon all my discontent, Vile unbelief, and pride; Give sweet submission to thy will, Whatever be denied.
When kind they look and warm they seem, 'Tis not affection's glow; They value but my services; Which ended, I must go;	With grace to meekly bear the rod, And closer cleave to thee, Feeling thou art my Father, God, And wilt work all for me.
Must go a lonely wanderer, The desert drear to roam, Most painfully to feel I've lost My father and my home.	O! Cheer my heart; my sins subdue; Choose thou my lot for me; Be with me all the desert through, Till I thy glory see.
Yet cease, my selfish heart, thy strife; He is not lost but gone before,	

M. B.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

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I WAS born in the parish of Yealmpton, Devon, Dec. 11th, 1779. My father was advanced in years when he married my mother. He died 1784, leaving my mother with four children, and pregnant with the fifth. Three out of the five are gone, I believe, to glory. Glory to God for his free grace. After being a widow about three years, my mother was again married; and by an increasing second family I found my situation at home very uncomfortable, so that I often looked forward with some degree of pleasure to the time of my apprenticeship. Before I was 11 years old, I was put on trial with a Mr. E., of Dartmouth, where I continued but a few months. The family were Baptists, and Mr. E. a deacon of their cause. At that time the Baptist cause was very low at Dartmouth. They had no preacher, and twelve or fourteen used to meet in the chapel for prayer, &c., and I was compelled to attend also, sorely against my will. I was determined not to serve my apprenticeship with Mr. E. The name of Methodist I hated; for such was the term of reproach at that time cast on all Dissenters by our good Church folks. The Establishment I thought must be right, and all were disobedient both to God and the king who did not uphold the Church. Such were my early prejudices, and I acted accordingly; for I magnified their faults who were not of the Church, and expected much more from them than I did from our good Church folks.

On one occasion Mr. E. took me with him to a village three miles from Dartmouth, and he incautiously took more drink than nature required, or his sober habits would bear. I discovered nothing of his situation until we had walked some distance towards home, when he staggered and fell into a ditch; but he being a little man, I with much hard labour got him out, and safely led him home, not without much hazard and many merciful preservations both to him and myself. It was very dark, and the road strange to me. I remember while walking in a narrow road hearing some horses coming behind us in full trot, and I thought if the horses had crooks, which were common in Devon, that our situation was most perilous; for on the left was a steep leading to an arm of the sea. I, therefore, hastily pulled Mr. E. after me into the bushes on the right, which providentially preserved us; but it was a narrow escape from danger or death. We at length got safe to Dartmouth; but as we passed through the town we had a long train of spectators, shouting lustily, so that I felt my situation not the most agreeable. On our entering our house, Mrs. E. was so excited that she first used her fist on her husband, and then on me. I thought this the greatest cruelty to me, as I was quite exhausted with leading Mr. E., and carrying a large bundle besides, and could not be very strong, as I was not quite 11 years old. This untoward circumstance greatly prejudiced my mind against Dissenters, and I made use of that and a few other things to induce my parents to remove me, which they did soon

afterwards; and the following spring I was apprenticed at Plymouth, during which time God called me by his grace. But more of that in due course.

I have not mentioned the intoxication of Mr. E. with a view to expose human infirmity, nor to prejudice the minds of men against a man or body of men. It is but justice to Mr. E. to say that I never saw him intoxicated but that once; and in his family there was strict and good order. I have often thought that had I been able to judge of my true interest, and have served my apprenticeship with Mr. E., it had been a mercy for me. I might have escaped those "evil communications which corrupt good manners," and have been preserved from many vices which are painful for me to reflect on to this day. David's prayer is often mine: "Remember not the sins of my youth."

I would here beg godly parents to be cautious in placing out their children, lest by studying their worldly advantage they are the means of ruining their morals, and bringing on themselves the most bitter reflections when it may be too late. Many a heedless youth has had reason to curse the day that he was placed in such and such a family. By it some become infidels and others complete debauchees before they arrive at the age of maturity. A God-fearing family is a blessing to a youth, and a blessing to society. Careless mortals often sneer at such families, and hold up their persons and character to contempt. But what do they do when they think they are about to die? Why, often send for the very persons they have despised to pray by them.

Among the earliest of my recollections I must name this. When about three years old, I was walking along a plank which was thrown across a strong mill-stream, and I fell into the water; but my screams, I suppose, brought one of my father's men to the spot, and he drew me out, or I might have been carried a little further down the stream, where the water was much deeper, and have sunk to rise no more, as was the case with my father's sister, not many years before. Thus, "one shall be taken, and another left." "I will sing of mercy and judgment." Also, I well remember my first school, and learning my letters from what was called "The Horn-book." I think I was given to thought and reflection at a very early period; for I used to ask my mother many questions about God, Christ, heaven, Adam, his fall, &c. &c. I feared death greatly; I have trembled on my bed lest I should die before the morning. I could not sleep without saying my prayers; but I knew nothing in reality what prayer was. I was taught from my earliest lisping to say my prayers; and when I had repeated them, I thought the Lord was pleased with me for doing my duty; and in that deluded state I went on for years, sinning and repenting, repenting and sinning. How dark is the human understanding, both as respects the state of death we are in by the fall of Adam, and as it respects the precious redemption wrought out by the Son of God!

My mother was very strict over her children, and, according to her ability, she instructed us, causing us to read the blessed Scrip-

tures, and catechising us every Lord's day; and her rebukes were very keen if we told a lie, or used an improper word; which, though I seemed to pay no attention to in her presence, I have often wept over in secret, and vowed I would be better in future; but a few tears and a few dry prayers seemed to put all right again.

Soon after I left Dartmouth, as I have related, I was apprenticed at Plymouth. From the horrid company I was in all day, I contracted the awful habit of cursing and swearing when provoked, which was soon done. I used to give vent to my passion by the most vile and horrid language, even worse than my companions, who were much older than myself. Some were much pleased with my boldness and blasphemy; others reprov'd me, as being too young to use such language; and I remember my master cursed and swore at me for cursing and swearing! Indeed, I was placed in the very school of vice and folly. The most filthy and debauched conversation was sounded in my ears all the day; and such conversation, even by married men, as was by no means proper to be indulged in before boys. Their conversation, however, was a sweet morsel to my corrupt heart, and served as manure to enrich the soil already too rank with lust and evil propensities. Every year hardened me in sin. I kept company with some of the worst characters, and was the devil's tool to plan schemes of mischief, as a pleasure to ourselves, but a torment to others. I remember one base plan of mine, when about 15, which was for five or six of us to rob the garden of Philip Gibbs, an old Baptist minister at Plymouth. The plan I had laid was approved of, and off we all went to carry it into execution. In order to enter the garden, we had to cross a burying-ground; but, as I crossed the ground, I was taken in a trembling state from head to feet. I saw all my companions enter the garden, but had no power myself to enter into it. Conscience spoke with a loud voice: "What! Rob the poor old man's garden, and on a Sunday afternoon, while he is worshipping God?" Then the consequences, and a firm persuasion that my companions would be taken, shook me; so I leaped over the wall into the adjoining road, and ran as if pursued. Here God preserved me from public reproach; for two of the youths were taken by the servants, and they discovered the others that had made their escape, who were taken before the magistrate, publicly reprov'd, and fined half-a-guinea each. But, alas! I was as vile as they, and felt sorry that I had lost my courage. In many such matters and preservations I have cause to bless God; and I have thought if thieves generally had to pass through what I did, they certainly, from love to themselves, would give over the practice. Certain I am, "the way of transgressors is hard."

I have already said that increasing years were attended with increasing folly; and I followed every kind of amusement, so far as my money (which was very little) and opportunities would allow. And O how I used to please myself with the thought of the termination of my apprenticeship, that I might have more money, and mix with gay company, see something of life, and make myself more acquainted with the world, men, and things.

After I gave loose to the vanity of my foolish heart, which was darkened, I laid aside my usual forms of prayer; for I considered it highly improper to live as I did, (for my conscience was often lashing me,) and then after the sins of the day to call upon God. So that for several years I neglected prayer, and tried to buoy up my vain mind with such thoughts as these: "I will be better when I get old. I will repent, and live holy, and do what God has commanded. He has promised mercy in the eleventh hour to them that sincerely repent, and I know I can if I set about it!" O the blindness of the human understanding! But while I was thus reasoning, a sudden thought would often cross my mind: "What if you should be struck dead amidst your sins, as many have been! There is no repentance in the grave, whither thou goest." This alarmed me much, at times; and to get rid of these melancholy thoughts, I sought for relief in company, cards, dancing, wrestling, &c. &c.; and while pursuing these foolish pastimes, I probably appeared happy to others, but was far otherwise in myself; for, in the midst of my apparent happiness, a sudden check of conscience would make me completely miserable, so miserable that I have fancied my companions must have seen the state of my mind. But on no account would I discover the least seriousness, lest my companions should reproach me, and call me Methodist; and though I had a conviction in my mind that they were in a better state than myself, yet I hated them with a perfect hatred, and called them hypocrites, knaves, &c. But everything like seriousness condemned my evil practices.

I remember one Lord's day being made a prisoner by my shoemaker's unfaithfulness to his promise; and in the afternoon, as I sat gazing through the window, I saw an aged man mount a stool or chair. He sang the well-known hymn,

"Jesus, lover of my soul."

I listened with all attention. He prayed with much apparent fervour. He gave out his text, and preached with remarkable zeal, amidst much contempt by the mob gathered together, composed of some of the worst of characters, all which he bore with uncommon patience. His patience so surprised me that I said to myself, "There is surely something extraordinary in this man." The thought had no sooner crossed my mind than this was suggested to me, but from whence I know not to this day: "You will yet be a preacher of the gospel, and be called forth publicly to bear reproach, as this man is." I fell back with trembling and consternation, for at that time I knew nothing of the gospel. I have, however, since the Lord called me by his grace, inquired about the poor old man, and have reason to believe that he knew nothing savingly of Christ; for he blamed Adam for falling, and said he might have held his primitive integrity, and that every man might be saved if he would! I was then, I judge, about 16, a time when nature's fires begin to manifest themselves. I still went on "after the course of this world;" and, with increasing delight, I said, "Who will show me any good?" When I had passed my 17th year, I, with one of my companions,

went in search of a commodious room, in order to practise what is called country dances; but as my companion thought he could make a better bargain if alone, he left me with a very poor shoemaker in his room. While my companion was absent, which was some time, the poor shoemaker fell into conversation with me, which I will relate to the best of my recollection.

“Young man,” said he, “can you read?” I said, “Yes.” “Then,” said he, “I shall be glad if you will read to me a little of that old book,” pointing to the window where the book lay; “for, what with sickness and poverty, I have very little time for reading.” I said, “I will;” and immediately I took the book and read the title-page. I said, “O, it is the ‘Pilgrim’s Progress!’ I used to read this book, several years ago; and it is just like ‘Robinson Crusoe!’” “That is a choice book,” he said; “but the author means more than appears at first sight.” He then with his awl pointed out to me the meaning of the frontispiece. “You see,” said he, “the pilgrim with a book in his hand. That book is the Bible, which, when God awakens a poor sinner to a concern for his eternal welfare, he reads with great concern, to see if there be any hope for him. You see he has turned his back upon the city of destruction. That represents a sinner in real concern about his salvation; he leaves his evil ways and evil companions.” This was rather unwelcome news to me, and as soon as there appeared an opportunity I proceeded in reading the “ingenious dreamer.” But frequently the poor shoemaker would stop me, and explain the different things I had read. One thing is still strongly impressed upon my memory. When the pilgrim came to the sepulchre, which was represented by a wood-cut, my instructor said, “You see by the Christian’s beholding the Saviour on the cross, he loses the burden from his back. That is designed to teach us this: The burden on his back represents the burden of guilt upon a man’s conscience when convinced by the Holy Spirit of his lost condition by the fall of Adam, under the sense of which a poor sinner is made to groan and cry for deliverance. By-and-by he comes to Christ for salvation, and beholds the suffering Saviour by faith. This removes the burden from his mind, and he loves Christ and cleaves unto him, and wonders at his great love in dying for guilty sinners.” As the poor shoemaker expounded, I felt something unaccountably strange working in my mind. I tried to set it all aside, and forget what he said, but could not. I left him, and ruminated over what had passed, and sensibly felt that I was in a dangerous state. I know not what became of the projected dance; but I was obliged to leave my companions, and, as often as I could, visit the poor shoemaker; but could not by any means open my mind to him, nor to any other person. But I imagine he suspected God had begun his good work in me, by the heartfelt pleasure he appeared to have when I entered his room, which was very frequently in an evening. I used to ask him a variety of questions about himself, how he became religious, &c. He said, “By the advice of a friend I went to hear Mr. Tanner, of Exeter,

and his preaching had such an effect on me that I went home miserable, and begged of God to be my teacher, and I got a blessing indeed in his own time;" or to that effect.\*

I became from this time more moral and religious; but, alas! it was chiefly in the flesh; for I knew no more of God's way of saving sinners than a Hottentot. Duty! duty! I thought, must be done, or I shall be lost. I, therefore, resolved and vowed, and entered into a covenant with God that I would love and serve him. Not being able to pray, I got some ready-made prayers; but none that I had seen suited my case. After toiling some time with my dry prayer-books, I threw them aside to the moles and to the bats, and tried to pour out my heart to God, in unconnected and broken sentences, in bits and scraps, such as, "Lord, show me thy way; show me thy mercy. Save, Lord; I am lost. Pardon thou my sins." On some occasions I used to find some liberty and meltings of heart; some encouraging promises or invitations used to come into my mind as I was in prayer; and often such scriptures as I had no recollection of having read; and I used to search the Bible, or inquire if such and such passages were in the Bible. On other occasions, and perhaps the next time I attempted to pray, I was filled with such horror and trembling and confusion of mind as I cannot well describe, so that I have not known what I have been uttering; and when I had done I have thought that I have been mocking God. I have appeared in my own eyes as the most consummate hypocrite living; the vilest sinner on earth. Yet I could not give up prayer wholly. I was often tempted to call no more on God's holy name. But when I neglected prayer, I used to be condemned and lashed in my conscience; and these words were like a piercing sword: "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and none regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh." (Prov. i. 24-26.) O! These words used to cut me through and through. These things happened to me from the 17th to the 18th year of my age, to the best of my recollection. I had not, as yet, heard any gospel minister since my first concern; neither did I suppose any class of people were right and good Christians but those of our national Establishment. I hated all Dissenters, and considered them enemies both to God and the king! Still I was restless in my mind. Worldly company and pleasure I could not join in, or take any pleasure from; or, if I was drawn aside by my companions, or by the wantonness and foolishness of my own

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\* Perhaps my reader may wish to hear a little more of the poor shoemaker. He was taken ill of a typhus fever. I visited him; but he was mostly in a state of delirium. With great anxiety I watched for the lucid moment, and the Lord granted my request. I said, "Is Christ precious? Is it well with you?" He said, "Yes. My anchor's fixed, and I shall outride every storm." He died soon after. His name was William Arkwright. He was related to a very respectable family of that name in Derbyshire, as he told me he *walked* once from Exeter to see his cousin Arkwright, who was amazingly wealthy, and he *generously* gave him half-a-guinea for his 400 miles' journey!



heart, (which, to my shame was sometimes the case,) I have had the most fearful apprehensions afterwards, and have expected that judgment without mercy would certainly fall on my guilty head.

I kept my parish church regularly, carried the "Common Prayer-book," and, with the kind assistance of an aged schoolmaster, I became tolerably well acquainted with the ritual. In this way I hoped to get peace. The clergyman was a most worthy, moral man, and his age and venerable appearance struck me with awe when I saw him in the pulpit. I listened to his sermon with all attention, but could not understand him. His low tone of voice, his indistinct pronunciation, his classical style, his apparent indifference in giving instruction to poor, ignorant sinners, grieved me much; so that I came to this conclusion: "No doubt he knows the way to heaven, being a man of learning and piety; and if he knew how anxious I am to know the way to life, he would certainly take more trouble to teach me."

About this time, as I entered the church, the remains of Fox's "Book of Martyrs," on a bench, attracted my attention, which I looked at, and was struck with some of the sayings of the martyrs; but not being able to read well the black letter, and recollecting that I had the alphabet in Dyche's spelling-book, I applied myself closely to learn it, which I soon accomplished, with a view to see what the religion of the martyrs was. Accordingly, when the church-door was open on a Lord's day, I used to go and read during the whole service the "Book of Martyrs;" and certainly I received more instruction, and was much more entertained than I was by the poor old clergyman's sermons. I now began to think that the martyrs only were right, and that religion, perhaps, had died with them. I knew not then what to do. I looked about among different classes of professors, to see if I could find any persons of a heavenly and self-denying spirit, and I could discover none in Plymouth so much like the old disciples as the Wesleyans. Their very plain dress, at that time, their loving spirit, their zeal to do good, inclined me to think that they were heaven-bound travellers. I, therefore, as often as I could, used to attend their place of worship, and often wished that some one of them would condescend to speak to me; but I thought they could see what a poor, ignorant creature I was, not fit to come nigh them. Had they made free and spoken to me, I verily believe I should have been carried headlong into the vortex of Arminianism; because their doctrine is so suitable to the condition of a poor sinner striving in his own strength, as I then was.

About this time a circumstance occurred, which I will briefly relate. God had, a few years before, opened the blind eyes of Dr. Hawker; so that as the light of truth gradually broke in upon him, he came forth to the light, and as God taught him, so he preached. His preaching created no small stir in the town and neighbourhood, and many poor sinners, I am well satisfied, were called under his ministry; but desperate was the rage of most of the pharisees in the town against him, and still more desperate was the mind of his dearest friend against him. His preaching was a means of stirring

up several clergymen in the neighbourhood, for whom he used occasionally to preach, and the Lord evidently accompanied his word with power. Many a precious soul have I known called under his ministry. But more of this hereafter.

It fell out, but not by blind chance, that Dr. Hawker preached in the parish church in the vicinity of which I was born; for the clergyman of the parish appeared under some concern of soul, and had invited Dr. Hawker to preach for him, or, at least, he was prevailed upon to let Dr. Hawker preach. The effect was very striking; for many poor sinners were convicted under his ministry, some of whom I know died triumphing in Christ, the Friend of sinners. But the clergyman before mentioned was not, I fear, experimentally acquainted with the gospel. Hence a coolness on his part towards Dr. Hawker took place, and for many years before the clergyman's death Dr. Hawker did not visit the village, to the great grief of many, and to the rejoicing of others. However, the effect of Dr. Hawker's ministry was manifest. Many persons who had received the word of life from that dear man of God, used to walk to Plymouth to hear him on a Lord's day, among whom were several of my dear relatives, which brought me into their company, so that I had an opportunity of hearing the conversation; and sweet indeed it sometimes was; but I was only a listener. These circumstances, together with the advice of one of the friends, induced me to hear Dr. Hawker, though with some degree of reluctance. But the day I heard him was indeed a memorable day to me. I remember not his text; but I thought he addressed the whole of his discourse to *me*. He described the state of blindness and darkness we were all in by nature, how ruined and helpless we were left by Adam's fall, and what refuges of lies a poor sinner tried to run into when he saw his lost condition, and spoke much of the poor sinner's fears, feelings, and mistakes. I was looking through the shoulders of men that stood by me, who were taller than myself; but his eye seemed to pierce me through. I was in a state of consternation, for I never knew what *power* under the preached word was before, nor could I make a judgment of it then.

After the doctor had described our fallen state and condition, he went on to speak of Christ in the glory of his Person, and of his ineffable love to poor, ruined, undone sinners, what he suffered in the garden and on the cross, and all the fruit of his everlasting love. I found a most intense desire in my soul spring up as he spoke of Christ; for Christ's name was quite a new name to me, and a precious name also. Not that I knew that God was at work with me; but I went home with this persuasion, that I never should be happy until I knew Christ for myself.

From this time I read diligently the Scriptures, and I used to read all the religious books that fell in my way. Many of the books I read I have since known to be far enough from gospel truth, and were more calculated to puzzle than instruct the inquiring sinner; but the word of God was opened to my believing mind to my astonishment, particularly Jer. xxxi., Isa. xii., many of the Psalms, and

the Epistles in many parts. Indeed the light that shone upon the Bible and in my heart astonished me, and I was like the hind let loose. Christ appeared in the Scriptures where I never thought to find him. Moreover, I found Christ to be precious in all his names, offices, and characters. I found much liberty in prayer; so that I became a wrestler, like Jacob, and told the Lord, with child-like simplicity, I could not live unless he blessed me. Sometimes, in reflecting on my freedom with the Lord, I have feared that I had gone too far, when suddenly scripture after scripture would come into my mind, and drive all my fears away; such as these: "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you;" "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 mourn." If I used to ask the Lord what I had done that he should thus bless me, his word, especially Jer. xxxi. 3, used to overpower me. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," used to run through my mind twenty times over, and I stood amazed at the sovereign love of God manifested in Jesus, and to my heart also. I found much love and heart-cleaving to Dr. Hawker, and to all that I thought were the children of God; so that I felt anxious to be acquainted with them, that we might compare notes; but I was naturally very timid and bashful. I have gone for miles after them to hear their spiritual conversation in returning from the house of God, and have had an additional blessing from their observations on this and that part of the discourse we had been hearing; for their feelings and mine exactly corresponded, which was an additional confirmation of my faith; and truly I was so knit to God's people, above all the people upon the earth, that I could say, with Ruth to Naomi, "Where thou goest, I will go," &c. Such words as these were very sweet to me: "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God!" and, "We love him because he first loved us." "By this we know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Old things indeed seemed passed away, and all things were made new. I cannot now say how long I was thus favoured; but I think, to the best of my recollection, it lasted several months.

*(To be continued.)*

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"FOR AS THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST ABOUND IN US, SO OUR CONSOLATION ALSO ABOUNDETH BY CHRIST."—2 Cor. i. 5.

My dear Friend,—I have heard of your illness, and also of your recovery. I hope that you can bless God for the trial.

You will be glad to hear that my soul was much blest last night; and during this day I have shed many tears. I could scarcely shave myself, and my eyes are quite red with crying. A friend sent to know how I was this morning. My answer was, "Much the same in body, but well in soul." A man should have a particular religion

to use such language; he should know both parts of a work of grace on his soul. I have not had such a blessing since January, 1843. I was blest in my soul on the 18th of July, but not in the manner that I have been this time. The blessed promises were applied, and the highest hymns of assurance suited my soul, such as the 158th, Gadsby's:

“ Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,  
Which before the cross I spend,”

And “ When Jesus, with his mighty love,  
Visits my troubled breast.”

Such proofs of the Lord's loving-kindness to me at this particular time I valued highly. How often have I prayed that “my last days may be my best.” How often have I said that “it is a mercy to be well-laid in the grave.” A long sickness is a heavy cross; but it is in the furnaces and fires that the soul prospers and is in health. There is not much to live for in this time state. If things please the flesh, they will deaden the soul; and if they do not please the flesh, they make us murmur and fret. It is a trial to be silent; but I cannot murmur without considering that I have in my feeble way preached salvation by grace for more than the third of a century. I keep hearing, for my encouragement, that I have not laboured in vain, either in London or the country. What a high value Bunyan set upon his seals! I trust I may say that I value them more than gold and silver. What are riches and honours, compared to spiritual blessings and divine enjoyments? I do not envy those who are anxious to see all the new peep-shows, or those who are labouring hard to gather together a large heap of gold-dust. “Godliness with contentment is great gain.” In my present state, I have but little hope of preaching again. I was ill here 25 years ago. I have to bless God that I was raised up again. I wish to be grateful for the good health that I have had for 24 years.

Dr. Shaw, of Leicester, came to see me on the 24th Sept. He called on Tuesday, when in the neighbourhood, and told me that I was not so well as when he last saw me. What a very great mercy to have a religion of the right sort, and be made fit for the great change. I feel very grateful for this particular blessing. I have a sore throat, and suffer more. May the Lord bless me with patience and resignation! Death is a solemn subject. Those who can say that they are not afraid to look death in the face should have a particular religion, and should be very grateful. How awful to be deceived in such important matters! The real children of God like a searching ministry, that they may be well exercised whether they are right in doctrine, experience, and practice. Real repentance, real faith, and real love are very important matters. Both ministers and hearers must die for themselves. What a very great friend Christ is to those who really believe in him! Real faith and real love will produce real fruit. It will be 37 years ago next January since I have professed to fear God. What mercies and blessings of various kinds I have received; and how little my heart is melted with gratitude! It was well with me this morning. I could say,

“ My Jesus has done all things well !”

I could not murmur this morning about the past, nor fret about the future. You and many in your ungodly city will be glad to hear that my soul has been blessed in such a manner. "The Lord trieth the righteous." "Many are their afflictions, but the Lord delivers them out of them all." "It shall be well with the righteous." Those who fear God in your large city will be tried and exercised in various ways. The fear of God is a great treasure, and those who have such a treasure should not murmur about trifles without having their consciences condemned. May the Lord bless those who love and fear his name in Town. What a warning in the earthquake for ungodly England! Give my love to Mrs. C. and any inquiring friends.

Yours affectionately,

Oakham, Rutland, Oct. 15, 1863.

WILLIAM TIPTAFT.

## Obituary.

ROBERT PYM, LATE RECTOR OF ELMLEY,  
YORKSHIRE.

THE subject of the following brief memoir was one who lived much alone. He sought retirement, often saying to his friends that he did not wish to become a public character. But during the last few months of his life the Lord so powerfully blessed him that he repeatedly spoke and wrote to those friends who were favoured to have intercourse with him, requesting them to call upon the Lord's people to praise him for the great favours with which he supported and comforted him on a dying-bed. Nothing could be more repulsive to his feelings than the idea of exalting a "hell-deserving sinner," (as he frequently called himself,) but if the riches of grace could be magnified, and any of the Lord's tried family "who, through fear of death, are all their lifetime subject to bondage," might be encouraged by the relation of the Lord's gracious dealings with him, then he would not object to such an attempt being made.

Mr. Pym was born July 15th, 1793. He was the third son of Francis Pym, Esq., of the Hasells, Bedfordshire. Early in life he entered business as a banker's clerk in London, where he followed the devices and desires of his own sinful heart, and frequently, in after life, referred to that time with deep humiliation. But it was there that the Lord began the work of grace upon his soul. He felt burdened, but knew not what was the matter, and often sighed and mourned over his wretched condition. In this state he one day entered Christ Church, Newgate Street, and heard a sermon by the then Bishop of Lichfield (Ryder) on the words, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. ii. 20.) The text rather than the sermon powerfully affected his mind, and was the means of discovering to him the way of salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ, and he found "peace in believing," though far from being acquainted with the deep truths revealed in the word, which, in later life, by the blessed teaching and power of the Holy Spirit, became the joy and rejoicing of his heart.

Soon after this, being much disposed to leave the monotonous employment of a banker's clerk, and to seek the good of immortal souls, he determined to enter the ministry; and, after the usual college preparation, was in due time ordained. This he never spoke of without acknowledging the wonder-working hand of the Lord, and in most self-abasing terms would declare that God had chosen one of the weakest things of the world to preach "the truth as it is in Jesus." He now earnestly besought the Lord that "his word might not return unto him void, but accomplish that which he pleased, and prosper in the thing whereto he sent it." He has been known continually to spend hours on a Sabbath morning in prayer, seeking that *he* might be nothing, but, the Holy Spirit speaking in him and by him, God alone might be glorified.

At this time, while waiting for a field of labour, the heart of Lord Scarborough was inclined, through a mutual friend, to offer him a living in Yorkshire, which was then vacant. Lord Scarborough said it was a miserable neighbourhood, and no gentleman would like to live there; but a curate might be put in to do the duty. When this was mentioned to Mr. Pym, he at once said he should wish to do the work himself, and live amongst his people. He was, therefore, inducted into the rectory of Elmley, near Wakefield, in the year 1830, and there he continued to labour till 1861, when the Lord was pleased to lay him aside, that he might glorify him by nearly 12 months' bodily weakness and suffering. During this time of sickness, he was permitted to enjoy so much of the revealed glory and blessedness of Jehovah, as manifested in the person of Jesus, that the poor tabernacle could scarcely contain the "joy unspeakable" with which he was at times filled to overflowing. For many years he was subject to much bondage through the fear of death, evident in letters written between the years 1846 and 1850, when the Lord appeared in a marked way, and delivered him from it by a blessed application to his soul of Heb. v. 7.

The last few months of his life he was so greatly favoured that he earnestly longed "to depart and to be with Christ," of whose glory he was permitted so sweetly to taste on earth. In September, 1861, he wrote to a friend:

"I wish to reply to yours, that I may have the pleasure of once more communicating spiritually with you in our present state. We do not at any time know what a day may bring forth. But when the Lord's hand is upon one so near the completion of the three-score years and ten, as I am now drawing to, it becomes me not to disregard the warning voice. Blessed be God, he will not let me do that. He has laid me by from public ministering. It is with much difficulty that I can now communicate my thoughts to you by means of pen, ink, and paper."

Soon after the date of this letter, he was seized with epileptic fits, and became the subject of great darkness of soul. A member of his family attended him, and, by the order of the medical man, he was kept as quiet as possible; even those Christian friends with whom Mr. Pym delighted to hold intercourse being refused admittance into his room.

On Nov. 3rd, one of the Lord's people, with whom he had held sweet communion and fellowship for upwards of 17 years, went to see him. After some difficulty, he had an interview with Mr. Pym. He found him in a state of most painful soul desertion. The Lord had permitted Satan for a season to tempt him, that, like Job, his faith might be tried, and, to use his own words, "that it might make room for the manifestation of the mighty power of God in delivering him out of such a state." He was lying on the sofa, looking extremely dejected; and to his friend's anxious inquiry, "How are you, Mr. Pym?" he replied, "You are come to see a deceived hypocrite." He quoted many passages of Scripture which he thought appeared all against him, such as Heb. vi. 4-6; 1 Cor. iii. 12-15, 17; 1 Pet. iv. 17, &c. &c. He said he had been in this state six weeks, without any ray of light or the least relief to the anguish of his spirit, and he thought the whole Bible seemed to tell against him. In vain did his friend try to explain the word, and to show how little the passages he quoted applied to him. He could receive no comfort. At length his friend said, "Well, Mr. Pym, I have come here to hear you preach for 17 years, and your aim has always been to lead people to look out of themselves to Christ, and now you are doing nothing but looking to yourself." This appeared for a moment to give him relief, and Mr. Pym replied, "Thank you, thank you; I am, and have been doing nothing else for six weeks." Soon after this, he sank back on the sofa, quite exhausted, and the friend left, with a solemn awful feeling that the enemy of souls was there, and that nothing but the almighty power of Jehovah Jesus could conquer this mighty foe and set the captive free.

This friend, on his homeward journey, stopped at the house of a dear child of God at Hebden Bridge, and there engaged in prayer with two or three of the Lord's people on behalf of Mr. Pym. When they rose from their knees, they each expressed their belief, from what they had felt in prayer, that deliverance would soon arrive. The Lord is faithful to his word; (Matt. xviii. 19;) and accordingly sent light and blessing into the soul of his dear servant that very evening. By 5 o'clock the next morning he rang for his servant to bring him pencil and paper, that he might write to his friend. He dated his letter, "Elmley, Monday morning, 5 a.m., Nov. 4th, 1861; in bed," and commenced with, "Your visit has been blessed, very much blessed." He then quoted about fifty passages of Scripture which had been the subject of his meditation that morning, and concluded thus:

"To retain our standing here, we have to fight the good-fight of faith and to lay hold on eternal life. In this, Satan withstands and opposes us to the utmost; and in the present day there are but few who can meet the need of those who are brought to this. Those who are brought to this, what are they not made to experience of themselves and their indwelling sin! I must write no more, nor read this over. Pray for me. Pray for me, all and every one to whom it is given to pray in the faith of the gospel. " May I say, once more as heretofore,

"Yours affectionately in the Gospel,  
"ROBERT PYM."

Those who have never known these depths of Satan will not be able to understand the state of thralldom and bondage which this servant of God experienced, nor can they fully appreciate the powerful deliverance which was granted. Such are ready to say, "He went too far. It was wrong of him to speak so decidedly of his condition;" but should such persons ever come into the same state, they will find that Satan is too powerful for any less than an almighty arm to control or subdue.

On Nov. 6th he wrote to the same friend:

"I have been one of the vilest of sinners. In me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing, but sensibly all that is evil. Nothing but gospel truth, 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' could possibly avail me anything under this present affliction. I have been the subject of fearful darkness of soul, the hidings of God's face from me as he is in Christ. I have been in the deepest waters, and have endured a fiery furnace of soul trial, in which I have been made so acquainted with myself that I need not think it strange, as it seems impossible that I could be saved except by fire, a needs be existing that I should at this time be in heaviness through manifold temptations; that the trial of my faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ; whom, having not seen, I love; in whom, though now I see him not, yet believing I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of my faith, even the salvation of my soul. I am deeply convinced and satisfied at this moment that I cannot yet be finally saved unless I am kept by the power of God through faith, and that to this keeping by God's power through faith (God's gift) must be ascribed my having continued under the trials which for so many years faith has been subjected to in me."

Nov. 22nd he writes:

"I could indeed desire the company of some one of the Lord's dear family, with whom it were permitted to me to talk familiarly about death and approaching eternity; but it is not allowed, on account of the extreme weakness of the brain, &c. The Lord, at times, has been most kind to me; wonderful things have been opened and discovered to me; precious things brought to my mind; but some seasons also of soul trial and darkness."

The friend mentioned above visited Mr. Pym at intervals during the remainder of his days on earth, and usually found him rejoicing in God. But as no memorandum was taken of the conversations which occurred, we can best describe his state in his own words, from letters written to his friends at this time. The following are selected:

"Elmley, Jan. 18th, 1862.

"My dear Fellow-member in the mystical body of which the ever-blessed, great, and glorious Lord Jesus is the Head, in whom the life of each one is safely hid and eternally secured in God. Glorious mystery!—I would that I could communicate with you on the blessed things which, from time to time, are occupying my mind; but I have got past this by letter. I feel the want of some one to pray with, who could heart and soul join with me in my addresses, and prayers, and praises offered to the Divine Majesty on the throne of grace. I have been much tried in my mind since yesterday morning, on and off, at times feeling as though I were made up of two persons in my body and soul; and



when incapable of serving the Lord, in and with my mind, sadly tried by seemingly knowing of nothing else of which Robert Pym was made, or which constituted R. P., but the body of sin and death. I have wept much at times. When alone, weeping this morning in my bed, I thought there was comfort set forth in the word respecting some that were weepers upon earth; and I have just been looking at Rev. vii. 13, with the reply to the question put in that verse, contained in those which follow to the end of the chapter; and I conclude, as I did in bed this morning, that a weeping sinner, like me, may truly find much comfort from such a portion of the word of him that cannot lie. Our dear, ever-blessed Lord, when on earth, preached in the same comforting, consoling way, knowing that amongst his followers there would be weeping sinners on earth, who would be rejoicing saints in heaven, when he said, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' My head says, 'Desist!' So farewell, with Christian affection. From R. P."

The next letter was written the following day :

"Elmley, Jan. 19th, 1862.

"My dear Friend in our ever-blessed Christ,—Would that I could, in any little way, speak the praise of the Lord as I am called upon to do by his unspeakable goodness to me in every way, since I closed my last to you, about noon, yesterday. It would ill become me not to make the attempt. He blessed me at every turn, in every way, all yesterday, in temporal things, accompanying all with such spiritual comfort and consolation that I was in the blessed enjoyment of the peace of God which passeth all understanding, in a way requiring you to be here, an eye-witness, and as far as you could be a soul-partaker, to be able to form any idea at all coming up to the reality. I had comfortable and refreshing sleep during many hours last night. From 4 this morning I had the presence of the Lord, and an unceasing communion with him, surpassing anything I ever before experienced,—such freedom in pouring out my whole soul! The only thing I felt to need was to be out of the bondage of the body, the earthly house of this tabernacle, and actually with my soul in the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, mortality swallowed up of life, in that presence of Jesus which fills the whole soul, when out of the body, with a sensible participation of his glory, and enables it for a realization (with all other spirits made perfect in heaven) of that union which is of being in, and of one Spirit with the Lord. A dismissal from the body, or release, seemed all that was wanting to be immediately so received into a present Christ, who fills all surrounding space immeasurably; to find myself at once in heaven, where is Christ's visible presence, with that of all the holy angels around and before the throne of manifested glory, and the spirits of all the elect already gone before into that everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ, into which at death, we are assured from God's word, an entrance has been (as it will be to you and me) abundantly manifested. My head says, 'Write no more!' Farewell, my dear brother. You know what my farewells would include,—all blessings you can ever need, and all provided for you in Jesus. R. P."

These two letters are sufficiently indicative of Mr. Pym's experience at this time, though, as he drew nearer the end of his pilgrimage, he had less darkness and more manifested enjoyment. As the body became weaker, he became unable to write, even with the pencil, and he then employed his man servant to write at his dictation, to friends; and when too feeble to dictate, he would describe his case

and have it written, reading it over afterwards, and adding a few words to render it more intelligible. The following is transcribed from one such letters:

“When I, in compliance with my master’s wishes, read to him various parts of the word, which he much enjoys, he says, ‘It is such precious food to his soul.’ Yesterday he directed me to read, amongst others, Psalm xix.; and when at verse 10, remarked, ‘That is a just description of what the word is to me. If you can understand what a sugar-plum or barley-sugar is to children, you can understand something of what the Holy Spirit makes the word at times to me, in my present particular situation, both in hearing it read, and also when meditating upon it.’”

The friend who visited him on Nov. 3rd, spent about five weeks with him during May and June, and the Lord, in a most wonderful way, favoured and blessed them together. The time was chiefly spent in reading and prayer, and they had most blessed communications from God in Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mr. Pym often said he had deeper sights of God than language could describe. Sometimes he would exclaim twenty times together, “Blessed, blessed, blessed be his holy name!” At times they were so filled with the glory of God, that their bodies were crushed as it were by it; and repeatedly has Mr. Pym cried out, “Lord, my poor body will not contain it!” and many, many times would he exclaim, “O! It is wonderful, wonderful, that thou shouldst save me,—such a vile sinner as I!” The Holy Ghost revealed God in Christ, and faith being in lively exercise, their souls were filled to overflowing; and tears of love and joy were abundantly shed. If any of the servants entered the room, Mr. Pym could not help saying to them, “God has been blessing our poor souls;” and he often longed for other friends to share it also, and would say, “O tell them, tell them of the Lord’s goodness!”

The latter end of July, the same friend again visited Mr. Pym, staying with him about a fortnight. He found the body much weaker, but the soul more than ever rejoicing in God. Sometimes he would talk about the Lord and his goodness to his soul, until he was so overcome that he was attacked with one of the seizures with which he was afflicted, and on this account many Christian friends were not permitted to see him. He gradually declined in bodily strength until August 10th, when he had an apoplectic fit. He was then quite unconscious for a day or two; but on Thursday and Friday rallied again. He enjoyed the same blessed intercourse with God to the last. He was delighted if any fresh symptom appeared to betoken the approach of death, and would say to his man servant with evident pleasure, “I think I cannot last long.”

On Friday, August 15th, he said to one who was sitting by him, “It will soon be over now. It is all passing away. I am dying very happy, just as I wished to die. I am in union with Christ.” To another he said, “I die unto sin daily, but Jesus lives in me. It is all Jesus, nothing but Jesus. When Jesus appears, it will be all Jesus in heaven! I am dying!”

These were the last words he spoke. He gradually sank until 20 minutes after 3 o’clock on Sabbath morning, August 17th, 1862,

when he drew his last breath on earth, and entered upon an eternal Sabbath, and upon the full enjoyment of those satisfying pleasures which are to endure for ever, and for which he had so long and ardently panted.

He was interred under the communion table of Elmley Church, on Saturday, August 23rd, there to wait the resurrection of the body, and the entire fruition of all the purposes of God's everlasting love to his chosen ones.

The Bible which he was in the habit of using, and which is abundantly underlined and marked, was found to contain the following lines, written by his own hand: "This Bible to be given, after my decease, to J. N., of ——. Nov. 5th, 1861. Robert Pym. He most kindly visited me on the 3rd day of Nov., 1861, a Sabbath, when I was the subject of much soul darkness, spiritual trial, and trouble. After he was gone, his conversation was much blessed to the comfort of my soul, (Isa. l. 10; John v. 39,) and his visits since have been the same. I would give the Lord all the praise, thanking, blessing, and praising his holy name. May he exercise, strengthen, uphold, confirm, and establish my faith more and more, as he sees good to try it, and fulfil in me his own eternal praise and glory."

The following letter was written, in pencil, to the same friend, on his sick bed, when from bodily weakness he could scarcely hold a pen:

"The Son of God, God the Son, one and the same Lord God Almighty with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is, as John styles him in his second epistle, 'The Son of the Father.' He is not Son of God through his human nature being begotten of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, which it was; no; but as Son of God from all eternity, and that of the Father. He took the human nature into personal union with himself as God, the one only true God in the person of the Son, as distinct from the Father and the Holy Ghost from all eternity. This has been shown to me most beautifully, as lying meditating on him and the truth in him, and the word's revelation of him, in my bed this morning; when I was shown somewhat of his glory, as the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. In other words, he was shown to me to be the Son of God, as a distinct Person in the Godhead, the co-equal, co-eternal Son of the Father, one and the same Lord God Almighty with the Father in the glorious self-existing essence of the Godhead from all eternity. See John i. 14. Such beholdings are ascribed (verses 13, 14) to the work of God's grace in the souls of his people. See 1 John v. 4—8.

"The right Scriptural acknowledgment of the Son, as Son of the Father, is to be ascribed upon earth to the witness of the three, the Spirit, the water, (which is the grace of the Father in the Son, of which the Son was full,) and the blood; which agree in one in their witness with the record borne in heaven by the Three,—Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, which Three are One. Then verses 9 to 15 clearly and beautifully set forth, how salvation is through faith. So in Heb. i. 1, is it set forth. In these gospel days, God has spoken by this, his only begotten, Son. So in verse 3 he is declared to be the brightness of God's glory, the express image of his person, which plainly reveals and declares him to be the Son of the Father. The great and glorious things which in the word of God are set forth as immutably fixed in the eternal

counsels of Jehovah, (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,) upon this foundation of the divine Personality of the Son in the Godhead, as the Son of the Father, will not allow of my departing from the great and glorious truths of the word, wherein Jesus is, and has been shown to me the co-equal, and co-eternal Son of the Father.

“My mind is now too weak to permit of my writing any more at present, whilst the warning I have had from God that I may be out of the world at any moment, makes me desirous of keeping the eye of my mind fixed on Jesus as the co-equal, and co-eternal Son of the Father, glorified in his incarnate state.”\*

[Having occasionally, in times past, seen some of Mr. Pym's letters, and sermons contained in them, we have felt and said that he was one of the few ministers of truth in the Church of England who seemed to know both sides of the question, and to have some living experience of the things that he preached, both of faith and the trial of faith. He was not mixed up with the bishop and clergy, and all the tag-rag of the system, choristers and chanting and what not; but was a separate man, well exercised in his own soul, much despised and hated in his own neighbourhood as “mad Pym,” and preached to a gathering of peculiar people, who came many miles across the moors to hear him—plain, simple folk who loved an experimental gospel. His heart, as we have seen in one of his letters, was with such men as Warburton and M'Kenzie; and if he continued in the system it was not because he approved of or loved it, but because he could not clearly see his way out of it. Mainly for these reasons we have inserted the above Obituary.—ED.]

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### INQUIRY.

Dear Sir,—I observe in the “Standard,” this month, a quotation from William Huntington, as follows: “In God's chosen, the Holy Spirit works and stirs up jealousy, suspicion, and fear that all is not right, and *much distrust* about it.” Now, with all my partiality for the writings of that good man, I really cannot bring my mind over to the belief that the Holy Ghost, who begins the work of grace in the poor sinner's heart, next sets to work in that heart by inclining it to *distrust his own work*. That there *is* much of this distrust, I readily grant; but the question is, from what quarter does it proceed? Does it come from above or from beneath? It may be said that the *unregenerate* are not the subject of concern and fears in these matters. That is true; but then it should be remembered that the shining of the light in a dark place is the *discoverer* of what is there, but not the *producer* of those things. Will the Editor kindly offer his own thoughts upon the subject?

March 4th, 1863.

H.

### ANSWER.

Language is so imperfect an instrument of conveying the almost infinite shades of human thought that abundant room may generally

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\* What a clear testimony of a dying man to a spiritual knowledge and a living experience of that blessed truth, the eternal Sonship of Jesus! This is the way, the only way, to know it aright.—ED.

be found for objection to the casual expressions of the most accurate writers even on natural subjects. We cannot wonder, therefore, that when language becomes the medium of communicating divine thoughts and feelings which are so much beyond its usual range, inaccuracy of expression may sometimes be found or fancied even in the writings of our most approved authors. But against raising objections in a hostile or cavilling spirit against the expressions of the servants of God we are cautioned from the example of those enemies of truth "who make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate." (Isa. xxix. 21.) Trusting, however, from the spirit of the communication, that our correspondent is not one of such wretched characters, and that he really seeks some explanation of the point which he has brought before us, we feel disposed to drop a few remarks upon the expression to which he objects. Mr. Huntington, indeed, needs no defence from us; for so great is his usual accuracy of language, and so marvellous his felicity of expression, that his meaning is generally as clear as his style is full of force and fire.

The objection that our correspondent makes is, that the Holy Ghost is said to work distrust, implying, according to his view, that he inclines the heart to distrust his own work.

But let us look a little at Mr. Huntington's own words, and see whether they will not bear a good gospel sense, and a strictly scriptural and spiritual meaning. He is showing the effect of divine life in the soul in maintaining "a restlessness, a disquietude, and an appetite" which must be fed. He then adds, "Besides, the Holy Spirit works and stirs up jealousy, suspicion, and fear that all is not right, and much distrust about it, and about the treachery of the human heart." He does not say that the Holy Spirit works distrust about *his own work*, but "about it," that is, as the preceding words show, "that all is not right." In other words, that the Holy Spirit, illuminating the mind with divine light and quickening the soul into divine life, reveals to man the true state of the case—that he has a heart deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Now as he is made to see and feel this dreadful deceitfulness and wickedness, what thoughts and feelings necessarily arise in his mind? A fear lest he should be deceived, a distrust of himself—not a distrust of God, not a distrust of the work of the Spirit, so far as he can see and feel it, but a distrust whether he be really a partaker of the grace of God; for, seeing and feeling what an awful thing it is to be deceived in so important a matter as the salvation of his soul, and knowing how many are so deceived, he trembles lest such should be his own case. Is there anything wrong here, anything contrary to sound doctrine or gracious experience? We trow not. But again, do we not read of the pharisees that "they trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others?" (Luke xviii. 9.) Was not this self-trust a work of the flesh, and a piece of consummate folly? for "he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." (Prov. xxviii. 26.) Then, if self-trust is a work of the flesh, why should not self-distrust be a fruit of the Spirit? Do we not read of the true circumcision that

they "have no confidence in the flesh?" (Phil. iii. 3.) If, then, to worship God in the Spirit, and to rejoice in Christ Jesus are fruits of the Spirit, which none can deny, why should not the third mark be equally a fruit? And if a man has no confidence in the flesh, what does he do but distrust it? Is there anything wrong here, any irreparable breach of truth in doctrine or experience? We can see none.

But let us look at it in another point of view. We read of "godly sorrow," that it works certain effects in the soul. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (2 Cor. vii. 11.) It will be observed, that among the fruits here enumerated of godly sorrow, and as such declared to be the work of the Spirit, are "indignation," "fear," and "revenge." Now, adopting our correspondent's line of argument, we might say, How can the Holy Spirit work indignation? Is not indignation or anger a fruit of the flesh? What! Indignation at his own work! Or how can the Holy Spirit work "fear?" Is fear a fruit of the Spirit? What! A fear of his own work! when we are expressly told, that "we have not received the spirit of bondage to fear?" (Rom. viii. 15.) Or how can he work "revenge?" Is not revenge a fruit of the flesh, and one of its very worst fruits? Can the blessed Spirit then work one of the worst feelings of the human heart? Who does not see what room there is for cavilling here, and that precisely on the same grounds that our correspondent objects to the word "distrust?" But when we see that the meaning of the apostle is that the blessed Spirit works indignation, fear, and revenge, not against his own work, but against our works and against our sins; that he makes us indignant, not against himself, but against ourselves; fearful, not of his work, but of ourselves, lest we be altogether deceived; and fills us with revenge, not against his most kind and gracious operations, but against our own dreadful and damnable crimes and iniquities, certainly the whole text wears a different aspect. So, when Mr. Huntington asserts that the Holy Spirit works distrust, he means not that he leads us to distrust him or his most benign operations and gracious influences, but to distrust ourselves, lest our deceitful heart prove our ruin.

To our minds, Mr. Huntington's sense is abundantly clear, and we believe his words will find an echo in every living heart. This inward echo silences all cavils, and puts an effectual stop to all objections.

[The above answer has been unavoidably delayed.—ED.]

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A hypocrite, a false professor, may go a great way. He may pass through the first and second watch, (to wit, may be approved of Christians and churches); but what will he do when he comes at this iron gate that leadeth into the city? There the workers of iniquity will fall, be cast down, and shall not be able to rise.—*Bunyan*.

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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FEBRUARY, 1864.

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

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY  
FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET  
CHAPEL, LONDON.

*(Continued from p. 25.)*

It was during this happy time last mentioned that I found a strong desire to preach Christ to poor sinners; and the light which God gave me upon his holy word encouraged me to think that he would fit and furnish me for the great work of the ministry. I prayed most earnestly to the Lord for the Holy Spirit to be my teacher, and be all to me that I needed; and sometimes I was assured that God heard and approved of my prayer. But more of this hereafter. During these days of my espousals, I was greatly favoured in hearing that blessed man, Dr. Hawker. I seldom heard him but I came away with my cup running over, and did not suppose there was another man like him on earth. I knew as yet nothing about the trial of faith, the power of unbelief, the plague of my heart, nor the buffetings of Satan. My judgment, indeed, was the judgment of a child. I spoke as a child; I acted as a child. My love and zeal burned like a torch. I wrote several letters to my unregenerate relations, and used to tell them what God had done for me; for I thought that hearing the blessed things the Lord had done for me would make them fall in love with Christ. But, alas! I found, to my great mortification, that my letters and words, in most cases, were like water spilled on the ground. Several of the brethren became acquainted with me, to whom I opened my mind most cheerfully, and many sweet times we have had together in prayer, in singing, and in conversation about Christ and his precious salvation. I thought I could contradict all the infidels in the world, from what I knew and had feelingly enjoyed of Christ and his love in my own soul. Little did I think of the clouds of darkness that were about to overshadow me; and about which I shall now say a little.

By little and by little I found my joys began to decline, and my heart to get cold towards Christ. In this state I strove hard in prayer, but could get no answer, and I became restless in my mind. I used to look over my Bible, and turn up the folded leaves, and hunt after the precious things I had enjoyed. Never did a sucking babe search after the mother's breast with stronger desires than I

did for the fresh discoveries of Christ; but all was dark and distressing. The precious promises hardly looked like the same words, and I began to think that all my former enjoyments were the effects of my heated imagination. "Surely," I said, "if they had come from God, I should not have lost all sense and feeling of them." I still searched my Bible, and particularly the Psalms, and now and then used to find David's prayers expressive of my feelings, as if he had made them on purpose for me, which seemed to afford me momentary relief; but this was indeed of short duration; for the character of David appeared very different to mine in my eyes. I still attended the preaching of Dr. Hawker, but could seldom hear anything but what condemned me or distressed me. If I tried to lay hold of anything the good man said, it used to be torn from me in a moment by this suggestion: "You have turned your back upon Christ; you have no love to Christ; you have cast away his yoke," &c.

About this time there was also a snare laid for my feet, so that my thoughts, while in church, were carried away with that powerful evil that Paul speaks of, Rom. vii. 8. So distracted was I with my carnal affections toward the dying creature that I could hardly tell what the preacher said, and the more I strove against it, the more it prevailed over me, which used to fill me with guilt and confusion. Under these painful feelings, I determined to sit in the opposite end of the church, where the temptation would be out of my sight. I did so; and said to myself, "Now I shall be able to hear with more composure;" but, alas! What folly is bound up in the heart! I had no sooner removed my seat than I was beset in other ways, equally distracting. First, I was so sleepy that as soon as the text was given out, I fell into a doze, though I used every method to keep awake, such as pinching my flesh, taking snuff, standing in the seat, &c. This was the more surprising to me as it was contrary to my constitution and habits; for I was very thin, and my living was very plain and poor. I prayed that the Lord would take away this evil, for it seemed to me to be a mockery to be there, both to the minister and to God. I will not say the Lord heard my prayer in this instance; but this I know, my drowsiness left me, and then I hoped to be able to hear better; but here again I was mistaken. I was now so pestered with the things of this life that I seemed to be able to plan and order all things relative to my calling in life while at church much better than I could at home, nor had I the least power to put a stop to my rambling thoughts. When I left church, I used to hear the brethren say, "Well! What a most precious discourse we have had!" Another would reply, "I found it indeed good to be there;" the hearing of which struck me silent; and often I have crept out of the way of the saints, lest they should ask me some question, and so discover the dreadful state I was in; but no one soul knew of my temptations. I wished I had made no profession of religion, for now I seemed not fit for the world, nor the Lord's family. In this state I hung down my head like a bulrush for many months. And at times I had such hard thoughts of God,



such degrading thoughts of Christ, and such infidelity working in my mind, as have made me tremble. Self-pity also wrought so strongly in me that my thoughts have been carried beyond all due bounds; nay, till I could have pitied the damned in hell. Certain I am, but for God's restraining power, or mighty grace, man would act as bad as the fallen spirits. During this my dreary path, one circumstance added much to my misery, which was this. A youth who was fellow-apprentice with myself, observing me often reading my Bible, and in prayer, and hearing my conversation about the things of God in time past, was so wrought upon, though previously a very flighty youth, that he became all at once very serious, and lamented his ignorance, for he was not able to spell a monosyllable. I was highly gratified with his appearance of piety, and told him I would gladly teach him anything I knew, which indeed was very little. However, I soon taught him to read a plain chapter, which much delighted him and myself also. I found a great affection for this poor, neglected youth; and seeing, as I then thought, some hopeful signs of religion in him, I used every means to promote his eternal welfare. He left his vain companions, and his vile conversation, and would often be inquiring about the things of God, apparently like one hungering and thirsting after righteousness; and thus he went on for several months. But when I sank into the state before described, I evidently perceived a gradual declining in my young convert; and by little and little he threw off the mask, and became one of the most filthy and obscene youths in conversation I ever knew; and he also ridiculed all religion, as might be supposed. This circumstance added to the weight of my other trials. I thought, as he fell, so should I, and give up religion altogether, which thought, at times, made me tremble; but at other times I was careless and indifferent about it. In one of my indifferent moments, I passed by my old dancing-room. I halted and said, "I'll go in for once. I will not dance, but just look on." I did so; but I had not been there many minutes before I began to tremble, and stop I could not, the agitation of my mind was so great; for either in the room, or just as I left it, these words rang in my conscience: "We know the Son of God is come, and the whole world lieth in wickedness." I saw in one moment where all the world stood—in a state of darkness, death, and condemnation, and myself among the number, only my case seemed much worse than the ungodly world; for I was a gospel-hardened wretch! This cured me of ever entering a dancing-room afterwards; but it did not soften my heart.

At another time I joined one or two of my more moral former companions; and while at play in a field with a very hard ball, I injured the principal finger of my right hand. This I considered an evident judgment upon me for my base conduct. I left my companions with hell in my conscience, nor could the surgeon restore my injured finger; and often when I look at it, it reminds me of my baseness to the best of friends. But mercy was in this dispensation, for I was brought once more to cry heartily to God; and in my simplicity I said, "Lord, if thou canst show mercy once

more to a wretch like me, I'll be content if I never receive another." The sweet humbling sense of grace he granted me I shall never forget. But this unexpected favour did not last long. The dew soon dried up, and I was left to feel the desperate depravity of my nature. Nor did I once suppose that any of the Lord's children were exercised with such things. I therefore shunned them as much as possible, and was determined, as soon as I had my liberty, to leave that part and go to London, where I was not known. I determined to say nothing to any one about religion, go where I might; and as the day of my liberation drew nigh, I disposed of all my books, except my Bible and Dr. Watts's hymns, saying that they were too heavy to carry about, and that I could purchase more in town; but no one knew my determination, nor the exercises of my mind; and so different was the opinion of my friends concerning me to my own, that several said, "We hope God will make you a preacher before you return;" which deeply wounded my feelings, though I concealed it from them as well as I could. I reflected on their words, and said to myself, "God make me a preacher of his gospel! Poor souls! O how you are deceived in me! What a base hypocrite I must be! O! Did you know one half that is in my heart, you would turn me out of your company, and never speak to me more!"

All relating to myself that I have written hitherto, took place before I was 19 years old.

Soon after I was 19, I set off on foot for London; a distance of more than two hundred miles. I walked about 60 miles the first two days; but as I was descending a steep hill at the close of my second day's march, very tired, I suddenly stepped on a round stone, and at once sprained my ankle. It was with great difficulty I got to a lodging, and the next day I could hardly set my foot to the ground. All thought of walking the rest of my journey I was obliged to abandon; but having but little money, and the coach fares being high, I was obliged to state my situation to the coachman, who said he was going only 36 miles, but would gladly take me for a few shillings, and speak to the next coachman on my behalf; and by these means I came safe to London, through the Lord's goodness. My foot also got better by the means used, and by rest on the coach. This was in April, 1799.

I must look back to my first day's journey, and, indeed, I shall ever have cause to bless God for his goodness to me by the way on that day. I had to ascend a long and steep hill; and as I ascended very slowly, I was musing on the past scenes of my life, and wondering the Lord had not cut me off in the midst of my sin and rebellion, when a sudden thought struck me: "I will take out of my pack Watts's hymns, and read as I walk slowly up this tiresome hill." I did so; and cast my eye on,

"Blest are the souls that hear and know," &c.

A light and sweetness attended every line as I read; but when I came to these words,

"His righteousness exalts their hope,  
Nor Satan dares condemn,"

I stood still awhile, overcome with a sense of the love of Christ. I sang, and I wept for joy, and blessed and praised the Lord for his tender mercy towards me; and those words, "his righteousness," appeared grand indeed! When I arrived at the summit of the hill, I felt as if I must return again, in order to tell my friends who feared God what he had done for my soul. All around me seemed to look gay; for God had turned "the shadows of death into the morning." I stood awhile leaning on the top of my staff, hesitating whether I should go forward or return. At length I came to a conclusion to go forward, trusting in the Lord to prosper my way, and preserve me from sinning, that I might not dishonour him, nor wound my conscience. I had not had so clear a discovery of my acceptance in the Beloved, and of my full and complete salvation by his justifying righteousness as I was favoured with at this time. Also, many scriptures, to encourage, confirm, and establish me in my faith, pressed on my mind; so that I went on my way rejoicing. But O! what a change was wrought in my feelings! for though I had "been among the pots," I was now "like the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold." (Ps. lxxxviii. 13.)

This visitation from God refreshed my spirit, and continued with me for some time after I arrived in London, though not with that fulness of joy as at the first. My understanding was also much enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to the glorious plan of our redemption, as laid down in the holy scriptures; and my meditation of Christ, as the glorious Redeemer, was truly sweet.

I thought when I arrived at London how much I should be favoured in hearing, as I had been told of such a variety of excellent ministers of Christ in the great city. I, therefore, began to ramble about from one place to another, but could glean very little; for most of the preachers I heard, I have my fears, knew little or nothing of the Holy Spirit's teaching, or of Jesus Christ my Lord. I wondered how it was that I could seldom hear any of them with any soul satisfaction. It was indeed a grief to me, and I was led to a serious inquiry as to the cause. What help I have had at those times was chiefly in reading, in meditation, in prayer, and in conversation with two or three of God's children.

By degrees, during the summer of 1799, I lost my enjoyments, and my situation in life was most trying. I had to labour day after day with some of the worst of Adam's fallen race. They were, for the most part, either debauched deists, or empty professors of religion; and between the two I was ground as between two millstones. Having had blessed discoveries of Christ and his precious salvation to my heart with such demonstration and power, and then to meet with men who called the truth of the Bible in question, who vilified that precious Redeemer whom my soul loved, used to touch me most sensibly, so that I was not able to keep silence in their company; and from the warmth and zeal of my heart, I have confuted many of those daring infidels with whom I have been working;

and some of the outside empty professors of religion have been much confounded as the infidel party by the arguments I was enabled to bring forth. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, God will perfect praise. But O! What with their subtle reasoning, and their filthy and debauched conversation, my life was miserable, and I used to be truly glad to leave their company.

One thing, however, used to puzzle me much, which was, that I used in private to fall in with the worst things that I heard in the course of the day. Satan, I have thought it might be, took the advantage of me; for I used to have this suggestion,—that I had been speaking more than I ought to have done, that it was pride and presumption in one so young as myself. My path at this time was rough and thorny; and the many snares and temptations in London, suited to the depraved passions and carnal vigour of youth, many times threatened my downfall; but the Lord preserved me from grossly sinning and giving loose to the powers of corrupt nature. At the same time I was made to feel that I had no room to boast; for the worst scenes I beheld without were not worse than I felt in my own heart; the feeling of which often made me groan in secret. Indeed, such was the powerful working of my depravity that all my comfort was at times swept away by it; and I often came to this conclusion, that, if the work of God upon my heart had been genuine, I should not feel so much corruption, or have more power to beat down the old man. But I was a young soldier, and not skilled in the war; and having in a great measure lost my enjoyments, which I was doatingly fond of, I thought my experience singular. Some of the ministers that I used to hear at this time, instead of helping me, rather hindered me; for if I went to hear with some little hope of having my path a little cleared up, I came away cut up and cast down. One old minister made this observation in his sermon once: “Do you complain that you have lost your comforts? See if you cannot find out the cause. Perhaps you have neglected prayer, or the means; or you have not mortified the old man. See how the work of sanctification goes on. Don’t tell me about justification; for without practical holiness no man shall see the Lord.” I thought the good man must be right, and myself wrong; and I became entangled with his legal preaching, and much broken in my judgment. Those preachers, too, often used to warn their hearers against the Antinomians and their dangerous doctrines, and they would use all their powers of oratory in blackening the Antinomians. For my part I knew of none; but at length upon inquiry I found that those pious men meant William Huntington, John Bradford, and a few others; but there were not many such *awful* characters in London, as far as I could learn; and I was glad of it, and was determined not to hear them. But there was one difficulty I could not well surmount.

I had *promised* some friends of mine in the country that I would hear Mr. Huntington when I got to London; and so I came to a conclusion that I would hear him some week night when it did not interfere with my more frequented places of worship. Then I

thought I shall have fulfilled my promise, and I shall also have a confirmation of what I have heard about him. I will watch him very narrowly. I went accordingly to hear Mr. Huntington, but in a very secret way, lest any of my acquaintance should see me. I was much struck with his plain style and clear distinct delivery. His aptitude in the scriptures, and the proof he brought to establish every point of doctrine that he advanced, I could not gainsay nor resist; but still I was determined not to receive him in my affections; for I thought if this man is such a vile character, as no doubt he is, or so many pious men would not speak against him, and if I should embrace his sentiments, what an awful character I shall turn out at last! I am such a poor depraved wretch already; and if I should embrace his doctrine, it will be like manure, and my corruptions will all break loose in all their abomination; therefore I will stop up every door that his doctrine may not enter, except into my memory. Well, I heard him, and was much surprised at his astonishing memory and acquaintance with every part of the Bible; I felt sorry that so bad a man should have such good abilities; and I said to myself, if this man were a real man of truth, how bright he would shine! I went away quite disappointed that he did not confirm the things I had heard about him. I could not get his sermon out of my head, for it went no farther; but went home and related the principal parts of it to a good old woman, who seriously said to me, "I am afraid, my young friend, you have done wrong by hearing him." I said, "Dame, I could discover nothing contrary to the truth in what I heard." She said, "You might not; but a man might preach many gospel truths, and still be an awful character. He is a man of a very bad spirit," &c. This poor old disciple (for such she was) I believe had never heard him; but she had been told a great deal against him by the pious people at Keppel Street, with whom she stood connected, and she believed it. No doubt it was from sincere motives that she warned me against Huntington. Ignorance and prejudice often carry the real disciples of Christ to great lengths; and it is the devil's work to stir up the hearts both of saints and sinners against the free grace gospel of Christ; but it is the only remedy for man's deplorable misery. Satan will sanction all religion but the religion that exalts Christ and brings liberty to poor captives.

(To be continued.)

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NOTWITHSTANDING whatever can be said concerning the evidences of divine revelation, the most convincing argument, and most infallible demonstration, that the Scriptures are the word of God, is to feel their enlivening, enlightening, and transforming power in our hearts. And let it ever be remembered that Scripture cannot be understood but only in and by the inward ministration of the Holy Ghost. Were we in a room hung with the finest paintings, and adorned with the most exquisite statues, we could not see one of them if all light were excluded. Now the blessed Spirit's irradiation is the same to the mind that outward light is to the bodily eyes. The word of God will not avail to salvation without the Spirit of God, any more than a compass can be of use to a mariner unless he has light to see it by.—*Toplady.*

## NOTES OF A SERMON BY THE LATE MR. BIRCH.

"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Luke viii. 5—8.

THIS parable is set forth by the Evangelist Matthew with a, "Behold!" and if the matter be rightly considered, it need create no wonder; for first of all we are to consider the immense love of God to give sowers, when we consider what the seed is. It proceeded entirely from the love of God that any of the human race should be saved. This love showed itself in his eternal purpose or purpose of eternity, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord. His love is expressed in his absolute will and good pleasure: "According to the good pleasure of his will." The words "good pleasure" show that it is perfectly free and with the utmost delight; for where it was proclaimed from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased," it is the very same word that is used by Paul. (Eph. i. 9.) "According to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself;" and also in verse 5, as I have quoted above.

The word of our Lord shall stand for ever, or endure; and the substance of this word is what we call the Gospel, or good tidings; which word, David says, "God has magnified above all his name;" that is, his name as respects his work of creation, Wonderful! The wonderful wisdom, care, and mercy of God towards his creatures is wonderfully exemplified in it; but the new creation, exceeds the old in love, in wisdom, in grace, in mercy, in uncontrollable sovereignty, in the mystery of redemption, as seen in "God manifest in the flesh," Immanuel, called the "wisdom of God in a mystery," and the "hidden wisdom." It may well be said, "Behold! what manner of love" is revealed in that word which contains the purpose of God towards his elect, who obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, it may well be said, "Behold," when the Lord foresaw what entertainment the word would meet with from the world, when both the seed and the Sower would be hated and despised. But "Behold" the determinate counsel of God, which cannot be frustrated.

The sower shall *go forth*. Whither does he go? He goes out into the world, where he once lay among the pots. He shall be separated from them and he shall testify against them and their ways, and he shall testify of the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; and it is God's absolute determination that some shall bear. For their sakes the seed is given; for their sakes the sower goes forth, often with great reluctance, often terrified at the thought of the greatness of the work, more fit for an angel than a man, often in the face of the worst of opposition, not seldom meeting with reproach, contempt, neglect, yea, the worst of contempt. But go he must; the command is gone forth. A dispensation of the word is committed to him, and, there-

fore, going forth he shall go and weep too, that such a burden should be laid upon him: "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." He is a witness to all men of the universal depravity of man, and a witness of the unsearchable wisdom of God in finding out a way for mercy to flow in.

The sower has *seed* given to him. "I have given them thy word." Christ is the first and chief sower, and he deputed many to carry the precious seed, and they are bidden to cast it into the field.

This seed is called *light*, and the sowers are said to "sow light for the righteous." (Ps. cvii. 11.) That is, that the elect sinner may see light, even the Sun of righteousness, and thus be delivered from the darkness of error, and the darkness of Mount Sinai.

This seeds-man is said to be *going forth*. He shall go and weep, weeping under a sense of his utter insufficiency for so great a work, weeping under a sense of the goodness of God which he feels in his heart, weeping to see sinners so careless and indifferent, weeping to see so little success of the word, and sometimes to see a soul saved from death, and thus a multitude of sins hidden for ever, and no more to be remembered. He bears precious seed, and he knows the worth of it, having himself found it to the joy of his heart. God works by it and does wonders. One soweth and another reapeth. "I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour." That is, the prophets who went before have ploughed the fallow ground of the heart, and you are come with the good seed to throw it into the ground already prepared for it. He is bidden in the morning to sow his seed, and in the evening not to withhold his hand, not knowing whether shall prosper, this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. There is a promise that "it shall not return void." It shall either be a savour of life or of death. The good pleasure of the Lord is to prosper in the hand of Christ, who is the good Sower, who sends it with power to the hearts of his elect; and it is sent to the rest that, hearing they may hear and not understand, and seeing they may see and not perceive.

The great Sower, when on earth, was unwearied in this work. He was in the character of the Prophet, and it was his meat and drink to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work. He gathered his little flock by his word; and they came and sat down at his feet, acknowledging him to be Jehovah the Word, and receiving the law of life; and the perfect law of perfect liberty from his mouth was dearer to them than thousands of gold and silver; for "he sent his word and healed them, and they were saved from their destructions."

Christ acknowledges in this parable that he had a diversity of hearers, that the word met with very different receptions, but that, to gather together his elect, he sent his angels, or messengers, to the four winds. Some shall reap profit.

The hearers are fourfold; *Wayside, Stony ground; Thorny ground; Good ground.*

The *wayside* hearers either treated the word with contempt, or were robbed of it by the devil, who takes it away both from mind

and memory. It was esteemed by the wise Gentile as unworthy of notice, and the seedsman considered as the filth of the world; and rejected by the self-righteous Jew, who sought righteousness by the works of the law. These had their judgment. The word bound them over to the judgment of the great day, as scoffers, mockers, and they will be judged as rejecting the word, and so judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life. These will not hear the word. "They stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed," or ordained. Satan had power to harden them, to deceive them, to stiffen them, to prejudice them, to blind their eyes, to make them mad upon their idols, and so to prevail in spite of all warning and reproof. He, the preacher, that has obtained mercy, although he may faint at times, is encouraged to go on and to commend himself to the conscience of men; taking this into the account, that if his gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, and they will suffer eternal loss, being condemned by the law; and cursed, and given over to the second death. These are said to be "nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned;" for none who reject the gospel were ever written in the Lamb's book of life. "And whosoever was not found written in the Lamb's book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." (Rev. xx. 15.)

It is added, "The fowls of the air," &c. These fowls of the air are in Matthew called "the wicked one;" in Mark, "Satan," but here, in Luke, "the fowls of the air." Satan has his residence in the air, as Paul says, calling him "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." They are "disobedient ones," as Peter calls them, opposed to the elect, who are called by Peter "obedient children;" the one "children of the curse," and the other "children called to inherit a blessing." Had Paul preached the word in Asia, or gone into Bithynia, he would have met with just such hearers; but the Spirit suffered him not to go. He had a fruitful field appointed for him to sow in, or occupy, namely, at Philippi, whither he must go, for the Lord the Spirit sent him.

Nothing brings to light the real state of men as the gospel does. It is indeed a sea of glass, mingled with fire: "A fire goeth before him and burneth up his enemies on every side." It burns them up, either with the rage of malice or is a purifying furnace to them. It divides and separates the vessels of wood and of earth from the vessels of gold and silver. The Lord Jesus told the Jews (John v. 43), "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not. If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive."

The next reception of the word is this: "And some fell upon a rock, and as soon as it sprang up it withered away, because it lacked moisture." Matthew tells us that "it had no deepness of earth." It was not received in affliction and meekness, which prepare the soul. Mark tells us, "it had no root:" "no deepness of earth." Had there been a root, had there been moisture, the case would have been very different. The "root of the matter" was found in Job, (xix. 28,) deepness of earth in those who receive it with meek-



ness, and moisture in those to whom the Lord is dew to their souls. God alone can plough up the fallow ground. He alone can make the word enter, pierce, and rend the caul of the heart, and thus make a way for his word. There will be deepness of earth, when the Lord makes a deep incision in the heart by life and light accompanying the word. There is a majesty in the word when it thus enters with power. There is then a way made for the hearty reception of the Lord Jesus; but God is not pleased to do this in any but his elect, whom he has chosen, and for whom he has reserved the greatest of blessings, that is, eternal life. A superficial work is all that others attain to. These receive not the truth in the love of it; but had they been truly lost, truly perishing souls, they would have gladly come and received and embraced Christ Jesus. "He that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger." The "clean hands" signify that the sinner has not a bribe in his hand, or a price as the fool has: "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart for it?" He thinks of buying the favour of God, and comes with a price in his hand; but he is not mentally or spiritually poor, therefore he can have no real love for or delight in Him who was made sin that the sinner might be made the righteousness of God in him. To him the following words are a stumbling-block: "For if by grace, it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, it is no more of grace, otherwise work is no more work." (Rom. xi. 6.) This is a hard nut to crack to the proud doer, who is not an insolvent. (Prov. xvii. 16.)

In the truly lost sinner is found the root of love, as in Mary Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils. A debtor to grace she felt herself to be; a lover she was of course. A five-hundred pence debtor feels more love than a fifty pence debtor. To the lost soul the Saviour says, "Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help found." In such is found the lasting root of love which never faileth. I will feed you, O poor soul. "That that dieth, let it die, and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another;" that is, feed upon human applause, the doctrines pleasing to flesh and blood, the honour which comes from man. "My honour," says the poor soul, "is that Christ died for me, loved me, gave himself for me." How many turnings and windings has our cursed human nature. Herein, I think, is seen the exceeding deceitfulness of the human heart, that it evades by all possible means all knowledge of Christ, so that deep and lasting afflictions, fiery furnaces, are constantly needed to purge off all that dross and tin which adhere to the vessel of mercy; but where life has entered, there is a hearty reception of the Lord Jesus, and love is found; which love cannot be rooted up.

Again a description is given of the seed: "It lacked moisture," and therefore withered. All of us are by nature dry trees. We are indebted to God for rain literally, and we are indebted to the God of all grace for rain spiritually. There is sovereignty in this. "One piece was rained upon;" (Amos iv. 7;) and also, "I have

withholden the rain. I caused it to rain upon one, and caused it not to rain upon another city; one piece was rained upon, and the other piece whereupon it rained not, withered." It is the rain and the dew which give moisture to the plant of righteousness. Where the dew is, it causes "the tender herb to spring forth." (Job xxxviii. 27.) The dew upon Job supplied his branch with moisture; it kept him alive. The dew comes gently, quietly, and secretly. So it is with many a soul who makes no great show; but it imbibes the dew, the early dew which refreshes it. It is not the goodness of man which is compared to the early dew, but it is the dew of heaven with which the Lord blesses his people. (Mic. v. 7.) A dew from the Lord which tarrieth not for man. If the dew descend upon the soul, the word is received in power, and it abides, and the soul that is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit is sensible of this dew. It earnestly seeks it from the Lord, and is continually begging it, knowing that without it, it cannot prosper. "Then shall he give the rain of thy seed;" (Isa. xxx. 23;) "The heaven shall drop down dew." (Deut. xxxiii. 28.) And the earth opens to receive it; I mean the sensibly parched ground. The Lord says, "I will pour water on him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground," the dry land, or Sion, which signifies a dry place. "From God is thy fruit found." (Ps. cxxxiii. 3; cx. 3.) The Holy Spirit, who formed the human nature of Christ to make it a fit sacrifice, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," who out of mere love to poor lost man built that holy Tabernacle, and then came down in a bodily shape, like a dove, upon him, to show that God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him; that blessed Christ has the dew of his youth and communicates it to all the chosen seed, and to none else, and says, "I will be as the dew unto Israel." He being at the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, sheds it upon all his disciples; and he told them that as the living Father had sent him, so did he send them, and breathed on them, as essential Divinity alone can do, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." These never wither, "neither shall cease from yielding fruit." (Jer. xvii. 18.) But "the rest," as Paul calls them, always invariably wither. Their apparent seeming greenness withers away, being constantly impaired by temptations which discover that they have no dew from the Lord, who has made no one promise with respect to them. All things come by promise to the children, or the "heirs."

*(To be concluded in our next.)*

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THE sight of God manifested in the flesh is the most gracious and lovely sight that the eyes of sinners can ever behold. O how can their heart help burning with gratitude and love! It is indeed so mysteriously wonderful that the angels can find nothing in heaven like it, and therefore forget the proper glories of their own station, to look into, admire, and adore this unparalleled instance of love, condescension, and grace. They sing, at the sight of it, "Glory to God in the highest!"—*Charles.*

THOU HAST LOOSED MY BONDS.

Will you allow a poor thing a little space in the "Standard?" I am a poor sinner who has fallen a prey to the evils of my heart and before the power of temptation; and as I have made the hearts of many of your readers sad, the Lord having, I humbly hope, manifested mercy and forgiveness to my conscience, I now feel the sentiment of David: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."

I shall not be able to tell a thousandth part of the horror, anguish, and bitterness of soul I experienced before the Lord visited me in mercy, nor a thousandth part of the brokenness of spirit, the gratitude of heart, and amazement of mind, when he made known his grace and mercy to me. During this temptation, there was considerable ignorance and unconsciousness overspreading my mind. In my case, as in the case of many a child of God at the outset, the mind was averse to the temptation, and did not see the design of the foe; for when the enemy cannot work directly, he will employ the most probable means, and thus facilitate and make sure his work. I am anxious evermore to caution the tempted, and expose the tempter. O ye children of God, when a temptation is presented, try to turn aside and think seriously over it, and lay it before the Lord. Did I dare, I could say much about the craft and stratagems of the devil; yes, and about my own deceitful heart, the seat of every abomination, and my vile nature, the source of all my trouble and distress; and sometimes, when favoured with a little hope of an interest in the blood of Christ and his finished salvation, I am enamoured with the anticipation of the time when

"Sin, my worst enemy before,  
Shall vex my eyes and ears no more;  
My inward foes shall all be slain,  
Nor Satan break my peace again."

Now it is a great thing to be able to say we are not ignorant of Satan's devices. Though for some time there was a sort of a calm in my mind, this was only a prelude of a most terrible tempest. Amongst many scriptures which began to arouse my conscience, that was the principal one: "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." "Let him alone" sounded in my conscience; and really, for some time, it seemed as though this threat was executed on me; and poor Job's case was mine, when the Lord said to Satan, "Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life." Had it not been for this sovereign bound, put by the Lord to the power of this enemy, sure I am I had not now been in existence; for when so dreadfully tempted, and in bitterness and distraction of mind, I sought after death, but could not find it. By the great and severe conflict through which I have passed, it has rendered many parts of Scripture very expressive of my feelings, as though it were my own language; and, with Job, I have said, though with shame and sorrow I have been constrained to confess it before the Lord, "O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for; even that it

would please God to destroy me, and that he would let loose his hand and cut me off." And the account Job gives of himself in iii. 3-14, was a true picture of the rebellion and despair of my mind; and in the distraction of mind, I have said to my poor weeping wife, "I am lost! I am lost! My damnation is settled and sealed by the great decrees of heaven. I am a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction!" To which she has replied, "No, James, you are not. The Lord will appear for you in his own time."

Now it may appear very strange to some, that one who has held such sweet communion with the Lord in secret, one that has had such soul meltings, such heart breakings, and sin-embittering revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ as I hope I have had sometimes, should sink so deep in despair that sin, fear, unbelief, and the devil should have such power over the mind as to cause him to decide he was eternally lost; but such were my real feelings.

Before the Lord called me by his grace, I was a most dreadful swearer; but, during nearly 30 years, was little tempted to this. But now I was most terribly exercised with this dreadful temptation; and really it frequently seemed that awful language must escape my lips; and sure I am, had it not been for almighty power, I should have been overpowered by it. But the Lord, in many of my conflicts, made good that promise in measure: "When it shooteth forth, thou wilt debate with it. He stayeth the rough wind in the day of the east wind."

Amidst the soul trouble through which I have gone, there were moments of respite, a breaking down before the Lord, and an earnest crying to him; but as sure as this was the case, the devil set in upon me more violently than before. Still, I found something averse to sin and the workings of Satan; and the language of the poet was very suitable to my experience:

"Midst all my fears, and sin, and woe,  
Thy Spirit will not let me go."

Now I will tell you, in as few words as possible, how the dear Lord began to break in upon my mind, in my soul affliction, at various times, in affording me a little help, so as to prevent me really sinking into despair. One Lord's day morning, namely, on January 29th, 1860, when reading a portion of the word of God with my family, I happened to open at Job xxxiii. As soon as I began to read, I felt a little melting down under the word; but when I came to verse 24, my feelings were really inexpressible, so that it was with great difficulty I could go on to finish the chapter. I hope I felt the sweetness and dissolving power of that verse: "Then he is gracious unto him, and saith, Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." I must honestly confess that this happy experience did not last very long, and on that account Satan began to dispute with me as to its reality; but I should much like it again; and I have sat and read over these words again and again, in hope I should feel as on that Sabbath day morning; but I could not. No; sensible I am that nothing less than almighty power and divine influence can make the word humbling

and consolatory to a burdened mind. This I have known for many years, but never so fully as at present. Still this scripture would be on my mind: "Deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom." And sometimes I have had a faint and a relieving view of the great Ransomer and of the ransom price, and a little hope of being one of the ransomed ones. Now this scripture gave place to the language of the poet:

"Blest is the man, O God,  
Whose hope is stay'd on thee;  
Who waits for thy salvation, Lord,  
Shall thy salvation see."

This was on my mind almost continually, for days together, and the words a little strengthened and encouraged me, especially the last two lines; for I knew I was really longing and waiting for that great blessing, and constrained to groan and sigh to the Lord that he would say to my soul, "I am thy salvation." Now Satan immediately began to combat with me because it was not scripture; and in the combat, finding myself beginning to sink, I secretly wished it had been divine and not human language; but I am a poor beggar, and must not choose. A drowning man makes no choice of his hold, and I felt as though I was sinking fast, and if I did not lay hold of that, I hope that laid hold of me.

The next season I have to refer to was on Lord's day morning, Feb. 12th, 1860. I read the word with my family, and when we bowed the knee before the Lord he was pleased graciously to break in upon my mind in a most merciful manner. The poet just tells the very feelings of my heart:

"In prayer my soul drew near the Lord,  
And saw his glory shine."

My hard heart was broken down before the Lord. My self-loathing and meltings of soul I cannot describe. The mercy of God to such a vile wretch, in the Person and mediation of a precious Christ, was so blessedly opened up to me that I could not help taking great liberty with the Lord, and that with humble confidence too. This is such a sacred and inward feeling that I believe you and some of your readers can better conceive of it than I can express it. I know it is a great thing for such a poor sinner as I am to say, but I cannot help it. I believed and felt it, and therefore speak. I do not believe that Bethel was a whit more solemn to Jacob than my room was to me: "This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

The next visit I have to record, which the Lord was graciously pleased to pay me, was on Lord's day, Feb. 19th. I went to chapel in the morning. The minister read for his text, Gen. viii. 9. Immediately as he read the words, I was struck with their suitableness to my state of mind, and while he was preaching I felt my heart melted down before the Lord. I went home, and in the afternoon was left alone, and yet not alone; I hope I was enabled to wrestle with the Lord. I felt nothing very joyous, but a little hope and confidence that the Lord would smile upon me once more. I went to chapel

in the evening. The good man read the same words as a text again, and, when speaking of the mourning of a child of God, said, "Sometimes he mourned over a precious Jesus." That one sentence entered my very soul, and the Lord the Spirit opened up to my mind a very solemn scene, that of the overwhelming sufferings of Christ. If ever I mourned on account of sin, if ever I saw the dreadful nature of sin and the justice and holiness of God, it was then, while I viewed the Lord Jesus Christ suffering for my sin; for at that time I lost sight of every one but myself, and felt as though my sin was the entire cause of all his sufferings. I thought I would not have sinned, nor ever would again, if I could help it, for ten thousand worlds, and earnestly wished myself in heaven, where sin is not known. The language of the prophet rested with solemn weight upon my mind, and I inwardly felt the experience of the same: "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 is in bitterness for his first born."

Service being over, I went home, and was glad to do so, for, from what I was then feeling, I thought I must leave the chapel or disturb those near. When I arrived at home and was seated in my room, the solemn subject still resting with great power upon my mind, and the Lord more and more revealing himself to me as the God of my salvation, in the Person and atoning blood of Christ, I felt the Lord so gracious and indulgent to me that I could not help exclaiming, "Can it be true? Can it be true? Can it ever be possible?"

I well remember the old garret, in which, 30 years ago, when labouring under the burden of guilt, the frown of the Almighty, and the curse of a broken law, the Lord Jesus Christ was most blessedly revealed to me, so as to deliver me from that state; but I assure you that was little more marvellous to me than the Lord's goodness to me that Sunday night. I should much like, if it were possible, to convey to your mind what I felt. With contrition of spirit and astonishment of mind at the great goodness of the Lord, I talked to him in some such way as this: "*Canst* thou? Is thy grace so free, is thy grace so rich, is thy grace so boundless, is thy grace so sovereign? And *will* thou? Does thy mercy, does thy love, does thy grace, does thy nature dispose thee to do it? Sure I am there is everything in me and about me to turn away thy mind. Yet to forgive! What? After all my wanderings, my rebellion, my vileness, and black ingratitude?" By this time my soul was so full of peace, and my mind so raised above all doubts and fears, and I had such an inward assurance of pardon and interest in Christ and his finished salvation, that I found it almost too much for such a vile wretch, not only for my mind, but for my poor body; for through the incessant temptations of Satan and the soul labour, the desponding and sinkings of mind with which I had struggled, it had much impaired my health and weakened my body. I truly proved the truth of the passage: "When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." I wished to

retire, and said to my wife, "Read Psalm ciii.;" and I can truly say I never read nor heard read any part of the word so precious and so expressive of my soul's feelings as I then felt that psalm to be. I could most heartily join with the man of God and say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." And though I do not now feel as I did then, yet there is something of its savour still resting on my mind. How often I have read that passage with my lips, but now, from the very bottom of my heart, I could sing:

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

For then I saw plainly that each Person in the Trinity was engaged in my soul's salvation. "O," I thought, "what a difference now to what it was when I read Job iii., and in his language breathed out my rebellion." Indeed, so great was the contrast in my feelings, it was like life from death, like midnight darkness to noon-day brightness, like a criminal under sentence of death receiving a full pardon. I now went to my bed-room, but had no inclination for sleep, I was so full of amazement at the mercy of God to such a vile sinner. I felt myself to be the vilest wretch out of hell, yet inwardly assured, beyond all doubt, that hell was not my portion. I walked to and fro my room, saying, a great number of times, "O what a God! O what a God! to show such mercy to such a sinner!" while several scriptures dropped with power upon my mind, and one would have the uppermost: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage?"

It will be plain, from what I have written, that I had been the subject of great rebellion; but this experience wrought in me an acquiescence in the will of the Lord, and a perfect submission to all the dispensations of his providence; and I felt that if the moving of my finger would alter anything against his will, I would not do it; and it gave me to see, as I had never seen before, the immutability of Jehovah in his love, mercy, purposes, and faithfulness. Sure I am, had it not been for this, he would have poured his wrath upon my guilty head, and sent me to hell; and at the same time I had a very sweet and comprehensive view of the worth, suitability, and perfection of the Lord Jesus Christ in his work.

The above was written just about the time that I passed through the exercises of mind, with an intention to send it to you immediately; but for some reason I deferred it, though perhaps a wrong one on my part; for there has not been scarcely a day ever since but that I have been more or less exercised about it, till at last I laid it before the Lord; and while doing so that scripture fell upon my mind: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work nor device nor knowledge nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

A MONUMENT OF MERCY.

## THE LORD IS GOOD AND DOETH GOOD.

My dear Friend and beloved Brother in the Lord Jesus Christ,—Christ loved us, and gave himself for us, and redeemed our souls to God without spot, and hath put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself; and yet we have to groan out under a body of sin and death, daily and hourly.

The Lord is truly good to us here as a church and people, and still keeps adding to our number; and, bless his precious name, he still is taking one and another home to glory. We have two well-taught souls now in the furnace, and they both seem to be drawing towards their everlasting home and habitation. Their souls are rooted and grounded in the faith.

O, my friend, what a rich blessing bestowed upon a poor sinner, to be put into the possession of divine grace, superabounding mercy, everlasting life, precious faith, a good hope, and a sure confidence in the blood and righteousness of the eternal Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. And when the Lord Jesus smiles upon the soul, and shines into one's heart, and the word of truth drops like honey and oil into the soul, it is sweet travelling onward and homeward, with joy and peace in believing. Then it is that we feel the road good, the foundation sure, the prize in view, the world under our feet, the loins girded, the breastplate on, the sword in hand, and the soul looking forward for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Many thanks for your last kind letter. We are always glad to hear from you, and to hear how you are getting on in the best things, for we shall soon have to quit all things here below the sun, and to lay down these vile bodies which are a daily plague to our poor souls. O how my poor heart groans out, under a feeling sense of my ignorance, vileness, filthiness, and wretchedness! Still the Lord is very merciful and gracious unto me and mine. His great goodness and mercy to us as a church and people is marvellous. I only wonder how it is the Lord can and does make any use of such a poor, old, blind bat as I am, and that he does own such a poor, feeble testimony as mine. I often feel that when my soul enters into his everlasting kingdom, I shall crown him Lord of all. My soul wants to love him more and serve him better. O that my soul could but exalt Christ more, and lay the sinner lower in the dust! But my weakness and infirmities grow upon me. If I live until Saturday next, I shall be three score years old; so you see I am getting down towards the grave's mouth.

I saw by your last letter that you are likely to have a settled minister at last. There is nothing too hard for the Lord to do. He will work by whom he will; and this yourself have proved again and again, for he is one that gives no account of his deeds.

The Lord bless you as a church and people, and give you a pastor after his own heart.

Chapel House, Godmanchester,  
Feb. 24, 1863.

THOS. GODWIN.



## TOSSED UP AND DOWN AS THE LOCUST.

To my well-beloved Friend and Brother Morris,—I am glad to find you in the good old path, and that you are still kicking and plunging, thereby proving you are yet alive, for, however unpleasant the work, it is unknown to all in a state of death. In my feelings I am like a locust, at no stay. Sometimes I appear like a bottle in the smoke, as dry as brushwood, indifferent about the best things, laying plans for years to come, feeling great backwardness to private prayer, much wandering of mind when upon my knees, with coldness of heart, often peevish and fretful, dissatisfied with myself and every one about me, and frequently told by the devil I have just as much religion as makes me miserable in myself and hateful to everybody about me; yet, blessed be the Lord, I at times feel a little life moving under all this rubbish, and a small measure of love going out to the Beloved, and, at such seasons, I find myself at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in my right mind. I then think of a verse in Watts:

“ My willing soul would stay,  
In such a frame as this,  
And sit and sing herself away,  
To everlasting bliss.”

I then enter a little into what David felt, when he said he would rather spend an hour in God's courts than a thousand elsewhere.

I often think I have lost my first love. I remember past seasons, when I walked much in the light of God's countenance; but they are gone; and I sometimes think the latter end of my journey will be much darker than the beginning; but I hope at eventide there will be light, and that will be enough. My present desire is that my heavenly Father may lead me his own way. O my dear brother, may you and I be kept from murmuring against him, whomsoever we may murmur at beside.

I received a letter from Mrs. Steers a few days ago, to whom remember me kindly. I have several letters from my Lewes friends unanswered, of much older dates than hers. My thoughts respecting my journey to Lewes are still the same. The season of the year will certainly be very dreary, and the journey long. However, my present intention is to be at Lewes on the 15th or 16th of next month, so as to preach on Sunday the 17th, but how the Lord has ordered matters, time will determine. If we should be permitted to meet at that time, I hope the Lord will bless the meeting to our mutual profit, and his own glory. I have no cross whatever from Mrs. H. in regard to my coming. On the contrary, I meet with every encouragement from her; for which I am thankful. I am glad to find the Lord is with you when you meet together. While you are favoured with his presence, you have no lack, and his promise is to be with two or three that meet together, even to the end of the world.

I remain, your sincere Friend and Brother in the path of tribulation,  
Oct. 15, 1811. W. HUDSON.

[The writer of the above letter preceded Mr. Vinall as the minister at Lewes.—Ed.]

## Obituary.

### SARAH WHITTLE, OF OAKHAM, RUTLAND.

Died on Dec. 2nd, 1863, at Oakham, Rutland, Sarah Whittle, widow, aged 55 years.

She was a very quiet, consistent woman, and was generally respected. But possessing these things naturally, perhaps marks of divine grace were less easily traced in her than in other characters more opposed to it.

She had been a hearer of the truth at Providence Chapel, Oakham, under the pastoral care of Mr. P., from the first opening of the chapel; but she could not say for several years that anything she heard came home to her soul. It was in a very serious illness which she had about 24 years since that her sins were first laid with weight upon her soul. She remembers that she then wept bitterly over her lost state as a sinner before God; but she could not tell her mother or any one else the cause of her grief. When, however, a little better, and she was one day sitting upon the sofa, the words, "Can a woman forget her sucking child that she should not have compassion upon the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee," (Isa. xlix. 15,) came with such consoling power into her soul, that she believed if she died she should go to heaven. After this she gradually recovered.

Her mother thought when she saw her weeping and in such trouble, she was not satisfied with her attention and kindness. She said, "Sarah, what is the matter with you? I do all for you I can." She could not tell her; and, being in such trouble of soul, she could not go to bed at her usual hour. The next night came. The Lord having appeared for her, she wanted to go to bed early, to be alone with the Lord, to bless and praise him. Her mother said, "Sarah, how is it? Last night, when you were so ill, you would not go to bed; to-night, when you are better, you want to go too early."

For many years she worked at her needle, and once, when working at a village two miles from Oakham, where she stayed all night, she was asked by the people in the house to join them in a game at cards. She said she could not, and continued at her work. There was much profane conversation going on. She said she felt miserable; it was like hell to her. There were two children present, who, after the game was finished, were asked to sing a hymn. One of them gave out,

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear."

She said, "I felt his name *was* sweet to *me*, though I could not say whether I was a believer or not." She said she had a sweet night, but no sleep, nor did she want it; she felt it a favour to be alone. Still many years passed on, in which she could find nothing marked of the Lord's teaching in her soul, and even to the end she greatly feared being presumptuous, and claiming anything which the Lord had not really wrought in her. There were some for whom she

occasionally worked who believed that she was the subject of godly fear, and that she greatly desired if she were not right that the Lord would make and keep her so.

Early in 1859 she married, which step seemed for the time to add to her comfort; but her husband lived only two years, and the greater part of the second year he was the subject of much affliction of body. After his death, circumstances concurred to place her in very trying paths, but it manifestly worked for good to her soul.

When she returned to Oakham in her *Mara* condition, she was led to seek her chief friends amongst those who she believed feared God, and the hearts of some such were open to her until her death, and she will live in their remembrance. The word of truth, which from time to time she heard, seemed more and more endeared to her soul. During her marriage she heard Mr. P. from Isaiah xvii. 10, 11; under which striking sermon she felt much of her own experience was traced out, and she felt a fear of what the Lord might yet have to do with her. When the sermon was afterwards published, she said she clasped it with pleasure to her bosom, desiring light to measure herself by it and to be searched of the Lord.

At another time, on June 30th, 1862, when Mr. Brown last preached here, she heard him remarkably well, and said she could never forget it, the word was so suited to her experience. She said, "What a favour it is to have these gracious ministers to open up the word to us, for I am such a blind, confused thing, I cannot tell what I am, nor where I am."\*

She had a very ailing constitution, and it became more so the last two years, and varied afflictions wrought to bring her low. Between five and six months before her death she became afflicted with a very suffering and incurable internal disease, and through a singularly kind appointment in providence, when her illness commenced, she was placed in the house of a kind friend, not any relation, who waited upon and attended to her very cheerfully to the close of her life. At the beginning of her illness, she was very dark in soul, and could say very little to friends who visited her. She would now and then lament this state, and it became a much greater trial to her as the solemnity of her position opened before her. To a friend who often saw her she said one day, "Mrs. L., read to me this morning that sweet hymn, 160, Gadsby's Selection,

'There is a fountain, fill'd with blood,' &c.

And O," she said, "I never had such an intense longing in all my life to know the blessedness of redeeming love in *my own soul*. It was something like what is somewhere in the word, 'My soul breaketh with longing;'" evidently alluding to Ps. cxix. 20. "O, I thought if I could say,

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\* Mr. B. spoke from Jer. xlv. 5: "And seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not; for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord; but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest." Nothing could have been more descriptive of the path in which she was walking than was this Scripture, and the way in which the dear man of God opened it up.

‘ Redeeming love has been my theme,  
And shall be till I die,’

I would desire no more.”

On the night of November 2nd, her room was closed for the night. Her sufferings were great, as, through her illness, they were; her heart, she afterwards said, harder and darker than ever; “and, O,” she thought, “what a state to be in, with death before me!” In the course of two or three hours her long-denied relief came. Her heart was softened; her spirit broken and subdued; the love of God, she said, was shed abroad in her soul; she had nearness to his divine Majesty; the fear of death was taken away. She said, “I believe I did know what it was to plunge in that fountain, for which I had so longed.” She said, “I praised and blessed the name of the Lord scores of times. I became quite exhausted, and thought I should like to die, for I had a faith’s view of the throne and the Lamb and the worshipping assembly.”

The next day she was much tried because she had no particular word applied; but a friend, to whom she so said, remarked, “But whose work could it be to melt your heart, give nearness and supplication?” She said, “I have lost the sweetness; I could not get it at first; I cannot get it again; but I do believe it must have been the Lord; and I can never forget it.” Never previous to this manifestation, but often afterwards, was she heard blessing and praising the Lord, and desiring she had others to help her to do so; and she said, alluding to that visit from the Lord, “In that light I saw many things to have been of the Lord, which I could not see before.” She said her first desire was to die and be with the Lord; but that if she recovered, she might be baptized and join the church here below, which she had often wished to do. Hymn 449 was very sweet to her, especially the last verse; also, 473, especially the first two lines of the fifth verse:

“ O glorious hour! O blest abode!  
I shall be near and like my God.”

After that visitation these words were much upon her mind: “Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” (1 Pet. i. 17.) The chapter being read to her, she said she felt the whole of it very sweet. The great enemy of souls sorely hunted her at times, so that she had to plead hard for one more token for good. Her only sister, who had long been exercised about her in her own soul, lived a few miles distant, and had not the same opportunity of encouragement as to her state as friends had who could see her oftener, and felt a holy jealousy that she might not receive anything which was not wrought of God. But she was constrained when she heard her pleadings with the Lord, and saw how graciously he answered her, to the joy of her heart, to acknowledge his hand towards her. She was first encouraged when much exercised about her by the application of verse 3, 804th hymn:

“ Those feeble desires,” &c.

After that, during one of her sister’s visits to her, she was sweetly comforted by the application of verse 3, 160th hymn:

" Dear dying Lamb! Thy precious blood  
 Shall never lose its power,  
 Till all the ransom'd church of God  
 Be saved to sin no more."

This seemed to be the fulfilment of the longing desire which she had previously had concerning that hymn; but she knew not that it was from the same hymn at the time of its sweetness being first felt. She repeated this verse often, with much feeling; and a friend who heard her the last Sabbath evening of her life, said she substituted the word "blest" for "saved," as if anticipating what she was about to enter upon, and that it sounded like spiritual music in her ear.

On the Saturday previous to her death, she, through great suffering and weakness, told a friend who went in that Isa. xliii. 2: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c., had greatly supported her soul all that morning; and from her solemn manner it was believed that she felt it was given to bear her through her last conflict. She said, "I begged of the Lord not to suffer me to be deceived, that my life hangs on a very thread;" and she said, with more firm assurance than she had ever spoken with, "These words from the next verse came with such sweetness that I knew none but the Lord *could* speak them: 'I am *thy* Saviour,'" and that friend having heard her say how she was awed by the holiness of God, whenever that came before her mind, felt that the opening words of verse 3 might, in wisdom and compassion to her great weakness, not have been brought before her at that time. She could speak but little after this. Sometimes she would breathe out, "Dear Jesus!" and, "Though heart and flesh fail, the Lord shall be the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever;" and, "Dear dying Lamb!" hung often on her lips, as long as she could speak.

For 24 hours before her decease, her sufferings were distressing to a great degree. Her sister was almost overwhelmed. The enemy was busy with his suggestions. About half an hour before she died she became quite free from pain, and these words (hymn 539) were given as a sweet balm to her sister's mind:

" The time will shortly come,  
 When you, with sweet surprise,  
 Will find yourself at home,  
 With Christ, above the skies;  
 With him to live, with him to reign,  
 And never, never part again."

And the writer of these few lines could assuredly feel that her sufferings, comparatively,

" Were but for a moment's space,  
 Ending in eternal peace."

Oakham, Dec. 9th, 1863.

A. F. P.

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GOSPEL trials and temptations are for a merciful end, that Paul may not be puffed up, or as he saith, "Lest I should be like a meteor lifted up in the air above measure." (2 Cor. xii. 7.) "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, (as condemned malefactors,) that we should not trust in ourselves." (2 Cor. i. 9.)—*Rutherford*.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

As we have reason to believe from various communications which directly or indirectly have reached us, that our earlier Meditations on the eternal Sonship, sacred Humanity, and Covenant Offices of the Lord Jesus, and those of a more recent date on the Person and Work of the Holy Ghost, have been favourably received by many of our gracious readers, and been found by them both instructive and profitable, we feel strengthened and encouraged by such testimonies to go on in the same track, and to lay before them in a similar form, as the Lord may from time to time enable us, such other branches of divine truth as have been opened to our understanding, made manifest to our conscience, or endeared to our affections.

As believers in general, we are bidden "to hold forth the word of life," (Phil. ii. 16,) and "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints;" (Jude 3;) and as servants of Christ in particular, we are charged "to be instant in season, out of season; to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine." And why? Because "the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine." (2 Tim. iv. 2, 3.) And is not that time arrived? Was there ever a day when "men more turned their ears away from the truth, and were more turned unto fables?" Was there ever a day when the complaint of the prophet was more applicable: "Truth is fallen in the street and equity cannot enter?" (Isaiah lix. 14.) Yea, so fallen into the street that the professing no less than the profane world would gladly see both it and those who hold it swept away altogether into the common sewer, that both it and they might for ever disappear from the eyes of men, the one as an unclean thing too impure for the claims of modern holiness, and the other as too bigoted for the demands of an enlightened liberality.

But besides this general neglect and contempt of truth, there is another feature still more appalling. It is not merely "a day of trouble"—trouble to the Lord's people, "and of rebuke"—in the frowns met with by honest truth, but "of blasphemy" (Isaiah xxxvii. 3); for not only is the truth of God almost banished from the pulpit and the press, but its very foundations are fast being torn up, and this not as formerly by a few obscure infidels, but by learned divines in high places. Science is mustering all its arts and arms to undermine the veracity of the Bible; talent and learning are uniting all their strength openly to assault its authority; and a cheap press is lending its ready and powerful aid to give the utmost effect to these combined attacks upon the very foundation of all our hopes for eternity. Meanwhile the professing church stands as it were paralysed, not so much with fear—for that would imply some life—as with apathy. She has indeed a dim view of the

approaching danger; but having lost her shield and sword by abandoning the truth, like a man in a dream she strikes her idle blows here and there, and after a show of resistance is even now almost ready to surrender into the hands of her enemies the second best gift of God to man—the inspired revelation of his mind and will in the Scriptures of truth. And need we wonder that the Church, to whom has been entrusted the care of this sacred deposit, should be thus deserted of God when she has been so unfaithful to her trust? By departing from the truth of God she has virtually abandoned her charge. She has thrown away the jewel which gave the value to the casket; for of what value is the Bible separate from the truth of the Bible? When Hophni and Phinehas degrade and disgrace their priestly office, need we wonder that the ark should fall into the hands of the Philistines; or that an enemy should be seen in the house of the Lord's habitation?

When men give up the truth of God they virtually give up the word of God. Those who deny the internal inspiration of the blessed Spirit are not far from denying the external inspiration of the Scriptures; and those who have no living faith in the incarnate Word cannot have faith in the written word. There are, then, evident signs of an approaching compromise between the assailants and the defenders of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The Church and the world have long been coming closer and closer together, and now the last wall of separation is fast giving way. The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures will soon be openly or tacitly given up by the leaders of both Church and Dissent; their example, as has invariably been the case in similar instances, will spread itself among the lower ranks of both bodies until there will be a general renunciation of the authority of the Bible as the word of the living God. With that renunciation the whole force and authority of the Scriptures will be gone; and then they will cease to be what they have been from the earliest period of time—a binding declaration from God to man. Satan, indeed, with his usual craft, is hiding from the eyes of men the certain consequences of denying the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, for it is only as such that they are the word of God at all. Separate from this inspiration, we have no evidence that there is a heaven or a hell, or even a God, and the Scriptures are no more to us than the poems of Homer or the Vedas of the Brahmins. Men speak justly of the formidable advance of Popery; but behind Popery there looms a much more terrible figure—*Infidelity*. Giants Pope and Pagan were great men in their day; but there is a greater giant to come—Giant Infidel. The Pope and Pagan giants warred against the body; but the Infidel giant wars against the soul. The weapons of Popery and Paganism were the rough and ready bodily application of fire and fagot, rack and thumb screw; the weapons of infidelity are much more polished and quiet, but addressed with deadly effect to the intellect, and adapted to all classes of society. Scientific discussions of eminent geologists; annual meetings of learned societies in the large towns and prominent centres of civilization; Essays and

Reviews from divines in high places or University professors, address themselves to the educated classes of society; whilst popular lectures, leading articles, half argument half banter, in Sunday newspapers, trashy tales openly ridiculing religion and covertly advocating infidel principles, with a whole host of cheap publications of a similar character, serve up the same dish for the food and entertainment of the less educated masses.

We may seem to be going out of our usual path to notice these things; but a watchman should not be unobservant of the signs of the times, nor shut himself up in his sentry-box looking only in one direction. If there be a "coming struggle," and if Infidelity be the last enemy of the Church, to be forewarned is to be forearmed. At any rate, if, when the Lord is about to bring a sword upon the land, the watchman see it coming, blow the trumpet, and warn the people, he delivers his own soul from blood, and it may be the souls of others from destruction.

But what we see now in the dim distance is but the beginning of the end. The mischief will not stop here. When the restraint of God's word is gone, society has lost the most binding tie on the lusts and passions of men; for when there is no fear of judgment after death, what is there to keep men back from sin?

To what, then, are we called who have felt the power and authority of the word of God upon our hearts? To bind it more closely and warmly to our breast; to prize it in proportion to the attacks made upon it; to seek for clearer and more powerful manifestations of its truth and blessedness to our own soul, and, as called upon, to contend for it by tongue and pen. We feel, therefore, a growing desire to devote what remains of life and strength to the defence of the truth as it is in Jesus. Through the good hand of God upon us, we have a large circle of readers, and among them many, very many of the excellent of the earth. We feel bound, then, by every spiritual tie, to avail ourselves of the position in which we trust the Lord has placed us, to be a faithful steward of the mysteries of God, to keep back nothing that is profitable through the fear of man, but by manifestation of the truth to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And may the Lord, dear readers, incline your hearts to pray for us, that he would give us a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, that the anointing which teacheth of all things may richly rest upon our soul, and clothe our pen with that power and savour which make truth so precious to the hearts of those who believe in the Son of God unto eternal life.

But though we intend, with the Lord's help and blessing, to pursue the same general method of laying divine truth before our readers in the shape of "Meditations," yet, in order to allow our pen a somewhat freer scope, we shall not tie ourselves down to any one precise subject, or to one limited course, as we have hitherto restrained ourselves. Whilst engaged in handling such deep and important subjects as have already occupied our Meditations, there was a necessity to adhere rigidly to a fixed line of thought and ar-



gument, as nothing is more confusing to the mind of both writer and reader than wandering from point to point without any definite order. Such writing resembles an untidy drawer, full of loose papers, where every letter or bill comes to hand that you do not want, but the one that you particularly need is nowhere to be found. We shall therefore adhere to a certain order of thought and arrangement, though we shall not tie ourselves down to a fixed course.

We intend then, with the Lord's help and blessing, to issue "Meditations on various important points of our most holy faith." This title will sufficiently explain our intention. As we shall endeavour to handle none but "*important*" points, we hope to be preserved from vain jangling on minor matters; as these points are "*various*," we trust this may give us that variety without which all writing soon becomes wearisome from continual sameness of thought and expression; and as the truths of "*our most holy faith*" will alone engage our pen, we hope that both writer and reader may be favoured with the enjoyment of their liberating effect and sanctifying influence.

But we shall not tie ourselves down to pursue our Meditations in every No. A "Review" or an "Answer" to an "Inquiry" may occasionally relieve our more solid and heavier page; for we wish to bear in mind, not only that we have a large circle of readers—a circumstance in itself almost necessarily demanding a proportionate variety of matter, but that such a change enables us also to handle various points of divine truth not less interesting, perhaps, or less profitable than those deeper and graver subjects which require more careful study and thoughtful meditation.

But a few words may be desirable as introductory to the subject of our present Meditations—*The authority and power of the word of God upon the heart.*

In our previous Meditations we have assumed as the basis of our arguments the truth and inspiration of the word of God; for this, among all Christians, is a settled point, the foundation of all their faith, as well as of all their hope. Take away this solid foundation, or in any way impair its stability, and with it all their hopes of eternal life at once fall into utter ruin; for "if the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Ps. xi. 3.) But this is the very thing which the enemies of God and godliness are now attempting, with all their might and main, to effect. Hitherto they have only attempted to break down the carved work of the temple of God with axes and hammers; but now they cry out to each other, "Rase, rase it even to the foundation thereof." We, therefore, feel led to examine the foundations of our faith and hope, that we and our readers may see whether we have or have not followed cunningly devised fables, in ourselves believing in and making known unto you, dear friends and brethren, the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Pet. i. 16.) We shall therefore, as the Lord may enable, under our present subject of meditation, the authority and power of the word of God upon the heart, consider,

I. The *necessity* of a revelation of the mind and will of God to man.

II. The nature of that revelation.

III. The binding *authority* of that revelation on the consciences of men *in general*.

IV. The binding authority of that revelation on the hearts and consciences of the people of God *in particular*.

I. As, from the very nature of our subject, we cannot expect to be able to prove every step of our argument with all the certainty and exactness of a mathematical problem, so at the very outset we must assume certain points as generally admitted by all but avowed infidels, without subjecting them to strict demonstrative proof. These fixed points or data are,

1. That there is a God who, by the exercise of a divine power, created man on earth.

2. That in so doing he breathed into him a rational and immortal soul.

3. That by this act of creative power he made man capable of knowing him, worshipping him, and obeying him.

If these three simple propositions are denied or questioned, there is at once an end to all further argument. Revelation and religion fall at once to the ground, and man has no pre-eminence over the beasts that perish. To this point modern science is fast tending; for the fashionable theory at present is that there was no special creation of man at all, but that by progressive advancement from a lower state of being, he was at last fully evolved out of an ape, and in fact is a kind of improved gorilla; much in the same way as a Ribstone pippin is an improved crab, or a green gage plum an improved bullace. Our readers may disbelieve our assertion, or smile at our illustration, but they may depend upon it that this is the theory which is fast advancing in recognition amongst scientific circles, where it is first elaborated and ripened by the highest intellect of the country. Being thus countenanced and popularised, it will gradually spread itself downwards, until it will fully leaven the minds of thousands, and among them doubtless very many who now profess to believe the Scriptures. It is, in fact, with all its evident absurdity, an attempt to explain the inexplicable, and to account for the presence of man in this world, without his special creation at a definite moment by God himself, according to the testimony of the Scriptures. Now in direct opposition to this ape-into-man theory, which destroys at a blow the immortality of the soul and indeed the possession of a soul altogether by man, the Bible, as a revelation from God, gives us a history of man's creation, and that God not only formed his body of the dust of the ground, but "breathed into him the breath of life," which he did not to any of the lower animals, and thus "man became a living soul." (Gen. ii.) Between this statement and infidelity we have no alternative.

1. If, then, as the Scripture tells us, God created man in his own image after his own likeness, he made man *capable of knowing*, worshipping, and serving him. But this intelligent service man could not render without some special revelation of the mind and will of God how he was to be acceptably worshipped, served, and

obeyed; for though worship and obedience are inseparably connected with the claims which God, as the Creator, has upon man as his intelligent creature, yet to be acceptable they must be according to his own prescription. Thus we see the *necessity* of a revelation from God to man, or otherwise there could be no intercourse between man and his Maker, no intelligent service, no acceptable obedience.

These truths seem very simple, almost too evident to require proof, or too commonplace to find admission into our pages. But please to bear in mind, Christian readers, our present object. It is to show *the foundations* on which our faith is built. The house in which you are living does not seem perhaps quite so stable as it was. The autumnal gales have a good deal shaken it. There is a storm abroad in the sky—evident symptoms of an approaching hurricane. Would it not be as well to examine the foundations on which your house rests, lest on some stormy night it fall into ruins? Is it rock or sand? As is the foundation, such is the stability of the house. But what is the foundation of our spiritual building—our house for eternity? The word of the Lord which abideth for ever. Are we then wrong in examining the strength of this foundation, if its stability involves all our dearest hopes, and without which we must be of all men most miserable? Do we err, then, in thus dwelling—commonplace though it may seem, on the *necessity* of a divine revelation as laid deep in the *relationship* between man and his Maker? The craving after God felt by every new-born soul, the eagerness with which it flies at once to get comfort and instruction from the word, the holy joy with which it hails every ray of heavenly light that shines on its dark path, evidently show how deep the necessity of a divine revelation is laid in the relationship between man and his Maker.

2. But we find ourselves not only here in this present stage of time as the creatures of God's hand, but we see and feel that we and all others with us of the human race are *sinful* creatures. This is a fact as plain and as palpable to our mental, as our very existence to our bodily eye—a fact, an appalling fact, which the devil himself, with all his infernal sophistry, can neither dispute nor deny. Can any one whose conscience is not seared as with a hot iron look into himself, or look at others, without seeing and acknowledging that there is in us all an utter contrariety to the image of God in which we were created? Put aside yourself, though that is the surest because the clearest and most deeply felt evidence, and only give one glance at the crimes, the horrid and detestable crimes, which in this civilised England of ours, this land of churches and chapels, books and bibles, preachers and professors, every day brings to light. And looking beyond the confines of our favoured island—for with all its horrid sins it is a favoured land—view the universality of wickedness rising up as a thick steam from every part of the earth. It matters not where man lives; he is the same sinful being, the same vile wretch, under all circumstances, in all ages, and in all climates. But we need not enlarge on a point so evident. Not to

see our own sins or the sins of others is to be stone blind to the common light of the natural understanding, stone deaf to the common voice of the natural conscience.

3. But now comes the question, "What has been *the cause* of all this?" If we see a river, like the London Thames, carrying down to the ocean a stream defiled with all kind of filth and impurity, we know there must have been a cause for these polluted waters. Did the stream spring so from its earliest birth, or did it contract the pollution in its downward course? Surely a pure and holy God did not create man in his present awful state of iniquity, any more than the Thames sprang out of mother earth, laden with the filth of the London sewers. Man then must have fallen from the state of innocence and uprightness in which he was created; for God cannot be the author of sin, which he must be, had man come from his hands the same sinful being that we now find him. Where and whence then did man become what he now is? Here all is darkness, except so far as a revelation from God has explained the mystery. The only light upon the dreadful fact of the inward and outward sinfulness of man, which meets us at every turn, comes from the Bible. There we have written, as with a ray of divine light, not only man's creation, but man's fall. Men in high places, which they disgrace by their presence; men like Colenso who eat the bread of the Church whose fundamental articles they deny; men of science falsely so called, for the true science is to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; men of intellect which they pervert to their own ruin and the ruin of others, may ignore the Bible, and pronounce the book of Genesis a myth, a Hebrew tradition, an antiquated document, exploded by the discoveries of modern science; but where else can any account be obtained of two facts, which infidelity itself cannot deny or dispute? 1, That man is an intelligent, rational creature. 2, That man is a sinful being. No sophistry can overturn facts so plain, so palpable, and no infidel scheme can explain them. O that men should spend their days which they hold only by the sufferance of God, and devote their abilities which they possess only by the gift of God, to rob us of the only light which shines in this dark world, and to spoil us of the only hope which can cheer us as we travel through it, and for ever pass away from it.

4. But now, still pursuing the same line of thought, we are brought to another step of our argument to show the *necessity* of a revelation from God, as deeply laid in the relationship between man and his Maker. We have assumed as fixed unquestionable data these three points, the being of God; the creation of man by his divine Maker and his endowment with an intelligent, rational, immortal soul; and his present state as a sinner, before the eyes of infinite purity and holiness. Now without a special revelation from God, in what way can it be clearly and indubitably known how this sinful being, man, can be happy in a future state of existence? For we have assumed that he was created for immortality. That a soul polluted with every crime should find admission after death into the blissful presence of

an infinitely holy God, without some pardon of sin or change of nature, not only shocks every feeling of our mind, but is diametrically opposed to the convictions of our natural conscience.

But apart from revelation, how are we to know in what way this guilty soul can be pardoned—this sinful soul be cleansed—this unholy soul be purified and sanctified? Here all schemes of man's contrivance fail. Here cursed infidelity, when she has dragged her victims to the mouth of the grave, leaves them on the brink of hell to the torment of their own conscience; for even in this life many a dying wretch has felt the very pangs of hell in his awakened conscience; many a bold and daring infidel has howled on his death-bed under the terrible wrath of the Almighty; and thus, whether he would or not, has proved the Bible true. What can science or speculation do for a poor dying wretch with all his sins before his eyes, the wrath of God in his conscience, and hell opening its mouth to swallow up his guilty soul? Only in the Scriptures have we any discovery to our awakened consciences how sin can be pardoned and the soul saved in perfect harmony with the holiness and justice of an offended God.

5. But again, another question here meets us as we advance still further in our proof of the *necessity* of a divine revelation as deeply laid in the very relationship between man and his Maker. And please to bear in mind that though these seem very simple elementary truths scarcely deserving proof, or perhaps even as you think a passing notice, yet that in them is laid the foundation of all that we believe. The next question, then, that arises out of the relationship which man bears to his Creator is, How is God to be acceptably worshipped? That some worship is due to him is a truth so deeply laid in the mind of man that universal homage has been paid to it. Sin has most awfully brutalised the mind of man, defaced the image of God in which he was created, and in many points sunk him lower than the beasts; but it has not stamped out of his conscience the conviction that some worship is due to God. But without a divine revelation of his will, how can we know what is acceptable worship? For unacceptable worship is but adding sin to sin. The idea attached to worship is that it is the suitable acknowledgment of our dependence on God, the offering up of petitions and supplications for his favour, with confessions of our sin and unworthiness, and thankfulness for present mercies. But apart from a special revelation, what evidence or assurance have we of the way whereby our Maker may be acceptably worshipped? We see what men do who are ignorant of, or have cast aside or neglected divine revelation. In almost every case men have worshipped the most brutal idols instead of the only true and living God. That God is a Spirit, and those that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth; that he can only be approached through his dear Son, as the Mediator between God and man; that the Holy Spirit alone can indite real prayer in the heart; that all our worship is only acceptable as perfumed by the intercession of our great High Priest within the veil—what should we have known or felt of

these sacred truths, without a knowledge and experience of which we cannot worship God acceptably, apart from that divine revelation which we hold in our hands and the power of which we have felt in our hearts?

Thanks, then, be unto God for the gift of his holy word. Next to the gift of his dear Son, it is the most precious gift of God to man. May we bind it warmly to our breast, daily dig into it for his treasure, and as the Lord the Spirit opens up its precious contents and seals them with power and savour upon our hearts, may we bless and praise his holy name that he has plucked our feet out of the net of the infidel, and given us to know for ourselves that the word of the Lord endureth for ever.

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### SALVATION IS OF THE LORD.

“They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.” “But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay that that I have vowed.”

With lying vanities the foe contrives To keep in constant motion people's lives;	But those redeemed from their fellow men. Eternal life they have in hope, and when
With great excitement occupies their minds, Leaving eternal matters to the winds.	They're call'd to die, they will ascend To enjoy eternal glory without end.
Blessed be God, a few may yet be found, A scatter'd remnant on this cursed ground,	Amongst these highly favour'd ones would I Look at these things by faith, and dwell on high
Whose hearts are touch'd, whose eyes anointed are After eternal realities to care;	In hope and expectation, and forego The lying vanities so prized below. How soon the end will come of all things here!
Who see the vanity of all below And long their interest in Christ to know;	How short man's life is daily does appear;
These prize redeeming mercy, and they long To learn what none can sing (Salva- tion's Song) Gospport.	He dies, gives up the ghost, and where is he? Gone to a bless'd or cursed eternity.

A. H.

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A SOUL which is once brought into the entanglement of back-sliding, especially such as have no clear gospel light nor understanding to undeceive or unwind themselves, falls under very sad temptations at length; for whither may not Satan roll such a poor soul, that is tumbling down the hill already? And they that weigh their state of grace only in the scale of mortification of sin, as it is commonly taken, for dying to particular acts, cannot be so infallibly persuaded as they that place their assurance most in the blood and righteousness of Christ.—*Saltmarsh.*

THE riches of mercy is made out by saving the chief of sinners, and in quickening them when dead; (Eph. ii. 1, 4;) and it is very observable that the apostles, whenever they mention the grace of God in saving, quickening, &c., give not the least intimation of men's worthiness, preparedness, compliance, or any such thing; but dead in sins and quickening come one on the neck of the other, as light does upon darkness, which in no sort induces the light, or prepares the dark earth or air for it.—*Coles.*

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

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MARCH, 1864.

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

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

(Continued from p. 43.)

The summer of 1799 drawing to a close, and my labour beginning to fall off, I began to think what I should do, and where I should go to seek employ. I at length agreed to go to Bath and Bristol with a young man of my acquaintance. This was in August. My companion left me at Bath; nor did I want his company; for he was an Arian Baptist. I went on to Bristol, where I was employed for the most part of three months, when I returned again to London. When I went to Bristol I had an idea that I should be much favoured in hearing some of the excellent preachers there that I had been told of, and I went to most of the churches and chapels where it was reported the gospel was preached; but I found neither dew nor rain, oil nor salt. Some were tolerably sound in the leading doctrines of the gospel, but still before they had finished their sermon they would foul the waters with their feet.

Their candour and liberality, too, were such, that they formed an association, that is, most of the ministers, if not all; and they used to meet once a month, and preach down bigotry, and preach up candour; and this group consisted of Arminians, Presbyterians, Independents, Baptists, &c. I heard one of the preachers say in his sermon, "We hail this happy day. Now we can meet *as brethren*, and give to *all* the right hand of fellowship!" I would fain have joined in with him, for my eyes were not sufficiently opened to discern the difference between a fleshly religion and that religion that stands in power; but could not, and I appeared in my own eyes "a speckled bird." "Well," he went on to say, "We are now happily united in promoting the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom. It was time indeed to lay aside our little differences in opinion, and be more closely united in opposing the grand enemy. O this is a day I have long wished to see." The people also seemed in high glee, and they sang lustily to express their joy that all bigotry was now laid aside, at least in Bristol. I looked at these things with astonishment, and I made my own reflections. "Bigotry knocked down," I said. "Stop! Let me inquire what it is the folk mean by bigotry.

As I reflected, it struck me that a body composed of such materials was not very likely to promote the prosperity of the Redeemer's kingdom. These proceedings begat in me some unfavourable thoughts about the association; yet I checked myself, lest I should grow too uncharitable; and said to myself, "I am but a poor solitary individual; and so many gospel ministers and people surely cannot be deceived!"

There was another thing which much puzzled me,—they seemed all union and love; but I could feel no love to them. Bristol, at that time, was full of professors of religion of one sort and another, and many of my shopmates were thorough-paced Arminians. God having led me into a further knowledge of the glorious plan of salvation by grace alone, I could not keep silence to hear them vilify the doctrine of election and predestination, of Christ's imputed righteousness, and the final perseverance of the saints. I knew if these doctrines were not the doctrines of the Bible, there was no hope for me; but having tasted their divine power and sweetness, I was constrained to contend earnestly for them; which used to bring me into continual trouble, and they used to call me Antinomian, bigot, narrow spirit. God has often favoured me with such freedom of speech, and such a ready recollection of his word, when I have been contending with them, that they have left arguing the point, and vented their malice by the basest insinuations. One man in the shop was pointed out to me as a perfect man in the flesh. I never saw him smile that I can recollect, but he was stern and reserved to all about him. I took an opportunity to walk his road, in order to converse with him about religion, but could get no access; for he was as surly as a bear; which made me think that he was not quite so perfect as the poor deluded Arminians had represented him to me.

Among the many professors I met with in Bristol, there was but one man who seemed to be acquainted with the things of God experimentally. Doubtless there were many hidden ones of the Lord's own children there; but it was my unhappiness not to find them out. But by this time I began to suspect that there was but very little real religion in Bristol; yet I had some sharp conflicts in my mind when I thought so. I am now at a point that their zeal for religion, their associations, their missionary efforts, their great love for candour, and their hatred to bigotry, all arose from the flesh, from delusion, from enmity to a free-grace gospel, and from the devil, whose interest it is to blind the minds of them that believe not, and prejudice their hearts against God's glorious and divine sovereignty. One zealous missionary advocate that I was working with one day proposed a question to his shopmates, chiefly Arminians, whether it was any sin for a man to buy a ticket in the national lottery, with a view to aid the cause of God, if a prize should turn up. Not waiting for an answer, he proceeded to say, "I have a great desire to aid the missionary cause; but I have no money. If I should buy a ticket, and it should prove a prize of any considerable amount, I could support one missionary; and would not that be doing a great deal of good?" Most of the men expressed their ap-



probation, but I was silent; and by my silence he appealed to me for my opinion. I said, "You remind me of God's command to Saul, and of his conduct. God told Saul to spare none, but put all to the sword. However, Saul saved some of the best of the sheep, no doubt for his own use, though he hypocritically told the prophet they were to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. Now you talk of buying a ticket in the lottery, and of what you are going to do for God if you get a prize. Why, God does not wish you to do evil that good may come. I wish all true missionaries prosperity; and if the cause be of God, he is able to support it, and will; but I should be afraid that after you had got your prize, you would think about yourself before the missionary cause." What lengths of absurdity and folly a man may run to, if God be not his teacher.

I returned to London, as I have observed, in about three months, in hope of shortly obtaining employ; but I had to meet with many trials during that very severe winter, 1800; nevertheless, the Lord was very gracious to me; and in providence also the Lord appeared very kind to me; for he gave me favour in the eyes of my employer, so that he actually discharged his leading man, and put me in his place, for the man he discharged was unsteady. This man much tried me, for he had a clear knowledge of the doctrines of grace in his head, and used to hear Huntington and Burnham, and write some hymns that contained sound truth. But his habits of drunkenness were such that I reprov'd him severely; and the last time I reprov'd him, he said, "I thought you believed in predestination." "I am a predestinarian," I said. "Then," said he, "don't you suppose that my drinking is according to the decrees of God?" I was so struck with the man's hardness of heart, and awful presumption, that I paused, and then said, "And if all things are according to God's decrees, why not my telling you your faults among the rest? God's revealed will," I said, "is our rule to follow, and not to sin, that grace may abound. Besides, consider the injury you are doing your poor family, and to yourself also, as well as bringing a reproach on the good ways of God."

These remarks touched him, and he was silent and sullen; but shortly broke out into his old practice again, for which he was discharged from his employ. I met him some time afterwards in Soho Square, and he aimed a blow at me, which I avoided, and said, "What! Do you mean to lay your faults to me, and smite with the fist of wickedness?" His conscience smote him, his lips quivered, he turned pale, his strength seemed taken from him, and he sneaked away like a thief. "The way of transgressors is hard," especially gospel-hardened transgressors. I never saw him afterwards. During this winter I enjoyed much favour from the Lord, both in providence and grace. Just as the winter ended, my employer was a bankrupt, and I was discharged; but that was a time of no difficulty to get employ; and I was constantly employed the whole of that summer.

But many sore trials and inward conflicts I passed through, both while I was at Bristol and during the following year. My depraved

heart and the darkness of soul I frequently laboured under were such that I often thought I must give up all religion. But O, the thought of turning my back upon Christ was horrible to my feelings! And sometimes I thought he looked upon me, and said, "Will you also go away?" which used to break my stony heart, and I would say, "Lord, to whom can I go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

During the summer of 1800, I used to ramble about London to hear various preachers, such was my folly and want of good judgment; but I gathered very little. There were one or two preachers that used to visit Tottenham Court Road Chapel at that time, that I was rather attached to, particularly Thomas Grove, who would state very boldly some of the leading doctrines of divine truth; and I hope he had an experimental knowledge of them. But he appeared to decline very much some years afterwards, as I have been told by some godly people at Walsall. I met Mr. Grove once in Walsall, and shook hands with him, and thanked him for the many precious truths I had heard him advance in London some years before, which pleased him much; and this led to a further conversation; but when I gave him to understand that I was settled over the people in Birmingham, over whom John Bradford used to preside, he grew very cold all at once, and left me.

In the summer of 1800, I was exceedingly depressed at times, which I thought was brought on partly by the pride and vanity of my mind, and partly by the dreadful workings of my corrupt heart. I have trembled when I have left my home lest I should be left to fall into some abominable sin; for I was so surrounded with snares and temptations, that I was certain if God did not mercifully preserve me, I must fall; and what was still worse, I sometimes wished that I could be left to gratify my corrupt desires. How devilish and abominable is man's heart! But there was a text that was fastened on my mind, and I may say was my constant monitor. It was this, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereunto according to thy word." These words have often been to me like the whip for the fool's back; and by them I have often been preserved from presumptuous sins. I found the more I strove in my own strength to subdue the besetting sins of my nature, the more I was overcome by them; and I wrote bitter things against myself. I had also such bondage in my spirit, and such dragging work in prayer, that I sometimes could not pray, nor bow my knees before God. And hearing seemed of no use to me, for none of the preachers that I heard seemed to understand my case. Thus I went about, hanging down my head, at times, like a bulrush, and despair fast approached me. If I tried to look back upon former mercies and deliverances, they seemed buried out of my sight. I came to this conclusion, that I had made a grand mistake at the beginning of my profession, that I was never properly convicted, that I never hated sin as sin, that I had presumed to make free with Christ and his promises without a divine warrant, that my religion was of the flesh, that I was a hypocrite in grain, that I was cut off and that I was a castaway, that now there was nothing to be expected but a "fearful

looking-for of judgment, which should devour the adversaries,"—that I had told lies, and imposed upon God's people; that my sins would be all brought to light soon, and then I should be made to appear in my true character, as having been the vilest impostor in the world. Those who have travelled this dreary path can judge, and none beside, what my feelings were in this time of temptation. There was one prayer I remembered in Jeremiah, which I used to put up to God frequently, which was this: "Be not a terror unto me; thou art my hope in the day of evil." And I used to say, "Lord, I have no hope but in thee, no hope of being saved but in Jesus and by him;" and I used to be a little revived; but it was but momentary, and was often followed by the most horrible thoughts that could enter the mind of man. If I went to hear preaching, I was almost sure to be cut to pieces in my feelings, for I used to be goaded on by the preacher to holiness and diligence, and to make the moral law the rule of my life; but I found the law to be "the letter that killeth." One day I made my mind up to go, for the last time, to hear preaching. I went to hear John Newton, in Lombard Street, on a Lord's day morning, sorrowful and sad enough. The preacher took for his text a passage out of Jonah: "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came in unto thee, even in thine holy temple." The words seemed very sweet to me; and the preacher went into a variety of trials and temptations that the children of God were exercised with, showing by the word that tribulation was the usual path to God's kingdom; and then he sweetly spoke of Christ as sympathising with his afflicted members in all their sorrows and trials, &c. The Lord was pleased to make that sermon a special blessing to me, and I left the church with all my burdens taken off, and my soul was taken once more out of prison. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!" I well know what David meant by that prayer of his: "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." I went to dine with a godly woman that day; and as soon as I entered, she said, "Your face shines; I am sure you have had some of the good wine of the kingdom to-day;" for she saw my gloom was dispersed. I said, "Yes, blessed be God, I have. The Lord has turned my captivity. This has been a blessed jubilee to me;" and I related the matter to her out of the abundance of my heart. She said, "I was persuaded the Lord would appear for you; for he is faithful to his promise." I believe she partook of my enjoyments, and we rejoiced together, and praised the Lord. I now began to read my Bible with more pleasure; and my eyes received a fresh anointing, so that I could discern more clearly than before between the precept and the promise, between the law and the gospel, while Christ appeared more glorious in my eyes as my only blessed Mediator, Husband, and Friend; nor could I forbear speaking of him and his love, grace, and full redemption. I rejoiced that I was not under the law, but under grace.

Now that the Lord had turned my captivity, it again occurred to my mind that I should yet be called forth to speak to poor sinners in the name of the Lord; my mind was continually ruminating on

the work of the ministry, and I thought my prayers to that end were approved by the Lord; for I found no rebukes when I prayed to him, but many encouraging promises.

The summer of 1800 being now nearly at an end, and my work falling off, I begged the Lord's direction in my future movements. But I little thought what was coming; for a few days afterwards, I was taken ill of a fever, and laid by several weeks. I was reduced very weak in body. On one occasion I heard my nurse say to my medical attendant, "What do you think of him, Sir?" He said, "I fear he is in great danger. There is but one thing more I can give him that is likely to do him good." This news sank me very low. I was indeed in much darkness during my affliction; but I had not the fear of death, nor dread of hell; nevertheless, I was much puzzled to make out my path, as I had been favoured so much just before. The only thing I wished to live for was to preach Christ to poor sinners, that they might be blessed and he glorified.

A few hours after my medical man left me, an old disciple called on me, and I believe she concluded my life was nearly at a close. She asked me how I was; but my dark state of soul and my great debility prevented me from giving her an immediate answer. At length I told her as to the state of my mind. The dear old disciple said, in a most emphatical tone, "God has been gracious to you, and what have you to fear? Has not God said, I will never, never leave thee, nor forsake thee?" She had no sooner said these words than the Lord applied them with power and sweetness to my heart; and as soon as I could recover myself, (for I was quite overcome with a sense of the Lord's goodness), I said, "Yes! and bless his holy name, I know he will never leave me nor forsake me!" A few hours afterwards, the medical man called on me to see the effects of his last effort, and was quite surprised. He said, "The fever has left him; he will do well." He did not know that the best Physician had visited me, even Jesus Christ. O how sweet are the visits of Jesus in a time of real need, no matter how poor and insignificant the instrument he makes use of to bring the blessing.

From that time I began to gain strength in body and soul; for the sunshine of the Lord's presence shone sweetly upon me; and though I was somewhat tried in temporals through my affliction, and had no prospect of work when I got well, yet these things did not much trouble me. If God give peace, who then can make trouble? It was several weeks before I gained strength sufficient to undertake a journey; but as soon as I judged it prudent, which was late in October, I went to Portsea. During my slow recovery, I had much time for reading and meditation. The Lord indeed blessed me much at times in reading his word, the sense of which has lasted for days, up to the time of my going to Portsea. The morning I left for Portsea, I was as happy in my soul as a man could wish to be this side glory. I sat behind on the coach alone, when we started from Charing Cross; and as we passed along Westminster Bridge, I sang with inexpressible pleasure that well-known hymn: \*

"Guide me, O thou great Jehovah."

There was a large fire blazing at Wapping; and from that bridge we beheld that striking emblem of the last great day. That fire I believe consumed several hundred houses. It being long before daylight, the sight was very striking to me, and furnished me with some profitable meditations as I travelled. But this prosperity of mine was very short-lived; for it rained nearly the whole of the journey, and at times in such torrents as I have seldom been exposed to; and not being well prepared for such weather, nor properly established in my health, I caught a cold, and was seized in the most violent manner in the night at the inn where I slept. I thought I could not live till daylight; but the Lord was merciful to me. I could scarcely walk when I left the inn, yet, through his tender mercy, I was relieved in a few hours, and, though very debilitated, I got quite well in a few days, and sought labour, which I obtained immediately; and was mostly employed during my continuance at Portsea.

During my continuance at Portsea, which was two months, I had to take up my cross day by day; for I met with such trials as I never expected to pass through again in this world. Mine was not an outward cross; for I had not much to try me in that respect, having good health, and labour for my hands; but I was attacked first by *infidelity*; and this so prevailed over me that I was led into all sorts of carnal reasoning; and when I read my Bible, every deistical objection was raised in my mind against the truth of the Holy Scriptures, so that I was made completely miserable. If I tried to call to mind my former mercies, and God's gracious deliverances, it was all set at defiance, and laughed at, as it were, by this gigantic monster *infidelity*. Such was the confusion produced in my mind, I could see no sort of self-consistency in those parts of the word of God which I read. All the arguments which deists usually bring against the truth of the Bible, and which I had heard much of before, came into my mind in torrents, especially when I took up my Bible, or attempted to pray; insomuch that I have trembled when I have opened the book of God; and sometimes I have closed the book, and thrown it down in a terrible rage, and in my heart found fault with the Lord, that he had not revealed his mind and will more plainly, and less liable to objections. O the awful hardness, rebellion, and blindness of my heart! I seemed now to be in the worst condition that I was ever in. It was so unaccountably strange to me, that, after so many mercies and deliverances, I should be plunged into this horrible pit, where no water is!

In this horrible place I struggled for several weeks, yet not without rays of light occasionally, but they were not abiding; and sometimes such was the violence of temptation that it was with difficulty I could attend to my lawful calling. I remember one day, as I was walking in the market at Portsmouth, that I was suddenly assaulted with a spirit of blasphemy and rebellion, that I could not tell what to do with myself; and the enemy suggested, You had better throw yourself into the sea and drown yourself, and then you will have done with all this misery. This made me shudder, that such a desperate thought should ever enter my mind; yet, I felt as angry with the

Lord as Jonah. In this state I moped about in the market for some time, reasoning, cavilling, and contending in my spirit with the Lord, why he suffered me to come into this state. At last those words came most powerfully into my mind: "Be not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." This stopped my rebellion in a short time; and I said to myself, "Why, I have been acting like a beast! Hath not the Lord a right to try me as he pleases?"

(To be continued.)

## NOTES OF A SERMON BY THE LATE MR. BIRCH.

"A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell by the way-side, and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."—Luke viii. 5—8.

(Concluded from page 48.)

HERE is a third sort of hearers, which are described thus: "And some fell *among thorns*, and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it." The sword of justice, bathed in heaven, shall come down upon Idumea, the people of God's curse, to judgment. Esau, typical of the reprobate, shall bear briers and thorns, and be nigh unto cursing; and O how many are there visibly under the curse at this day! How many do we see professing the truth, in whom this world has choked all good appearances. But would this be the case if they were the beloved of God? No; assuredly not. Would he suffer the briers and thorns to choke the seed sown in "his husbandry?" Does he not say, "Who would set the briers and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them together." (Isa. xxvii. 4.) "There shall not come thither the fear of briers and thorns." (Isa. vii. 25.) The Lord will not suffer the souls of the redeemed to be thus dealt with. He is here showing how few are saved. This world has got plenty in it to please the flesh; but the Lord will take care of his own, and he makes them cry mightily to God against these briers and thorns. So John tells us: "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself;" that is, by prayer and supplication he brings in help from the Lord, who withers these things and subdues his iniquities. Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evil," and that "they who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare." The believer is aware of this, and therefore prays against it. He finds these things present themselves to him to draw him aside. He sees others fall, and knows that he has no power to keep himself; therefore he gives himself to prayer, that sin may not prevail against him, nor have the dominion. He watches unto prayer. He cries out of violence (Hab. i. 2) done to his soul, what power sin has in him and against him; and he knows where to go for help, for he reads thus: "Where

sin abounded, grace did much more abound." This is his only support. He sees others fall; he knows that he is by nature no better than they; he is made to feel what a prey he is to all evil, if left to himself; he sees the awful state of those who are left and let alone, (Hos. iv. 17,) and would rather endure the sharpest trials than be left to fall as they do; he sees what pleasing baits the world has, and that his corrupt nature loves the world; and O, how does he wrestle with God for a blessing, as Jabez did, the blessing of life, by which he escapes the corruptions which are in the world through lust, as Peter says. These are heirs of the grace of life, and they have the living water within them, and cry mightily to God for a fresh supply of that blessed Spirit who keeps the soul; so that death, the body of sin, does not reign. It is a sore conflict with flesh which we are called to, and a constant one. Fleshly lusts war against the soul; they are its real and only enemies, for nothing can hurt the soul but sin. *That* being subdued, the soul is safe. Afflicted they are, and afflicted they will be all their days, for there is no cessation until life is ended.

You see the fearful end of the thorny ground; nigh unto cursing, and bringing forth nothing but briars and thorns. Paul saw many of these in his day, and having much more grace than I have, he wept at the thought: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, whose end is destruction." Paul could not prevent these worldlings from frequenting the assemblies of the saints any more than I; but he could weep for them, knowing that their end would be awful; and he had a great feeling for the flock of Christ, and grief to see the worthy and honourable name by which the people were called dishonoured.

Now I come to the latter part, having given but a poor and meagre account of three former grounds on which the seed fell.

The wonderful *mercy of God* in his dear Son towards his own dear elect is here set forth. And here I cannot but remark what mistakes men make, because they do not search the word of God with constant and diligent prayer, that they may know the mind of God in his word. It requires all diligence, much searching, and much and serious perusal; and then you will not stumble at several parts of Scripture which seem to clash with others. I speak from experience. Upon reading the latter part of the text, it is our wisdom to ask, "How came this ground to be good?" Was it from any native or natural goodness in the ground? That cannot be, for all are alike; there is no difference, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," or lacked, that is, failed of that glory which was in the first Adam before the fall. Besides, Paul asks, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) And John says, "A man can receive nothing except it be given him from above." (John iii. 27.) Therefore ascribe nothing to yourself but sin and misery. In yourself there is by nature nothing but rejection of all that is of God. If God love you, he will show you what a horrid aversion there is in you to all that is good. The first thing that God does

for a soul is to show it where it is, and his teachings leave a long and lasting impression on the soul. "Thou hast destroyed thyself." "Thou hast neither will nor power,—no liking to me." God will go through every part of the work thoroughly with you. He will go over it with you over and over, again and again. Remember, his elect are called his husbandry. (1 Cor. iii. 9.) He will plough up and discover to you the badness of the soil, and make you loathe the sight of yourself. If once will not do, twice may; and if twice will not do it, you shall have it again and again. Heavy and lasting affliction is and will be the lot of the elect family. They are called, and they are truly called, "the afflicted people:" "Thou wilt save the afflicted people." (Ps. xviii. 27.) They are afflicted, and made to know that in their flesh dwelleth no good thing. I love to find a most diligent search in my soul: "My spirit made diligent search." These keen sensations and feelings in your soul will promote an appetite for the bread of God, and will make you search diligently. Where there is life there will be deep exercise of soul; and these will infallibly hide pride and lead to deep views of truth. Such will willingly take the lowest room, and say, "A more degraded, sensual, proud creature than I never existed." God's design is to glorify his grace in you, and to set up on high in your heart his dear Son; and this he will do, and has determined to do.

"And other fell upon *good ground*, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundred-fold." Wherever the word enters, we read that it giveth light: "The entrance of thy words giveth light." It giveth understanding unto the simple, or little ones. It is a candle, and searches the innermost parts of the belly. It is a light to search the soul: "And it shall come to pass in that day that I will search Jerusalem as with candles;" and this is a reproof, chastening, punishing light, for it severely punishes our corrupt nature; because this heavenly light discovers to us what we are. It enrages Satan, who has filled our souls with all evil. This discovery is one of the fruits of the Spirit. You will say, "this is a bitter;" and yet this discovery proceeds from love; and if the Holy Spirit did not love you, he would not deal thus with you: "The things that my soul refused to touch are as my sorrowful meat." (Job vi. 7.) "And is this," say you, "a fruit of love?" Yes. Hear what the Lord says by Job: "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him, and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him, and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" Now, if God has set his heart upon you, (and he has if you are one of his elect,) he will discover the baseness of your heart, and make you sick at the sight: "I will make thee sick in smiting thee." (Mic. vi. 13.) "And is this a mercy?" say you. Yes; as God Almighty liveth, it is an excellent mercy, a mercy for which you one day will thank and bless him. "Why?" you say. Why? Because the Lord of the house says, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." He set himself forth in the parable as the Samaritan who bound up the wounds of the man who fell among thieves; and he is acting the part of the kindest friend in showing you your sickness,



which you were not sensible of until he showed it to you. Then you were sick indeed. But this sickness is not unto death. Let him go on; prescribe not to him. He will show himself in his promises, and draw you and allure you to come to him: "I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness;" and what follows? "and speak comfortably to her;" and this will have a healing effect upon your soul; and as the word took deep root downwards, now it will bear fruit upwards. (Isa. xxxvii. 31.) They shall spring up in hope as willows by the water-courses. (Isa. xlii. 4.) The word nourishing and encouraging hope will make you cleave to it, and say, "Remember thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope." As the word gains ground, so will you prosper. Your desires will enlarge, and you will say, as Moses did, "Show me thy glory." "It is the glory of God to conceal a thing; but the honour of kings is to search out a matter." They are to punish the evil doers, and reward them who do well. But if the Lord, the God of heaven and earth, were to deal thus with us, woe unto us, for we must all be lost; and good were it for us if we had never been born. If God were to deal with us after our sins and reward us according to our iniquities, we might well cry to the rocks to cover us from the wrath of God. But the glory of God consists in the free forgiveness of all our sins; and when this is made known to the soul, it will spring up in love, peace, and joy. This peace, this joy may be damped; many sore temptations may cause great bitterness; but he that first formed you will keep you alive. The briars and thorns in your soul will distress you, and you will have to pray against them, and they may for a time be as violent as ever, and seem to defy you; but you must and will be compelled to call in the aid of the great and good Husbandman; and he will come to your help, and fulfil this blessed word by Micah: "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again; he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." So will he deal with you, though he may bear long with you, and you will think and conclude that he does not hear when you cry unto him of violence. You shall still bring forth fruit, much self-loathing, much admiration of free grace, some sweet views of the Lord Jesus; and you will say, an intimate knowledge of him is the quintessence of all religion.

So I speak, and so you will say. May you go on from strength to strength, knowing more of sinful self and more of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord, who will grow more and more lovely in your eyes. To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

[We much like the simple, spiritual, experimental vein of gospel truth in the above sermon. There is no show or glitter about it, no "enticing words of man's wisdom;" but, without any very great depths or heights, sound, solid, weighty, living experience.—Ed.]

## CAN A DEAD MINISTER COMMUNICATE SPIRITUAL LIFE ?

Dear Sir,—Yours came to hand, and I have considered the matter. God's ways are wonderful, and his judgments past finding out. It is God that hath founded Zion, and it is the Highest himself that must establish her. Man cannot do it. It is God's work to fix the heart, to persuade Japhet, and to build up the church and every member of it: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The Branch shall build the temple, and he shall have the glory.

It has long been an established point with me, that a carnal man cannot be a minister of the Spirit; that he cannot season a soul with grace who hath no salt in himself, or communicate that to others which he himself never had. Those who built up a wall, and those that daubed it, those who healed the wound slightly, and cried, "Peace, peace," where God had not spoken peace, and those who run unsent of God, do not seem to have profited the people at all. And as it was in the days of old, so it appears to be now. It is like people, like priest. They must stand in God's counsel, and cause the people to hear the word from his mouth, who turn people from the errors of their ways, and from the evil of their doings; but the reprobate is not of God's counsel, and an uncommissioned ambassador is not as his mouth. This point not only appears plain from the Scriptures, but from the faithfulness and justice of God, who, as he will not justify the wicked, neither will he countenance an impostor, seeing he himself hath commended his churches in the first ages of the gospel for trying the false apostles and proving them liars; and as he forbids us to follow the voice of a stranger, it is not likely that the Shepherd should speak to us by a stranger, or set the broad seal of heaven to confirm the message and mission of a hypocrite in Zion. God is not the author of confusion. Under the former dispensation he strictly forbids cattle to gender with divers kinds, the sowing of the vineyard with divers seeds, and the wearing of a garment of linen and woollen together; and likewise all affinity between the worshippers of God and idolaters; from all which we may warrantably conclude that, under the more perfect dispensation, he will never use a wolf to beget a lamb of his fold, or a presumptuous child of the devil to beget a saint of God, while he himself is in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. The Lord's offspring are begotten in the bonds of the gospel. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; but "how shall they hear without a preacher, and how shall they preach except they be sent?"

"I believed, therefore have I spoken." We believe, and therefore speak. If believing women are to keep silence in the church, much more male infidels; for, as it is declared that without faith it is impossible to please God, so it is impossible that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in the hand of an unbeliever; for, as holy things are not to be given to dogs, so no holy things are to be expected from them.

Nevertheless, this may be a truth, as I once found in myself, after I had been for some time convinced by the Spirit of the evil of sin, and of the condemned state that I was in by nature. A carnal man that worked with me, who had been a great reader, would often answer my questions from the Scriptures, (which I at that time knew nothing of,) and by which means I got now and then a little light into the word, through his only mentioning the text; and in this sense a man with one talent may put the talent out to the exchanger. The exchangers I take to be persons of grace; and the man with one talent a graceless man, with a gift of speculative knowledge. The former having grace and little knowledge, the other knowledge and no grace. The latter may furnish the former with head knowledge, and with expressions for prayer and conversation; and the feeling of the saint may tally with the word from the mouth of the hypocrite, insomuch as that the new-born soul may leap at the sound of the other's salutation; but still the power comes from the Spirit within the believer, not from the speaker, for he having nothing but the letter, cannot be a minister of the Spirit, but only of the letter.

I have known several who have affirmed to me that they have received the grace of God under the ministry of some such men, which has staggered me more than once in this my opinion; but by watching them they established me in my old sentiment, for they appeared to be a spurious race. Mr. L., against whom I wrote, was one of these illegitimate ones, who soon proclaimed to all what he was; and so did all the rest.

The person you mention is not the person I alluded to in my discourse. It is one who hath made a much greater noise than ever he did, and nothing, I believe, but a noise.

In these and in all other matters let thy request be made known unto God, and thy thought shall be established. The throne is accessible, and the way is open. Go with boldness there. You have Christ to plead, and faithful is he that hath promised.

That you may seek and find is the desire of,

Yours in the Lord,

Church Street, Paddington,  
April 8th, 1796.

WM. HUNTINGTON.

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### A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. COWPER, OF THE DICKER, SUSSEX.

My dear Friend,—I have often had it upon my mind, when from home, to drop a few lines to you, and now avail myself of this opportunity to do so, and hope this will find you and yours in health; likewise the little flock usually attending at Zoar; who have, with yourselves, the prayers and best feelings of my heart for your temporal and eternal welfare; for you are in my heart to die and live with. Since the commencement of our acquaintance, I have had the pleasing satisfaction to witness in you a manifest desire to live the gospel you profess, and to endeavour to adorn it in all things, and to show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness

into his marvellous light; which hath indeed gladdened me, for I have no greater joy amongst men than to see the professed followers of Jesus walking in the truth, for it is the will of God, even their sanctification, that every one should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and in honour. The doctrines of grace are doctrines according to godliness; and where they do not produce their legitimate effects, such professors have not received them in the love of them. The truth would make them free from the vassalage of Satan, who is the king of all the children of pride and profligacy, and reigns over and rules in the children of disobedience, who are made manifest by their fruits. But O what an unspeakable mercy to be broken off from the wild and grafted into the good olive tree, and to partake of the nature and fatness thereof, the fruits of which are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, faith; and these are neither palatable to the world, the flesh, nor the devil. Jesus will gather them as fruits that abound to the account of his own people. But herein are two labours, in which his quickened, called family are peculiarly engaged. The first is in prayer at the throne, to obtain grace to help them to bring forth the fruits of righteousness, which are said to be by Christ Jesus, and unto the praise and glory of God. (Phil. i. 11.) The second labour is, when we have done all, truly to see, and feel, and confess before him that we are unprofitable servants; but this last, in a truly convinced sinner, is small compared with the former. In this labour I think the apostle Paul was deeply employed, (Acts xxiv. 16,) and I would to God that all who name the name of Christ were as closely employed, and that Christ was not wounded in the house of his friends. O that the little family we are a part of may be kept in peace, and peace and truth may continue in our days. May he whose gracious work it is to guide into all truth, root you, ground you, and settle you in love; and daily bring you deeper into the warfare, and make you skilful at arms and valiant in fight, even the good fight of faith, ever remembering victory is certain. Nor is our battle or our race for a corruptible crown, but a crown of glory, which fadeth not away. The same apostle tells us he fought in this battle, not at uncertainty, nor as one that beats the air. From this war there is no discharge till death, nor are we crowned except we strive lawfully.

Since my absence, I have been brought down much in my body, but, through mercy, am comfortably restored; but am ordered by my medical attendant to lie down between the services, or preach only once a day; therefore, under these circumstances, I must decline Eastbourne on Sunday evenings, and shall feel obliged to you if you will inform Mr. S. of it. Through mercy, I feel gaining strength tolerably fast, and was much helped last night, and felt as if I could have continued my speech till midnight. May an after day manifest good effects, that it hath not been in vain. O that my labours may more redound to the glory of God and the good of Zion!

Faithfully yours,

Southampton Street, Oct. 24th, 1848.

WM. COWPER.

## A LETTER BY THE LATE JOHN KEYT.

My Dear Friend,—Although you now seldom see my face, yet am I a frequent visitor in a mental way. Age, infirmities, and weather have for some months past chiefly confined me to my room, when many and, at times, serious concerns occupy my thoughts and affections; and as my sojourn in this wilderness cannot be long, it behoves me to see that I be not entangled with the deceits, snares, and cares of this poor, transitory, mortal life, which has hitherto proved a hindrance to my progress heavenward; and more diligently to attend to the apostle's kind exhortation: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth," &c.

We, my dear friend, are surrounded with many and potent adversaries, and plagued within with a host of inbred foes. These external and internal enemies are both combined together to destroy, not only our present peace, but also our everlasting welfare and happiness; and we of ourselves have no might nor power against this great company, whose fierce and violent rage aims at nothing less than our final destruction. In our firstborn state these foes had the dominion over us. We were their willing slaves; but since it hath pleased the Almighty to deliver us from their tyranny and ruling power, they now are become the continual plagues of our poor souls. But, glory be to God Most High, he hath now, by price and by power, ransomed us, the poor helpless captives, out of the hand and from under the dominion of them that were stronger than we. We, who were once dead in trespasses and sins, are now raised up out of the insensible sleep of spiritual death. But how was this mighty change wrought? O, it was done by the sovereign, electing, everlasting love of God, the Father of all mercies; by the dying love of God the Son; and by the quickening, teaching, guiding love of God the Holy Spirit. This emanation of the love of a Triune God is sweetly unfolded in the first 14 verses of Ephesians i.; and when applied to the soul of a chosen one by the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit, what an overwhelming glory attends it!

Now one would think that the subjects of such free, discriminating, distinguishing grace must always live in the happy enjoyment of it; but, alas! we know, by painful experience, it is not so. The in-being of sin still remains; the Canaanite still abides to plague and perplex us; and though we, who were once Satan's lawful captives, are delivered from his infernal power, yet his inveterate enmity against Christ and the objects of his redeeming grace is such, that this bitter "adversary as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." Against this enemy and his spawn (inbred corruptions) we are exhorted to watch; to be sober and vigilant; to resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in our brethren that are in the world. Now this being the case, we are stimulated, with the spouse of old, to inquire after the footsteps of the flock, in order to be at a point whether we ourselves are in the same

footsteps with them. This method of procedure has often been a great encouragement to me, feeling how apt and prone I am to backslide, and wander from my only true resting-place; seeing it is no small mercy to know with certainty that I am walking in the right way that leads to heaven and glory, especially now that the end of all things here below is before my eyes; and I can tell my dear friend that I am sometimes favoured with tokens for good in this respect. One instance of this lately transpired, which I will mention. There is a certain minister of the gospel residing in the country whom I have heard in London frequently; and it is now about a year ago, having one evening heard with much profit, I went in and spoke to him, requesting a few lines from him; when he replied, "If that is your desire, the best way to obtain it is to write to me first." This was like a stumbling-block in the way; however, I ventured to write to him on the 24th of last month, and on the 26th I received an answer, a copy of which I have inclosed for your perusal. Its contents have proved a blessed instruction to me, and I hope it will prove the same to you also. If it does, let me know by a line, as your soul's prosperity is near my heart.

Please to present my kind love unto Mrs. S., my fellow-traveller in the thorny path of infirmities and afflictions. She may long survive me in this wilderness state, as I have now entered my 77th year. O, may it be our happy lot to meet at last in the kingdom of God above, "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are for ever at rest." This is the desire and prayer of

Yours affectionately,

No. 12, Foley Street, March 9, 1836.

JOHN KEYT.

### HOW IS THE GOLD BECOME DIM! HOW IS THE MOST FINE GOLD CHANGED!

I received your letter, and have thought it over. The subject has deeply impressed me for some time. It is a sad, a deeply-to-be-deplored state of things. By the tone of your last, I feel a little more freedom in expressing myself on this gloomy subject, hoping you are one of Zion's mourners, whose hearts are set on the welfare of that land, and mourn to see and hear of her desolations.

I believe we see it fast hastening to an important crisis. It is the general feeling amongst the Lord's manifested children that there is little, very little exercised life, and much death, carnal ease, and conformity to the world and the vanity of the world shown here. If some of the puritan fathers could see the amalgamation of church and world, as in the present day, it would sadden their spirits to think on poor Zion; and if they could attend some of the prayer-meetings, and hear her confessions, they would soon judge how she lives. Their hopes hang much upon how they are received by others. An expression of doubt or suspicion from some seems almost to kill their hope. I remember visiting a person in dying circumstances, that had long made a profession. After some conversation, I perceived a great desire in him to know what I thought

of his religion; so I said, "If I were to say I thought your hope was one that would forsake you in death, what would you think?" "O," he said, "it would kill me!" "But if," I said, "I thought your hope was that anchor which entered into Jesus, and would carry you safe through the swellings of Jordan, this would relieve you from that care and fear you now feel?" "Yes," he said, "it would, for I do not believe you would deceive me." I said, "No, I certainly would not, in such a solemn state as you are now in; but of what little worth is my judgment to you in matters of such vast importance? I am but a poor, fallen sinner, and make sad mistakes in my judgment of my own feelings; so how is it possible I can form a right judgment by words from others? The existence of life and hope, and its exercises, its declinings and revivings, its pullings down and rootings up and rebuilding is such a mystery to me, who have to witness the different sensations; how then is it possible I can tell by your words the existence of a living hope from one like a spider's web? A believer's hope hangs on the favour of God, purely so. There is nothing else can meet it. Take this away, the favour of Jehovah, and we are in the same condition as devils. A work of grace wrought in the heart is the effect of God's favour, which is to be taught feelingly our entire ruined condition as fallen sinners, without any power to better our condition, and God resisting our endeavours to make ourselves commendable to him, by frowning upon us and cursing us as transgressors. This does not look much like a work of grace in the esteem of such a poor, miserable sinner; for as one said:

" ' The bride at Sinai little understood  
How these law humblings were designed for good,  
To enhance the value of her Husband's blood.'

But it is laying a foundation in the sinner's heart to endear Jesus as the sinner's Friend, to teach him what to love him for."

Now I believe this person to be a sample of many in the church in the present day, who know but little of the work of faith, the labour of love, and the patience of hope; but, alas! We have multitudes around us, high in profession, whose lives are foul by drunkenness, lewdness, gossiping, busybodies, brawlers, idlers, and sight-seers; and some die awful deaths, through their wicked profession, and become a spectacle to the world.

O Zion, when I think on thee, my heart is pained. "O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the desolations of Zion!" See whom she takes in as her teachers, men bold in presumption, hardened by the encouragement they meet with from the churches, polluted in their lives, callous in heart, seeking only to excite the passions. This is all the blessing they wish to impart to the people, and all they know of; and these get often a crowd to hear them, while a deeply exercised, God-fearing servant of Christ has often to preach to mere empty seats. Many dislike their narrow-minded, as they call them, and bigoted sermons, for they search the inward parts, discover the coun-

terfeit, tear off the veil, reprove the rotten hope, and show the path of life, with its bitters.

But, bless the Lord, he has not entirely forsaken his vineyard, but, for his honour's sake, still keeps his light here and there burning, for the honour of God and the welfare of Zion, and distils his blessings through them; and how beautiful are their feet that publish salvation in the mystery of the gospel of peace! O, it is a wonderful dispensation, when made known to a poor, ruined sinner, this hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world to our glory; and it is not preached in vain, for there are sweet dew-drops, which distil upon the living soul, sweeter than honey and more glorifying to the Lord than all that excitement, affectation, and cant which please the multitude who catch the spirit of delusion from the ministers of darkness and death.

These are sad things, and you may think me very censorious; but I have long witnessed them, to my sorrow. They spring from false apostles, transforming themselves into the ministers of Christ; and no marvel, for these days were foretold by the apostles of our Lord Jesus. What trouble had the apostle Paul with the Galatians, through the false teachers which had bewitched them; and the present desolate state of Zion may be traced to the same source. Its baneful effects are more observable in churches without a pastor, who are supplied by occasional preachers; and there are but few that do not suffer through this poisonous source. But let me ever be found among the few who cleave to that ministry of the Spirit that savours of a tender spirit, softened by the fear of the Lord, moving my soul to obedience, diligently studying the word of God as my food to support and comfort me under these daily exercises, which create necessities that must be supplied through much importunity and often long delays. This, I know well, is no easy life; there is in it a labour and a travail which few professors know; but "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant," and make them know the bitterness of his frowns and the sweetness of a daily intercourse with him. To such he shows his superlative beauty in his suitability and sufficiency to lean upon his word of promise, and to feel confidence in him; to be satisfied with his dispensations, however trying, and to expect all to work for good; to desire his glory rather than our ease.

May this life of faith be our daily life till he has perfected in us his work, and made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

#### A WEARY PILGRIM.

[We fully agree with the above remarks, and they much express both our judgment and our feelings.—ED.]

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As the inward principle of evangelical repentance is regenerating grace, no man can spiritually repent until he is born of God; and every man who is born of God repents spiritually. When the Lord turns and looks upon us in effectual calling, we are then turned, and look with mournings unto him whom our sins have pierced.—*Toplady.*



## BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE.

My dear Sister,—“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” God in Christ is our refuge from the avenger of blood, from the wrath to come, and from all worldly enemies and storms and tempests whatsoever that may arise to beat against and oppress our poor souls in this our dreary pilgrimage through the shadow of death. He is a city of refuge unto all who truly flee unto him, as the publican did. Such, blessed be his name, have I found him to be unto me. For I can and do truly say with the poet:

“Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee.”

He is also our strength, “A strength to the poor, a strength to the needy in his distress.” Yes, a secret or a manifest strength, a less or a greater strength, as the time or need requires; but always an all-sufficient strength. I have found him a believing strength, a hoping strength, a humbling strength, a loving strength, a praying strength, a meditating strength, a preaching strength, an enduring strength, a warring strength, a victorious strength, a triumphing strength, a shouting and a thanksgiving strength. Hitherto I have found his grace to be sufficient for me, and his strength made perfect in my weakness. This almighty, omnipotent strength of the church girdeth our soul with a girdle, that Satan, world, nor sin, can ever unloose. Therefore our life is hid and bound up in the bundle of our life with the Lord our God. Yea, he is a very present help in trouble. “Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” But troubles do not spring out of the ground, or come by chance; neither do they come alone, for “in all their afflictions he was afflicted;” and “when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee;” and “though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me.” When Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were in the burning, fiery furnace, there was a fourth there too, and he was the Son of God. If Daniel go into the lion’s den, the angel goes in too; and he encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Elisha’s servant said, “Alas, my master! How shall we do!” He answered, “Fear not, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them.” He hath said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,” so that we may boldly say, “The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man can do unto unto me.” He is so very present as a help in trouble, that, behold, he dwelleth in us; according as he hath said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them.” And, “Ye are the temple of the living God.” Job said, “Is not my help in me?” The Lord within him helped Jehoshaphat to cry unto him, and outwardly moved the enemy to depart from him.

Now, having this very present help in trouble, troubles, therefore, in his hand, do us lasting good. The very troubles themselves do work against our enemies to our profit, and the glory of God. Against our enemies, as they make us watch and pray; and for our

profit, as they make us wiser; and for the glory of God, as his mercy, truth, and faithfulness appear and shine thereby.

As these things have sprung up in my mind, I put them down, and send them to you. May the Lord help you to ponder this lovely part of our inheritance, and derive comfort therefrom, as he hath granted me in the hour of need.

With our united love to you, Believe me to remain,

Yours affectionately, for the truth's sake,

JAMES SHORTER.

## BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL.

But this is not enough. Dear Sir, I want you to help me, and bless and thank the Lord on my behalf. I would that all the dear children of God could rejoice that one more brand is plucked out of the burning. You will say, "This is strong language, dame, for your poor, doubting, fearful soul." Yes, dear Sir, long have I been held here, and ever resisted anything like comfort; but the reason was I never could lay hold of it, for we can only receive what is given us by the Lord himself. In this respect I have sometimes felt, (to my shame be it spoken,) when any kind friend has tried to offer me comfort by repeating sweet texts of Scripture and so on to me, I have thought they would easily encourage a hypocrite, and have felt a sort of enmity rise, and so have cut their heads off and my own too. But, O! Mr. Parsons, on Sunday night, (an evening to be remembered by poor me as long as I draw my breath,) was an instrument in the hands of the Lord of cutting all the cords asunder. I wept and feared as I entered into the cloud. The glory of the Lord, I sensibly felt, overshadowed me; and when you mentioned the word "Hosea," my heart beat and my frame shook so violently; for why? I can give no reason but the power of the Lord. He shook my frame, and brought down my proud and haughty spirit; and, bless his holy name, he filled me with that joy and peace in believing which is truly sweeter than honey or the honeycomb. I sat under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. Yes, and it still is so. O pray the Lord for me, that I stand not upon a pinnacle, to be dashed down by Satan at his will. But no! I cannot think I shall, for I am filled with that love which casteth out fear. I may be left to doubt again, but I never can despair as I have done before. I know what Toplady felt when he sweetly sings:

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

I really wished more than once through the sermon that you would sit down. I said within myself, "It is enough! I can have no more. I shall be forced to go out." As you went on, showing me how truly the Lord had been alluring me, and had indeed brought me into the wilderness, he was then, even then, speaking comfortably to me, even to my heart. I had a sweet view of Elijah on the mount. It was not in the great and strong wind which the

Lord sends at times to rend, as it were, the caul of the heart, nor yet in the earthquake of fear and trembling, nor in the fires of temptation, where I have been terribly scorched. No, dear Sir, but in the still voice, saying, "I will allure; yea, I have done it. I have brought thee into the wilderness; I have hedged up thy way with thorns in all thy rebellions against me. I would not leave thee in error, though thou didst cleave closely unto it; but now I am speaking comfortably to thy heart. This is the day of my power, and thou shalt be willing."

Never was I more unfit, if fitness be required, than on that evening; for I went in a most careless, indifferent frame of mind, amounting to rebellion. I had made up my mind there would be nothing for me, and so felt a hardened, rebellious spirit under it. O wretched being that I am! Who would have thought that Jesus would have turned and looked upon me? This is my Beloved, and this my Friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem. He hath put me in the cleft of the rock, in his dear, wounded side, and there his banner over me is love. He stayeth me with flagons, he comforteth me with apples.

But I must conclude, and beg pardon for trying your eyes so long. It is my wish that my name may stand on your list as a beggar at mercy's door; not in haste. Should it be inconvenient or give you any trouble, let it remain, if it be for six months; or should any sheep or lamb of Christ's fold object to me, I would rather withdraw than be a source of uncomfortable feeling to any one. But if they should receive me, then the Lord speaks loudly indeed to my poor soul, saying, "It is I; fear not;" for as I am a stranger to most of them, it cannot possibly be from anything whatever in me; but He who made me willing in the day of his power to come in, will make the hearts of the dear people willing to receive me.

Good bye, dear Sir. The Lord be with thee continually, and give the blessings from the upper and the nether springs.

I am, truly yours, in the faith of Christ,

Arundel, March 29, 1836.

E. B.

### ABSENT, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN.

My dear ———,—I once more will endeavour to write to you; but I feel so much darkness of mind, I scarcely know what to say. I hope, though you have had such a dark scene for some years, you have had times and seasons when you found your Saviour a present help in time of need; and as you draw nearer your journey's end you will, I hope, find him to be your support and strength, and be blessed with his smiles. Notwithstanding the temptations of Satan you may be tormented with, the Lord has said, "When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." No doubt you have many times proved this to be true, and that you have hitherto been kept by the power of God. I can say for myself, if it were not for the grace of God, I should be one of the most miserable beings upon earth; and though I feel at

times to doubt if I have one spark of grace, or ever had in my heart, yet I would not give up the hope I have for all the world. I have of late months questioned the reality of my conversion even so much (though unknown to any of the family) as to feel almost driven to despair; but I recollect very well one day, when searching for evidences, it came into my mind what the late Mr. M'Kenzie once wrote in the "Standard" with respect to trusting in evidences instead of trusting in Christ. This drew me to my knees, to plead the blood of Christ. My doubts and fears all fled, and I had, for a few moments, sweet intercourse with the Saviour, and I found I could leave all I had in his hands; but I soon to my own sad place returned; and even now I feel ready to exclaim, "What shall I do if I am deceived?" Yet I can say I feel I love the Lord and his people; but I find very few here who know anything about experimental religion. It is all outside work. There have been a great many baptized here this year, of all denominations. My daughter Mary is one of them; and though the minister knew I would not give my consent, yet he drew her into the church. Poor girl! What good will it do her without a real change? They rake and scrape all together they can get. It is very little any need say at what they call the experience meetings.

I hope my sister B. is enabled to bear her troubles patiently, knowing all things are for the best; but I often think all things are for the worst with me; and yet, in my right mind, I know better; but I am so discontented unless I can have my own way, and the Lord is determined he will have his way. I sometimes feel ashamed I am so unthankful, because the Lord has taken some of my earthly comforts from me, though he has wonderfully provided for me all my lifetime; but I have long been taught that a thankful heart is a gift of God; and I have sometimes thanked the Lord for a thankful heart. I am a strange being. Sometimes I feel as though I do not care for anything in the world, and then again I am full of anxiety and care; but the time will soon come when I shall have done with this world, and then, if I am one of the Lord's people, all will be well.

With respect to temporal things, I can only say we are getting along a little better than we were, as my husband and eldest son have some little work to do, and I hope the time will come when they will do better. We are all as well as usual. My brother William has been to see us. He looks very thin. This country is not so healthy as England, and I am sorry I ever came; but if the truth was preached here I should not care so much; but as it is, I do feel very much dissatisfied at times.

My dear ———, I will now bid you farewell for the present, and may the God of all comfort be with you and bless you in every trying hour.

Fall River, America, Oct. 1st, 1850.

PHEBE HAMER.

[The writer of the above letter was the youngest daughter of the late Mr. Gadsby. The account of her death was given in our Oct. No., 1858.]

## INQUIRY.

Dear Sir,—Will you have the kindness to give your opinion on the following questions: Is it strictly in accordance with the rules given by Christ and his apostles to suspend any member of a Christian church for immoral conduct? If so, should it be for a given time, say 10 or 12 months, just as the church might think proper to decide? or should suspension be until the disorderly member makes confession of his fault and repents of such conduct? Would the church do right in then permitting him to fill up his place in the church as before? Or would it be more proper, or consistent with church discipline, not to hear any confession, nor yet to receive such member until the expiration of the time for which such member has been suspended?

By giving through the "Gospel Standard" your opinion, you will greatly oblige.  
A CONSTANT READER.

## ANSWER.

As four or five distinct questions are here asked, though they have all a bearing on each other, we shall endeavour, according to the ability which may be given us, to answer them separately.

1. "Is it strictly in accordance with the rules given by Christ and his apostles, to suspend any member of a Christian church for immoral conduct?"

A Christian church has undoubtedly a right to separate or suspend any member for immoral conduct. The church at Corinth, for instance, was expressly commanded by Paul, "to put away from among them"—that is, separate from their body, "that wicked person," who had taken his father's wife. (1 Cor. v. 13.) And that the whole church took part in it, is plain from the words, "Sufficient for such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." (2 Cor. ii. 6.) "The punishment was inflicted of many," that is, it was not inflicted upon the offender by the authority of a few in the church, whether deacons, or leading men, but by the "many," in their corporate capacity as a church. But upon the man's sorrow and repentance, which had come to Paul's ears, they were bidden to forgive and comfort him. (2 Cor. ii. 7.) From this we clearly gather the power of a church to restore a member as well as separate him. Thus, also, the apostle speaks: "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. (Gal. vi. 1.) These, then, are general principles, from which may be drawn particular rules for our guidance; for here, as elsewhere, the Scripture gives us only general principles, leaving us at liberty to deduce rules from them. But these two rules are subject to these two restrictions:

1. They must be fully in harmony with these general principles; and 2, they must be thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the gospel.

Now applying these general principles to the other questions before us, let us seek to answer them scripturally.

2. Separation, the severer punishment, implies suspension, the minor, on this simple ground, that the same legislature which has

authority to punish a heinous crime, say murder, with death, has authority to punish a less crime, say robbery, with imprisonment. We therefore fairly assume that a church has power to suspend a member for inconsistent conduct, as well as "put him away," that is, separate him, though the Scripture does not expressly name suspension as a church punishment, or give us an instance of it.

But now the question arises. Should this suspension be definite or indefinite—that is, for a fixed time, or until the disorderly member be brought to repentance and confession? We certainly think it should be for a fixed, definite period; for suspension is a "punishment" as well as a "censure," (2 Cor. ii. 6, text and margin;) and on the same principle that the judge sentences the convicted criminal to a fixed period of imprisonment, so should the church define the time of the suspension. This view, then, of the case, if correct, will furnish the answer to the next question.

3. "Would the church do right in permitting the member to fill up the place as before, if he repent and make confession before the time fixed is expired?" To this we answer, that no rules can be laid down to meet extreme cases. The suspended member might be "swallowed up with over much sorrow," as was the case with the member at Corinth; (2 Cor. ii. 7;) and the church, feeling for his distress and trouble, might wish to restore him, as a brotherly act, before the time was fully elapsed. None could blame this act of brotherly sympathy and love, for it would be carrying out the spirit of the gospel even at the expense of strict church discipline. But such cases would be rare, and can only be met as they occur. It would be better, therefore, in our judgment, in all but this extreme instance, to let the original sentence remain until the time be fully expired, and that for the following reasons.

Church censures are painful things, and they are meant to be painful things; they are punishments, and are intended as punishments. They should therefore be well weighed before administered; but when once determined on, they should remain unaltered. It is good for the suspended member that he should feel the guilt of his sin, and the weight of his punishment. Let him see and feel what an evil and bitter thing it is to sin against the Lord, and that the church is determined to mark its sense of inconsistent conduct, and not dally or trifle with the honour and glory of God. It is besides good for the church itself, as a warning to all the other members, to let them see there is a weight in church censures, and that they are not lightly to be repealed. It is good for the congregation which will thus see that the church does not wink at sin, which it might readily suppose was the case if almost as soon as a punishment was inflicted, it was removed. No; let all see that the church does not think lightly of sin, but observes a strict impartiality in censuring and punishing it.

It is so generally understood that the member should, before his restoration, acknowledge his sin before the church, that we need not enter upon that point. The Lord keep us from ever incurring church censures, or bringing any reproach on his holy and blessed name.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

IN our last Number we attempted to show the *Necessity* of a divine revelation from the peculiar relationship in which man, as a rational, intelligent creature, stands to his Almighty Creator.

This argument from necessity may seem to be either so self-evident, or so elementary, as to be almost beneath the notice of the feeblest child of grace, and therefore quite unsuitable to our pages, which profess to furnish not only milk for the babe, but meat for the man. But to this objection we may reply, that when the poor child of grace, be he feeble or strong, comes to be knocked about as much as we have been by infidel suggestions from within and infidel arguments from without, he will be glad to lay hold of any clear proof of a divine revelation, however self-evident or however elementary. It is indeed, we freely admit, mere foundation work which we are at present laying; but foundation work is as needful as building up work, and in some respects more so; for it is not the building which holds up the foundation, but the foundation which holds up the building.

But why should we despise elementary principles as beneath our notice? We do not despise the alphabet because only little children learn it, nor do we condemn the numeration table because taught in the infant school; for we know that, though mere elements, we can neither read nor count without them. So religion has its elements—"the first principles of the oracles of God," (Heb. v. 12,) to which we may refer as the foundation of our faith. If then we are told that we have learnt to read our Bible wrong because Dr. Stanley has discovered some mistakes in the letters, or have counted its treasures amiss because Dr. Colenso has published a new Arithmetic, let us look and see whether we have mistaken A for B, and whether we must set down the five books of Moses as five ciphers without prefixing one figure to turn them into thousands of gold and silver. But why despise foundation work because you happily have got beyond it? The mason will not venture up the scaffolding if he find the poles rotten at the foot; nor will the engine-driver cross the railway bridge if he see, from its sinking, that the abutments are giving way. Why, then, should not we examine the foundations of our most holy faith, and not venture our souls on the great bridge from time into eternity without giving one glance at the strength or weakness of the abutments?

The Bible is put into our hands as a revelation from God. As such we have received it from our fathers. As such, and as such only, does it claim our attention and our obedience. If it is not the word of God—we speak with reverence, it is an imposture. Now, if we can but firmly establish the *necessity* of a revelation from God, we have laid a strong foundation for a belief that the Bible is that

revelation; for no other is worth a moment's examination. This argument from necessity, then, is very strong—stronger, perhaps, than it at first appears, and as extensive in application as firm in strength. To feel the force of this argument, cast your eyes for a few moments over creation, and see what a provision has been made everywhere by its All-wise and All-powerful Creator for necessity. From man, at the head of creation, down to the lowest organised structure, there is not a necessity for which provision has not been made, and that in exact proportion to its wants. You yourself came into this world a poor, naked, helpless infant, full of necessities, and must have perished from the womb unless provision had been made for them. Who filled for you your mother's breast with milk and your mother's heart with love? But you have a soul as well as a body—no less naked, no less necessitous. Shall, then, the body have its necessities, and these be provided for, and shall the soul have its necessities too, and for these there be no provision made? Is there no milk for the soul as well as for the body? no "sincere milk of the word that it may grow thereby?" Look at the new-born soul. How it craves the word of life! As then you need go no farther than yourself in your first birth to find the meeting together of necessity and provision, so you need go no farther than your second birth to the meeting of the same provision for the same necessity.

But let us look at this argument from necessity from some other points of view, for it is too extensive as well as too cogent to be hastily dismissed, and assumes many important aspects.

7. Assuming, as we have already done, then, that man is the creature of God's hand—and how else can we account for his existence? and assuming that he has been endowed with a rational, intelligent soul, capable of knowing, worshipping, and obeying his divine Maker—and of this our own experience is the most clear and indubitable proof—is it *consistent with the goodness of God* to leave man to grope his way to a knowledge of his glorious Creator, without a word of direction, without a ray of light! That God should be good—eternally and infinitely good, is as much a necessary perfection of the divine nature as that he should be all wise, or all powerful, or all holy. Love, benevolence, good-will, call it by what name you may, to the creatures of his hand are everywhere so conspicuous in God even as a Creator, and form so important an element in all our conceptions of the Almighty, that they have in some minds even overshadowed the severer attributes of his righteous character. We ask then how it would be consistent with this universally acknowledged goodness of God to make a provision for every necessity of man's body, and make no provision for the necessity of man's soul? If I am a father and love my child, as my child, shall I leave him, like the poor outcast babe in Ezekiel, (xvi.,) without one word of kindly notice or loving instruction? Shall I have been the means of his having birth and being, and then cast him off into the wide world to shift for himself, without speaking one word to him during the whole course of his natural life? To deny, then, a special revelation from God is to ascribe to the most beneficent Father in



heaven conduct which we should reprobate with detestation in any father on earth.

8. But put the argument from necessity in another shape, and view it under another aspect. If man were made able to obey the will of his Maker, what obedience could be rendered unless to some *prescribed and positive declaration* of that will? And what is that declaration of the will of God but a revelation from himself, and such a revelation as should be not only intelligible by man, but attended with such indubitable evidence as to be binding on his conscience as well as clear to his understanding? Let us not forget that if God be man's Maker he is thereby man's Master. He who gave him being has a right to his service. This is an acknowledged principle. But service implies a rule, and an expressed rule. If we are masters, do we expect our servants to obey us unless we tell them what to do? Are they to guess at our wishes, or obey our orders? Can we chide them for disobedience to our will, unless we have made that will clearly known to them? The centurion well put the case when he said, "For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me; and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." But if he had not said to his servant, "Do this," could he have expected him to do, or chidden him for not doing it? Thus these very infidel teachers who deny revelation cannot give an order to their servants, or speak a word to their children without establishing revelation, unless, at least, they mean to assert that they are juster masters to their servants, and kinder parents to their children than God is to any of us. So, unless God has given to man a clear revelation of his will, how can man either know what that will is, or endeavour to obey it?

9. But put the argument under another form, and in a more convincing point of view. God is man's *Judge* as well as man's Master. It is not with Him and us as with us and our servants. We and they are of the same flesh and blood, without any natural authority on the one side or subjection on the other. Masters and servants with us are merely matters of work and wages. But God is our Almighty Judge as well as our sovereign Master. Now as a master's will must be known before it can be obeyed, so a judge's law must be declared before it can be transgressed. If, then, no law had been given to man, there could have been no transgression. This is an acknowledged principle in all laws, both human and divine. The apostle therefore says, "Where no law is there is no transgression." (Rom. iv. 15.) Why are theft and murder punished? Because the law expressly forbids them under a prescribed penalty. But why are not ingratitude, infidelity, and seduction punished? Is it a less crime to rob a poor girl of her virtue than to rob her of her pocket-handkerchief? But the judge punishes the thief and lets off the seducer. The one goes after fresh prey, and the other goes to the treadmill. Why? Because the statute book has so determined it. It is the law of the land, from which there is no appeal, which punishes crimes against society, but not crimes against morality.

We see, therefore, the necessity of a direct, positive law being given by God; for without it, there would have been no transgression; and if no transgression, there could have been no punishment. But what do we see everywhere around us? The most daring crimes, the vilest sins, the foulest abominations, all which are so contrary even to the plainest dictates of natural conscience, that all but the most debased of men view them with indignation, and deem them justly punishable. But how could God justly punish what he has not forbidden? And if he has forbidden them, where or how has he done so? Where is the statute book written by his finger, or by his dictation? We say that it is the Bible; and we ask all who reject the Bible as a divine revelation, to point out to us any other book which bears the least mark or impress of coming from God.

Thus we see that the more we examine the subject the more do we see the *necessity* of a divine revelation. And O, how blessed it is to the child of grace, to find and feel that when he takes up the Scriptures God speaks to him in them; that therein is revealed the mind and will of his heavenly Father; and that, as he believes the testimony which God has thus given of himself, he has, by the power which accompanies it, an inward witness that the Lord of heaven and earth is speaking to his soul.

But enough perhaps has been said about the *necessity* of a revelation from God, as based upon the natural, necessary relationship that exists between man and his Maker. We will, therefore, now pass on to consider the *nature* of this revelation, which we proposed as the second branch of our inquiry.

II. And here we come at once face to face with the infidelity of the human heart; for this wretched disease of the soul, like a deep-seated, incurable cancer in the body, if stopped in one place, breaks out immediately in another. Two objections at once start up to view. 1. That such a direct revelation from God is contrary to all present experience and observation. 2. That it is beyond our conception, if not contrary to our reason, that God should expressly communicate a knowledge of his will to man. But let us see whether these objections are insuperable.

1. What is meant by a revelation from God being contrary to our present experience? Is our experience of a thing to be the proof of its existence? An African king is said to have put a missionary to death, as a liar and an impostor, because he had asserted that in his country he had seen water so hard that persons could walk on it as on dry land. Because God does not speak to infidels *now*, has not he spoken to apostles and prophets of old? Is there no light, because blind men have no sight; or no music, because deaf men have no hearing? What a weak, what a futile argument that nothing can be true but what we have ourselves witnessed! But there is the best of all reasons why God does not *now* speak to man. He *has* spoken. Need he then speak again? Need he be always speaking? Must he speak to every individual of the human race, or must he call with a voice from heaven to our ears, before we

can have sufficient evidence that he has spoken at all? The Bible would be an imperfect revelation of the mind and will of God if it needed continual supplementing by fresh revelations. But this point will more clearly appear when we unfold the *nature* of divine revelation.

2. But let us take up the second stumbling block—that we cannot understand *how* God can make his will known to man; *how* he can infallibly assure him what his will is; or *how* he can reveal it to his understanding and make it binding upon his conscience. We fully admit that these are points so beyond the compass of the reasoning mind, and so entirely out of its province, that it halts and staggers at the very threshold with a “How can these things be?” But here again we are setting up our own experience as a criterion of the possibility or impossibility of a thing. Must we believe nothing but what we can understand? Can you understand your own creation? Can you understand how your eye sees objects, or how your ear hears sounds? You can trace with your scalpel and your dissections a certain bodily conformation of eye and ear. You can take the eye to pieces as easily as you can unscrew a telescope, and lay on your dissecting table its lens and its humours, and explain it all on optical principles, that it is an apparatus made to see with. But can you explain how the mind, that last, that subtle principle, can *see* with this beautiful apparatus—that is, how it can form a conception of the various objects which this mere bodily organ presents to it? No; not you, nor all the powers of human reason can explain the action of matter upon spirit—the connection between the brain and the mind. And if you cannot understand the action of matter upon spirit—and yet it is a fact of daily, hourly, momentarily observation and experience—why doubt that spirit can act upon spirit; in other words, that God, who is a Spirit, can make his will known to the soul of man? But why should nothing be true but what we can understand? Why should we set up our poor limited faculties as able to hold heaven and earth in their grasp, and boldly and rashly reject whatever they cannot embrace? It is a part of the trial of our faith that we should receive on the testimony of God what is, not indeed contrary to reason, but what is above it. Revelation is supernatural—that is, beyond nature, not contrary to it. If the Bible told us that two and two made five, or that a square and a circle were exactly of the same shape, we might well deny it our credence; but what the Bible reveals are not physical impossibilities, but spiritual truths, and therefore beyond the province of reason, which can only handle earthly matters.

Having thus disposed of these preliminary objections, we shall now, with God's help and blessing, address ourselves to the present subject of our inquiry, the *nature* of a divine revelation.

To a Christian mind nothing is more evident than that God can and does speak to the sons of men. Still we may with a reverent spirit inquire *how* he has spoken. If God, who made man, cannot make himself known to man, it must be either because he cannot, or because man is not capable of hearing his voice. The first is not so

much infidelity as atheism. If there be a God, to deny his power to speak to man is to say he is a limited Being—to deny that he is Almighty. He that made man must be capable of speaking to man. But is man capable of hearing God's voice? You cannot make a gold cup of a mass of lead; not because you cannot make a cup out of metal, but because the base metal, lead, is naturally incapable of being converted by any process into the precious metal, gold. So, were man's soul naturally incapable of hearing God's voice, or of believing what it heard, no revelation of the will of God could be made to man any more than to the brute creation. But we know from daily experience that we are capable of hearing one another speak, of understanding what we hear, of believing what is thus communicated to our mind, and of acting upon it. Supposing, then, that God were pleased to speak to man, there evidently is in him no natural incapability of hearing the voice of God, of understanding what he hears, of believing what might be thus communicated, and of rendering obedience to the will thus made known. When God spake first to Samuel, the child was as much capable of hearing the words, "Samuel, Samuel," spoken to him by God as he was of hearing the same words had they been spoken, as he thought, by Eli. That God *can* speak in an audible voice we can no more doubt than that he has enabled us to speak to each other; for surely he that has power to make us speak to one another has power to speak himself to us, if he will so to do. And he who has given us power to understand the meaning of words which we speak to one another, surely has power to make us understand what he is pleased to say unto us. Thus there is no natural impossibility in the way to bar at once all progress, or any difficulty that cannot be easily removed. When this formidable objection is closely examined, we see that it really resolves itself into this point: "Has God all-mighty power or not? Is he a finite or an infinite Being? Did he make us, or did we make ourselves? And if he had power to make us, has he not power to manifest himself unto us." Nay, to push the point more fully home, the question after all is really this, "Is there a God at all?" Infidelity, we have often thought, is only disguised atheism; for once admit, or rather once believe and feel that there is a God, and that as such he possesses infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; and once admit that man is the rational, intelligent creature of his hand, and all the supposed difficulties which an infidel heart within, and infidel hands without have piled up in the way of the possibility or probability of a revelation from God to man, vanish into thin air as so many exhalations from our corrupt heart. We do not say that difficulties may not still remain in revelation itself after we have overcome the grand preliminary objection to there being a revelation at all; but when we are once fully satisfied in our own mind that God has spoken to man, and that the Bible contains what he has thus spoken as the expression of his mind and will, then all these mere minor difficulties, if we cannot explain them, we are content to leave unexplained.

We hope that we have not too severely tasked the patience of our spiritual readers by dwelling so long on these mere elementary foun-

dation points, settling, or, as they may perhaps rather think, unsettling what they have never doubted. But all the children of God, dear readers, are not favoured with your strong faith. Many who truly desire to fear God are frequently sorely tried in their minds with infidel thoughts;\* and as we ourselves have been, especially in times past, much in this furnace, we feel led to take up those stumbling-blocks which lie so thickly strewed in their path. But apart from this, we are free to confess that the natural character of our mind is not to be satisfied with dim, confused views upon any subject to which we apply our thoughts. We cannot bear to lose ourselves in a tangled maze of confusion, without seeing our way clearly before us; and we therefore feel similarly desirous, when we take up our pen, to make straight paths for our feet, and be a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. But this very aim at clearness of thought and expression is apt sometimes to issue in overlaying a subject with wearisome prolixity, much in the same way as we may weary our servants by repeating our directions to them too often. We must plead, however, for our excuse, the importance of the subject, and the earnest desire that we feel to lay the foundation broad and good.

But though our limits now warn us to come to a close, we cannot comfortably do so without pressing upon our readers two considerations which we wish them steadily to bear in mind.

1. View our Meditations on the subject *as a whole*. Thus viewed, what may now appear at first sight unnecessary or unimportant will drop into its place, and will be seen to be needful to give strength and symmetry to the whole building. When, with God's help and blessing, we shall have finished our task, the preliminary, elementary matter which has thus far engaged our pen will be seen to have contributed a basis on which our subject—the authority of God's word—may firmly rest.

2. Secondly, if your own mind is sometimes agitated with infidel doubts, and you have had certain points, as, for instance, the necessity of a divine revelation cleared up, and firmly established in your own mind, *do not let yourself be driven from it*. Do not always be doing and undoing, setting and unsetting, building up and pulling down. If a point be once firmly settled, let it continue firmly settled. Make the ground firm and good as you go along; but when once you find the ground firm under your feet, do not break up the road again, or let yourself be pushed off the causeway. In this is much of the good fight of faith—to abide by what we believe and know; not to be driven from certainties to uncertainties, but to maintain the ground that we have fairly won from the enemy, and rather die fighting for God and his word, than give in one inch to Satan and your unbelieving heart. Take, for instance, this argument from necessity. Does not every longing desire of your heart Godward convince you of its truth? Every cry for light, every sigh and groan for a word to be spoken with a divine power to your soul; every desire in your

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\* See, for instance, the experience of the late Mr. Fowler, in this very No.

breast to know God's will, and do it, are so many standing proofs—proofs within your own personal cognisance and realisation, of the necessity for a revelation from God to man. Now, having got that proof, abide by it as a decided point, a settled matter; and don't be driven from it. When thus firmly established as a fixed principle, you will find, as you proceed, that it will open up to you with greater clearness and strength the *nature* of this divine revelation, in which centre all our faith and hope. Here we shall meet again if the Lord will, in our next No.

### THE NAME OF CHRIST.

THE name of Christ, how sweet it sounds!	Now ends the ancient covenant,
How sweet the mention of his wounds!	The wrath, the debt, the fear, and want;
For thee, my soul, how dear and good	A Testament is now of force,
Is the bare naming of his blood.	Revoking every former curse.
What makes it precious thus to me,	By this I 'scape eternal doom,
Is since the Lamb hung on the tree;	And fearless nigh to God I come;
His pangs and torments made me well,	"My Father" to him I may say,
Who else had gone to endless hell.	And know he hears whene'er I pray.
The law, my conscience, and the fiend	I join the number who are his,
Were witnesses how I had sinn'd;	And share their joy, and love, and bliss;
I stood accused, in debt, and poor,	I'm his, and he, the Man Divine,
When Jesus paid off all my score.	With all his merits, now is mine.
Nor this alone, but at his death	My dear Testator will I bless,
His all he would to me bequeath;	And, wearing his pure righteousness,
I am now made his pleasant son,	I boldly shall his judgment meet,
And heir to his eternal throne.	And worship at his bleeding feet.
His dying words are graven deep	No death or judgment hence I dread;
Upon my heart, awake or sleep:	The precious blood my Saviour shed,
"This is the blood I shed for thee;	The blood of sprinkling speaks for me.
Drink of this cup, and pardon'd be."	I'm safe. O Jesus, praise to thee!

CENNICK.

It is good that we know Christ breweth or mixeth our cup. He can sugar the salt and bitter wine with mercy. There is no desertion of the saints that we read of but there is as much of Christ in it as giveth it some taste and smell of heaven.—*Rutherford*.

"ISRAEL shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end." We do not want testimonies for the truth of this part of the text, but faith to believe it; and for want of faith in exercise, and looking back on a thirty years' profession, attended with so many infirmities, sins, slips, and falls, we are ready to doubt; yea, our own confidence sinks at the sight, fearing this is enough to prove all our profession vain; and with many a groan we cry to God that he would pass by all and give us a token for good. This was my case very lately, with all my failings in view; but whilst in confession before him, and pleading on my knees, these words came softly on my mind: "None of his sins which he hath committed shall be mentioned to him." Quite suitable to my case and feelings were these words; and never did they prove so sweet to me before. May we not say, "Gracious is the Lord, yea, our God is merciful," who will not so much as even mention any one sin to us!—*Beeman*.

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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APRIL, 1864.

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

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY  
FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET  
CHAPEL, LONDON.

*(Continued from p. 76.)*

One day, when I was very much tried with a spirit of infidelity, so that it was with difficulty I could do my work, it came into my mind that, as soon as I went to dinner, I would once more go and pour out my soul to God, and beg of him to remove every stumbling-block out of my way, and show me plainly that the Bible was his own revealed truth. I did so, and found the blessed Spirit to help my infirmities. When I took my Bible, I opened it at that part which I most stumbled at, and a divine light shone on the sacred page, so that I stood surprised at my own ignorance; and it forcibly struck me that I had been under the power of Satan, and that he was the author of most of the base and God-dishonouring things that I had felt working in my heart. I said, "Satan, thou art a liar. The Bible is true. Thy lies and my blindness have been the source of my confusion." The snare was now broken, and my soul was made to escape from one of the worst places that a pardoned sinner can ever be brought into.

During this time of temptation I often tried to bring my past deliverances forth, and set them in battle array against my fears; but all in vain; the temptation of the enemy was too strong for me; and by it I was taught much more of my extreme weakness than I ever knew before. When I used to make use of any word in prayer that implied appropriation, or attempted to remind the Lord of his former mercies, I was sure to be assaulted most grievously that my religion was a delusion, that no one that was a partaker of grace could ever sink so low as to doubt the truth of all revealed religion; that I was a real deist, but too much of a hypocrite to acknowledge it.

In reflecting on this hour of temptation, I am inclined to think that it was God's school of instruction, and that he was preparing me to be of some service to his people; and I do believe that the school of affliction is better calculated to make a useful minister of Jesus Christ than all the learning taught in all the universities and academies in the universe. I do not wish by this remark to offend any man who may have received a classical education; but what I would

insist upon is, that all the human acquirements that a man may have cannot make him a minister of Jesus Christ. Paul, no doubt, had plenty of human learning; but he was obliged to cast it overboard, as mariners do the goods of an overladen vessel; and to speak, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but in the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

While I was at Portsea, I met with no one person that I could freely converse with on spiritual matters. I used to hear Mr. Miall, Mr. Horsey, and Mr. Griffin, and they sometimes preached tolerably clearly as to the doctrines of the gospel; but there was nothing in their preaching calculated to relieve a tried sinner; and as for the hearers, they appeared very well satisfied with their duties and with themselves. But I must say of Portsea, as I have said of Bristol, there might be many of the Lord's hidden ones there, but I had not the happiness to find them out.

I left Portsea for Plymouth Dock, (now Devonport,) about Christmas, by a small vessel. I wanted to see some of my old friends, and tell them a little of the Lord's goodness to me. It was very smooth when we set sail; but as we passed the "Needles," the wind blew very high, and the sea rolled over the deck of the vessel, so that we were obliged to close the hatchway with all speed, or we should have been sunk. A very high sea continued most of the night; but the wind was in our favour. We had also good moonlight, and no fogs; and by the goodness of God, who "manages the seas," I landed at Devonport after 23 hours' sail. Thus I was again brought back near my native place to have more trials and more mercies.

I was just now passed my 21st year. Upon reflecting, as well as my memory will assist me, I think I had something like the feelings of the patriarch Jacob, on his return to his native place. There is, somehow, a predilection for the place of our nativity, more especially when we are young, and have not travelled much. I think I looked back with admiration on the goodness of my God, who had preserved me amidst many sore trials both in body and in mind, during my rambling here and there. "Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

I desire to bless my God that he hath made room for me in the hearts of many hundreds of his own children, that I am personally acquainted with in town and country, and some out of this country; and I doubt not but I live in the affections of many by means of my writings, whose faces I never saw. It is, therefore, for the sake of the called in Christ Jesus I chiefly write, that they may glorify God in me, if they are favoured to receive any spiritual profit by my narrative.

Being brought to my native place, and having gained by spiritual trading, and as the Lord gave a door of utterance, I soon became the companion of many gracious people, *too many*, as I now think; but my heart was warm, and I could not forbear speaking of the precious name of Jesus; for he was to me the fairest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely. His word also was my meditation



day and night; for he had made darkness light and crooked things straight, according to his blessed promise. I was, therefore, always ready for spiritual conversation at this period, which united many to me, and we have walked and talked until midnight of Jesus and his grace; of his blood and righteousness; of his precious promises and sweet invitations; of the high and blessed privileges of his saints, as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; and of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. These were times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, that ought to be borne in remembrance.

At, or about this time, I had also such a blessed view of the covenant of grace, made by the eternal Three-One God of Israel, and ratified by the blood-shedding of Jesus, our glorious Mediator, as I shall not forget. The immutable faithfulness, and the inviolable oath of Jehovah, were the stability of my times. I used to peruse my Bible with more interest than ever; and Isaiah, the Canticles, and the Epistles of Paul were sweeter to me than a bundle of roses; and I said, "My meditation of him shall be sweet. I will be glad in the Lord;" and with the spouse, I said, "A bundle of myrrh is my Well-beloved unto me."

I could much enlarge here, but must forbear, lest I should stumble the feeble lambs in Christ's fold, who are dear to me. I had now a longing desire to spread the savour of the dear Redeemer's name to my fellow sinners. But O, when I thought of the vast importance of the work of the ministry, I trembled in my very soul, and often viewed it as an act of the greatest presumption! A poor illiterate man as I was, to think of preaching the gospel! I used to tremble at the thought, and wished to get rid of it, but could not. I have cavilled and objected again and again; and as fast as I have objected, God has by his word knocked it all down. These words used to run in my mind: "I will make thee a fisher of men;" "Who made man's mouth?" "Say not, I am a child;" "Thou shalt go unto all that I send thee." No one knew at that time my thoughts respecting the ministry.

One day when I went to see my dear relations, a few of God's people met together for prayer and spiritual conversation in an old thatched house, and I gladly joined them, as there was no true gospel preached in the village. After some conversation, an old disciple in this humble village said to me, "I wish you would read a chapter; and, if anything strikes you, do tell us about it." I did as she requested, and continued for more than half-an-hour. This was the first time I had ever attempted to speak in the name of the Lord; nor did I feel the least embarrassment in speaking, nor any condemnation in my conscience after I had spoken. From that time I concluded that the Lord was about to employ me in his vineyard; but I kept all these things to myself. The circumstance of my speaking to these few people was soon spread abroad; and I was requested, soon after this, to speak at the Old Tabernacle in Plymouth, which put me into great straits. Refuse I could not, and yet to attempt it was horrible to my feelings. For some days before I made the

attempt, I felt a wish that I had not made the promise; and such was the darkness and perplexity of my mind that I could with the utmost difficulty attend to my labour; and as the hours passed away, I fancied I was something like the man in a dark cell, looking with horror towards the day of his execution.

Thus I was tormented up to the day appointed for me to preach. I had been often preaching to myself, and found plenty of matter flow, when alone in meditation; but now, from the darkness of my mind, the confusion of my thoughts, and the prevalence of my unbelieving fears, I felt that I should be confounded before the people; and it appeared nothing less than presumption to enter the pulpit. I said, "My pride has brought me into all this misery;" and I greatly feared that God would publicly expose me. The sign being given for me to mount the pulpit, I trembled from head to foot; and as I entered the pulpit it suddenly crossed my mind, "This is the pulpit that Whitefield has often preached in, as well as other able men; and can such a presumptuous fool as I dare to stand and attempt to preach after such great men?" This added to my confusion, while my knees smote each other as I sat in the pulpit. The hymn being sung, I felt as if I should have fainted. I rose as well as I could, and concealed my trembling from the people as well as I was able, hiding myself by the help of a large velvet cushion. When I began to pray, I found my trembling began to abate; and, finding liberty in calling upon the Lord, I began to take courage, and I pleaded his promises as one that really stood in need of his helping hand. Having finished my prayer, I sat down, and thanked the Lord that he had been better to me than my fears thus far; but while the hymn was singing, I was overwhelmed with fear again. It was suggested to me, "You have gone through your prayer because you have been in the habit of praying; but what will you do when you stand up to preach? Why, the people will laugh at your folly!" Thus was I buffeted till the hymn was sung; when I stood up trembling, with my eyes fixed on the Bible, and gave out for my text, Zech. ix. 11: "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

I had, by experience, known what the pit was, and what it was to be a prisoner in the pit, and how God delivered me, even by the precious blood of Christ, applied by the Holy Spirit to my sin-burdened soul. I knew also that the blood of Christ was the blood of sprinkling, and the blood of the everlasting covenant which was to be paid as the price of our redemption to divine justice. I had had many a blessed meditation and sweet feast from these great and precious truths; but now I wanted the door of utterance to be opened for me that I might set these things before the people, that their souls might be comforted, and that Christ might be exalted. As soon as I began to preach, I felt the sweetness of my text; my fears and trembling were in a great measure removed, and I was furnished with a full supply of appropriate scriptures to explain and illustrate my text; neither was I at all at a loss for words, and matter flowed faster than I could express it by words to the people, though I think

I spoke faster than is commendable in a preacher; for rapid speaking prevents profitable hearing to many persons whose capacities are slow and dull. I spoke about three quarters of an hour, but dared not take my eyes from my Bible one moment, lest I should be thrown into confusion. When I had done, I felt like a man who had been relieved of a burden too much for his strength. The testimony of the leading man at the chapel, as well as several others who heard me at that time, was very encouraging; but of this I shall say no more. I went home rejoicing; but loathed myself in my own sight, that I should have listened to the devil, carnal reason, and unbelief, to the dishonour of God, who had so many times fulfilled his promises to me, and answered my prayers.

This news of my preaching was soon blazed abroad, and I was from that time frequently employed in Plymouth and in many villages round.

After I had once preached, and having been somewhat favoured, I thought the principal difficulty was got over; but, alas! I soon found I was much mistaken; for my trials had but just commenced, as respects the ministry.

Now a new scene of trial opened before me. Some of the brethren, I thought, disapproved of my preaching, and they used to throw stumbling-blocks in my way to hinder my proceeding. Their conduct to me, and the importance of the work of the ministry, greatly depressed my spirits; and I frequently thought I would give up all thoughts of preaching; nay, I have been pleased many times with the idea that I had for ever done with it. But my pleasure was soon at an end, for shortly after some text would press on my mind, and be opened to me in meditation, so that before I was aware, I was arranging my sermon; and then I used to recollect myself, and say, "Why, I have done with preaching; I have quite done with it; I will have no more of it; I am determined to be a hearer." Thus, I used to try to extinguish the light. For a little time I used to get rid of it; and I thought it a delusion of Satan, that had got hold of my mind, and filled me with a vain conceit of preaching. The same day, perhaps, some letter or messenger would bring me word that I was wanted to preach at such a place, and that if I did not go the people would have no one to preach to them. I tried to make all the excuses I could; and if I was poorly, I magnified it in order to get off preaching. This I have done many times. Again, I used to beg a little time before I answered the application; and while reflecting on the matter, I have been so lashed with many scriptures, that I have been overwhelmed with trouble. I was charged home with rebellion against the light, and as not fit for the kingdom of God, having put my hand to the gospel plough, and now I had turned back. Then the promises I had made to the Lord, and the prayers I had offered up to him in respect to the ministry, used to come fresh to my mind. I laboured hard to get rid of all these things, and tell the Lord that I had no learning necessary for a preacher; that I had not a proper gift of speech; that I was in such a dark state in my soul, that if I attempted to preach

again, I should be confounded before the people, and bring dishonour on his holy name, and disgrace to his cause.

Thus I used to cavil and dispute, till the Lord stopped me by such words as these: "Who made man's mouth?" "I will give you a mouth and wisdom;" "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." These words used to be both reproving and comforting; and I said, "I will go and preach *this once*, and if these promises come from God I shall know by his affording me help in preaching; and by his helping me, I shall conclude that he does design me for the work of the ministry." Thus, I set my hand to the plough again, and I received most sensible help from the Lord several times, which so filled me with self-loathing, on account of my base past conduct, that I could not lay myself low enough at the feet of my gracious Redeemer. His mercy, grace, and long-suffering quite overcame me. I was now raised to a comfortable persuasion that the Lord's hand was in my preaching, and that I still should see his hand more plainly.

Thus encouraged by some sweet manifestations of Christ, I went forth again boldly when called upon, and made sure that the Lord would be with me. In this, however, I had made a mistake; for I did not see what a vast heap of pride had sprung up in my depraved heart, taking the advantage of God's indulgences to me. Hence, when I attempted to preach again, all my meditations were snatched from me, and such horrible darkness came over my mind, and such trembling of body, that my speech seemed to me quite altered in sound; and in this bondage and misery I have gone on for three quarters of an hour preaching, and when I had done, my sermon appeared to me a complete jumble of confusion. When I have retired, Satan has assaulted me most grievously, not that I then suspected to come from him; but I concluded that my embarrassment was a certain sign that I had presumptuously run into the ministry without being called of God; and I begged the Lord to take all thoughts of preaching out of my mind that I might not offend him again by assuming that sacred office. Perhaps, not a week after that, I should have more matter flow into my mind than before, and get rid of it I could not, but was like a bottle that wanted vent. Applications were also made from different quarters for me to preach. Thus I continued, sometimes encouraged, and at other times so overwhelmed with fear, bondage, and temptation that I wished I had never thought about the ministry. Some of the Lord's people used to express great satisfaction in hearing me, even when I was in such embarrassment myself, which used to provoke me to wrath; and I concluded, that either the devil had deceived them as well as me, or that God had used me as a messenger to carry a morsel to them, as the unclean raven was employed to carry food to the prophet.

There were several young men who had commenced preaching at that time, with whom I was acquainted. I gave several of them some hints about the trials of my mind; but they appeared quite strangers to my path. They would tell me of their great liberty in preaching; of the way they had handled their text; how much they had

been blessed to this, that, and the other, and seemed highly pleased with their performances. Alas! I thought I was a singular mortal, very different from any one that I had met with. They appeared always ready, and were anxious to preach; I was generally backward and fearful. They found no fault with themselves or their preaching, and I was doing very little else.

About the close of the year 1801, I visited Kingsbridge, to see some of my relations; and by their influence I was invited to preach at the chapel in Lady Huntingdon's connexion, and I found no reluctance on my part; for I had been somewhat favoured in my meditations as I walked thither. At the time appointed, I went to preach to a much larger congregation than I had been accustomed to preach to, yet my great natural timidity was removed, and I found much freedom of speech, and I think I felt much pleasure in my own soul in showing to my hearers how we stood righteous before God, and the blessed safety of those who were accepted in the Beloved. Many of the people expressed much satisfaction; and I was, by the leading men of the chapel, pressed to preach again; and in the warmth of the moment, I consented. Thus far, all went on well; but losing by degrees my enjoyments, I fell into a reasoning spirit; and under a strong temptation, I said to myself, "I have been carried through my last exercise much to my own satisfaction, and to the people's; but what shall I do for matter the next time? I have said all that I can say." I laboured and toiled in my mind, sometimes at old texts, and at other times at new texts, to see if I could pick up anything; but the more I toiled the greater was my embarrassment and confusion, so that I knew not what to do. I had made a promise, and, therefore, it was too late to say Nay. In this state I was tossed about like a vessel in a high sea, until I was happily relieved by a sudden thought. It was this, "I have heard Mr. Jones preach from this text, 'With loving-kindness have I drawn thee;' why, I had better preach as much as I can recollect of his sermon. It is sound truth, and much better than I can produce." I found, it is true, a questioning in my mind whether it was right for me to preach Mr. Jones's sermon; but I soon silenced the clamour in my conscience by saying, "What am I to do? I have nothing of my own. And if I attempt to take a text, and preach from it of my own devising, I shall be put to confusion; and what will the people think and say of me? Will it not be much better for me to preach a good sermon, though another man's, than darken counsel by words without knowledge?" Thus I settled the business; and to call into action all the powers of my memory. I had good ground to hope for success, because I had heard Mr. Jones preach the above sermon, first, in London; second, at Bristol, and third, at Devonport; so that I suppose it was an old favourite of the preacher's; and my memory, as well as Mr. Jones's, being pretty strong, I recollected that he delivered the whole of his four heads with about sixteen subdivisions, nearly word for word every time, which I thought much to my advantage. Thus furnished, (and well, too, I thought, for if the sermon would do for London, Bristol, and Devonport, surely it will

do for Kingsbridge!) I mounted the pulpit at the given time. If I recollect right, I was rather confused in my prayer. I had been in the habit, from the commencement of my preaching, to entreat the Lord to assist me, both as to matter and manner; but having a sermon already made, as I thought, I could not honestly beg for God's assistance; neither could I beg of the Lord to assist my memory; for that would have discovered me to the people at once. I therefore got through my prayer as well as I could, and, perhaps, the hearers saw nothing amiss. After the people had sung, I gave out my text with a tolerable emphasis, and proceeded, after a short introduction, to divide my text in the same order as laid down by the aforesaid Mr. Jones. You will observe, reader, that I had four heads, and about sixteen divisions to get through. The number of hearers happened to far exceed the former time of my preaching, and several classical men, I understood, were to be present, as well as the regular minister, who had been polished at Cheshunt Academy; so that I had quite work enough before me. Well, with all these difficulties before my eyes, I set to work as well as I could. But, alas, for me! I had not spoken long before the most dreadful guilt, hypocrisy, pride, and confusion possessed my mind. Mr. Jones's sermon was completely taken from my memory, and though I used every artifice to recover, at least some part of it, I could not; and after labouring like a thresher, for I should suppose not more than 15 minutes, quite exhausted, I sat down in confusion, not knowing where to hide my head. After the conclusion, several persons came round me to encourage me not to be dispirited on account of my embarrassment, and they expressed much sympathy for me, seeing that I was but a stripling, and young in the ministry; but I was sensible I deserved no pity. I, however, concealed the cause of my embarrassment, and acknowledged my error before God in secret. I was ashamed of my unbelief, that I could not depend upon the Lord, as he had been my help. I was condemned for my pride in attempting to raise myself high by another man's stilts. This mortification of my pride taught me a lesson that I have not forgotten yet. I said to myself, "I will never attempt to preach Jones's sermon, nor any other man's, any more as long as I live!" I am persuaded, that if sermon-stealers were served as I was on this occasion, they would be of my opinion. Blessed be God, who overrules the errors of his servants for their good, and for his own glory! I have mentioned this circumstance, and designed it as a caution to young preachers, never to wish to appear in things already made to their hands, lest they should be beaten with many stripes, as I was. I fear that the fleshly scheme I tried to carry into execution is too much practised by many, who shine in other men's robes, who have the knack of altering a little of a sermon here and there to escape detection. The voice may resemble Jacob's, but the hands are Esau's. *(To be continued.)*

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No man receives the Holy Ghost, but he who has felt the terrors of Sinai.—*Bishop Hall.*

## A SERMON ON DIVINE INSTRUCTION.

“I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto thee.”—Ps. xxxii. 8, 9.

THE word of God, the gospel of the Lord's grace, is sent not to the righteous, but to sinners; that is to say, the Scripture means it is not sent to those who think they are righteous, but to those who feel they are sinners; as Christ says, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” And so it is that every one whom the grace of God lays hold of, is by that grace brought to know and feel the very awful state of corruption and sin in which he is by nature; so that he is obliged to cease from all hope of satisfying for his sins or getting salvation by the deeds of the law. The Lord have great mercy on us, and cause us to discern his mighty hand on us, in bringing our hearts down more and more to this knowledge and deep feeling of the sin that is in us, and give us more of that blessed faith by which we may lay hold of Jesus Christ, because it is the gift of God bestowed for that end. It is the favour of God toward any sinner, when enabled to believe and to enter with hope and comfort into Christ as the friend of sinners, for no man can truly believe that favour of the love and power of Christ towards him, except through the mercy of God specially granted. It is a blessing unutterable, to be sought for, asked and waited for by all those who seek the salvation of their souls. That blessed faith is wholly in the Lord's hand to give them. It is, I say, his favour to them, and no work of their own. He works it in them in his good time and according to his good pleasure, and it is the way of life and salvation set forth in the word from the beginning to the end. Surely it was understood in a blessed manner, even before the coming of Christ, by those who were partakers of the grace of God. Even as it is testified by the apostle Paul respecting David, when he refers to him in Rom. iv., saying, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin;” and truly may David add, “In whose spirit there is no guile,” that is, because of the blessed simplicity and truth in the inward parts which is freely given by the Lord to his people, who thus are favoured with his grace, for they are naturally full of guile and evil of every kind, and are deeply plagued with the feeling thereof when they cannot find and attain to the power of that excellent mercy of the Lord.

But, my brethren, blessed are they whom the Lord stirs up and enables to continue waiting, and praying, and looking for this mercy of the Lord Jesus at all times. O what a mercy, and how sensible are we of the greatness of that mercy, when the Lord shows us our own inability, that he has provided so marvellous a salvation as this, wholly free and independent of our own works: “Not by works of righteousness which we have done,” but through the mediation of

Jesus Christ, whom he sent into the world for that purpose; for "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

May the Lord, my brethren, inwardly and spiritually enlighten us with his word in all times of temptation, darkness, and trouble to which we are subject, and cause us to see, although we are thus sensible of our manifold evils, yet this is the Scripture testimony, and those who are enabled to press forward in prayer and supplication for the blessing shall find the truth of it, viz., that faith in Christ's name, and blood, and righteousness is the saving grace; and those who are sinners in themselves by nature thus must come to seek for this marvellous mercy of faith in Christ's name. Let it not be considered a strange thing that such should be exercised and endure sore temptations at times, for so most surely they will find; but the Lord enable them to continue in that way which is set before them in this psalm which I am considering; for, as David says, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

Let us take notice of it, how it was with that man whose religion was most surely of God in a peculiar manner, as the Lord called him "the man after his own heart." He was a sinner like to us, and when left to himself he fell into great sins. Nevertheless, the Lord brought him up out of every depth, and made him a pattern to his whole church of the efficacy of that saving and blessed repentance which comes through faith, and no other way; and thus he is an example to us. But then, O the exercise of his heart, the trials he passed through notwithstanding, as these words testify.

And what was it that was so exceedingly painful and caused this long-continued misery in his spirit? "When I kept silence," &c. He means it was that time when the hand of God was heavy on him because of his sins, but he was not fully and thoroughly humbled before God as a sinner; therefore in that state there was the rebellion of his heart, and he felt it keenly and the misery of it, which he could not endure, it was so distressing.

But, my brethren, he says, "My bones waxed old," &c; that is, all my strength and my confidence are decayed, "through my roaring, for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me." Is it, then, surprising that there should be this sore and deep trouble found and passed through at times by the children of God in other ages? Ah! by all who walk in the fear of God desiring to serve him; and they know how painfully oftentimes they are beset by temptations, and how dark their feelings are in that day, when they cannot see the light of his countenance. May the Lord have mercy on those in such a state and condition, to grant unto them what of themselves they cannot possibly attain unto, and that is a real spiritual tenderness of heart through the coming in of the Lord's favour, though it be in a secret measure and degree; but assuredly if the heart is softened, it has been through the grace of the gospel, for the power of the broken law in the heart never softens it, but makes



us feel more that dreadful hardness. But certainly the Lord is able to watch over his people in the deepest times of trouble, and when they are most afraid, because of that sin of their heart which they cannot, without his blessed power in their soul, bring before him in confession and self-abhorrence, but they are asking and looking for the mercy of Jesus Christ. The Lord leads his people to see, that he causes them to cease from all other help or hope, and to look *this* way, even through Christ, for his mercy, even they who are in their own feelings the most unworthy and unfit of all men for this mercy, for they are so sensible of their own pride, rebellion, darkness, unbelief, and the sin of their own nature altogether. Nevertheless, there is nothing for all that evil but looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is a blessing if the Lord will enable them to confess as they feel their transgressions to the Lord, for it is not fit, so to speak, that they should speak of these things to the uttermost unto others, but in a certain secret and humble confession before the Lord to acknowledge the worst of their state before him. Will he give them grace to do it now, and will he make them to hope that it shall not be in vain to do it? forasmuch as the Scripture gives us no other way, and tells us that this is the right way. Therefore, to do it, and to beg of the Lord that he would give them power to wait and still to do it, that is, to confess, and still to confess again, the evil to the Lord, seeking for the free remission and the full pardon through Christ, and not for their own sake. Now is the Lord instructing them to take that way and to continue in it; yea, does he show them that they must continually return again to it, for they oftentimes through sin would turn aside unto another way, but they must be brought back unto their way of abiding before the Lord in the deep confession of their sin, and looking for the mercy to come freely. I know it is the Lord's kindness if he in anywise enables them to look for or expect the mercy, for it does not seem, if we are left to ourselves, that we are in the way to find mercy in that state; but may the Lord not leave us to ourselves, but be gracious, that we may continue in that way of confessing our sin, and looking only for that mercy to come freely and fully, as the Scripture bears witness that the Lord sent it into the hearts of other sinners before us when they were in their own feelings the farthest off from it.

But the Lord did bring the mercy to them, and he is the same now: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." This is the blessing, when he enables us to take this way through the trouble and darkness; and is not that waiting on him according to his blessed word? And he says he will be gracious to the poor and needy, the destitute, and those who fall down before him as undone in themselves. Therefore let us not give up the hope; those who are in that state bound in their own feelings cannot loose their own bonds; they cannot hasten the Lord's time; they cannot heal themselves with their own hand; they cannot apply the word to their own heart and be satisfied; but it is an exceedingly great mercy from the Lord that they are truly awakened, and made sensible of their sin, and brought down in the way that David describes in this place, for he testifies:

“I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” The Lord have great mercy on us to give us that spiritual simplicity and tenderness before him. It cannot be found without some measure of spiritual hope and help through Christ, or else we should dissemble and cloak the sin, and not feel it so bad as it is set forth to us.

But that blessed grace comes from Christ, the Saviour of sinners, who died for sin, and put it away by the sacrifice of himself, and he gives his Holy Spirit, that favour to sinners, to bring them to repentance. He sends the power forth; he makes them feel the evil keenly, and brings them down before him deeply. What is that sore trouble, that deep anxiety, that spiritual fervency of heart under the pressure and burden? I say there is a measure there of the favour and power of Jesus Christ, for it is a good and holy feeling of their sin which he works in them. O, how far removed from that spiritual tenderness are all those who walk in a fleshly confidence.

The Lord have mercy to bring us to the true confidence, and that by leading us through this way which is here described and set forth. It must needs be so; all the children of God must be brought to it and through it. The Lord have mercy on us, that we may find his power in our hearts to fulfil it in us. Let us by his grace continue looking to him; we are not to plan for ourselves, and to say, “It must be so and so, and I must get this or that,” according to our wisdom. We cannot by planning get this spiritual work, or the conflict, or pass through it, or get deliverance under it. The Lord must do it in his own time and way, and by his own means. (Ps. xxxii., 6.) Only then may he so stir up our hearts in prayer and supplication to wait on him, to give us the opening of the ear to hear the word of life, and to enable us in some degree to understand that right way of faith in Jesus Christ, which is the only way of salvation, and the way which is not in ourselves but in the Lord, and he must give it to us.

If there be this blessed work in the soul, there will be the clear deliverance and the blessed favour of the Lord manifested in due time. It will not be always that the children of God will be in that state, that spiritual trouble, without the clear hope, without the blessing, and without the testimony of the love of God in the heart. It is the blessing they reach forward to, only this, let the Lord bestow it on them. Do not let them take up with any false imitation, given by man or wrought by themselves; it will do them no good. As long as he keeps the soul which he has quickened, seeking and looking for the mercy through faith, though the fulness is not bestowed, yet there is a blessing granted to them already, for which they have cause to thank him. As it is written: “He which hath begun the good work will perform it,” and their heart is encouraged to pray to him saying, “Lord, continue thy loving-kindness.” The Lord, my brethren, enable us in all these things to follow the example which David sets before us; and may he have mercy, and overcome by his kindness and grace all the dreadful unbelief which rises at times;

though we cannot overcome it ourselves, it darkens us again and again. The Lord give us grace to wait on him, and to understand that in the midst of the conflict, trouble, fear, and oppression, because of this evil his voice is to be heard, that we are to entreat him to open our ear, for it is in the midst of this trouble that the word of God becomes truly profitable to our souls. We should not if at ease in this wicked world look out and feel our need of the consolation of the word; but because of the fear, oppression, and temptation, we come near in prayer and supplication. As in Jonah's case, which we were reading, it is said when in his trouble: "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of my affliction to the Lord." It was no sign of any good thing in him that the effect of the affliction brought him to that crying, for before there was that bitter affliction there was the rebellion going on, and if it had not been stopped, it would have been his ruin; but the Lord brought Jonah back through the depth, and then he cried. So it is good if the Lord cause us "so to cry by reason of the affliction." It is a good thing so to cry, and the Lord will listen to that cry; but we must acknowledge we are sinners in that we did not cry before, and being in that awful state of rebellion.

O that the Lord may make it manifest and thoroughly understood that his salvation comes not by our works of righteousness, but through Christ's favour only; that our trust may be in the Lord and not in ourselves; and that the Lord may look on us in our necessity, in our darkness, in our conflicts and troubles; that we may hear that sweet and blessed voice that speaks in the words of my text, "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye;" for we should look for and entreat the Lord's mercy, that he would bring us into the state that we should hear his word and voice, and have power to believe it, that he speaks to us, unworthy as we are, in that state in which we are unable to guide ourselves, and unable to overcome the enemies round about us: "I will instruct thee." May these blessed words bring us at once to the feet of that blessed Instructor, even to him who is sent forth by the Father and the Son for the guidance and instruction of his people at all times, the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who shall be with them for ever; that they should look for him at a time when overpowered by temptation, and when they could see no help; but there was the Helper there, for he was to abide with them for ever. We cannot always see it so, but the Lord is able to cause us to believe it, and that when we least expect so to do.

O that it may please the Lord to grant us the consolation; for if we have the tribulation, we need it. The consolation comes where the tribulation abounds.

"I will instruct thee." This is the poor, the needy, the fearing, and the destitute sinner who is addressed in my text, to whom the Lord says, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go," &c. We need not suppose that the man who is thus addressed has no sin in him, and is holy and devout. If that were

truly so, he would not need the instruction, and the Saviour he could do without. It is such poor and needy ones, such tried and tempted ones as we are, surrounded on every side with enemies, and having most treacherous hearts within, and an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God. It is a keen feeling of the trouble which these sins and enemies cause that brings us to cry to the Lord that we may understand what his word says, that he saves sinners; that he will not forsake those made sensible of their great need, but let them look to him, even from the ends of the earth. They have no power; no, they know they have not; but the Lord gives a keen desire to pray, saying, "Lord, enable me." That is the state in which they are; and though at times, through the hardness of their hearts, it is otherwise, and they cannot pray, yet it troubles them, and they groan, being burdened through that unbelief. When pressed on every side, and they cannot pray, then says the Lord, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go."

O but it is a blessing, beyond what words can utter, to be enabled to believe that there is this favour in the Lord to us; that he should say this to those so unworthy of it, who have so great opposition against that which is so good, and who are so dark and driven, because they feel so ignorant, and they cannot guide themselves aright, and cannot see their own way; for the Lord makes them willing to be blessed indeed. It is not as Christ says of the Jews, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, we see, therefore your sin remaineth;" but where the heart is really troubled, there is this cry for mercy.

Well says the Lord, "I will guide thee with mine eye." Will he? Shall we find it so, pressed and surrounded with trials on every side as we are, not seeing the right way, not knowing how to order our own steps? If there be this falling before him, this earnest looking for his mercy, let us thank him for that spirit, it is the spirit of faith. "I will guide thee with mine eye." We may not see for ourselves how it shall be, but being made to wait on him, he orders all things, and it turns afterwards for a testimony that he heard our prayer, guarded us from evil, and brought us to that which is good. Now, I say, by the mercy of the Lord, we must pray that he would enable us to remember these words in our trials and temptations; not to let them go, but to seek more faith to believe that so bad though we are, so unworthy though we are, yet being made sensible of the evil and crying to him, there is a measure of spiritual faith, and he guides and preserves the soul in that state. Many things we fear may come, but the Lord knows how to guide us safely. It is attended with humiliation. "I will guide thee with *mine eye*." Not that we are made wise ourselves, but are made poor in spirit and dependent on him; and it is a blessing to be so, for Christ says, "Blessed are they that mourn, and that hunger and thirst after righteousness."

But there is a caution, and the Lord enable us, with all our heart, to attend to that spiritual caution, for when the Lord speaks thus graciously of what he will do for these sinners who in their trouble commit their way to him in confession, and look for his mercy,

and pray that he will guide them, he cautions them and says, "Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule," &c. The Lord knows we are all of us naturally nothing better; that there is that rebellion, pride, ignorance, and darkness in our hearts; and that which we are to attend to is this: if the Lord sends forth his word against those evils, he will bring them down. We shall not be slaves to the evil. It is his mercy, his doing. His word must overthrow the enemies. It is a blessing when this caution and others in the word appear to us in that point of view, viz., that the Lord speaks so, because he will be with us to bring the evil down; therefore when convinced that we are indeed as the horse and mule which have no understanding, yet again considering the word of the Lord, there is hope that in confessing the evil and looking for the Lord's mercy, he works not only deliverance from the guilt of sin, but also gives his blessed Spirit to overcome the power of the sin that is in us; for so we must look to the blessed gospel of Christ, both for deliverance from the guilt and power of sin; for except through that blessed gospel there is no deliverance either from its guilt or power; but it is testified, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace;" and that is the consolation still, even to those who must acknowledge, as we all do more or less, how often the return of the evil is found. The Lord knows it is needful for his people to be deeply tried in this world, and to know that sin is an exceeding great enemy; and though overcome, it must be overcome again and again; and as long as we live we shall find we are not delivered from its inbeing, but the power of the gospel of Christ must continually quicken us that we be not satisfied under that burden, but groan being burdened, looking to his mercy, not to our groans nor to our being burdened, but to his free mercy. He comes to us. We deserve it not; therefore we are to look to him the Saviour.

The Lord have mercy on us to enable us to remember it specially in the time of need; yet so it is through the sin of our hearts, when we should look after these things most they are then furthest off from us, and there is the seeking, and fainting, and unbelief. But is not the Lord able to overcome it? The Lord give us grace to acknowledge it when we feel it most, and not to let us continue in unbelief, but to enable us to press on and find the victory from day to day through the mercy of Christ. May the Lord grant it for his name's sake. Amen.

[There is a vein of sound, experimental truth in the above sermon, which will pay for reading, though the style and language are so confused and rambling.—ED.]

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To such horrid lengths of absurdity and impiety are men, even of the brightest talents, liable, when they unhappily shut their eyes against that written revelation which so kindly holds the lamp to benighted reason, that one would almost think writers of this cast are purposely raised up by providence, to show mankind the necessity of divine revelation; and to demonstrate the utter insufficiency of mere reason, genius, and philosophy, to guide us either to happiness or truth.—*Toplady.*

## A LETTER TO HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR ABSENT AND AFFLICTED PASTOR.

My dear Friends,—May grace and peace be with you, as the best of blessings. When you read the Epistles, you find the language addressed to particular characters. Paul concludes his Epistle to the Ephesians, “Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.” If you can make out that you are blessed with that sort of religion, you are interested in the blessing. There is something particular in such a profession, because it will end in the salvation of the soul. God will never give you such a great gift, and then send you to hell. There must be the Spirit of God where the good work is begun. Though the Lord will never leave his own, yet they will fear he has left them, and that they cannot be God’s children, in having so much opposed to vital godliness. If you had no knowledge of the plague of your heart, and did not sigh and groan from inbred corruptions, your faith would appear more like presumption than real faith that must be tried. If a man is favoured in his soul, and on the mount, he must come down again. He will find that he takes Hart’s hymn again and again:

“ If ever it could come to pass,  
That sheep of Christ might fall away,  
My fickle, feeble soul, alas!  
Would fall a thousand times a day;  
Were not thy love as firm as free,  
Thou soon wouldst take it, Lord, from me.

“ I on thy promises depend ;  
At least I to depend desire ;  
That thou wilt love me to the end,  
Be with me in temptation’s fire ;  
Wilt for me work, and in me too,  
And guide me right, and bring me through,

“ No other stay have I beside ;  
If these can alter, I must fall ;  
I look to thee to be supplied  
With life, with will, with power, with all.  
Rich souls may glory in their store,  
But Jesus will relieve the poor.”

If you have to speak of soul prosperity, you will have to speak of soul adversity, or you would think God is going to take you to heaven. It is a mercy to be amongst the exercised and tried of the Lord’s family. The tried and afflicted can pray the best, and can hear the best, and know best what it is to trust in God. What a very great mercy to know the realities of religion, so that you can speak with authority of what you have passed through. Some can say but little; but time proves that they wear well. The favoured few are those who will endure unto the end. How many parts of Scripture are very searching; and many, having their heads well furnished with knowledge, and yet destitute of the fear of God, that precious treasure, stumble many by their walk and conduct. They are well kept whom the Lord keeps; and at times God’s children are obliged to think and say, “It is a mercy to be well laid in the

grave." There is no room for boasting. The last shall be first, and the first last. If you are amongst the humble, meek, and lowly at the feet of Jesus, you are greatly favoured. There is no clothing like being clothed with humility. We have nothing to be proud of. Grace makes all the difference in hearers or preachers; in old saints or young saints. Paul says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" What a very favoured people those are who know the effects of free grace on their souls; such have authority to hope or believe that they are amongst the real saints. The name of saint seems too high ground to stand on with so much sin and so many fears. The Lord trieth the righteous; many are their afflictions; but the Lord will deliver them again and again. God will be true to his promises; but they are to know the dark parts of religion as well as the bright parts, who are the real followers of the Lamb. In our right minds we do not want to be deceived. We cannot be too grateful for the renewings of the Spirit. How cold, dark, and dead, if left to ourselves! We want fresh proofs of God's loving-kindness. If needed much, they will be valued much. The Lord's people are a praying people, so that they will pray for the Holy Spirit's work to be known on their souls; and they are glad to hear ministers preach that great work. Those who are to be in heaven will want to know the blessed Trinity in the salvation of their souls, God's covenant love, what Christ has done for us, and what the Holy Spirit has wrought in us. If a minister is ignorant of the Spirit's teaching, how can he describe a work of grace on a sinner's soul? Many years many of us have professed the name of Christ, and it is a mercy to be on our feet in the great battle against the world, the flesh, and the devil. May grace keep and preserve us; we are great debtors to grace. It is a little more than 21 years since the church was formed, and the scythe of death has cut down about 30 members. How many will fall in the next 21 years?

How very awful the scene in America, in the loss of so many lives at one time, burnt in the church, above 2,300! We know not what may take place. What awful trials and judgments we hear of. God reigns; and there are mansions above, prepared for God's people, as a peculiar and prepared people. Those who are blessed with a religion of the right sort, would wish to be contented, and not murmur about trifles. May the Lord bless and keep you, and may he send you ministers whom he will bless. May you love one another, and bear with each other's infirmities, so that you may know what real love is to Christ, and what real love is to the brethren.

From your affectionate Pastor,  
Oakham, Rutland, Feb. 5, 1864. WM. TIPTAFT.

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THE more clear our comprehension of God's love to us, and the firmer our belief in it, the more ardent will be our love to him, and the more active will our hearts be in his service.—*Charles.*

## A LETTER BY THE LATE J. M'KENZIE.

Dear Friend,—I have just received your feeling letter, and lose no time in answering it. I see, and am glad to see that, like myself, you find the way to the kingdom of God a path of tribulation. Not that I rejoice in your sufferings, merely as such, for “no chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous;” but because I firmly believe this is the right way to a city of eternal habitation, and a true mark of true spiritual experience, and that such is strictly scriptural.

My dear friends, it is in and at times hard striving and squeezing work to enter into the kingdom of heaven experimentally. It may well be called a narrow path, a great fight of afflictions, a warfare, a way where there is no way, an unknown path, a deep and hidden path. As it is written: “Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known. Thou leddest thy people like a flock.” “Thy judgments are a great deep.” This path is the “blessings of the deep that lieth under,” (Gen. xlix. 25,) the subterraneous stream of life that works its way beneath the surface, and at times sweetly springs up into everlasting life in the heart. All our trials and troubles; all our tormenting and soul-sinking doubts and fears about the reality and truth of our religion, and our utter inability to help ourselves; all our shut up, embarrassed, and straitened feelings in prayer; all our darkness and misery of soul from the feeling sense of an absent God; all the brewings up and breakings forth of a fallen, depraved, corrupt, and abominable heart, and the guilt and sorrow attending it; all Satan’s temptations, and all outward and temporal troubles; all serve to make us fit subjects for the Lord’s free and sovereign grace, and to make us fit vessels for the Lord’s blessed word to fit our hearts, that we may be comforted, and magnify the matchless mercy and love of the Triune God of Israel. These painful lessons bring us into close quarters with God, and the end of these, sooner or later, will be a blessing to our souls. They teach us sound wisdom; *i.e.*, experimental wisdom. They cause us to lift up our voice after spiritual wisdom; after divine teaching; and after ‘the love, grace, and mercy of God manifested to our souls, and to seek for those blessings more than they that seek for hid treasure. (See Prov. ii. 1–9.)

I hope the Lord will go on to be gracious to you and your family, until he bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noon-day. Then it will be clear enough; for there is no light (natural) brighter than the noon day. Then you will not grope in the dark, then you will not mope and repine, but be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of the Lord’s house. Blessed state! Remember me to your wife and family.

Yours to serve in the bond of truth,

Preston, March 17, 1841.

JNO. M'KENZIE.

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SINNERS are called on to believe, but to believe after the order of free grace; that is, that they be first self-lost and sick, and then be saved by the Physician.—*Rutherford*.



## Obituary.

### JOHN BRICE, OF STOCKPORT.

ON February 22nd, 1864, John Brice, of Stockport, aged 75.

He was brought to feel a concern about his soul when 24 years years of age. The Lord found him indeed in the ways of sin and vice, and as he was very fond of company, his Sabbaths were mostly spent with his companions in the fields, or some other place of pleasure. It was on one of these excursions that the Lord made him feel concerned about soul matters. He laboured hard to put these convictions and the evil day far from him, by joining his companions when opportunity offered; but one night, when in bed, he had a most distressing dream, in which he heard a voice saying, "Wilt thou go on in sin, and be damned?" This caused him altogether to leave his former associates, and seek after and desire to know one thing only, how a sinner could be saved. But finding no interpreter, his inquiry was in vain. After running here and there without success, he concluded that what he felt must be an earnest of eternal destruction. But the Lord was again pleased to speak to his soul in a way much like the first. He seemed to see himself on a large hill, at the foot of which was an immense gulf. He felt an impression that his lot was to perish in it. But while rolling towards it, he laid hold of something like a root, by which he held, until at length a hand reached him, which raised him up, and he felt strength given him to flee from the danger. Upon this he awoke, crying out, "Let us go further, we are not safe yet." This dream or vision made a lasting impression on his mind, and raised him up to a little hope. Though much disliking the Particular Baptists, he thought, as nothing but grief and confusion arose in his mind from the other preaching, he would venture, and that but once, just to hear what they might say. An old man, whom he never knew, was preaching in a room near. So John found himself among the few who went to hear him. The old man's text was: "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness." This suitable text found its way into his heart, for the word was like water to the thirsty soul. Shortly after this, he attended the ministry of Mr. Handforth, then at Gatley. He found in this good man's preaching, food "well winnowed with the shovel and the fan." It was in Mr. Handforth's chapel that he first heard the late Mr. Gadsby, which was a further help to his soul; and this led him to Manchester, where, after a while, he saw baptism as a Christian ordinance, and was baptized by Mr. Gadsby, after a powerful sermon from Job xix. 28. This was a time much to be remembered by him, for the baptism wherewith Christ was baptised was then opened up to the eye of his faith. But after this he was sorely tempted. Thinking the step he had taken was a wrong one, he told his wife, saying, "O, that I had never joined these people; I shall never hold out to the end." She replied, "You will do as well as some others;" not understanding his feelings. But this was no comfort to John, who felt his need of being kept by a divine power.

Passing over the middle part of his life, which was made up, as the psalmist says of himself, of "judgment and mercy," we come to his latter days. About three years ago, when coming down stairs in a hurry, he fell and broke his arm. Upon the heels of this visitation came much darkness of mind. First, he murmured at the painful misfortune; next, came self-pity; next, rebellion with despondency, and a measure of internal wretchedness much like despair. This lasted till his life became to him nothing but a scene of wretchedness. At length the Lord's time came. This portion brought deliverance: "Will not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him? Yea, he will avenge them speedily, though he bear long with them." He escaped as a bird from the hand of the fowler; but his health now much failed, and infirmities came on with much speed. But, as the outward man decayed, the inward man was renewed day by day. It was thought he would have died six months before the time fully came; but the Lord brought him about again for a short time; nor was he confined to his bed till about two months ago. He now felt death nigh at hand; but the Lord was far from comforting his soul, and he had to walk in darkness, without any shining light. When he was asked how he felt in his mind, he could only say, "Dark, dark; yea, 'a darkness that can be felt.'" At length the Lord was pleased to bestow upon him, for a short time, a measure of peace, enabling him to turn again to many places where he had blessed him. He could now remember his early days with pleasure, believing that what he then experienced was of the Lord. About three weeks before he died, he wished much to hear the Scriptures read, and prayer to be offered up by the friends who came to see him, and his mouth was opened to speak freely of the things of God and truth. A hymn, and this verse of it especially, was at this time much blessed to him:

"Should I joy thy saints to meet,  
Love the things I once abhorr'd,  
Find at times the promise sweet,  
If I did not love the Lord?"

This time of refreshing lasted, more or less, three days; then he sank still deeper into darkness, which was the heaviest the two last days of his life, for Satan was allowed to come in upon his soul like the breaking in of waters. His principal sayings were: "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? O, that the Lord would appear! If all the world were mine, yea, a thousand worlds, freely would I give all if I did but feel Christ was mine. After 53 years of profession, am I to be lost?" About three hours before his departure, some one asked him how he felt. He exclaimed, with tears in his eyes, "No hope." Some time before, he had made a promise to the writer that, if it were well with him at last, he would try and let it be known. His daughter and wife knew the matter, but after what had passed were afraid he would be taken away in his present darkness. Looking, however, steadfastly at him, they saw a change come over his countenance; his very flesh appeared to alter. He began to smile and lighten up in a way none can understand unless they have

seen it. His daughter, remembering the former promise, said, "Is it well?" He raised his hand as far as strength would enable him, saying, with much confidence, "It is well." After a pause, she again said, "And is it really well?" Again, with the same smile, he said, "It is well." Here his happy spirit took its flight. He passed through many troubles; but was enabled to lean on that strong Arm "which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar." Thus it may be truly said that he passed through many changes, but made a blessed end, and died in peace.

Stockport.

G. C.

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### JEHOVAH JIREH.

GEN. xxii. 14.

BELIEVER, lift thine head in every circumstance,  
And rest assured in this, there's nothing comes by chance.  
Though dark may be thy way, and distant be thy guide,  
That God who hath provided will provide.

False friends may try to tread thy fainting spirit down,  
Disdainfully look on, and mock, and jeer, and frown;  
But O, amidst the whole, cleave close to Jesus' side,  
And he that hath provided will provide.

Thy father's house may scoff and speak reproachfully,  
Thy mother's too as well, and shun thy company;  
Smile at this trying path, disdainfully deride.  
Still he who hath provided will provide.

Is poverty thy lot, and is the cupboard bare?  
Still fly to him who waits to hear and answer prayer;  
Pursue the path to bliss, and thou shalt be supplied.  
That God who hath provided will provide.

Fight manfully for truth in every form and part,  
And let professors see it is with all thine heart;  
Extol King Jesus high, whoever may deride,  
And he who hath provided will provide.

Be not ashamed of Christ at any time or place;  
In all thy words and ways exalt redeeming grace;  
Proclaim eternal love, whatever may betide,  
And he who hath provided will provide.

When God's afflicting hand is heavily on thee,  
And thou art brought to feel care and necessity,  
Try hard to trust thy God; press against wind and tide,  
And he who hath provided will provide.

In Jordan's stream he'll be thy Almighty Friend;  
His promise is, "I will be with thee to the end;  
Thy name upon my breast shall evermore abide;  
Thy God who hath provided will provide.

"When labouring for breath, and when thy eye-balls roll }  
With agony and pain, I will sustain thy soul;  
Through death's dark valley I will be thy Friend and Guide,  
And then for thee I will eternally provide."

Lew Down.

RICHARD BICKELL.

## INQUIRY.

## THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART.

"But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let the children of Israel go."—EXODUS x. 20.

SOME time ago, an Inquiry was sent us, as a private communication, requesting of us some explanation of the above text; the writer, like many others doubtless, feeling herself unable to reconcile the hardening of Pharaoh's heart with her ideas of the justice and righteousness of God.

To relieve, if not explain the difficulty, (for a difficulty may be relieved of its heaviest pressure, even where it cannot be fully removed out of the way,) we returned to our inquirer a few thoughts upon the subject; and, as it has struck our mind they might not be unacceptable to those of our readers who have felt the same difficulty, we have been induced to give them a place, with some enlargements and additions, in our pages.

Dear Madam,—By a singular coincidence, I had been reading, in my morning perusal of the Scriptures, that part of the Book of Exodus in which the dealings of God with Pharaoh are related by the sacred historian; and I need not say that the same question arose in my breast which sprang up in yours, for it is too prominent a feature not to present itself to an inquiring mind.

As far then as regards my own views and feelings, I seem to see some deep and important truths couched in it, which may tend, with God's help and blessing, to relieve your mind of that great weight of difficulty which seems to press upon it.

1st. I see in it the *sovereignty* of Jehovah. This is clearly declared by the apostle, Rom. ix. 17. It may seem hard to us that God should specially raise up a man that he might show forth his power in him, even when that power was to be manifested in his destruction. But though our natural mind may recoil from this, we are bound to submit to the inspired testimony. It is, indeed, a part, and a very necessary part, of faith to believe what we cannot comprehend. The sovereignty of God is a great deep, but is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures as his mercy, his love, or his grace; and is therefore as much to be received by faith. We are not at liberty to receive or to reject the revelation which God has made of himself just according to our conceptions; nor are we to measure by our finite line the infinite depths of the revealed perfections of Jehovah. The sovereignty of God meets us, not only in the case of Pharaoh, but at every turn. Whatever difficulty we may feel in reconciling our ideas of the justice of God with his hardening the heart of the Egyptian king, of this one thing we are well assured, that the Judge of the whole earth must do right. It becomes us, then, rather to say, "O the depth!" than cavil at the sovereignty of the Supreme Majesty of heaven.

2. But, 2ndly, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, which has puzzled so many, may, I think, be received as a *judicial hardening*. We

can hardly think that God put forth a special power to harden the heart of Pharaoh as he puts forth a special power to soften the heart of a saint. But he left him to his own devices. Being an enemy to his people, an oppressor, and a persecutor, he had no claim upon God to show him mercy. God, therefore, justly left him to himself; and this leaving him to himself produced hardness, as the going down of the sun produces night, or the absence of heat causes cold. It can not be said that the sun is the cause of night, or that heat is the cause of frost. So when unbelief and obduracy of heart presented themselves to Pharaoh's mind; when he encouraged, indulged, and eventually fell a prey to them, it was not so much God's hardening his heart as his hardening his own, which was the cause of his destruction. We therefore read, "But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them;" and again, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go." (Exod. viii. 15, 32.) Neither judgment nor mercy had any effect upon him, for we read, "And when Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunders were ceased, he sinned yet more, and hardened his heart, he and his servants." (Exod. ix. 34.) When a sinner is determined to disobey; when neither mercy nor judgment has any effect upon him; when in obstinate rebellion he fights against God with desperate enmity, is it unrighteous with the Lord to let him go on in the way which he has chosen, and let him perish in his sins?

3. But, 3rdly, consider again the *mighty miracles* which were wrought before his eyes—miracles of so stupendous a nature as one would have thought would have convinced him, not only of the mighty power, but of the sovereign will of God. But he seems not only to have hardened his heart, but to have closed his eyes, and exercised violence upon his natural judgment. He was so determined to disbelieve and to disobey that he must have forced himself, as it were, to do so in direct opposition to his own convictions. Now, God was under no compulsion to overcome his unbelief, if he set himself deliberately to disbelieve. The Lord did, so to speak, everything that he could do to convince him, short of bestowing upon him his grace; and if, in spite of these convincing miracles, he persisted in disobedience and in obstinate resistance to his declared will, God was not bound to treat him as a friend, when he was acting as a deliberate and most obdurate enemy.

4. But, consider 4thly, that the Lord had a *special purpose* to bring to light and to work out by means of Pharaoh's obduracy. He had to *punish* the Egyptians for their cruel persecution of his people Israel. We therefore find that the plagues of Egypt fell upon the people as well as upon their prince. They had taken a part in making the children of Israel serve with rigour. It was meet, therefore, that those who had persecuted God's chosen people should reap the fruit of it. This is the Lord's usual way of avenging the wrongs done to his people. Now the circumstance that Pharaoh hardened his heart so long and so obstinately, drew forth that continued series of plagues whereby just punishment fell upon

the Egyptians. Had Pharaoh not hardened his heart, had he let the children of Israel go at the very first intimation of God, neither he nor the Egyptians would have been suitably or sufficiently punished for their persecutions of the children of Israel. Pharaoh's therefore hardening his heart became an indirect means of visiting them with some due proportion of punishment.

5. But consider, 5thly, the *testimony* which God gave thereby against the *idolatry* of Egypt. Their beloved river was turned into blood. The oxen which they worshipped, at least under the form of the bull Apis, were smitten with murrain; and their very personal habits of cleanliness, which they considered indispensable to religious sanctity, were fearfully infringed upon by the plagues of flies, frogs, and other more noxious vermin.

6. Observe also, 6thly, what a *lesson* the Lord was thereby *teaching the children of Israel* of his own power and greatness, as well as of his special love and mercy toward them. The distinction which he made between them and the Egyptians, in the infliction of the plagues only upon the latter, were convincing evidences to his own people of his mercy and love towards them; and the wondrous displays of his Almighty power were meant to convince them, in the most marked way, of the difference between the idols of Egypt and the God of their fathers, the great and glorious I AM.

7. But, not to multiply further considerations, observe also how these dealings of God with Pharaoh have been a *means, through all time, of magnifying the power of God* in the deliverance of his people; and being recorded in the word of truth are, from age to age, a standing memorial of the love of God toward his friends, and of the wrath of God against his foes.

Now when we look at these considerations, and doubtless there are many others of a similar nature, we cannot but admire the wisdom of God in allowing Pharaoh thus to harden his heart. What a warning is thereby afforded to persecutors of the Church of God! What encouragement to the persecuted that the Lord will hear their groans as he did those of the children of Israel! How every godly Israelite might look back to the days of old, and read in the dealings of God with Pharaoh an everliving history of judgment and mercy. Read in the light of the Spirit, the whole narrative becomes pregnant with instruction. But, in order to reap that instruction from it, we must do what Moses did at God's command, put the shoes of carnal reason from off our feet whilst we tread holy ground. Thus, whatever our carnal mind may suggest to question the dealings of God in hardening Pharaoh's heart, true faith will acquiesce in his wisdom.

I hope that the Lord may bless these considerations of the subject to your mind. Though I do not profess to be able entirely to remove the difficulty which has perplexed you, yet I trust they may afford you ground for quietly waiting at the Lord's feet in that submission of judgment to the infinite wisdom of God, which well becomes a worm of the dust.

Yours very sincerely for truth's sake,

Stamford.

J. C. P.

## REVIEW.

*Rejoicing Novices and Grooming Veterans. An Address to the Upper, Middle, and Lower Classes. By William Parks, B.A., Rector of Openshaw, Manchester. In which are clearly shown the Folly and Absurdity of the "Always Rejoicing" Theory, lately become so fashionable amongst certain Religious Professors. Manchester: Edwin Slater, 129, Market Street. 1864.*

MR. PARKS is a very bold and faithful writer; and there is a pungency in his style, and every now and then a downright, straightforward homeliness of expression, which give peculiar force to his language, and stamp it as altogether original. He usually sees very clearly into his subject; and as he is much delivered from the fear of man which bringeth a snare, he faithfully and unshrinkingly expresses by his pen what he has firmly grasped by his mind. He is one of those few men who say what they mean and mean what they say; and this is no small advantage in a writer who brings his thoughts before the church of God on such weighty and important matters as usually exercise his pen. Such men, even though in some points they may be defective in knowledge or experience, and in others rash in judgment or hasty in expression, are yet much to be valued for their sterling worth, and almost so in proportion to their rarity. This is a day of compromise. The sharp, salient edges of truth are mostly pared away with the nicest care, and rounded off with the greatest assiduity, for fear, we suppose, lest any babe in grace should inadvertently run against them and get a sad hurt. Should such a distressing accident happen to any of the little ones who are just beginning to run alone, how the tender nurses catch him up at once in their arms to soothe his sorrows; and how they call out against that great, ugly table, or that naughty chair, which has so hurt the little dear. "It is this ever preaching election which does so much mischief; this telling the people that Christ died only for just a particular few, and not throwing wide open the arms of mercy; this always talking about a work of grace upon the heart; and how we must feel the curse of the law and convictions of sin before we can know the comforts of the gospel. This kind of preaching distresses the little ones, and puts a stumbling-block in the way of those who are being drawn by love. Our way is to preach Christ at once, and offer him, without exception, to all who will accept him, and that immediately, without all this unnecessary bondage and distress. No wonder there are so few rejoicing Christians. No wonder there is so much moping, so much groaning and sighing, and hanging the head down like a bulrush. What we like to see is, happy Christians; and the religion which we think the best of is, cheerful piety, taking God at his word, believing the promises, and living above doubts and fears." Now is not this just the language of the day, the main staple of scores of books and tracts, and the cry of hundreds of popular pulpits? Need we, then, be surprised that our amiable writers and our soft, mild, gentle preachers, with such views as these, are so afraid of giving pain to

their susceptible readers and their tender-hearted hearers that, instead of blowing the trumpet in Zion, and sounding an alarm in the holy mountain, they rather sing a perpetual lullaby. Nothing, they think, is worse, or more alarming to the people than brandishing before their eyes a drawn sword; and the very idea of plunging it deep into the conscience of any of their decidedly pious and most consistent and respectable hearers, fills them with the same feminine tenderness of blood and suffering as we may suppose a recruit feels when he first screws on the bayonet and advances to the charge. Such writers and preachers are as tremblingly sensitive to the tears of suffering on Christian faces as any mother whose darling boy has fallen down and hurt himself. Deep distress of conscience, agonising fears of the wrath to come, powerful convictions of sin, putting away of all hope or comfort which does not come direct from the Lord, doubts, fears, and slavish bondage under the curse of the law and the apprehended wrath of the Almighty—such and similar experience is now almost universally set aside as unnecessary to the new birth; and an easier path is held forth as equally safe and far more comfortable. But, however plausible it may appear in theory, and however pleasing it may be to the flesh, especially when dressed up with eloquent language and enforced with strong appeals to the natural feelings, what is all this soft and gentle preaching and writing but doing the very thing which God has so denounced in his holy word? How he testifies against those prophets “who prophesy smooth things; who prophesy deceits; who know not the way of the Lord, nor have walked in his counsel, but prophesy a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought and the deceit of their heart.” (Jer. xiv. 14.) How, too, the prophet Ezekiel denounces the false prophets of his day, of whom one built up a wall, and others daubed it with untempered mortar. How he testifies against those foolish women that sew pillows to all armholes; and how he declares what the effect of all such smooth preaching is: “With lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad, and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life.” (Ezek. xiii. 10, 18, 22.)

There is no greater mark of false ministers given in the word of truth than “healing the hurt of the daughter of God’s people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” (Jer. viii. 11.) If we carefully read the book of Jeremiah, we shall see that the great sin and the chief deception of all the false prophets who sprang up in scores during the period of his ministry was to build up the people in a false hope; to assure them that they had no reason to fear the judgments of God, for that the Lord would not execute against them what he threatened. They therefore hardened the people in sin and disobedience, took them off all repentance and forsaking of their sins, led them to trifle with and despise the judgments of God, and built them up in a false confidence that, because they were the people of God by external profession, they were his also by regenerating grace. Thus they took the very doctrine of God’s



having a peculiar people, whom he loved and would never forsake, and abused it to the building up of an ungodly professing people upon the foundation of God's love and faithfulness to his own elect. If our eyes were fully open to see the effect of the false teaching of our day, we should see it equally dishonouring to God, and pregnant with equally awful consequences. We should see hundreds of dead professors built up without a foundation ever having been laid in their consciences of repentance toward God. We should see sin made a little matter of, the awful anger of the Almighty against it, and his terrible indignation against transgressors passed by as a thing of little moment. We should see the strait and narrow path widened out in all directions; the promises and invitations torn away from their connection; the distinguishing truths of the gospel beaten down into, and amalgamated with, the grossest errors; the precepts of the word dislocated and distorted; and the clear revelation of God's mind and will given in the New Testament softened and accommodated to the reasoning mind, and the proud self-righteousness of man. And it needs must be so; for the word of grace is such a consistent and harmonious whole, that unless it is held by the teaching of the Spirit in the hand of a living faith, all attempts to interpret it must issue in confusion.

But to show more clearly the emptiness and inconsistency of the current ministry of the day, let us take one familiar instance. There is, then, as it appears to us, no greater or more widely-spread delusive teaching, both in town and country, than the constant cry both from pulpit and press, addressed to all, without explanation or exception, "Come to Jesus." We shall therefore attempt briefly to show the real nature and tendency of this ever-recurring invitation.

That which is the peculiar, the sole privilege of the sheep of Christ; that which our Lord expressly tells us no man can do except he be specially taught and drawn of the Father; that which is the particular act of a living faith, such as is given to none but the elect; that which is intended for, and addressed to the hungry, the thirsty, the weary and heavy-laden, the outcast and ready to perish, is now made to be the duty of all men, an easy and simple act which everybody is bound to do, and which anybody can do if he likes. "Come to Jesus" is spread abroad in tracts by thousands; is printed in all types, sets, and sizes; is thrown down area steps, spread about broad-cast at fairs, horse-races, and executions; and is the standing stock-in-trade of every beardless youth who, on a Sunday afternoon, can get round him a knot of idlers to preach to in the parks. We may seem to be severe on this point; but to show the fallacy and deceptiveness of this universal call to come to Jesus, at first sight so scriptural and evangelical, let us assume that it is listened to and acted upon. Step into that crowded chapel where, amidst the blaze of gas and warmed with his subject, the fervid preacher is calling on his hearers to come to Jesus, and to come at once. Assume that, wrought upon by his ardent eloquence and his urgent appeals, the whole congregation, as if moved by an uncontrollable impulse, at once started upon their feet, and cried aloud,

as with a universal shout, "Sir, we will do what you bid us, and we will do it now. We will and do all of us come to Christ this very moment." Now would this determination, bring them one step nearer to heaven? If all of them, men, women, and children, were to come to Christ in the feelings of their mind, as well as the expression of their lips, without any divine breathing upon their soul, without any teaching or drawing of God, without any descent of the Holy Ghost upon their heart, as at the day of Pentecost, what would all this coming to Christ be but an act of the natural mind, an emotion of, and in the flesh, and therefore neither pleasing to God, (Rom. viii. 8,) nor of any profit to them? (John vi. 63.) Where, in all this mere mental, natural, carnal coming to Christ, would be the new birth, without which there is neither seeing nor entering into the kingdom of God? Where repentance unto life? Where any translation from the power of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Where any divine light, life, or power? Where any teaching or testimony, work or witness of the Holy Ghost? Where any one of his heavenly graces or spiritual fruits? It is, in fact, man's substitute for the work of God, an insidious way of throwing over the new birth, and of trampling down the strait gate and the narrow way. It is putting the special prerogative of Christ, ("The Son quickeneth whom he will,") into the hands of every man to do for himself, and thus, in fact, make man his own saviour. All such preaching and all such coming begin and end in the flesh. It is at best, therefore, but a kindling a fire and walking in the sparks of it, of which the end at God's hand, if grace prevent not, will be to lie down in sorrow.

But we have wandered from our subject, and from Mr. Parks's little tract; and yet not altogether from some connection with both, for the view which he so manfully attacks, "the always rejoicing theory," as he terms it, is closely allied to the popular cry of coming to Jesus. They both have a show of agreement with the letter of Scripture; just sufficient to give them currency in the religious world,—just enough water to float them out on the great stream of profession. It is with popular errors as with popular slanders. There must be a certain amount of truth in them to give them vitality. None would take a brass sovereign, however well coined; gild it nicely, and it may pass. So most errors are gilt over with truth; or, to change the figure, many are letter truths held in the dead hand of notion; but torn from their right place in the analogy of faith and in the inward kingdom of heaven. That believers may and do rejoice in tribulation; that as their sufferings abound, so does their consolation; that though in heaviness, through manifold temptations, they may still, as believing in Jesus, rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, is most true in Scripture and in experience. But the experience of some is not the duty nor even the privilege of all. If the Lord bless the soul with manifestations of his presence and the sheddings abroad of his love, and if under these gracious in-shinings it is enabled to rejoice in the midst of persecution, or pain,

or bereavements, or deep trials, this is but the effect of his special grace. But to call upon all believers thus always to rejoice as a matter of duty, or privilege, or precept, or exhortation, is a proof of the grossest ignorance of what this rejoicing is. It is setting up a doctrine, a theory, a notion, a mere sentiment or religious view in the place of the special blessing of God, and of those peculiar manifestations of his love which are so rarely given to, and yet so highly prized by his own people. It is bidding us catch ourselves up into the third heaven, because Paul was caught up there, and to speak to ourselves unspeakable words, because such he heard in Paradise. It is, in fact, taking the letter of Scripture to destroy the experience of Scripture. It is emboldening and hardening "novices," as Mr. Parks justly calls them, to assume to themselves the choicest favours of God as common things to which they have a right. It therefore fosters the most daring presumption, leading men unhumiliated and unbroken to trifle with God by rejoicing in him as their Father, without his giving them the spirit of adoption, and claiming Christ as their Saviour, without any manifestation of his Person or love. What must be the end of such novices, if grace prevent not? Either a hardened confidence or miserable despair.

But it is time to give some account of, and some extracts from, Mr. Parks's tract. Like most of his other writings, it is bold, faithful, and unflinching, and contains a good amount of sound argument. The following extract will give a good idea of the general staple of the work.

"Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."—HEB. xii. 12, 13.

"The very fact of the apostles continually warning, exhorting, counselling, and comforting those to whom they wrote, is a clear proof that Christians in the primitive times did not find the path Zionward an easy one. Language like the above is wholly incompatible with the modern theory of 'always rejoicing,' and the only thing to be wondered at is the hardihood and want of common sense in those who maintain the opposite side of the question. Indeed, as we meditate upon the apostles' oft-repeated counsels, upon the facts brought to light by the Epistles, upon the melancholy prognostications about the future of true Christians in this life, and, above all, upon our own sober and solemn experience compared with that of many others whom we believe to be manifested children of God, we are forced to the conclusion that they who always rejoice must either be novices, or hypocrites, or extraordinarily favoured persons!

"The life of a Christian is a struggle, a fight, a conflict, a warfare, in which the most desperate efforts are made by the arch enemy of souls to overthrow him; and how any real actor, soldier, or combatant in such a strife can always rejoice, is as utterly incomprehensible to me as the skipping and singing of a regiment in the midst of the din and roar of battle. After a *victory*, (even a temporary one,) I could understand the regiment's delight; but as long as there was danger about, or the smart of wounds felt, or the terrible slaughter by the enemy witnessed, I should unhesitatingly pronounce the men composing it to be insane!

"I know that Paul's own expressions are brought to bear against my views upon this question. The antithetical phrase, '*Sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,*' is pointed to as an unanswerable proof that if this be not the ordinary Christian's experience, he doesn't know the Lord. But what fallacious folly is this! What schoolboy superficiality is here! What outrageous recklessness does such dealing with the word of God exhibit!

"Am I Paul? Have I Paul's graces, Paul's privileges, Paul's power? Nay, for though I have 'like-precious faith' with him, it is not of the same measure or quantity, and in comparison with him I am but a weakling and a babe!"

But though we fully agree with much of the tract, and admire the bold, uncompromising way in which Mr. Parks has exposed the delusive confidence of those who profess to be always rejoicing, yet we feel that we cannot comfortably close our Review without naming two things which struck our mind after carefully perusing his little work.

1. We seem first to desire in it a greater subduedness of tone, a more mellow, chastened, savory, and unctuous spirit pervading and animating it, and bedewing it with that peculiar authority and power which carry not only conviction to the understanding, but an indelible persuasion to the heart. "The weapons of our warfare," says the apostle, "are not carnal, but mighty, through God, to the pulling down of strong-holds." (2 Cor. x. 4.) By the laying aside of carnal and the taking up of spiritual weapons, not an atom of faithfulness need be sacrificed, and yet the whole work be more effectually done. We wish, however, to speak tenderly upon this point, our aim being, not to discourage faithful men from boldly assailing error, but to point out where they often err, and where we have erred, and still do err ourselves, and perhaps in this very Review. "Though we walk in the flesh, we should not war after the flesh," nor beat down error by the mere force of strong words, in which, perhaps, there is more of our own spirit than the power of God. When Mr. Parks gets older, and has been more in the furnace of affliction, he will see this more clearly, and that there is a way of beating down error, as Owen and Bunyan used to beat it down, with the greatest faithfulness, and yet the sweetest savour of the Spirit of Christ and the power of God.\*

2. The second thing which struck our mind is, that Mr. Parks, with all his general clearness of view and ability in argument, has rather failed in hitting the exact point of the controversy. His *forte* is rather to pull down than to build up, and his arm seems stronger to pluck up an error than to plant a truth—at least in this instance, where much skill and experience are needed to put it in its right place in the garden of the Lord. In consequence of this, some texts he seems to us to have rather explained away than to have explained; for instance, the passage "sorrowful yet always rejoicing."† This, we think, the following extract will show.

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\* We may instance Mr. Bourne's Letters as a remarkable example of this combination of faithful testimony against error with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power. No man was more opposed to this always rejoicing in the letter of the word than Mr. B., or has spoken more strongly against it; but with what weighty words—because so scriptural and experimental, and out of the fulness of his own heart!

† We also object to his explanation (in a note) of Phil. iii. 1, and iv. 4, and 1 Thess. v. 16, as "meaning nothing more than an affectionate greeting at parting." It is quite true that the Greek word translated "rejoice" may be rendered "farewell," as 2 Cor. xiii. 11, but never so in the middle of an epistle, and especially when joined with "always." It is simply absurd to say "always farewell." We must say that such an explanation is neither sound criticism nor good divinity, and weakens instead of strengthens his argument.

“But I will go farther, and question whether Paul *did* always rejoice. I will not lay undue weight upon the terrible soul conflict he has recorded in Rom. ix., where he has said, ‘I could wish that I myself were a curse (a thing accursed) from Christ, on behalf of my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh;’ Rom. ix. 3; for the meaning of the apostle is obscure; but if it were what competent scholars have taken it to mean, there could have been no rejoicing in Paul’s soul *then*; but I would point to one or two circumstances in his life, wherein it was a moral impossibility he could have rejoiced, viz. :—

“1. He was sadly grieved by the conduct of the Corinthians and of the Galatians, (2 Cor. vii. 5; xii. 20; 1 Cor. iv. 21; Gal. iv. 11,) and was filled with fears concerning them. Now it is not at all likely that he could have rejoiced under such circumstances. True, he says, ‘I am exceedingly joyful in all our tribulation;’ (2 Cor. vii. 4;) but we must remember that this joyfulness was *after* the coming of Titus to tell him of the repentance and godly sorrow of the Corinthians, *not* whilst he was in suspense and fear.

“2. Paul was terribly afflicted with ‘a thorn in the flesh,’ which so harassed him that he besought the Lord three several times to remove it; but the Lord would not grant his petition. (2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.) Now it is wholly incredible that Paul rejoiced whilst he was struggling in prayer for the removal of this annoyance—this ‘messenger of Satan’ that so buffeted him. True, again he says, ‘Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities. I will glory in my infirmities;’ (2 Cor. xii. 9, 10;) but we must remember that this was *after* the Lord had soothed and consoled him concerning this matter, and *not* whilst he was in the midst of his conflict.

“In short, it is evident that Paul had had practical experience of what he wrote to the Hebrew Christians, namely, ‘No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, *afterward* it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.’ (Heb. xii. 11.) Whilst the chastening is going on, an apostle himself cannot regard it as joyous, but grievous; but when the result is blessed, *then* his soul is filled with joy.

“Brethren in the Lord Jesus, it is exactly so with you and me. *Always* rejoicing is an absurdity in theory, and an impossibility in fact; and we may safely come to the conclusion that they who are strangers to this truth, or pretend to be strangers to it, have either never been in the Christian conflict, or have very bad memories.”

This seems to us rather like setting Paul against Paul. Martyrs have rejoiced in their dungeons. God may pour in his greatest consolations under the greatest afflictions. We must not then say it was “a moral impossibility” that Paul could rejoice under such and such distressing circumstances, unless we can measure the amount of consolations poured into his heart. Similarly, there is great truth and force in the following extract and yet we see in it a missing of the exact point.

“When the Christian can realise the Saviour’s presence, when he has had prayer answered, when he has escaped the net of the fowler, when he has received a sweet promise into his very soul, he rejoices indeed; but as these things are not always happening, it is clear the Christian is not always rejoicing.

“I have met with individuals who were reckless enough to say, that in the very midst of their trials they could always rejoice; yea, that the deeper the trial the greater their joy! How to deal with such persons I hardly know; but I would venture to ask them a few questions. Now suppose the case of a Christian man with a godless wife, or a Christian woman with a godless husband; or suppose Christian parents with godless children; can these rejoice always? What! When persecuted, and taunted, and worried, to the very verge of blasphemy? (Acts xxvi. 11.)

“Or suppose the Christian tradesman, toiling with hands and head from morning till night for a thankless and disobedient family; and suppose that

after all this man's diligence in business, and fervour of spirit, he utterly fails, and is brought to ruin; can he always rejoice?

"Or suppose even a more trying case, namely, that of the graceless son or daughter of Christian parents, after neglecting parental warnings, and living without hope and without God in the world; suppose this child to be summoned before the judgment-bar of God, without a moment's time for a cry for mercy; can those parents rejoice? Can they lift up their hearts with joy under such terrible affliction as that?"

"Surely not! Deprive these Christians of their *nature*, stop up the fountain of their affection, quench their human sympathies, make brutes or angels of them, and then they may rejoice; but most certainly *not* under ordinary circumstances!"

All this is most true, and very forcibly and clearly put, and is indeed a complete answer to those who say we ought always to rejoice as our Christian privilege. And yet there is a truth and an experience deeper than all this. Under ordinary circumstances, none, no, not even the most experienced Christian can rejoice amidst such heart-rending trials. And yet God might enable him so to do. Who under ordinary circumstances can rejoice in a sick bed? And yet hundreds have rejoiced in it. Who under ordinary circumstances can rejoice in death? And yet thousands have rejoiced in it. Who under ordinary circumstances can rejoice in persecution, poverty, contempt and shame? And yet hundreds have rejoiced in them. Who under ordinary circumstances can rejoice in a cancer in the breast, in a consumption in the lungs, or a stone in the bladder? And yet many have rejoiced in them all.

Where Mr. Parks errs, is in denying the possibility of rejoicing under circumstances of peculiar distress. But what is impossible with man is possible with God. In ordinary cases, the joy comes after the trouble; but there are extraordinary cases where joy comes in the very midst of the trouble. See Hab. iii. 17, 18; Rom. v. 3; 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 5; 1 Thess. i. 6.

With these deductions, which we felt we could not fairly withhold, we consider Mr. Parks's little tract a faithful testimony against a delusive error.

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### THY NAME IS AS THE OINTMENT POURED FORTH.

CANT. i. 3.

SWEET'S the savour of his name,  
Who to ransom rebels came;  
Sing my soul and greatly laud  
Jesus, thy incarnate God.

Magnify him, all on earth,  
Who are born of heavenly birth;  
Magnify his name with me,  
Sing the incarnate mystery.

Him who made my nature his,  
Me to raise to heights of bliss;  
Christ, who riches did forego,  
On me riches to bestow.

Gospel, Feb. 17th, 1864.

Holy Ghost, make known to me  
More and more this mystery;  
God incarnate more reveal,  
And my interest in him seal.

Show me more and more, that he  
Bore my sins upon the tree;  
Took away my every sin,  
Righteousness for me brought in.

Glorify that matchless One  
God's own co-eternal Son,  
Who to ransom rebels came;  
Sweet's the savour of his name.

A. H.

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I AM weary of the instability of the streams. O let me go to the fountain. When I am saying, I shall die in my nest, my nest is soon fired about my ears, and turned to ashes.—*Dorney*.

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

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MAY, 1864.

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

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

(Continued from p. 108.)

Looking back at 1801, I remember that it was a chequered scene all through. On the one hand, I experienced many tokens for good, many mercies and discoveries of the Redeemer's love, both in public and in private; and on the other hand, I had many sad proofs how low I was sunk by the fall; how deceitful and desperately wicked my heart was! I have often feared that I should be left to carry into practice the evils that were constantly boiling up in my heart, in spite of all my prayers and cries to God to keep me by his power. I had some temptations also very near me, and well calculated to suit the corrupt flesh of most men. What snares I refer to, my reader will find in Ecclesiastes vii. 26; from which, through God's mercy, I escaped but *very narrowly*, and not without defiling the conscience, and producing much confusion in my mind. I expected by this time to find my constitutional sins more brought into subjection, and supposed by the reign of grace I should feel less and less of the motions of sin; but in this I was deceived, for I found a constant warfare, and could not tell for some time what judgment to make of it. The most filthy and abominable thoughts used suddenly to spring up in my mind; and very commonly just after I had been much favoured with the Lord's sensible presence, which used to puzzle me exceedingly, and fill me with sorrow. At other times I seemed as if I took a real pleasure in indulging the flesh, which used to meet with frequent checks from the word of God, and fill me with dismay. Now I am inclined to think this was partly the work of Satan; for I often had this suggested to me: "How is it possible that you can prove yourself a child of God? You are nothing but a mass of unholiness and sin, and you have no *desire* to be otherwise. And really it appeared all true that was suggested to me at times. In the beginning of my preaching, I used to search the Scriptures in order to comfort others; but now, from the painful exercises of my mind, I was obliged to search the word for light upon my intricate path; and instead of choosing texts to preach from for the people, I was obliged to preach from such texts as suited myself, according as I

had received a little help from them; for, indeed, the Lord did often comfort and encourage me by many scriptures in this my day of trial. But I was soon robbed of all, and my old temptations returned again, which I thought prevented my preaching from being of any use to the people; on which ground I sometimes concluded I must cease preaching altogether.

I now see what I saw not then, that the Lord was leading me in paths which I knew not, and preparing me, by fiery trials, both to understand his word and to preach with profit to the tried and tempted, which no man can do unless he has been tried himself. Besides these temptations, I had many others, and strong oppositions raised in my mind against some of the leading doctrines of truth; so that I was obliged with prayer to try every doctrine I believed and preached by the word of God, which much established me in the truth of the doctrines, and in a firm persuasion that I had been rightly taught them.

It was about this time that I became more intimately acquainted with Dr. Hawker, who very cordially received me, and he was truly like a father and a friend to me. During 1801 and 1802, I used to have frequent interviews with Dr. Hawker, and received much instruction from him; for he was always ready, and would most cheerfully communicate any information I wanted, either of a literary or spiritual nature. After many conversations with him, he encouraged me to go forth in the ministry, and used every means to promote my success in the work. Many of the Dissenters at that time wanted the Doctor to leave the Establishment; yea, they found great fault with him because of what they called *bigotry!* but indeed, I have seen more bigotry in those men than ever I saw in the Doctor. He was a lover of all good men; differ as they might with him, or with each other, as to church discipline. He was above a little, narrow, sectarian spirit, and hundreds can testify the truth of what I say of him. His whole mind was occupied how he could do any good, either to the souls or bodies of men. Such men are very seldom to be met with; yet this blessed servant of Christ was continually harassed, not so much by the profane, as by the professing world! He was branded as an antinomian in all quarters of the kingdom, though his life was the most free from blots of any preacher I have known. Blessed servant of God! Thou art now out of the reach of the malignant tongue, and thy joy is full.

My readers will pardon this digression. I could not refrain from showing my regard to the memory of him whose name is dear to me, and to thousands in this kingdom, for Christ's sake.

During this year, 1802, as well as the former, I passed through many changes, sometimes joyous frames, and at other times grievous frames of soul; and I often said with Job, "Changes and war are against me."

I remember about this time I was favoured one day with some blessed discoveries of Christ by faith, so that my heart was with the Lord all day, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. There was to be a prayer-meeting the same evening at Dr. Hawker's school-room,



and the Doctor and a number of his friends used to meet on those occasions. Having been so happy all the day, I attended the meeting with high expectations, hoping that I should be called upon to engage in prayer; and so it fell out to my great mortification. After giving out the hymn I began to pray; but in one moment I was covered with a cloud of darkness, which threw me into such confusion of mind that I could recollect nothing that had been on my mind during the day; and my embarrassment was such that I could hardly express the few unconnected petitions I put up, so that in two or three minutes I gave up in the greatest perplexity. Service being over, I went away as fast as possible, for I was ashamed to look any of the brethren in the face. Most of the people knew that I had been some time preaching, here and there, and some of them had expressed a bad opinion of my preaching. I was, therefore, terribly cut up on that account; for I judged they would now have just reason to conclude that the Lord never designed me to preach, seeing I was not able to pray before the people. I never entered that school-room on a prayer-meeting night afterwards, I believe, fearing I might be called upon to engage in prayer. Thus, my pride had brought me low with a witness. Satan, also, took the advantage of my mortification, and suggested that my happiness during the day never could have come from God; if it had, I could not have been so suddenly hurled into this dismal place, so as to forget everything. Indeed, it appeared clear to me this was true, and sharp work I had of it, together with much fretfulness and rebellion against the Lord, that he should leave me thus to make a fool of myself, and thereby dishonour him.

Thus, my foolish heart for some time fretted against the Lord, but not without many rebukes from the word of God. After my spirit got a little calm, I began to consider soberly what the Lord might intend by this dispensation; and I perceived that the Lord's hand was in it, to humble my proud heart, and that I had been seeking my own gratification before his honour. I saw plainly how foolishly I had acted in indulging such thoughts as these, in my day of prosperity; for I thought that when I opened my mouth in prayer, the people would be astonished at the Lord's goodness to me; and this would remove their hard thoughts of me, and beget such a union between us that, instead of their looking cool and being distant in their carriage, they would covet my company more frequently! "A man's pride will bring him low." I think I learned more by this trial, painful as it was, than I should have learnt if the Lord had given me the desire of my heart.

From this time I began to be more cautious, having stumbled through my folly; and if the Lord favoured me to rejoice, it used to be with a measure of trembling. Yet I could not keep down pride, if the Lord granted me liberty in preaching, or if he appeared to bless the word to any one; and the appearance of this pride made me abhor myself, because I saw it was robbing God of the glory justly due unto his name. Besides, I trembled at his rod, for I knew the fool's back called for many stripes.

During the former two years I met with very few of the saints who seemed to be tried as I was; for some used to say, if I spoke to them about darkness of soul, indwelling sin, or Satan's temptations, "You must look to Christ. You must not look at yourself, nor at indwelling sin, nor temptations. What have you to do with these things?" But, alas! I found these things had much to do with me, so that I could not so readily take their advice, which no doubt was meant well; but they were physicians of no value to me. I do not lay any stress on my trials, nor judge another because he has not been led in my path; for I believe many are not, nor do I wish them to be. I would not lay a stumbling-block in the path of any of the Redeemer's tender lambs, for that is contrary to the instruction I have received from his blessed word, and contrary to the principle of love which should ever be exercised by the servants of Jesus towards the weakest believer. But if the Lord has a work for a man to do, he will fit that man for his work by manifold temptations; and it is by these things a man lives, out of love with himself, and in love with Christ.

But I often wrote bitter things against myself, that I was kept so much in the back ground, and all for want of better judgment. I was a dull scholar, and am still.

About the close of 1802, it struck me that I would leave Plymouth, and settle in London; and that for three reasons. First, my labour began to fall off; and to be destitute of sufficient labour is distressing to an honest, poor man. Secondly, I had, as far as I could see, very little success in preaching, after labouring some time in different places occasionally. Thirdly, I perceived a vast deal of frivolity in many who ranked high among the people with whom I was acquainted. They had gospel heads, but not broken hearts. They sat in the judgment-chair on many much better taught than themselves. These things made their conversation and company irksome to me, and I wished to leave them altogether. I also thought that if I went to London there might be a better prospect both for my business and to preach the gospel, if the Lord had designed me for the work; for this was still a question with me, except when the Lord comforted my heart in delivering his truth.

When I had pondered these things over, a thought for the first time struck me that I should like, if it were the Lord's will, to alter my condition before I left Plymouth, that I might have a home, and a friend, to share our joys and sorrows together. I had serious thoughts on the subject, and well considered the matter; which, I fear, is not always done even by God's people.

The words, "In all thy ways acknowledge him," at this time especially, as well as on many former occasions, were much impressed on my mind; for if a believer be not guided by the Lord, he will make a wrong choice, and that to his sorrow. The desired object was cast in my way without my seeking; and March 14th, 1803, I entered the honourable state of marriage, with an intention to go forthwith to London; but "man's goings are of the Lord. How, then, can he understand his way?" With a wife the Lord sent

me plenty of labour week after week, so that I could not leave without resisting the dictates of conscience, and the manifest interposition of providence. I still, month after month, entertained some hope that my way would be made clear to go to London; but all in vain at that time. Some circumstance or other continually thwarted my intentions, so that I came to a conclusion that it was the will of God for me to remain at Plymouth.

My mind thus settled in regard to the leadings of divine providence, I looked more to the thing in hand, and pursued my labour with better spirits; and the Lord prospered our labours so as to enable us to "provide things honest in the sight of all men." But these temporal blessings, which are from the Lord, were followed on my part with too much anxious thought about the things of this world, which perish with the using; and by degrees I grew lukewarm, or rather cold in the things of God. I had now a wife to provide for, and a family in prospect, and little or nothing of this world's goods. As I thought it was the Lord's will for me to abide in and live by my labour at my civil calling, I became indifferent about preaching, and thought if the Lord had designed me for the ministry he would have made it appear before that time. Besides, I thought that if I attempted to attend to preaching, I should be neglecting my lawful calling, which would bring me into reproach, as well as the cause of God. And further, I thought I was justified in abandoning all thoughts of the ministry, because I felt no heart for it, neither had I been favoured in reading and meditation as heretofore. Thus I came to a conclusion that I would never attempt to preach again, and was much pleased with the idea that I had got rid of a burden that so sorely tried me. I now pleased myself with the thought of being a hearer, and anticipated much pleasure in hearing Dr. Hawker and others who might fall in my way.

Now all appeared right. I was going to have comfortable Lord's days; hear the word with my wife and talk over the things of God at home; have spiritual refreshment and rest for the body after the fatigues of the week, and be quite ready for the toils of the next week. This was my golden dream; but it was painted in water colour, and it soon washed out. I attended chiefly on Dr. Hawker's ministry at this time, whose word had been much blessed to me in former times, as I have stated; but, alas! I could seldom hear him now with any sort of pleasure. He appeared to me to be a different preacher to what he had been. He dwelt much upon the great and precious doctrines of the gospel, as the doctrines of the Trinity, the Person of Christ as Mediator, his complete atonement for the sins of the elect, the saints' glorious union with Christ and their completeness in him, the Head; all which I approved of, for I had tasted their sweetness; but his ministry was not adapted for me at this time; neither do I think that his ministry, generally, was calculated for those whom the Lord sees fit to try as by fire.

After I had heard the word, I sometimes met in the churchyard with many I knew, and they used to be delighted with what they had heard. Many of those persons, I have not the shadow of a

doubt, felt the power of God under the Doctor's ministry. Some, I then feared, were rejoicing in his light; for their general conduct was not becoming the gospel; and my fears were confirmed subsequently. The Doctor sowed good seed, and the enemy sowed tares. I was at length so provoked and tried with my barren hearing, and the people's general rejoicing, that I determined to stop and speak to no one, if I could avoid it. Sometimes I used to get so angry with the preacher that I felt as if I must leave the place. Then again I used to think if God had sent me to preach, I could preach better than he; and after that I used to be reprov'd for my pride and presumption. Thus my golden dream all vanished; and in this state of silence, rebellion, and misery, I continued the best part of one year.

During this period, many thoughts I had respecting my having preached, and many fears arose in my mind that I had acted presumptuously in so doing, which led me to examine the word of God, and my own heart, as to my motives; but I could appeal to God that all that I had in view was his glory and the good of sinners; not to live an idle life, nor for the sake of filthy lucre. I could not fix guilt on my conscience for having preached; for I concluded that if it is a moral duty for every man to do good unto his neighbour, it was the duty of every saved sinner to speak to his brother of the things which God had taught him by his blessed Spirit; and if it was right to speak of Christ and his precious name to one, it was to twenty, when urged by his brethren, according to the ability that God giveth. I am still of the same mind on that subject; but let every brother in Christ wait till he is called upon. "A man's gift maketh room for him."

I was now in a great strait, for I was cut off from preaching, and had no pleasure in hearing, neither did I enjoy that anticipated pleasure in solitude at home which I dreamed of. I felt now in a worse condition than ever; and in this state my heart often fretted against the Lord. But no one knew the sore trials of my mind. I had learned that it was a vain thing to fly to creatures for help.

One Lord's day, as I came out of church, a man, who had been a preacher with myself in the villages, but who had now declined preaching, came up to me, and seemed highly pleased to see me. After a few words had passed, he said, "So you have given up preaching, as well as myself, I understand!" At his remark, I paused, while I felt the fire burning within my bones; and as soon as I could adjust my thoughts, I said, "No, my friend. I am laid up just to refit, but I shall preach again yet, and as long as I have a tongue capable of speaking." He appeared astounded, and left me. After I had replied to him, I began to think what could induce me to speak so positively to the man; but I could not account for it. It was the impulse of the moment; but I was determined to watch the result.

During the week my mind was more comfortable, and I was more fruitful in meditation; and before the next Lord's day, I received a pressing invitation to preach, which I could not refuse. Thus, God's hand appeared to me in a most conspicuous way. I had God's ap-

probation in preaching; nor have I been in silence from that day when called upon to preach, if I had health.

Now the snare was broken, and I had two things to attend to; that is, minding my business and preaching the gospel. This appeared to be what the Lord had designed me to pursue; nor did I think of leaving my calling at this time.

During the time of my silence before spoken of, I made arrangements to establish myself in business; but was more than once crossed in my purposes, which made my heart very rebellious. I rose early, and sat up late, and ate the bread of carefulness; but after all it was with difficulty that I could pay my way; and my unbelief has often said that I should die in debt, and that my family would be left a burden upon others. These fits of unbelief used generally to come on me after I had been preaching in the villages on a Lord's day; and there appeared a show of reason in my fears, because I seldom had anything for preaching. If I received my coach-hire and victuals, that was the most I received; and in many cases I have paid my own expenses, and travelled on foot many miles on a Lord's day, preaching twice or three times; so that on the Monday I have not been able to labour at my business.

In this way I went on for several years. Sometimes I was so tried in my business, and had such darkness of soul and sore temptations from Satan, that I thought I should be deprived of my reason. What with labouring all the week at a sedentary business, early and late, the buffetings of Satan, my unbelieving fears, and carnal reasonings, my bodily frame was much shaken, and my nerves much more so. But in the midst of all these things, I embraced every opportunity for meditation and reading. After the business of the day, I have devoted two or three hours in trying to learn the Greek language, in order to be able to read the New Testament in its original tongue; after which, I intended to study the Hebrew also, and indeed I began it. The Latin, also, I was obliged to attend to, as most of my books had the original words explained in that language. But never having received an education in my youth, and now having no tutor, and a business to attend to, I found my progress was very slow in the knowledge of the dead languages. Indeed, it required more time than I could spare for the object mentioned. It required, I conceived, more than a common capacity to learn so many things together, and under such circumstances as I was in. It was not from an idea that I should ever excel as a scholar; nor did I suppose that there was any defect, essentially, in our translation; nor did I act from a principle of pride, in order to shine before men; nor was it that I thought the mind of the Holy Spirit could not be known without the knowledge of the original languages, that induced me to try to learn them. But it struck me that our translators were fallible men, and that our language had been very much altered since our last translation; that by comparing the different parts of our translation with the original, some light might be cast upon the word. Nor do I once regret the attempt I made, for I found the benefit of it in several ways. It brought me more into

the habit of close thinking; it made me more familiar with the Scriptures; and many times I have had some sweet enjoyment in comparing our version with the Greek. That language I liked best; the very sound of the alphabet was to my ear like a fine tune skillfully played on that noble instrument the organ.

I differ from many good and well-meaning men, I know, on this subject; but I wish not to offend them, for every man has his proper gift from God. As for those good men who know the originals, but carelessly lay them aside, I do not think they display much wisdom, either human or divine. If I were familiar with the originals, I would read them in common with our version. Nor do I once suppose that any servant of God would lose one grain of his spirituality by so doing. This was the practice of Goodwin, Owen, Toplady, Romaine, Gill, and others, to whom we, in this our forlorn age, are no more to be compared than the rushlight taper to the blazing torch.\*

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## SUBSTANCE OF TWO SERMONS BY THE LATE MR. WARBURTON.

PREACHED IN EDEN STREET CHAPEL.

“Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.”—ISAIAH xl. 1.

MY dear friends, I do not know how you feel, but I feel it to be a solemn thing to speak in the name of the Lord God of hosts. There is no speaking to God's glory except God gives the power. I feel just like a little child who cannot stand except he is held up by the hand, so weak and helpless is he.

As the Lord shall help and assist, we will attempt,

To notice *this people*, which God calls his own. We shall not take up the time to prove that they are his people by creation. Besides this, they are his own people, as his children, his body, his building, as dear to him as the apple of his eye. Have they a holier nature in themselves than the rest of the world? O no. How then did they become his people? It originated in his sovereign, discriminating *love and choice*. If we speak of it to all eternity, we never can get beyond this. Why did he set his love upon Jacob, and reject Esau? Moses himself could not get beyond the Lord's pleasure. He told the Lord what a poor, stammering creature he

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\* In this point we fully agree with Mr. Fowler. Indeed, in our last interview with him, he said to us: “Do not lay aside your Greek Testament.” Here he showed much more wisdom than some uneducated men, who would seem almost to consider that the less they know of languages, &c., the better; and that the smaller share they have of human knowledge and wisdom, the more they necessarily must have of divine. He speaks also with much good sense and modesty of his own attainments, and puts the matter in its right place. To obtain any critical knowledge of the learned languages, they must be learnt in early boyhood, and studied for years with unremitting attention; but to know enough of Greek to be able to compare one passage with another, to ascertain the various senses in which the same word is used, and examine lexicons, may be obtained by most men who have good abilities, and will give two or three hours' study every day to the Greek Testament. Nor is a knowledge of Latin now necessary for this, as in Mr. Fowler's day, for of late years grammars and lexicons have been published in Greek and English.—ED.

was. "Lord," he says, "I am not fit to go;" but it was God's pleasure for him to go, and go he must; and, therefore, this people are his people, as I have said, by his sovereign, discriminating choice; and that man who hates this truth hates God. If he is the most pious creature that can be turned out, if he hates the doctrine of God's discriminating choice, he hates God; for he that loves God loves his truth. The apostle Paul, speaking on this subject, says, "According as he hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world." These people are very ugly things in their own eyes. God says, "The beasts of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls; because I give waters in the wilderness and streams in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise." Now there can be no mistake here. It is God's word. What ugly things they are by nature; and the poor things think devils cannot be more wicked than they are.

My friends, there are thousands and tens of thousands of professors who are contented with having their judgment well informed; but not so with this people. O how these poor things will cry unto God with real prayer: "Am I one of this blessed number?" They know that there will be none saved but these, for their names are written in heaven.

Now are there not many of you whose consciences tell you that you have never come into this spot? If you die without this, you will as surely be damned as God's word is true. I tell you what these souls want. God says, "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;" and their souls cry unto God to decide the matter; and when he comes again, how sweet it is.

Do you know anything about these things? God knows my heart, I wish your soul's profit. O how good is electing, discriminating choice!

But again. This people are his own, and he claims them as such by *price*. The Saviour has bought them; therefore they are his by price; and he calls them by this name, "the redeemed of the Lord," and his "ransomed" ones, and he says, "they shall come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their head. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Three or four "shalls" God here gives to his ransomed ones. Bless his precious name, he gave himself for us, that he might "redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." He "hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live to righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." And the apostle says, "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil." And he "hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his." Aye, bless God, he hath purchased them. They are not able to save

themselves, nor yet damn themselves. I must come out with it just as it comes in. The apostle says, "Ye are bought with a price." Some one may be ready to say, "Then you need not be afraid of sin. You have no need to come to chapel." No, that is not it; for the apostle adds, "Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are his." I tell you what, my friends, the more this people are brought experimentally to feel the precious blood of Christ upon their consciences, the more they are firmly persuaded in their souls that neither the devil nor sin can damn them. Now, some professors of religion tell us, that as we go to heaven in this way, sin will not do us any harm. Such have nothing in their hearts but the devil and his kingdom; but the man whose conscience the blood of Christ has purged, O how he hates sin! What a monster sin is in his eyes! Have you ever wanted the blood of Christ to be brought home to your consciences? When David felt this, he said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me; bless his holy name." So David's heart was put above devil, sin, and death. And did this lead him to sin, that grace might abound? Ah, no! friends, when this is felt in the conscience, sin is hated as much as Satan is hated. These poor souls want neither husband, wife, parson, or clerk to tell them that God is theirs. They feel that God is their portion, and say with David, "The Lord God is a shield for me, my glory, and the lifter up of my head."

Ah! Methinks there is some poor, diminutive thing sitting in the dust, who cannot lift up your head, and you say, "The parson is on such high ground to-day, and on the wings of eagles." Don't you want to pull him down a little? Come, poor, dear soul, if I have forgotten thee, God has not forgotten thee. If there is a hungering and thirsting for these things, thou shalt be filled. If there is a little sip by the way, he hath promised that thou shalt see his glory.

The people that he calls his own are his by *power*. They are all by nature in the devil's kingdom; but Christ sets up his kingdom in the soul, and all the devils in the bottomless pit cannot take possession of it. God Almighty's power keeps him, and brings him to see that if he could weep tears of blood night and day, his own tears would not save him. He cries out, with the blind man, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" He is sometimes for turning back into the world again. Jesus has endured all the damnation due to that poor soul; and when God the Spirit reveals it in heart, he cannot speak well enough of Jesus. O, could my soul exalt him as my soul feels! These people are a people that the Lord *keeps* by power. "Kept," as the apostle Peter says, "by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time." The poor soul says, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. Smile on my soul, and I will smile on thee. As a Father, be round about me, and as a wall of fire." I never felt my weakness as much as I do now in all my life.

They are his people by voluntarily *giving themselves up* to the Lord. Some may say, "Do not begin to push about free-will, when



you have been talking about free grace. Free-will and free grace never will unite together." Now, don't get the old countryman into a pit, and then knock him about for it. All the men in the world will never bring a natural man to love God. Such are dead in trespasses and sins, and love all the pleasures of the world. Their cry is, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Now, can the Lord be unjust to damn them for what they delight in? The natural will of man is to rush headlong to hell. But the Lord's people are brought freely and willingly to dedicate their hearts unto God. The Lord says, "They shall be willing in the day of my power." It is "God that worketh in us to will and to do, of his own good pleasure." My friends, see a man who has been travelling and walking all day, and is so tired that he can hardly lift one foot above another; will he not willingly and cheerfully, of his own free-will, go to bed? I was once, when in London, walking through the City, and was very hungry. Passing an eating-house, I said, "I must go in and have a plate." Did I not go in willingly? I wanted nobody to flog me in.

How many times do these people beg of God that he will manage them and be with them. They give themselves up to the Lord, to be saved by him, in his own time and way. But they are often comfortless, feeling their need of comfort, being deprived of the things that their souls delight in, and the things which their souls wish to enjoy. Now the Lord says, "Take up the stumblingblocks out of the way of my people; lift up a standard."

Now, I do not know how it is with you London folks. As to my own people, I might as well try to build up the moon as to comfort them, if God does not bless the word. The apostle says, "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation." This comfort is different to what some persons talk about; setting us to take God at his word and act faith, and then we shall have comfort. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God." So these people have their uncomfortable moments, many sinkings and distresses, for fear God is not their God, and not all the people in the world can give them comfort. There may be a few crumbs picked up, just to encourage their poor souls to wait on, but they want these things brought home.

Well, poor, dear soul, if there is a poor nothing in the presence of God, that wants to know whether thou art a child of God or not, I tell thee what, poor soul, the effect it will have on thy heart. It is to bring thee to see that all other hopes and refuges will give way. Thou art not wrestling thus to be seen of men, or to be seen in a church book, but that God will decide thy doubtful condition in thy heart. Hear the word of God, which cannot lie, which cannot be

mistaken: "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. Yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." He has brought thee to see there is no way but through Christ, and in God's time he will make it plain. "For the vision is for an appointed time. In the end it shall speak, and not lie. Though it tarry, wait for it, because it will surely come; it will not tarry." Or how could the Lord speak in that blessed declaration, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," &c. Come, poor soul! What a kind God he is to such poor, distracted souls as thou art, fearing thou wilt not hold on thy way. Ah! poor soul, thou wilt hold on thy way. Thou art a match for Satan. God's children have often distressing cares in the world. Crosses in providence very often make them fear they will sink into despair.

Some people think providential trials are not fit to be brought into a pulpit; but it is generally those people that have got plenty of this world's good. In providence some of the Lord's dear people are tried in everything they put their hands to. What a sinking this brings to a poor child of God. The Lord does not intend this to destroy thee, but he is sending this for thy good. God is bringing thee to see what the world is, and that nothing but the kind hand of God can help thee and deliver thee. These are cutting trials, but they have their ends. God never sends cutting things to his children, but he intends them for their good. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness to them who are exercised thereby." I do not know of one single trial in providence but God has brought me through; and I have proved the truth of that one text of Scripture many a time: "The end of a thing is better than the beginning." God reigns over it all. God help thee to trust in him. All the gold and silver are his, and all the cattle upon a thousand hills. God hath left his word, and that will never fail: "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure."

I dare say you have often heard me say that I once was behind with my rent. I wanted a guinea, and I could not tell which way it was to come. I had been out to preach, and on my way home I had occasion to call on an old lady, to leave a message from Mr. Gadsby. In conversation I was so blessedly led to speak of the things of God that I quite forgot my rent-day, and everything else of a worldly nature. I spent a few minutes in prayer; and when we got up from our knees, the old lady left a guinea in my hand.

Poor soul, thy God can open a way. He says, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known. I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." O! bless his precious name! He knows how to comfort, and how to bring out of every difficulty, and how to make a way. He is teaching you a new song. Some people tell us that none are good singers but they that know music, those that know

the notes, and have got a good ear. Now, I do not know much of these things; but sometimes I think I can tell whether it is in tune or not. God loves new songs. The songs of Zion are all new songs made out of old ones. The poor soul has nobody to teach him but his God.

The Lord's people have often sinkings from God hiding his face. O what a sinking is this, when they cannot behold a single evidence of their being of his family, and that he is with them! The Bible is then a sealed book. They cannot see the hill Mizar. O what comfortless moments these are to God's dear children! I do not believe that any others know anything of these things. Their cry is, "Bring my soul out of prison." Some people say, "Why don't they look to past deliverances?" They cannot look when shut up in a dark prison. Says the poor soul, "I am shut up in prison, robbed and spoiled." They want the manifestation of the day-star arising in their souls. Nothing less than this will do. Poor, dear soul, though thou mayest have been in the prison-house for months, if thou canst do nothing but groan, what a mercy it is to groan. Groaning springs from life. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God. To comfort all that mourn." Thou shalt have comfort in God's own time. The time is coming when God will open the prison doors, and thou shalt come with songs of rejoicing on thy head, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

Satan set on me to-night, as I was coming to chapel, and said, "What! Such a fool as you going to preach to the people at Eden Street Chapel?" He followed me all up the street. Said he, "They all see what a fool you are. I dare say you are going to talk about some fine thing." And, my friends, what is a finer thing than to be enabled to speak words of comfort to the poor mourners in Zion? I do not believe there is one of God's people but the devil will plague him, more or less; but there is never a dart that will be shot that will bring any harm in the end. There is nothing wrong, poor soul. God will bring thee out with his mighty and powerful arm. Every heart knows its own bitterness. God will bring thee out in his own time. "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing had 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." "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Why, poor soul, thou art drinking of the cup that he drank of. "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord has promised to them that love him." Ere long you will be enabled to say, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; for when I fall I shall arise; when I sit in darkness the

Lord shall be a light unto me." How many times you are fearful you will never land in heaven; but God has promised to bring you to glory.

May God bless these few remarks, and he shall have all the glory.

### A LETTER BY THE LATE DANIEL HERBERT.

MY most highly-esteemed Friend and dearly beloved Brother in the highly-honoured, blood-royal Family of Jehovah, loved with an everlasting Love, predestinated to everlasting Life, an Heir of an everlasting Inheritance, made one with Christ, our everlasting Head,—Grace, mercy, and peace be multiplied to you, through the knowledge of your interest in these divine and eternal realities, by the unction of the blessed Spirit.

I now acknowledge the receipt of your truly kind and affectionate epistle, which really gladdened my heart. I fear you will think me negligent, that I should suffer so truly an experimental, scriptural, and evangelical letter to remain so long without a reply; but O! my dear friend, you know how it fared with those poor, distressed souls, sitting on the banks of the rivers of Babylon, with their harps unstrung and hanging upon the willows. How painful to be invited to sing the Lord's song under such circumstances. How could they sing in a strange land, so far from home? Let this be an apology for my not writing before; and I believe I should not have written now, had I not received a letter from my dear friend, Mr. S., who, I had almost persuaded myself to believe, had given me up, at which I should be much more grieved than surprised. But on the perusal of your letter, I think I have been enabled to take down my poor unstrung harp, and string it to this song: "I will love the Lord, for he hath heard the voice of my cry. He has brought me up again out of the horrible pit, and hath said to me, 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?'"

Your letter, my dear friend, I have read over and over; and I can assure you I can go with you step by step. There is not an inch of ground you have passed over but I have trodden again and again; and I know we can both say, "Having obtained help of God, we continue to this day." I fully agree with you that Arminianism is spreading its baneful effects through our land, and amongst the professors of this day, and that darkness is covering the earth, and gross darkness the people; so that a Yea and Nay gospel is the order of the day. Well, my dear friend, what a mercy that you and I have found the gospel to be the power of God to our eternal salvation; that nothing of a peradventure can arise; and that no Yea and Nay can come between to make our salvation doubtful, seeing the grand charter of heaven runs in these words: "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good; but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me." Blessed be God for such a promise to me, a poor creature, ready to run away ten thousand times a day; so that all my security is founded upon eternal

love, eternal counsel, and the eternal purpose, will, and pleasure of God, in his Trinity of persons in the One Jehovah.

O my dear friends, how sweet to see Jesus in all his fulness, completeness, and suitableness, and all that he is as our Surety, "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and that his fulness is like the ocean, filling every cavity, and yet is the same fulness still. And that my poor earthen vessel may be filled from this ocean of love from day to day, I trust is what I am praying for. For you as well as myself, I bless God that you and I know that grace, which in Jesus has been displayed to us, as mercy to the miserable, pardon to the guilty, peace to the distressed, liberty for the slave, life for the dead, righteousness to the filthy and unholy, hope for the despairing, strength for the fainting, riches for the beggar, salvation for the perishing, heaven for those who deserve hell, smiles instead of frowns. Therefore, when I see a poor, thoughtless sinner rolling sin under his tongue, and with hasty steps seeking his own destruction, methinks I hear a voice, saying, "Just such a wretch were you; but you are washed, but you are sanctified." Ah, my dear friend! It is not all the commands, promises, threatenings, exhortations, or creature persuasion from a legal principle that was ever effectual in turning one sinner to God, or cleansing one conscience from its guilt, or producing one spark of holiness in the heart. "You hath he quickened who were dead," and, but for this quickening, dead all men would remain.

I am often surprised that I should meet with such kind attention so many times. Surely the people must be tired. I assure you, my dear brother, I have watched my Father's hand in the whole, and in one instance I have seen it very plainly, for I can now see the finger of my God in his providence especially, what I formerly, in my prosperity, lost sight of. I can now see the hand that gives, and bless the Giver's hand.

I am, most truly and affectionately, Your Brother in Tribulation,  
and in the Bonds of Christ,  
Sudbury, Dec. 23, 1822.

DANIEL HERBERT.

O, WHAT provision is there in the Scriptures for our peace and comfort! Precious promises! They are of more value to a guilty sinner than worlds of the richest mines.—*Charles.*

BUT, O, how this wonderful grace melts the soul, humbles it under all its backslidings, and quickens it to walk with God in all the paths of obedience! Now Ephraim says, "What have I any more to do with idols?" But does this fit of burning love last? Ah! No; the affection part soon chills. "Thou saidst thou wouldst not transgress," saith the Lord, "when I had broken thy yoke and burst thy bonds; and yet, under every green tree thou wanderest, playing the harlot." But when the soul is again made sensible of its decays in love, O how it is ashamed and confounded in the remembrance of all its wandering ways! And sometimes it does not know whether it walks with God at all. It looks upon its defiled feet, (John xiii. 10; Luke v. 8,) and is ready to faint away in self-loathing; but then the everlasting love of God is its cordial, and the meritorious blood of Christ its bath, and so again it goes up from the washing clean and strong. (Cant. vi. 6.)—*Anne Dutton.*

## Obituary.

### MRS. COBBY, OF HASTINGS.

A short account of the experience and death of Mrs. Cobby, of Hastings; being part of a sermon delivered on the occasion, July 9th, 1854, at Ebenezer Chapel, Hastings, by David Fenner.

I come now to speak a little of our departed friend. About 30 years ago it pleased the Lord to exercise her mind with thoughts of death and eternity. The law of God entered her heart and conscience; she felt her sinful life as opposite to God, and at the bar of his justice was brought in guilty before God. The sentence of condemnation entered her conscience, and as a sinner she sank into a state of despondency. Being ignorant of the way of salvation, the legal way only was before her, that she must strive against sin and work righteousness for pardon and acceptance with God. She was diligent in attending legal preaching, and in the legal way, praying, repenting, and striving to get relief to her sinking soul. But the corruptions of her heart and nature rose up and spread over all, for she found them working in all she said or did; she felt to be altogether as an unclean thing, that all her words and deeds were sin, so was brought to despair of all hope and help in herself, and became sensibly and deeply in conviction a lost sinner. When in this distress, two of my hearers said to her, "You should go and hear Mr. Fenner; his preaching will suit you." Accordingly about 37 years ago, she came to hear me, when it pleased the Lord, through the first discourse, to manifest himself to her, and to shed abroad his pardoning love in her heart. Sin, guilt, bonds, and fears fled, and light, life, love, and peace filled her soul; she was brought forth into full, free, and sweet liberty to rejoice in the Lord as her God and Saviour. She was filled with love, gratitude, and praise; to use her own words: "I could not be more full. I could not enjoy more than I did;" meaning her capacity must be enlarged to receive a greater measure than what she enjoyed. But she was not to continue in that sensible enjoyment long; trials awaited her; she has indeed passed through much tribulation. In this it was true of her what Mr. Hart says:

" Their pardon some receive at first,  
And then compelled to fight:  
They feel their latter stages worst,  
And travel much by night."

Outward trials and soul conflicts continued with her, and were very great; but the hand of the Lord was constantly towards her for good. Touching her outward trials, I could name several singular providences towards her; I will name one. Above thirty years ago, as she was employed in bathing, she procured three or four machines to set up for herself, when she had powerful opposition; her opponents were determined to compel her to give up to them. She came to me in distress, and said, "I cannot weather on any longer; I must give up." I said, "Do not give up by any means, but persevere in the way in which you are; the time will come when the Company will give up to you, and all the machines will be your own;" which, in process of

time, took place accordingly. Her inward trials were chiefly a deep sense of spiritual poverty, the wearing of the body of sin and death, and powerful assaults of the enemy. These things made her often go bowed down by grief and sorrow; but the Lord made them useful in capacitating her for spiritual things. From the time of her first deliverance she constantly cleaved to my ministry. She never heard but one sermon in any other place in Hastings during the 37 years that she heard me, and that was when it was said a converted Jew would preach. Many times she said she had come to hear greatly burdened, when the Lord owned his word by his power and grace to her relief, and restored the joy of his salvation, so that she has gone from the place rejoicing in the Lord, in the grace that is in Christ. She had a quick and clear understanding of the doctrines of the gospel, and of the true experience of the children of God, and as her understanding was clear, so her conversation of her experience was distinct and plain. I may truly say she was an established child of God; the life of Christ within was a life of favouring his righteous cause. This she did both by liberality and by all means possible to draw and encourage others in the means of grace. She loved the children of God, was social with them in the ways of God. In her outward life she was honest, sincere, and conscientious in the fear of God. She believed the gospel, experienced the gospel, loved the gospel, followed, and lived the gospel, and I have lost in her a sincere, decided, liberal, and affectionate friend.

I come now to speak a little of her approaching end. What she said to me the two first times I visited her comprises most of what she said on the following visits. Her experience was a firm, unshaken persuasion of her interest in the everlasting love of God, and the assurance of hope of eternal life. She said, "I know the Lord loveth me; he hath manifested his love to me many times. I have a sure and abiding hope that I shall be with him." I asked her what her hope was in. She said, "My hope is in Christ; it is in his righteousness, in the salvation he hath completed. If one good work could save me, I have not done it, all my works are as filthy rags; but I am justified by the righteousness of Christ; there is my hope in him. I know he hath redeemed me, and hath pardoned me and delivered my soul, and I believe he will not leave me; I shall be for ever with him." We then conversed freely on the complete redemption and salvation wrought by Christ, in which she manifested a clear understanding, and a lively assurance of her interest therein. She said, "Many times have I enjoyed it through your ministry. Often have I come to hear, bowed down by trouble and grief, when the Lord hath again manifested his love to me, fed and refreshed my soul, and now I know what I have heard will do to die with." This she said several times, both to me and others. I asked her if she had any desire to live, she said, "No, I have no desire to live; I desire the will of the Lord to be done. I believe it won't be long; I shall soon be gone. My life has been a life of great trials and conflicts, but it will soon be over and I shall be with Christ." In course of conversation she spoke a little of domestic trials as a

distress to her. I pressed on her to endeavour to give it up and leave it to the Lord's disposal, as she was soon by death to be taken from it all for ever. She said, "I wish to give it up; my feelings are keen; nature clings; I know it is best to leave it all; the Lord doeth all things well, and my hope is in him." When she conversed again freely on spiritual things, and on the cause of God with us, she said: "I do love them that love the gospel, and are decided for the cause; I cannot feel the same to them that are wavering. It is those that are decided and continue cleaving to the gospel that will become free; the truth shall make them free. The Lord hath given me to love his truth. I have never kept away from hearing the gospel when it was possible for me to be there; and now I have the benefit of it, I can die with it." When I visited her again her hope was firm and steadfast. In the course of conversation I asked her if the enemy, during her illness, had been permitted to assault her; she said, "Very little, very little, the Lord keeps him back. And I believe the Lord will maintain my hope in him, and keep me. I know he loves me and will not leave me, but will bring me safe through all, and I shall be with him in glory. He hath redeemed and saved me, and he will not leave me." The last time I visited her was in the afternoon of the day before she died. When I entered the room she was dozing, but soon she opened her eyes, and said to her daughter, "Give me a little water, my dear." When she had drunk she was very free, I think more free and lively than either of the times before. One of our congregation (not a member) had just committed the rash act on himself, which had been named to her. Though so near her end she named it to me, and entered freely into conversation upon it. We spoke of the distinction there must be between a real child of God and such an one. She carried on the distinction between such an one and her own experience, stating how the Lord, by his free grace, had blessed her with the true evidences of a child of God, and when we came to that of *receiving the truth in the love of it*, that such will never be left to be a victim to that temptation. "Because thou hast kept my word, I will keep thee." She said, "I have loved the truth, I do love it, and I have kept it, and I know the Lord will keep me and bring me through, and I shall be with him; and I may say I love you as a minister of the truth, and we shall be in heaven together." This was the last visit. Her affection was a fit of paralysis, by which she lost the use of one side. About three hours before her death she had another fit, by which the use of the other side was taken away, and her speech was so gone it was difficult to understand her broken accents; but they were sufficient to know that her hope and mental feelings were free and lively. She tried to speak thus: "I know, I know, my Redeemer—." What she wished to say was, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." And at last, when she could not articulate a broken accent, her daughter asked her, "Are you happy?" when, by her countenance and nodding, she plainly declared she was happy. Thus she departed this life in the 74th year of her age, and, I believe, is with Christ.

June 28th, 1854.



## INQUIRIES.

Dear Sir,—If a member and a deacon of a Particular Baptist Church walks disorderly, and is set aside by the church for a time, say three months; and if at the end of that time he is requested by the church to come and acknowledge his fault; is it right, or in accordance with the Scriptures of truth for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to be set aside because such member and deacon does not choose to come before the church?

Your thoughts through the "Standard" will greatly oblige,

Yours for the Truth's Sake,

A WEAKLING.

## ANSWER.

Assuming the truth of the above statement, for we are sorry to say we have often received such incorrect, one-sided accounts that we have been quite misled by them;—but assuming that the above is a fair, impartial statement of the case, we can only express our surprise that such an Inquiry should be thought necessary. What a state a church must be in, according to the above representation! Our correspondent does not mention whether the church has a pastor; but we should gather not, from such a state of disorder. Whom most to blame, we know not. In the first place, the deacon should not have been "requested," at the end of the time, to come and acknowledge his fault. It should have been intimated to him that the time of suspension being expired, the church was willing to listen to him, if the Lord had given him repentance of his sin. But no request should have been made, unless he had shown such manifest signs of repentance, and such a sense of his own unworthiness to return, that the church felt bound to comfort him, lest he should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. But so far from this being the case, it would rather seem, from his not listening to the request, that he was offended at, instead of being humbled by, his punishment, and was not properly brought down into contrition and godly sorrow under it. He, therefore, must be in a very wrong spirit. Then, again, to set aside the administration of the Lord's supper, because the suspended deacon will not come forward and acknowledge his fault—what a state a church must be in to sanction such inconsistent, disorderly conduct? How can such neglect, and for such a cause, be "in accordance with the Scriptures of truth?" We should, then, advise the church, if our advice be of any value, to let the deacon's suspension continue until repentance and acknowledgment be given him for his fault, and that the ordinance of the Lord's supper should be administered as usual, quite irrespective of him; for it is monstrous indeed that the ordinances of God's house should be set aside on account of one man, and that one who has been suspended for disorderly conduct.

Dear Mr. Editor,—I recently heard a man preach, who took his text from Mark iv. 31, 32. Then he went on to say that Christ was the seed, and that he could bring forward a hundred scriptures to prove it; and the fowls of the air were God's people.

I would take the liberty to ask whether that is the true meaning of the words? Should you, Sir, feel inclined to give your thoughts on the above, you will much oblige,

Yours for Truth's Sake,

A POOR THING.

ANSWER.

Our readers would, we think, be somewhat surprised if they knew the number of Inquiries which we continually receive of a similar character with the above, and how often our opinion is asked whether such extraordinary interpretations of Scripture as our correspondent here names are consistent with the mind and meaning of the Spirit. Some of these interpretations, which our correspondents assure us they have heard from the pulpit with their own ears, are so inconsistent, and what we might also call so outrageous, that we have sometimes thought they must either have wholly misunderstood, or grossly misrepresented the meaning of the preacher. But this cannot well be the case in the present instance, as we personally know the Inquirer, and believe him to be, not only a very sober-minded man, and well acquainted with the truth for himself, but one who is not likely to misunderstand, and who certainly would not misrepresent what he had heard.

But is it not truly lamentable, that a man who stands up in a pulpit, and as such professes "rightly to divide the word of truth," should be so left to pervert and distort the meaning of one of the plainest and simplest parables which the Lord ever delivered, and, above all, one which had the peculiar advantage of his own interpretation? The "seed" which the sower went out to sow was not Christ, but the word of truth, that is, the gospel: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" (Mark xvi. 15;) "Preach the word." (2 Tim. iv. 2.) Our Lord, therefore, in his explanation of the parable of the sower, calls it "the word of the kingdom;" (Matt. xiii. 19;) that is, of the gospel, termed elsewhere "the gospel of the kingdom." (Matt. iv. 23.) It is true that Christ is the Word, and that to preach the word is to preach Christ; but this is quite a distinct thing from saying that Christ himself is the seed which the sower sows. The word which testifies of Christ and Christ himself are surely very different. Again, what can be more foolish, inconsistent, or contrary to Christ's own exposition of the parable, than to explain "the fowls of the air" to mean the people of God? Our Lord expressly says, "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side." (Matt. xiii. 19.) What can be more plain from this than that "the fowls of the air" represent Satan and his evil spirits, who catch away the word as it falls on the ears of him who heareth and understandeth not? Satan is "the prince of the power of the air," (Eph. ii. 2,) and he and his agents are therefore aptly symbolised by "the fowls of the air." See also Eph. vi. 12. *Margin.*

We have sometimes tried to account for the prevailing disposition

to explain texts in this extraordinary way, for it seems to be the aim and delight of some preachers to astonish their people by some novel and, as they think, striking explanations; and we have thought that it might be much connected with the general character of the day. All is now bustle and excitement. The last was a slow age. Travelling was slow, trade was slow, conversation, writing, preaching were all slow, very slow. But this is a fast age; everything moves forward at an express speed, under high pressure, and you must either get into the train, or be left behind on the platform. In literature everything must now be quick, rapid, dashing; what is called sensational. So in preaching. Dull, heavy, solid, weighty preachers may preach, if they like, to empty benches; for only a few old-fashioned hearers will listen to them. Something novel, attractive, dramatic, and striking is in demand. "Well, then, let me give them," says the preacher, "some perfectly novel, original interpretation of a text—something quite new and distinct from all they ever heard before. Will not that be striking? How they will look round about them, and look at me, and look at each other; and what a wonderful interpreter of Scripture they will think I am." We cannot pursue the idea; but we think that this grasping after something striking, something to draw attention to, and admiration of the preacher lies much at the bottom of these strange, wild, and inconsistent interpretations of the word of God.

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If our God should exact his law but in the same rigour wherewith he gave it, sin could not quit the lost. But now the fire, wherein it was delivered, was but terrifying; the fire wherein it shall be required, is consuming. Happy those that are brought from under the terrors of that law which was given in fire, and in fire shall be required.—*Bishop Hall*.

It was necessary, if Adam shall have comfort by it, that the terms of the promise be altogether free and absolute: for, suppose them to be conditional, as, namely, if Adam shall now repent and convert himself; if he shall better improve a second stock, or rather, the cankered remnant of that he had at first, my Son then shall come into this lower world, to still that enemy and avenger. His life shall go for thy life; I will be friends with thee, and restore thee to thy former state. All this, and more of this kind, had yielded but little comfort of hope to a guilty and defiled conscience, that found itself not only naked, and wholly bereft of its primitive righteousness, but at enmity with its Creator, and a bond-slave to Satan; for such reasonings as these would have broke in like a flood, to bear down, and stifle all hopes of future success, especially, if when I was in so blessed a state, and endued with power to keep the law, upon so slight a temptation I yielded and fell; how should I rise now I am down, and my strength is gone? If when I had freedom of will, and stood upright, I so easily warped into crooked paths, how can I hope to return, and do better, now my will is so perverted, and bent to a contrary course? If whilst I had eyes in my head, and saw things with clearness, I yet lost my way and wandered; how should I think to recover it, being now both sadly bewildered, and my eyes put out? How should I bring a clean thing out of an unclean, who kept not my heart clean when it was so? How should I gain more with fewer talents, who ran myself out of all when I had abundantly more?—*Coles*.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

*(Continued from page 100.)*

THERE are some minds naturally so constituted that, whatever be the subject of inquiry, they cannot rest satisfied with any conclusions which are not established by demonstrative proof; and there are others of so peculiar a temperament that, though they may not demand demonstrative proof on every subject, yet they feel so acutely the force of every objection which may be started against a generally received truth, that unless each difficulty, as it arises, be fully and fairly removed out of the way, no weight of opposing testimony is, to their mind, of any avail. Now as we shall most probably have occasion in the course of our argument to meet with both these cases, we shall address a few remarks to each before we proceed any further with our subject.

1. It would be well, then, if the first of these two classes of mind would remember that there is a vast variety of questions, the truth and certainty of which it would be madness and folly to doubt, which, from their very nature, are incapable of demonstrative proof; in other words, cannot be established by argumentative reasoning step by step, link by link, in the same way as a sum can be proved in arithmetic, or a problem demonstrated in mathematics. That the sun, for instance, will rise to-morrow in the east, and that within the next 24 hours it will twice be high water at London Bridge, cannot be demonstratively proved. We are perfectly sure that these two events will occur, and on astronomical principles they may be both explained; but our only real reason for believing that they will take place is past observation, that is, the accumulated experience of countless years and centuries. That some time next winter there will be frost,\* that a great general once lived, named Julius Cæsar, and that he invaded Britain; that there is a large city, called New York, across the Atlantic Ocean; none of these three things can be demonstratively proved. The first is a matter of highly probable conjecture; our belief of the second depends on two or three old manuscripts which might have been forged, or Cæsar might have intentionally deceived us; our confidence in the existence of the third rests merely on what we have been told by eye-witnesses, or have read in books. And yet to doubt the truth and reality of any one of these three things would be not so much unbelief or infidelity as madness or folly. So it is impossible to prove demonstratively, that is, formally and mathematically, that God has given a revelation of his mind and will to the sons of men, or even that he exists; and yet it may be established so thoroughly and completely

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\* The readers of "Butler's Analogy" will perceive that we have borrowed one or two of these instances from him.

by proof of another kind that to disbelieve or reject it would be the greatest folly and impiety. For instance, that there lived in Judea about 1860 years ago, a person named Jesus Christ; that he wrought many wondrous miracles; that he was crucified by Pontius Pilate; that he rose from the dead and ascended up to heaven, are facts quite as certain, if not more so, than that Julius Cæsar ever lived, or that he invaded Britain. Unless a few old manuscripts had been preserved out of the general wreck, or a few old coins been dug up, we should not have known there ever was a man named Julius Cæsar; and that he invaded Britain rests only on his own testimony in his "Commentaries," and on some allusions to it in Cicero and other authors. But that Jesus Christ lived and died and rose again we have the testimony not only of the four Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles, but of hundreds of Christians shortly after the event, and many of them martyrs, who cheerfully shed their blood as witnesses to his death and resurrection. The invasion of Cæsar left no more standing mark on the history of England than the waves which then beat on the Kentish shore; but the death and resurrection of Christ have not only saved millions of redeemed souls, but have changed the whole face of Europe, and stamped every feature of its history for thirteen centuries.

2. And now a few words for that class of mind which demands an answer to every objection. In demonstrative proof, an objection which cannot be removed is fatal to the truth of the conclusion. One error in posting the ledger will spoil the sum total. At the end of the day, if the cash in hand does not exactly agree with the calculated balance, the banker knows there is a wrong entry somewhere. If in measuring what is called the base line of the great Ordnance Survey of Great Britain, about 5 miles long, an error had been made of 100 yards, it would so have affected every triangle and so vitiated every calculation that not a single town or village, road or river would have been rightly placed in the map. In these cases errors which cannot be detected and rectified destroy the truth of the conclusion. But in subjects where testimony is our only mode of proof, as in all historical questions, errors more or less considerable may exist, and objections, more or less powerful, may be started; and yet, though the former may not be capable of rectification, nor the latter of satisfactory answer, no real injury may be done to the truth of the conclusion.\*

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\* Besides which, an objection is not unanswerable because *we*, with our present means of information, cannot answer it. Dr. Colenso, for instance, has raised an objection to the truth of Leviticus by calculating the number of bullocks, lambs, turtle-doves, &c., which would be required in the wilderness to carry out the sacrifices enjoined, and has endeavoured to show, by arithmetical cultivation, that such a number could not have been obtained there. Now suppose that we could not meet that objection, would it overthrow the authority of the Pentateuch, that is, the first five books of the Bible? Not a whit; for the amount of proof on the other side might be so strong as to reduce the objection to a minimum. But we may answer it thus. If circumcision was not practised in the wilderness, which we know was the case, why might not the sacrifices have been suspended or only partially observed? The wilderness was only a passage to Canaan. It was *there* that

It is very difficult, for instance, to harmonise and reconcile the accounts which the four Evangelists have given us of the transactions at the last supper, and of Christ's resurrection. But what force have these objections in opposition to the overwhelming testimony that the Lord Jesus supped with his disciples the evening before the crucifixion, and that he rose from the dead?

But now to resume our subject. The point at which we arrived in our last Paper was, that assuming the being of God, and that man was the rational, intelligent creature of his hand, there was really no difficulty in the way of a revelation of the mind and will of God to him. If there were any such insuperable difficulty, it could only arise from one of these two causes; 1st, either that God was incapable of giving to man that revelation, which would be a denial of God's omnipotence; or, 2ndly, that man was incapable of receiving it, which would be a denial of man's reason and intelligence. It comes, then, at last to this point as a mere matter of fact: "Has God spoken to man or not? Has he given him or not given him a revelation of his mind and will?" We assert that he has done so. We are asked, "Where is that revelation?" We reply, "In the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament." We are then challenged to the proof that these Scriptures are a revelation from God. Here then is the battle-ground. Here the whole gist and force of the controversy lie. To carry this point, we ought now, in all fairness, to bring up all the evidences of the truth of revelation. But it is clear that our space does not admit of this, and that the attempt to do so would carry us altogether away from our present subject. And yet to afford no proof whatever of our assertion that the Scriptures are a divine revelation, would seem like a tacit surrender of the whole position, or a crafty evasion; and this is a charge which we mean not to incur.

Before then we bring forward our proofs of the Scriptures being a divine revelation, we must settle the question which lies more immediately before us, the *nature* of that revelation. To do this we must assume the truth of the Scriptures; for as they profess to contain this revelation from God, it is only by examining them that we can ascertain the nature of revelation at all. This may seem illogical, and that by so doing we are tacitly assuming the very point in dispute. Strictly speaking, it is so; but we must either make this assumption, or depart altogether from our present subject. The *nature* of revelation can only be known from the records of revelation. To explain what they are in themselves, the Scriptures must speak for themselves. They are their own witnesses. Let us call them into court and hear their testimony. Let us examine them and cross-examine them; and surely every witness may be believed to speak the truth until he has been convicted of falsehood.

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the whole ceremonial law was to be carried out. Moses, as the man of God, the typical mediator, received the ceremonial law from God's mouth in the wilderness; but the laws there given were to be the code of the people when settled in the Holy Land.

Now, assuming the Scriptures to be true, nothing to our mind seems plainer than these two points; 1st., that God can and did speak to man so as to convey to his mind a full understanding of his meaning; 2. That when God so spoke, he could and did furnish a sufficient, if not overwhelming conviction to man that it was his voice. Assuming, then, the truth of the account of the creation of man as given in Genesis, that he was created in the image of his divine Maker,\* there is nothing inconsistent with that account, nor improbable from the nature of the case, that God could and did converse with man in his state of innocency, and that with an audible voice. If you doubt that point, and will fairly fathom that doubt to the very bottom, you will find that it is infidelity, and nothing else, which makes you doubt it. It is merely because you cannot understand *how* God can converse with man, and therefore you do not believe that he ever did so. But this is not argument or proof. It is sheer scepticism—rank infidelity. There is no natural impossibility in the way, no contradiction in terms, nor even a miracle in question. No one could prove there was anything contrary to our ideas of God as God, or of man as man, if God were to speak to me personally and individually this night with a voice from heaven. Were he to do so, you might doubt it, or you might discredit my assertion; but you could not, on any fair, logical grounds, prove that it was impossible, or even make it out to be such a miracle as the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Put back the creation of man as far as you will, it is evident that there must have been a creation of him at some time, or we should not now be here; and that he must have been created an adult—a grown up, fully matured man; for a babe must have perished. Now when once we have fairly admitted the creation of man in his adult, fully formed state of body and mind, what difficulty is there in believing that his divine Creator should make himself known to him? that he should speak to him, and that he should afford him some sensible evidence that it was He, his Lord and God, who thus spoke? And what more simple and, we might almost say, natural way was there than that his divine

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\* The creation of man in the image of God speaks for itself as an inspired declaration. How different from the disgusting, derogatory ape-into-man theory! Look at man formed in the image of God, possessed of godlike purity and holiness, of an immortal soul, of noble reasoning, intelligent faculties, able to know, worship, adore, and serve his divine Creator. And now view him as just a little beyond a gorilla; a large ape, by some happy accident become somewhat advanced before his brother apes, first learning how to make a fire, then to put a few logs together, next to click, click a few rude sounds, as the beginning of language, until, by gradual improvement, he at last becomes a Newton or a Milton! But this is the theory of the present day, advancing everywhere by rapid strides, and likely to become soon the accepted explanation of man's existence on earth. How disgusting a theory! And how, even as a theory, beset with objections to which the difficulties of revelation are as a molehill to a mountain! Apes have been known since the time of Solomon; (2 Chron. ix. 21;) and monkeys are represented in the Egyptian tombs of still earlier date; but has any improved ape ever made his appearance? The monkeys in the Zoological Gardens, after years of observation of their numerous visitors, have never shown any disposition to learn to talk, or improve themselves into gentlemen and ladies.

Maker should put him into a garden, where all his wants would be supplied, and that he should test his obedience by a charge what he might do and what he might not do? Once get over the difficulty of the first creation of man, and there is nothing in the narrative inconsistent with itself, derogatory to the character of God, or naturally incredible.

But now comes the fall; the only explanation, by the way, which has ever been given of that appalling fact which meets us at every turn, the *innate wickedness* of man in his present condition. Now, if we believe that the Lord conversed with man before the fall, there is no difficulty in the way of our believing he conversed with man after the fall. We are not now treating this question on Christian principles, as a point of divine truth, but merely removing what we may call preliminary difficulties which may present themselves to the mind before it can fully admit the idea of a divine revelation. The fall did not destroy the intelligent faculties of man's mind, though it marred and defaced the image of God, in which he was created. It is therefore just as easy to conceive that God spake to man after the fall as before; that is, in an intelligible voice, and in such a manner as to afford him the fullest evidence that it was the Lord who spoke.

If our readers have given us their attention, and thus far travelled with us, they will see that these are the two points which we wish to establish as unfolding the *nature* of a divine revelation: 1. That God has spoken to man; 2. That what he spoke bore a sensible, unmistakeable impress that it was the voice of God. If these two points can be fairly established, we have in them all we want to show the *nature* of a divine revelation. The *proof*, the *evidence* that we have this revelation in the Bible is another matter, to which we shall come in due time. We mention this lest any of our readers should think that, through ignorance or inadvertence, we are confounding two things so widely distinct as the nature of a revelation, and the proof of it.

1. But as the *nature* of this revelation, it being an important point, demands a fuller explanation, let us take from the Scriptures several instances of it; and first, as one of its clearest illustrations, the various appearances of God to *Abraham*, as recorded in the Book of Genesis. Looking at it from a Christian point of view, we see the wisdom and goodness of God in giving us such clear and ample details of his dealings with Abraham; for in his seed, the promised Messiah, all the families of the earth were to be blessed. But look at it now merely as an illustration of the nature of revelation; and commence with his *call*: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Gen. xii. 1-3.) How simple is all this; and yet what a light it casts on the nature of a divine revelation! "Now the Lord had said unto



Abram." Here we have the fact, that is, assuming it as a fact, that God spoke to man; to a certain man; to one whom he had designed for great things; to one from whom a whole nation was to spring; to one from whom the promised Messiah was to come. All must admit that if God ever should speak to man here was an ample, a sufficient, a justifiable reason why he should speak to this particular man. And if he were to be the destined father of a great nation; a nation to be separated from all other nations to the peculiar service of the Almighty; a nation that exists to this day as a separate people, there could not be a more fitting thing than to call him personally, and bid him get out of his own country, and separate himself from all his family and kindred, that he might not only serve God more implicitly and obediently, but also, as if by anticipation, take possession of a land appointed for his descendants to inhabit. But Abraham, when thus called, must have had some clear, indubitable, unmistakable evidence that it was the Lord who so spoke unto him. The Scripture, in its divine simplicity, does not tell us, at least in this place, what this evidence was, but we know it was enough to convince Abraham that it was the Lord, for we read: "So Abram departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him."

2. Now take two other instances of the Lord's speaking to Abraham; and first, that *remarkable appearance* recorded in Gen. xv. 1: "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." "The word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision." It was, indeed, in a vision, but it was still the word of the Lord. The same voice spoke to him which had spoken to him before. And Abraham knew his voice, for immediately he answered: "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold to me thou hast given no seed; and lo, one born in my house is mine heir." But now observe how again the same voice of the Lord came to him: "And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." (Gen. xv. 4, 5.) And mark the effect: "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Gen. xv. 6.) "And he believed in the Lord." But if the Lord had not spoken to him in the promise given; and if he had not had an evidence that it was the Lord who spoke it, how could he have believed the promise, or in the Lord who gave it? Here, then, we see the nature of revelation—God speaking to man, and giving man an evidence that it is he who speaks.\*

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\* We need hardly point out how the justification of Abraham, as here recorded, forms the groundwork of the Apostles' grand argument, Rom. iv. If we allude to it in passing, it is merely to draw our readers' attention to the harmony of Scripture, and how the whole of revelation hangs together as a connected whole. If the inspiration and authenticity of Genesis be denied,

3. As a further illustration, take that signal event in Abraham's life, *the sacrifice of Isaac*. "And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham; and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of." (Gen. xxii. 1, 2.) It is most evident from this simple statement that God spake to Abraham, and in an audible, intelligible voice; and that Abraham knew and recognised it as the voice of God. The trial with Abraham was not to know whether he heard and understood the voice, but whether he would obey it. We know that he did obey it, and that he thus manifested the reality and extent of his faith and obedience. But where would have been either his faith or obedience unless he had had some indubitable evidence that it was the Lord who commanded the sacrifice?

But this beautiful, this touching narrative of Abraham's faith and obedience affords another illustration of the nature of revelation: "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham; and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me." (Gen. xxii. 11, 12.) "The angel of the Lord," we know, was not a created angel, but the Son of God, the messenger of the Lord of hosts. But he "called out of heaven." There was, then, an audible voice which reached the ears, and stayed the hand of the obedient patriarch. It was, therefore, the same voice that bade, which also forbade the sacrifice; or where would have been Abraham's faith and obedience to do or not do as that voice commanded? The same voice in the same way pronounced the blessing: "And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice." (Gen. xxii. 15-18.)

We have said almost enough to show the *nature* of a divine revelation, and yet, as we wish to make the subject as plain and as clear as we can, we shall bring forward a few more illustrations to the same purpose.

Our readers will perceive that we are all along assuming the truth and inspiration of the sacred narrative, and some may even think that we are thereby blinking or evading the whole question. Not so. It is necessary to assume the truth of the narrative to explain

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it will equally affect the inspiration of the Epistle to the Romans. See what the wretched nibblers at Genesis call upon us to give up! Both Old Testament and New, and with them all our knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent; in other words, all our hope of eternal life.

the nature of the revelation. In due time we shall come to the evidence of its truth and inspiration.

4. Next, then, take the case of *Isaac*. We read (Gen. xxvi. 2) that "the LORD appeared unto him, and said, Go not down into Egypt," &c. Now it would seem that though Isaac was already a partaker of grace, (see Gen. xxiv. 63,) and even his submission to be bound and sacrificed at the will of God would prove it, yet that the Lord had never in any special manner revealed himself to him. He had been blessed, and had had a special answer to prayer; (Gen. xxv. 11, 21;) but no revelation. We thus establish, as we shall find by and by in the parallel case of Moses, a distinction between the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and a special revelation from the mouth of God. But now the Lord appears unto Isaac. *How*, we are not told. It might have been in a dream, or a vision, or by the shedding abroad of his manifested presence. At any rate, it was a special making himself known to him as he had not made himself known before; and then, having thus supernaturally appeared, he spake to him in an audible\*, intelligible voice, which Isaac at once knew was the voice of the Lord.

5. The case of *Jacob* will not detain us long, though we adduce it as a further illustration of the nature of revelation. Unlike Isaac, Jacob seems to have had no work of grace in his heart before the dream at Bethel. There the Lord for the first time spake to his

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\* By "audible" we do not mean necessarily audible to others, or even that there was any sound at all made in the air. When, for instance, Paul was called at Damascus' gate, there was evidently a voice which spake audibly to him, as he himself declares: "And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." (Acts xxvi. 14.) But this voice was not heard by those who were with him. "And they that were with me saw indeed the light, and were afraid; but they heard not the voice of him that spake to me." (Acts xxii. 9.) But that this voice might have been audible to others, had the Lord so willed it, is plain from John xii. 28, 29: "Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered; others said, An angel spake to him." By an "audible voice," then, we understand a voice that reached the ears, without determining whether it was the ears of the body or the ears of the soul. It is so now. When the Lord speaks to the soul, it is as with a voice. "My sheep hear my voice." But it is not usually with a voice audible to the outward ear, though it may appear so to the hearer. Mr. Huntington says expressly of his own experience, "Immediately I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me in plain words, 'Lay by your forms of prayers, and go pray to Jesus Christ; do not you see how pitifully he speaks to sinners.' These are the words verbatim, for I think I shall never forget them." ("Kingdom of Heaven," p. 218.) Mr. Hart similarly records the words which were spoken to his soul, but does not lead us to believe they came with an audible voice to his bodily organs, for he says, "The Lord, by his Spirit of love, came not in a visionary manner into my brain, but with such divine power and energy into my soul that I was lost in blissful amazement. I cried out, 'What, me, Lord!' His Spirit answered in me, 'Yes, thee,' &c. From this we gather that it was not an audible voice, that is audible by the external ears, but an inward voice speaking in his soul, that Hart heard. This, then, is what we understand by an "audible" voice, without determining whether it was addressed to the bodily organs, though we believe in most cases it was not, or to the inward ears of the soul.

soul. And how? In a dream. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold, the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed." (Gen. xxviii. 12, 13.) Though Jacob knew nothing of the Lord beyond what he had heard of him by the ear in his father's house, yet immediately that God spoke to him, though in a dream, he knew his voice. "And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." (Gen. xxviii. 16, 17.) Here again we have the two elements of revelation: 1. The voice of God: 2. The self-commending power that it is God who speaks. The first is the substance of revelation; the second is the evidence of it. Without the first, there would have been no discovery to man of the mind and will of God; without the second, it would have had no power nor authority. But if we are asked what is this self-commending evidence, all we can answer is: If you have never felt it in your own experience, you must take the Scripture account of it: "Where the word of a king is, there is power." (Eccles. viii. 4.) "Our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 5.) "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." (1 Cor. ii. 4, 5.)

6. We hope we shall not weary our readers, but we cannot well pass by the instance of *Moses* as a remarkable illustration of our present subject—the *nature* of revelation. Moses was evidently called by grace before he fled out of Egypt. This is most plain from the apostle's testimony concerning him. (Heb. xi. 24–27.) And yet the Lord had not spoken to him, or given him any special, personal revelation of his mind and will. But after many years' sojourn in the land of Midian, when pursuing his ordinary occupation in feeding the flock of Jethro, his father-in-law, that special, that personal revelation was given him which not only determined the whole character of the remainder of his own life, but in its consequences changed the whole condition of the children of Israel, to whom he was sent as their deliverer out of Egypt. "Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Exod. iii. 1, 2.) It would seem from the narrative, given with all that divine simplicity which so characterises the Scripture, that it was the extraordinary spectacle of a bush burning and not being consumed, rather than any recognition of the special and personal presence of the LORD therein which attracted the attention of Moses.

“And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.” (Exod. iii. 3.) But now it was at this unexpected moment and in this unexpected way that God for the first time spake to him. “And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.” (Exod. iii. 4.) It is well to observe that here again we find the same two elements of divine revelation for which we have contended—1. The *voice* of God: 2. The *knowledge* that it was his voice. God “called unto him out of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses.” There was the audible, intelligible voice of God. “And he said, *Here am I.*” There was the conviction in the breast of Moses that it was God who spoke. In the case of Moses these two elements of a divine revelation are of signal importance, for on them depends the whole authority of his mission, and indeed we may say, the whole authority of the Pentateuch. We shall most probably have occasion to dwell upon this point more fully hereafter, and therefore merely allude to it now. But just consider this one point. The mission of Moses to Pharaoh, the bringing of the children of Israel out of Egypt, their wanderings in the wilderness, their subsequent occupation of Canaan, and, in a word, their whole history down to the time of Christ all virtually hang upon the appearance of God to him in the desert of Midian. Thus see what we are called upon to give up when we are hidden by such men as Colenso to surrender the divine authority of the Pentateuch. The special and supernatural call of Moses, as thus recorded in Exodus, of course loses all its authority, unless it be a true and authentic account of a real transaction; and as the whole mission of Moses was based upon that special call, with it goes all the authority of every part of the Bible which stands in connection with the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt; in other words, all the authority of both Old and New Testaments. Take authenticity and inspiration out of the Pentateuch, and what have we left? Nothing but a collection of Jewish legends, with some fragments of history or tradition magnified and distorted, but possessing nothing of a divine character so as to be the express word of God to man. But to throw away the Pentateuch is to throw away the rest of the Scriptures which hang upon the Pentateuch. What! Bid us throw away our Bibles because of a few historical objections, or a few arithmetical calculations! No, Dr. Colenso. Bid the miser throw into the fire all his heaped hoards; bid the sailor burn his chart, and hurl his compass into the sea; bid the gallant Danes cast away their guns and rifles, level their earth works, and bare their breasts to Prussian bayonets. Were all these to do such biddings, it would only be to sacrifice earthly hopes and happiness. But to throw away our Bibles would be to sacrifice all our hopes of eternal life, when you and such as you are gone to your place. Reader, beware of the first movement of infidel thoughts in your mind, and still more of any parleying with them. The beginning of infidelity is like the beginning of sin. The young, confiding girl who, at this season of the year, takes a walk in the fields on the Sunday evening

with her lover, little dreams when she is listening to his treacherous vows that next May's sun may see her a felon in Newgate, convicted of child murder. Who can tell that listening to one infidel objection may not end in shutting you up in the worse prison of infidelity, and under a more dreadful sentence than ever issued from the lips of an earthly judge?

We have spoken enough, we think, of the *nature* of revelation in its simple elements, though there are some other important circumstances connected with them, which we cannot now stay to trace. But having thus far put our readers on what, we hope, is the safe track, we would recommend them carefully and prayerfully to study the calls of Isaiah, (chap. vi.,) of Jeremiah, (chap. i.,) of Ezekiel, (chaps. i., ii.,) and of the prophets generally in the light which we have attempted to throw on the nature of divine revelation; and we doubt not that, under the sweet anointing of the Holy Ghost, they will find much in them to instruct and edify their souls, and establish them more fully and firmly in the authority of the Scriptures as being the word of the living God.

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### LONGING FOR HOME.

WEARY of self, the world, and sin, From Sinai's terrors free;	"Lord," hitherto I cry in tears, "When shall I reach my home?"
I groan, and pant, and long within, With Christ, my Lord, to be.	Then treacherous calms nor tempest's roar
His blood I've felt, his name I love; On him I cast my care;	My soul shall more affright; When once safe on you heavenly shore, With Christ, my dear delight.
I sing, and weep, and look above, In hope to praise him there.	Now blood and love form my repast, Though sin still makes me groan; Faith in my breast clasps Jesus fast, And sings free grace alone.
The war 'twixt grace and sin, for years Has pain'd my troubled breast;	In tribulation joyful still, Still pressing towards the prize;
How sweet, here in this vale of tears, At Jesus' feet to rest.	My heart is there, on Canaan's hill, There, there my treasure lies.
But if so sweet while here below, What must it be above?	My brother, thus it fares with me; The Lord thus bless thee too;
The thought, while yet my sorrows flow, Fills me with joy and love.	And daily, till his face we see, May he our strength renew.
Toss'd to and fro, midst hopes and fears, Then conquering, now o'ercome;	A MOURNER.

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MAN is as much a fallen creature at present as he was four or five thousand years ago; nor can less suffice to his renewal now than was necessary to his renewal then.—*Toplady*.

TAKE a believer who hath tasted how gracious the Lord is, in the eternal love of the Father, the great undertaking of the Son in the work of mediation and redemption, with the almighty work of the Spirit, creating grace and comfort in the soul, and hath had an experience of the love, holiness, and power of God in them all, and he will with more firm confidence adhere to the mysterious doctrine of the ever-blessed Trinity, being led into it and confirmed in it by some few plain testimonies of the word, than a thousand disputers shall do, who only have the notion of it in their minds.—*Owen*.

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JUNE, 1864.

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

THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY  
FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET  
CHAPEL, LONDON.

*(Continued from p. 140.)*

My path became every year more trying, both within and without, and I was determined not to leave my business if possible. All that I wished the Lord to grant me, was a sufficiency of business and power to preach the gospel free of all charge. Neither could I persuade myself that there was any body of people that would ever receive me as a minister, because of my peculiarities; or, if they did receive me, they would not support me long; therefore I was determined to be independent of every body of people. Such were my thoughts.

Many propositions had been made to me about the propriety of my being engaged wholly in the ministry, but all in vain; for I said, "I will use no carnal means to promote such a thing." I said, "If the Lord intends it, he knows of a place, and can open the door; but I will have no hand in it." I never solicited a pulpit; nor ever wrote to another minister to recommend me to a place; nor ever advertised for a situation in my life. I looked upon such things as belonging to the flesh, as human policy, as carnal craft, and not likely to end well; and I am still of the same opinion. My desire was to watch the cloud, and follow the leadings of God's providence. I had sometimes a full persuasion that the Lord would employ me wholly in his vineyard; but this seldom lasted long, but was all upset by the deep sense I had of my very great deficiency for such a work; and then it appeared to me nothing less than presumption for such an ignorant mortal to harbour a thought of the kind.

About this time, I was chiefly employed in preaching in Devonport and Ivybridge; on Lord's day at Ivybridge, every fortnight, in a commodious room; and only occasionally at Devonport, when the stated minister was ill, or on a journey; and I think my testimony was better understood and more cordially received in this place than in any other I preached in in that quarter, at the time alluded to. At Ivybridge, I continued preaching about two years, but I saw very little good done; and I think, out of about sixty or eighty hearers, I could not, in a judgment of Christian charity, reckon up

more than six or seven persons who were brought out of their natural state of darkness. The tree is known by its fruit. According to my feelings, I would sooner preach to twenty of the called in Christ Jesus, than to one hundred persons in nature's darkness; but a preacher's feelings must not be his guide, but the word of God. He must preach and sow the seed of the kingdom beside all waters: "He that observeth the wind shall not sow; and he that regardeth the clouds shall not reap."

I considered it my duty to preach the word of truth to this people, and leave the event with the Lord. Perhaps my testimony was received with power by two or three only; but I know not. Some seed lies a long time in the ground before it springs up; and I believe the Lord often wisely conceals from the man whose ministry has been blessed to sinners the knowledge of it, lest his proud heart should be uplifted.

From some circumstances, I used to hope that my labour was not in vain; for I had often much freedom in prayer for those people; and felt as if I could endure anything if the Lord would use me as an instrument to open their poor blind eyes. I really longed for their salvation; and with great boldness and pleasure did I preach Christ, and his full, free, and finished salvation to them.

Having to labour the whole week previous to my preaching, and sometimes very hard up to a late hour on the Saturday night, I was often so worn out in body that I was more fit to go to bed than go eleven miles to preach on the Lord's day morning. One day, after a hard week, I set off early in the morning on foot, to preach three times that day. When I had walked about half the distance, I felt much fatigued and dispirited. Some fits of unbelief and clouds of darkness came over me, so that I thought I would go no farther, but return. I sat on a bank for rest and reflection; and said to myself, "To what purpose do I thus toil and wear out body and mind? Neither temporal nor spiritual good comes of it. I am neglecting my family, and that is to do them great injury." Thus I reasoned and murmured. I think I had on this occasion something like the feelings of Elijah under the juniper tree, when he said, "Lord, it is enough. Take away my life from me, for I am no better than my fathers." How long I sat on the bank lost in thought I cannot now recollect, but at the time I well remember these words arrested my attention: "Death worketh in us, but life in you." I considered the words as coming to me from God to give me instruction, and to stir me, half dead as I seemed to be, to pursue my journey, and preach the gospel, that life might thereby be manifested to poor sinners. With this impression, new strength seemed to be given me, both in body and mind; and I arose and pursued my journey courageously. When I arrived at our meeting-house the hymn was sung, and one of the friends had engaged in prayer, through my delay. I therefore gave out for my text these words: "It is good for me to draw nigh unto God;" and I enjoyed, while preaching, light, life, liberty, and peace. The dose of bitters I received on the road made the sweet all the sweeter.



At another time, as I was going to this village to preach, I was so assaulted by distrust and unbelief, and, perhaps, by Satan too, that I said, "If I go on this way, wearing myself out, my family will come to beggary; and who will thank me then for all my labour? Will not people say I had no business to run about preaching, to the injury of my health, and to the ruin of my family?" Just as these things crossed my mind, those words of Christ were, I thought, spoken as powerfully to my heart as they were in the hearing of the disciples: "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." I blushed at my carnal reasoning and unbelief, and kept on repeating as I went, "Lord, I have wanted for nothing, I have wanted for nothing since I have laboured in thy service." "A word spoken in due season, how good it is."

About the year 1812, I left off preaching at Ivybridge; the cause of which was this. There was a preacher who used to preach in turn with me in the above place. He was high in doctrine, and on the doctrines he chiefly dwelt. The Arminians also had a place in the same village, and they used to have the largest number of hearers; and no wonder, as their doctrines are so congenial with every natural man's ideas. My fellow-preacher, seeing the Arminians so prosperous, proposed to my honest friend, Mr. F., to meet the Arminians half way, that we might increase our congregation, and be more prosperous also. Mr. F. was indignant at such a proposal, and told my fellow-preacher that he would sooner close our meeting-house than say a confederacy with the Arminians; and gave the preacher to understand that his services could be dispensed with. The next Lord's day, or shortly after, the said high Calvinistic preacher went over to the Arminians, and preached for them; for he was determined to be more *prosperous*, though at the expense of truth. When I came to the village at my usual time, lo! my congregation was gone after the said preacher to the Arminians, and I had the mortification of preaching to less than a dozen hearers. I took for my text these words: "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Our place was then closed, and I believe remained so for some years. This affair exercised me not a little, and many questions arose in my mind whether I had any business there at the first. I thought if the people had truly believed my report, (and I knew it was a good report,) they would not have joined the Arminians. "Many are called, but few chosen."

Soon after this event, other doors were opened to me to preach, until August, 1813. In the early part of the year I was requested to fill the place of a minister at Devonport for a few weeks, during his absence; to which I agreed. I had many times preached in the same place, during four or five years previously. After the stated minister had set off for his journey, one or two Lord's days were to be filled up by a minister from Somersetshire; and after he left, the labour fell upon me, until the stated minister returned. The minister above alluded to, was very ready, and very bold; possessing a strong memory also, he could quote whole pages of striking

poetry. He was much followed, and admired by many; and the people were very sorry when he was obliged to leave; and so was I, not from attachment to him, but for my own sake.

This minister having left, I looked forward towards the next Lord's day with all the trembling of a malefactor. I had some heavy outward trials at this time, and many buffetings by Satan, as well as much darkness of soul, and a deal of bondage in my spirit. As the Lord's day drew nearer, I seemed to get more dark and distressed, more perplexed and restless. Thus it continued with me until Lord's day morning, when the cloud was dispersed, my chains were knocked off, and the prison doors were thrown wide open.

I shall never forget this time of mercy; for I cried unto the Lord in trouble, and he delivered me out of my distresses; yea, he set me in a large place, such a place as I was never in before in preaching the gospel. The fear of man was all taken from me, and I spoke with such a boldness as that people had never witnessed in me before. They were surprised, and so was I also. There appeared a very different feeling in the people towards me to what there had been before, and many blessed God for his mercy to me; and I believe they felt a sweet union of soul to me, and I to them. I have observed that I had preached in this place many times before this; but sometimes I was very much embarrassed. On one occasion, I well remember I could not continue more than fifteen minutes, and that with hard labour, and down I sat in confusion. One man came to me, as I left the pulpit at the time alluded to last, and said to me, "Your head has been in a bag this afternoon." "Yes," I said, "and I wish it had been in a ditch sooner than here." O how mortifying this is to a proud man! and O how I kicked and rebelled! But now the scene was changed, for I was like a hind let loose; and the Lord favoured me much up to the time of the stated minister's return. But I little thought that this mercy was to be followed by some heavy trials; yet so it fell out. After fine weather, look out, fellow-traveller, for foul. This trial that I refer to arose from my friends and from the stated minister; for as soon as he returned, some of the people said to him, (though very imprudently,) "We were not anxious about your return; for we have been well supplied. We have heard to our great satisfaction;" and a variety of things I believe they said to him calculated to do mischief. The said minister was naturally warm and hasty; and no doubt Satan, who is ever busy, had a hand in it. This fired the *old man*, and produced some angry feelings in the said minister against me, which he could not conceal, but vented it in the pulpit on several occasions, to wound the people who had expressed so much satisfaction in hearing me. The good, but mistaken man, preached the best part of a sermon to prove that I was not sent of God to preach, and the ground of his argument was this; that if God had sent me to preach, he would have found me a church before this time. Some were pleased with his conclusion, and others quite the reverse.

These contentions about me deeply wounded my feelings; for I could say with an honest conscience, I never went to preach to his

people for lucre, nor to wean the affections of the people from their stated minister. Such a procedure is most contemptible; and how can any preacher expect the approbation of the Lord who takes such a fleshly course? However, the fault lay as much with my warm-hearted friends as with the minister. I learned then, and have learned my lesson over and over again since, that a preacher may suffer in his feelings, and even in his reputation, quite as much from the weakness of his warm-hearted friends as he may from his avowed enemies. But these are some of the afflictions of the gospel that Paul speaks of to Timothy.\*

I do not mention these things by way of angry reflection on the minister, who, I believe, is now in glory; nor do I reflect on my friends, many of whom are in glory also; but in all things we are instructed; and the hints that I have dropped may be useful to some, when I am no more in this world. To "cease from man," is a hard lesson to learn.

For some months previous to this time of trial, the providence of God appeared all against me; for by deaths, failures, and removals, my sources seemed nearly dried up, so that I was losing money every week for several months; and I had now four young children, over whom I have shed many a tear, and for whom I have put up many a prayer to my covenant God and Father; for they lay near my heart.

I was now shut up every way, and hemmed in on every side. This is the time, reader, for prayer, and for a man to prove God's faithfulness to his promise. But flesh and blood do not like this rugged road. My health was delicate at this time, and my nerves greatly shaken with outward and inward trials. Having very little business, I thought I would go over to Bristol a week or two, to visit two of my very dear friends in the Lord, to whom I felt a close union, in order to relieve both body and mind; and, after committing myself and family into the hands of my God by prayer and supplication, though in much weakness and with many fears, I made up my mind to go. My object was, not to preach unless a door was fairly thrown open to me. I made arrangements accordingly; and as I was passing through the market-place at Plymouth, I fell in with a man with whom I had had some slight acquaintance, and talked with him some time on the subject of religion chiefly. I said, "I shall not see you again for some time, as I am going to Bristol in a few days." "Indeed," he said, "will you take a letter for me to Bristol?" I said, "Yes, certainly." He said, "Will you not preach there?" I said, "I cannot say anything about preaching." "Will you go to Manchester?" said this man. "How far is it?" I said. He said, "Three hundred miles!" I said, "No; that is out of the question." "Well, then," he said, "I will write a line to Mr. Robins, of Bristol, and I am sure he will let you preach for him there." I said, "I am not anxious about preaching, but I will take a line to Mr. Robins."

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\* Excellent remarks, and well worth observation by minister and people.—Ed.

This man also asked me if I would visit Birmingham, provided I should be requested; and I consented. He therefore wrote to the people at Birmingham to send to me at Bristol. When I arrived at Bristol, I delivered the letter for Mr. Robins, and received for answer, that Mr. Robins was then in London. Mr. Robins's friend opened the letter, and read it; and observed to me he could say nothing about my preaching in their chapel, as they had had two or three preachers since Mr. Robins went to London, but did not approve of one of them, and therefore they had dismissed them. I said, "My object here is not to preach, but to see two friends; certainly I would preach if a door were fairly opened; but by no means would I obtrude." We entered into spiritual conversation; and when I was going, he said, "Suppose you come and preach on Lord's day morning. I should like to hear you once." I agreed to his proposal, and went and breakfasted with him on the Lord's day morning. I read and engaged in prayer in the family; and the blessed Lord poured upon me the spirit of grace and supplication in a most remarkable manner. I was humbled in the dust, and could say with my whole soul, "Thy will be done."

I could now leave the Lord to make darkness light, and crooked things straight. I had often tried to do these things in my own strength, but could not. I was now contented with my lot, and made willing to follow the Lord wherever he might go, and not attempt to go before him, nor dictate to him. I now found the truth of this promise in my heart, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength." The great stumbling-block was now removed. I had tried to remove it, but in vain; and I had often prayed the Lord to bring my will into entire submission to his; for I often, in my trials in providence, discovered a selfish spirit working in me that was nothing less than rebellion against God. Nothing humbles, nothing teaches like grace.

When I had finished prayer, as above, I looked at the old people present, and I thought that they partook of my enjoyments. They seemed too full to speak for several minutes; and I saw tears of joy flow from their eyes. When they had recovered themselves, they began to speak to me with the utmost pleasure. All their scruples were removed, and they seemed as much at home with me as if they had known me some years. In this frame we went to chapel, and the dew rested on my branch. As we went to chapel, the old man said to me, "You will give yourself out to preach again at night." I said, "I cannot say anything about preaching again. Perhaps once will be quite enough for you and myself also." I rejoiced, but it was with trembling; for having been so often buffeted by Satan, and deceived by my own heart, after the Lord showered down his blessings upon me, it put me on my guard.

I was favoured with much light, peace, and liberty in preaching that morning, and the people appeared fixed and attentive. Service ended, I gave out that from the feelings I had, I would preach again at night, provided there was no objection. This gave very general satisfaction, I soon perceived. I returned and dined with the old

man before mentioned, and we had some good conversation on the things of God. He remarked to me, "When I heard you break off so abruptly, and saw you sit down so suddenly, I was afraid you would not preach again, and I felt sorry that I should have been so scrupulous at the first." I said, "You did right. We are not to lay hands suddenly upon any man; but prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."

I should have observed, that after the Lord that morning had favoured me in prayer, I had a firm persuasion that he was now about to work, and that he would employ me wholly in the ministry; but where I knew not. I stopped with the people at Bristol two or three Lord's days at their request; and before I left them, they had several meetings among themselves to see if means could not be devised to get me among them as a joint-labourer with Mr. Robins, as he could only preach there once on a Lord's day.

Before I left them, they asked me many questions on the subject, as also how I was situated, and whether I could remove from Plymouth. I told them plainly that I certainly should leave Plymouth whenever the Lord opened a door for me that I could see his hand in; but at present I could not tell what to do. I had been expecting a letter from Birmingham, as I had promised my friend in Plymouth that I would preach there, if they requested me, before I returned; but the delay of the managers at Birmingham kept me in suspense some time; and I concluded on returning home, judging that my services were not wanted in Birmingham. I was about to take my place by the coach for Yeovil; but before I booked myself, I thought I would once more inquire if there was a letter for me from Birmingham. There was a letter, which had been received two days before, requesting me to come over and help them immediately, and apologizing for their delay, which arose through one of the managers being in London.

I left Bristol for Birmingham the next morning, after having taken a most affectionate leave of the old disciples, under whose roof I found a Bethel. Many others of the Lord's family I also met with at Bristol at this time; and it now appeared a very different place to me to what it did about thirteen years before this period, which I have given an account of in a former part of this work. I believe the friends at Bristol would have strained every nerve to get me there, for they heard me to their souls' satisfaction. I also think that they had some fears that some circumstance would take place to remove Mr. Robins wholly from them, which indeed was the case not long afterwards. The old disciple, whom I mentioned, died the same year; and he was the principal support of the chapel. An account of his death was sent to me by that plain, honest, upright servant of God, E. Robins, whose letter I shall here insert, to preserve it. Perhaps the only letter of his that will ever appear in print.

*"Bristol, Jan. 22, 1814.*

"Dear Friend,—I am desired by Mrs. Hughes to say that she received your letter, and we are all glad to hear of your welfare, and hope that God's goodness will ever pass before you, both in providence and in grace,

and that you may enjoy much of the presence of God in your own soul, which is better than life itself; and we hope that God is leading and directing you to take up the stumbling-blocks out of the way of his people, and casting up the highway, that they may follow after, and enjoy him as their resting-place in every trouble and temptation they may meet with.

“ It appears by your letter that you do not know of the death of Mr. Hughes; but I have to tell you that he was taken very ill on the 15th of November last; that he left this world for a better (I have every reason to believe) on the 2nd of December, and was buried on the 8th. By his death, I have lost a kind friend; the cause at Gideon Chapel, that he was the means of supporting, feels it also. But, blessed be God, the God of salvation is alive, and is at times graciously pleased to manifest himself to us in his own way, though we are but few and despised; and as nothing comes to pass by chance, so his promise is that all things shall work together for the good of those that fear and trust in him; who are, by the displays of his love to them, won over to love him above every object in heaven or on earth.

“ In consequence of the death of our friend, Mrs. H. is in a great deal of trouble by the loss of her partner, and by the troublesome state she is left in, as it regards her concerns, and as it regards the chapel; and I am sure that she stands in great need of the prayers of all her friends, far and near, to besiege a throne of grace in her behalf,—that God might give her faith to trust her whole concerns in his hands, and favour her with hope to expect all that she needs, and grant her patience to bear up under all, and resign her will to God’s dispensations and dealings; to be still, and to know that he is God. Indeed, my friend, she is in plenty of trouble; and if you can feel a heart to bear part of her burden at a throne of grace, do it, and may God give us success.

“ If ever you should come into these parts, you are welcome to my pulpit at Bath, and we shall be glad to receive you, and it is the same at Bristol, if you do judge us to be faithful to the Lord. Here are a few that love the truth, though but a few; and dreadfully despised by men who profess the same truths as we do, yet we cannot fall in with them. But at the same time, we wish to embrace all that are in the truth, and bid them God speed, and reject all the rest; for it is plain to me that the scarcest things in all the world, are honest-hearted Christians, and honest-hearted preachers of God’s word; and I believe wherever they are to be found, they are truly precious in the eyes of God and good men.

“ Will you be so kind as to give my kind love to Mr. and Mrs. H., to Mr. M., to Mr. J., to Mr. K., Mr. and Mrs. S., and to all that love the Lord Jesus; and may God bless you all.

“ So prays, Yours in the bonds of love and peace,

“ EDMUND ROBINS.”\*

“ P.S.—When you feel your mind at liberty, I should be glad to hear from you at any time, without any ceremony.”

(*To be continued.*)

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NONE are made partakers of forgiveness but those whom God hath eternally and graciously designed thereunto.—*Owen.*

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\* I have given the whole of the letter, to show the character of Mr. R. This man of God, whose robust constitution and powerful voice seemed to promise long life, wore himself out with preaching, a few years after this. He died near Wallingford, the same night he had preached, about the year 1817. See an epitaph designed for his grave-stone, in the 2nd vol. of my *Original Hymns*, p. 198.

## SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON PREACHED BY MR. HOBBS.

ON SUNDAY MORNING, FEBRUARY 25TH, 1849.

“That they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified.”—ISA. lxi. 3.

EVERY man by nature is unrighteous in the sight of God. All are sinners, whether brought to feel it or not; nor can any attain to righteousness by any outward means whatever. It cannot be so; God must change the heart. Israel strove hard after righteousness, but could not attain to the law of righteousness, because they sought it by the works of the law. As Paul says, the law discovers sin; so we find it was with this apostle; for before the law came to him, sin was dead; “but,” says he, “when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.” The law has now filed its bills in the court of conscience against the sinner. It now discovers the carnality of his heart, and the enmity existing between him and God. It discovers his lost, ruined, and undone estate, and he finds that he is indeed “carnal, sold under sin.”

It is the especial prerogative of the Holy Ghost to convince a man of the sin of unbelief. The law never does this. And here you may distinguish whether your religion is of God, or a mere empty profession; for no one was ever convinced of this sin but those who partake of the grace of God. It is written, “And when he (the Holy Ghost) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; of sin, because they believe not on me.” None but children of God mourn their departures from him, mourn for want of faith, feeling barrenness, coldness, deadness, and a longing desire after Jesus; if it only amount to a desire, a wish sometimes. None but those who are alive to God can feel those things. You will find a mere professor an utter stranger to these inward exercises.

“That they might be called trees of righteousness.” The law is not righteousness; conviction for sin is not righteousness, nor attending the outward means of grace. Strictly speaking, the Lord Jesus Christ is our righteousness. “In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness.” Again: “Surely shall one say, In the LORD have I righteousness and strength:” “Shall one say.” He has not been able to say it yet; but he *shall* say it. But still more to the purpose: “In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.”

“That they might be called trees of righteousness.” Now let us briefly look at the *characters* here mentioned. Who are these that are called “trees of righteousness,” or righteous persons? for such is the true meaning of the words. Those described in the former verses: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the *meek*.” This is a fruit and effect of the Spirit’s teaching,—meekness, in discovering a man’s vileness and sinfulness. It humbles him. “He hath sent me to bind up the *broken-hearted*.” This is not a broken heart from worldly

sorrow and grief; for it is possible for a man to be overwhelmed with trouble, and his heart be as hard as the nether millstone; for the sorrow of this world worketh death. This we know by bitter experience. But the broken-hearted here mentioned are sinners, made sensibly so by God. "To proclaim liberty to the *captives*." Those in captivity by sin, under a heavy bondage, bound by the chain of their sin. "And the opening of the prison to them that are *bound*. To comfort all that mourn." The Lord's people are a mourning, tried, and exercised people. I find, my dear brethren, I am still a mourner in Zion. Some people think that after pardon and peace are sealed home on the conscience there is no more trouble or sorrow; but I find it far otherwise. "Why," say you, "what do you mourn for? Is it the dread of death?" O no, my brethren. It is not that; for, blessed be the Lord, he has removed the dread of death I once had; but I do feel such a want of conformity to the image of Christ; I want to be more like him, more conformed to his likeness. I want to enjoy his uninterrupted presence. Well, these characters are to be called "trees of righteousness." They will not call themselves so, and Satan will not call them so, I am sure; but, never mind that; God calls them so. Let not the devil, or pray God that the devil may not, dispute you out of your confidence; for even the real work of God on your souls he would have you conceal by not speaking of it. He says it is only your pride; that you want to appear somebody; you had better say nothing about it; but, my brethren, whenever you can discover any of the work of God upon your soul, humbly speak of it, and give God all the glory.

But let us consider the metaphor here set forth: "*Trees of righteousness*;" There is no such a thing in the whole creation. God never planted any such in Eden. But believers are often in Scripture called trees: "I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the shittah tree, and the myrtle, and the oil tree, I will set in the desert the fir tree, and the pine, and the box tree together." All these are evergreens, always verdant, to which believers are here compared. When the children of Israel went to anoint a king over them, the prophet tells us, "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them; and they said unto the olive, Reign thou over us; also to the fig tree, to the vine, and to the bramble." Christ is also compared to a tree: "I am the root and offspring of David,—(the root in his divinity, the offspring in his humanity,) the bright and morning star." Saul and all his servants round about him lay under a tree. They grew so large that houses were built under them. The cedar is a large tree, but there are others that grow even larger. They are often large enough to hold hundreds of persons under the branches. It is said in the Revelation, speaking of the New Jerusalem, "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." And this tree is none other than our adorable Lord. This life is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, which all who belong to Christ partake of; for "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."



It always bears fruit, in winter as well as in summer, in spring as well as in autumn; always green. And, moreover, its being *green* denotes life. And the leaves were "for the healing of the nations." By the *leaves* I understand Christ's stripes, they are for a healing medicine; for "by his stripes we are healed." This tree is for shelter, for meat, and medicine. A shelter from all the tempests of wrath due to sinners, a shelter from law and justice. Hence the Church says in the Canticles, "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Also he is called a root, a rod, and a stem: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots." Also Christ is set forth as the vine, and his people as the branches. Being called a root it shows the immediate and close connexion with the tree; for all springs from the root. "Make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt," as Christ said. Again, "Boast not against the branches; but if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee."

"That they might be called trees of righteousness." David, in the first psalm, (or probably Asaph,) says of the righteous, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. His leaf also shall not wither." "I, the Lord, have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish." "The trees of the Lord are full of sap." If you ask me what the *sap* is, I answer, it is the grace of God. All the fruit we bear is a fruit of the Spirit. And as God in the first creation made all things before they grew, so when the Holy Spirit begins the work of grace in a man's heart, he implants all graces, although they are not all seen until time unfolds them; for what God does, is done for ever. "The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Of these, love shines pre-eminently; for love is the bond of perfectness, and the binding principle which unites the saint to Jesus, and to one another. This is the love of God. Paul tells us that though a man should have so strong a faith as to remove mountains, though he should understand all mysteries, and all knowledge, bestow his goods to feed the poor, yea, and give his body to be burned, yet, if without this love, it would profit him nothing.

It is possible for graceless professors to imitate the work of grace, the fruit of the Spirit. Perhaps when things go smoothly and nothing to ruffle their tempers, they are peaceable and appear loving: they may have peace and satisfaction from the performance of outward duties, instead of the true solid peace which God only can give. They may possess glee at outward prosperity, thinking that that is joy; but when the winds of adversity arise these drop off like unripe fruits.

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THE very light of evil is dangerous; and it is hard for the heart not to run into those sins, to which the eye and ear are turned. Not out of love, but custom, we fall into some offences.—*Bishop Hall.*

## THE WORK OF FAITH WITH POWER.

Dear Friend,—I am sorry to say we could not complete your order by the time, having our hay about, and then unfit for work, and extra orders from a place that we durst not by any means neglect. I hope you will excuse this, as I could not avoid it.

You kindly inquired how I got home, &c. I got home safe, and found all things pleasant, with two swarms of bees. Thanks be to the Giver of all good. I feel sorry to hear of your not being well, as where health is wanting, no temporal good can make up the deficiency. "Tis all for the best," is easier said than believed. One has its bearing on feeling, the other is an act of divine faith. The two never can agree; but as one is from above, and the other from beneath, we know from the word which shall gain the day; and I know and am assured that grace shall reign. I know something of your conflict by my own; but the word says, "Fear not, for I am with thee." The Lord is no fickle Friend; but he sees it needful to keep us low. Meekness and humility are the graces he feeds upon when he comes into his garden, blended with brokenness of heart and ardent love; and so of his own we give him. This brings on communion of saints, and helps us to say, "Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ."

I would write about things more spiritual; but I feel so shut up and barren; when I would do good evil is present with me. I know the good and I know the evil; I know the light and I know the darkness; I know bondage and I know liberty; and I am learning to live by faith. It is of no use looking within, though we can do this without faith; but as all my happiness centres in Christ, I want faith to be put in, that I may work it out. I do not want a vain confidence, a letter knowledge of Christ, but a knowledge that charms the heart, that makes the soul dance for joy, that so sheds abroad the love of God in the heart that religion becomes the chief theme of the soul. It is attended with light, life, and joy; brings on assurance; settles the mind above, and often wants to be there to get rid of sin. It converses with God in Christ, feels a calmness of soul, is led by the Spirit, and feels as though there were some one within talking with it. O the soft whispers of that blessed Spirit!

But I have run on till I am almost ashamed of my blunders and bad writing. My pen is so bad, and I cannot see even to mend it. I can think better than I can speak. I can say,

"Had I a thousand hearts, dear Lord,  
I'd give them all to thee;  
Had I a thousand tongues, they all  
Should speak the harmony."

We are all of us much as usual at present, posting on for the grave, the house appointed for all living. My mark is set, my prize is in view. I wish not to be deterred by anything here. I know not what a day may bring forth; but, reckoning on the worst side, it can but be through much tribulation; and he that has appointed it will give strength according to the day.

Desford, July 4, 1864.

EDWARD MOSS.

## A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. CROUCH.

Dear C.,—You request a speedy reply to yours. What say you to this? You wish me to come again and preach the word of the Lord to your people. “Come again!” Oh! And cry through the town of Croydon, as Jonah did through Nineveh, “Within forty days (if God has decreed it,) and Croydon shall be overthrown,” or some poor, wicked, self-righteous, erroneous, self-deceived sinner or sinners therein. Come and supply for you! Indeed; I would come as Noah and the Baptist,—righteous men, and preachers of righteousness, even the righteousness of God. The subject has glittering grandeur, magnificent highness, pure as well as strict and severe administration.

“Can you come?” say you? What! As Elijah, Jeremiah, Joel, and Paul, and preach the righteous judgment of God against them? Yes; and I would show that which is not the least, nor yet seldom, what the God-man came for: “that they that see should be made blind,”—little noticed, little thought of, but frequently taking place; and a most awful mark preceding a final and closing scene of a lost condition. “The election hath obtained it; the rest were blinded.”

When I come, I hope to have full divine authority to “cry aloud,” that the deaf may hear; “and spare not,” however men may tremble at the subject; “and show my people their transgression,” however they may be inclined to shun the sight. *My people!* These must see it as it is, and confess the truth thereof. I would be careful to set forth a deep and sound work herein, because it will be necessary, and found to precede the eternal salvation of the soul. Careful I would be to give the right sense of the law, that all who hear to purpose might know it; and that by the law is the right knowledge of sin. Even as Paul did: “When the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” Forgotten sins are brought to remembrance; little sins will become great; and those things which might have been thought to be no harm found to be no less than the transgression of the law. “I died.” Death is the issue. Death to all the pleasure of sin, or sinful pleasure, no longer to live therein, as before. I would preach this until sin abounds, and the strength of it is felt, and that it is the sting of death, and makes death to be the King of terrors, and so to be greatly feared. I would speak of the Cherubim, and the drawn sword they wield to guard the way to the tree of life, and to cut all down who shall attempt such an act by the works of the law, either in whole or in part. I would so speak that sinners might be arrested, convicted, and so corrected as to make them tremble, fear, and quake, and confess that they are guilty before the Lord.

The good Lord order it to be so that whenever I come or agree to supply for my dear friend again there may be a noise, because some are brought into concern about their immortal and never-dying souls. I assure you, and you believe me, that when present to labour in your stead, my way will be to know none but Christ, and him crucified, as the only salvation of poor, lost, and needy creatures.

Through him and in him we have the vision of God, the covenant sealed, and the great store of all spiritual blessings. He is ever pouring out and sending down testimonies of himself,—of his blood and righteousness, his grace and mercy, his love and power, all unitedly engaged in the salvation of the elect from the perilous situation they see and feel themselves to be in. His word he gave them; the same remains unto the present, and is of the greatest importance in the business, for there is the plainest account we can have; and this commands a silence to our accusers; brings the aid that is required for faith, sets the matter right how we can be saved, and is a guide to our feet all our time of sojourning here below. The people of the Lord should be obedient in this matter, as in all their concerns, to ask the Lord for their preachers, and for the subject of his most holy word; for it has “pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” Thus a very great thing is made known by them in their ministry. Salvation is the subject, even the forgiveness of sin to the poor, lost, and guilty creature; and, under these considerations, who would not like to be engaged by the Divine Master, and be made use of to their fellow men for so great a benefit, even the salvation of their souls? I would be ready for such a labour, pant with thirst for such great and good pay, and burn with love unto the Lord that he should do such mighty deed. The salvation of sinners, their souls for hire, their persons as seals to our ministry, almost makes me say, “Here am I! Send me.” It almost makes me say to my soliciting friend, “I will come.” But then it cannot be at the time that thou dost request. The Lord’s day before that, I am engaged for an exchange with Mr. C.; and must not be absent at that time, two Lord’s days following.

Accept our love, and tender the same to all the friends of the cause of God and truth. Overlook my faults, pity my weakness, excuse my blunders, bear with my bad writing. Put on charity towards me, for I am old, and bowels of mercy, for I have much need of such friends; and to the utmost, even to the last, be tender and kind.

Wadhurst, July 11, 1856.

W. CROUCH.

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WE ourselves know and see that many of the Scripture prophecies have been completely fulfilled; and that others of them are now fulfilling, even at this very time. Thus, with regard to the Jews, we have all the evidence it is possible to have, that the prophet Hosea wrote by divine inspiration when he affirmed that the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without sacrifice, and without an ephod, and without teraphim. (Hos. iii. 4.) This has actually and literally been the case with them for more than 1,700 years past, and continues to be so at this present moment. Every Jew we meet is a striking instance that the sceptre is indeed departed from Judah, and a lawgiver from between his feet, and demonstrates the authenticity of the Scriptures, and that they were divinely inspired. They continue to the present moment uninjured by time and transcription; and this is a still farther evidence of their divine origin, that God, in his providence, has so remarkably preserved them.—*To plady.*

## Obituary.

### CATHERINA WRIGHT.

I DESIRE to put together a few recollections of my late beloved sister, who departed this life October 25th, 1863, aged 30.

Catherina Wright was the youngest daughter of the late Mr. John Wright, of whose death there was an account in the February Number of the "Gospel Standard" of the above year.

From a child she was very thoughtful. A circumstance comes to mind which I cannot pass by. When she was about seven years of age, our beloved father was so ill that we expected his end was near. To her sisters, who were with her in the dining-room, weeping, she said, "Do not cry; there was one good man in the Bible who lived 15 years after he was ill." This, when it was related to our dear mother, gave her a hope our father's life would be spared.

My sister delighted to sit and listen to the conversation of the servants of God who used to come to our house, was often reading her Bible, and loved the house of prayer. She was also often observed to be weeping; but it was not until eight or nine years since that she spoke in such a way as to discover to us that the Lord was at work with her. About that time, our aunt was on a visit at our dear father's. Being left alone with her in the room, and seeing her weep bitterly, she inquired the cause. She said, "O, aunt, I am such a sinner!" Some time after this, I went on a visit, when she opened her mind to me, referring to the above circumstance. She told me that, for a long time, the thought that she must die pressed heavily on her mind; but for the last fortnight of that time it so thoroughly possessed every thought, following her wherever she went, that she did not know what to do, such gloom and darkness enveloped her. She used to wonder, when walking out, how the people she met could be so cheerful, seeing they must die.

All this she kept to herself. One night she retired to rest, still feeling the same distressing cloud hanging over her; but when she awoke the next morning, it was all gone. While wondering at this, a glorious light seemed to fill the room, and she felt such a sweet hope in and love to Jesus springing up that she told me she felt she could willingly die then. The change in her countenance was visible to all around her. She enjoyed a sweet peace for some time; but when this was withdrawn she sank very low, fearing this could not have come from the Lord, seeing there were no words applied; and often did she tell me how exercised she was about it; but she used to say, "I do feel such a love to Jesus. What a wonderful, what a suitable Saviour he is!" Often have I seen the silent tear trickle down her cheek while reading of him in his word. One day she went to the house of prayer much cast down, on the account before named. She heard Mr. H., who traced out her experience so exactly that she was quite raised to a hope again, and she felt a sweet union to him which, while life lasted, never lessened. Many times was she blessed in hearing this dear servant of God.

From a child, she always dreaded our beloved father's death; but one Tuesday evening, while hearing Mr. H., she was brought to such a sweet frame of resignation that she felt able to give him up into the Lord's hands whenever he should be pleased to call him hence; and, indeed, when that time did arrive, she was so supported that she observed to me she could not help wondering at the Lord's goodness to her at a time to which she had looked forward with so much dread. Alas! We then little thought she would so soon be called to follow him.

At times she was much exercised in soul, fearing she had never experienced a law work; yet she felt she was a helpless, ruined, lost sinner, and knew if not saved freely and entirely by Jesus, there was no hope whatever for her. She was also much exercised about prayer, fearing hers were not true prayers; but there were times when she felt her whole soul going out after him whom she loved. One time, in particular, when going up Gower Street, she was quite melted down under a sense of the love of Christ. It was rarely she spoke of these things, and but to few, she so dreaded saying more than she felt, and was fearful lest others should think she was better than she was; but whenever I used to come up to London on a visit, I have been astonished, as she has poured out her simple tale into my ears, to find how the Lord had led her on from time to time. As I kept no record of these conversations, I cannot remember them sufficiently to relate them.

A friend, to whom she was about to be united in marriage, had she been spared, has kindly favoured me with a few extracts of letters written during the years 1862 and 1863, which he has given me permission to insert. I will, therefore, do so before I proceed to her last illness, as they show the general state of her mind:

"You ask me for advice. I do not feel capable of giving any; I am so much in need of it myself—so much more fit to be the advised than the adviser. But I do try to pray for you in my poor way. But then, again, I feel more need of one to pray for me, than fitness to pray for another. You do not know how weak and incapable of good I am. I cannot bear you to think me so much better than I am. How very gladly would I see you more concerned about yourself. You seem to think it such an easy thing; as though you had only to make up your mind to be religious, and you could be so. Without God gives us his Holy Spirit, I believe we can never serve him aright; that if we go to him in our own strength, our very prayers are an abomination in his sight. But if we go from a felt need of a Saviour, knowing that if Jesus did not die for us as poor fallen creatures we must perish for ever, then I am sure he will hear and answer us. We never seek a shelter, unless some danger is near; so, until we cannot feel safe without Christ's salvation, we shall never ask for it aright. God is a Spirit, and he will be sought for in spirit and in truth. Do not be deceived; God is not mocked. Jesus has said, 'Ye must be born again.' . . . You tell me you believe the Bible; see whether what I have written agrees with it or not. . . . Read the Bible very carefully; ask God to give you his Holy Spirit, that you may understand what you read."

Again she writes:

"You believe that the Bible is an inspired book. That same Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration it was written, has revealed Jesus to his

people in all ages of the world; and if you are made to feel your need of a Saviour, and to long earnestly for his great salvation, it will be all the work of that good Spirit. I cannot bear the thought of your deceiving yourself. I would not have you talked into religion, and sometimes I am almost afraid that, through me, you will deceive yourself; because you know how much I wish you to be a real Christian. I am so frightened at your fancying yourself one. Try to look up to him for his Holy Spirit. Do not think of improving yourself; you will only fail. Go on reading your Bible; God can make you see such beauties in it in one moment that you may have to bless him for his revealed will to the end of your life."

"You write to me as though I had found God. I do hope he has made me seek him, but I want to know Jesus as my Saviour; to know him for myself; to feel sure that when my dying hour comes, it will be well with me; and not only in death, but in life and all its trials do I want a Comforter, one to whom I can look for support; for there are times when earthly friends can do us no good. I have known such times; and I, too, have known what it has been to look unto God, and to feel lightened; at least, I hope I have not been deceived, but the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know it?"

"I assure you, I often tremble at myself. O do not think of me more highly than you ought. I am utterly weak, and unable to do anything that is right; but I do hope I desire to be made right and kept so. Is it not well for us we have the Bible, though we can seldom see its beauties? and to know that though we change, God does not; that if he once loves us, he will never forsake us, and that he knows all those who desire to fear him? I should like to love such a kind, forgiving Saviour; perhaps, some day I shall feel certain I do love him."

"God would never incline our hearts to seek him and make us thirst for him, if he did not mean to satisfy us. It is good to wait patiently upon the Lord; to commit our way unto him, and he will give us the desire of our hearts; and is it not our sincere desire to serve him with our whole hearts faithfully? And from whom could sinful human beings get such desires, but from the Author and Giver of every good gift? Let us wait on him and look to him, and in his own good time he will make his Son, the glorious Sun of righteousness, to shine upon us, unworthy though we are of such an unspeakable gift; and what an unspeakable gift, indeed, was his only-beloved Son, to die for all those who feel their need of him. Sometimes this great love seems to me overpowering. I want to feel it more and more. O to lose sight of everything earthly in it. I do hope God will send down his Holy Spirit into our hearts, to teach us and guide us aright; for without him our lives would be dark and dreary, and our death too; but Jesus has died; he has brought life and immortality to light, and not one of his true followers will ever be forsaken, either in life or in death."

"God is constantly watching over his people. The thing is to be made right, in the first place; to be sure that we are indeed chosen ones in his Son Christ Jesus. There is nothing more encouraging than the persuasion that he who hath begun the good work will carry it on until the day of Jesus Christ; that means, I suppose, until we know for ourselves that Jesus has loved us and died for us; not when he comes at the day of judgment. I have often thought what a dreadful day that will be; but as I have gone on thinking of it, sometimes I have lost the fear; for I have found no dread in the coming of a loving Saviour, who died that poor, lost, ruined sinners might be raised to dwell with him."

“I sometimes feel as though I had indeed a hard heart, when I know all the great things he has done for me, and dare not deny that he has shown me particular mercies, and yet feel not the slightest spark of gratitude. God’s thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways our ways, and in those words lies much comfort for those who know themselves in any measure.”

“He lives for ever, and so will the very feeblest one who clings to him. What a gospel it is indeed. May we see more and more of its beauties; for in it alone is happiness to be found—enduring happiness.”

“‘To lead into the way of peace.’ There is something so beautiful to me in the word peace. It is what I want to feel so; my heart filled with peace; no tiresome little cares about the present and the future, and no bitter remembrance of a happy past; but a peaceful, calm trust in a God who does indeed do all things well; one who knows all those who put their trust in him, even when they do not think they are trusting him; but underneath all their fretfulness and waywardness, there is a little trust somewhere: ‘Yet will I look once more toward his holy temple.’”

“O yes; great and many are his mercies; but how unmindful are we poor, murmuring creatures. But now and then a little gleam of light shines through and gladdens our dark hearts; for ‘in His light shall we see light.’”

Some time in November, 1862, my sister caught cold, through getting wet while going to chapel. At first, we thought it would soon leave her, but, being obliged to go out one damp day, she increased it materially. We sent for her medical adviser, who, after examining her lungs, pronounced them both affected with bronchitis, but hoped, by the blessing of God on the means used, and careful nursing, she would soon get over it. Towards the latter end of January, in the following year, feeling much better, indeed well comparatively, and being anxious to go out, she was permitted, thinking the air would strengthen and invigorate her system, which had suffered much through being confined so long to the house. She seemed sometimes better, sometimes worse, until April, when it was found advisable she should have change of air. After another examination of her lungs, finding disease had commenced its fearful ravages, she was ordered off to Hastings. She went with a sister, whose companion she had always been when that sister’s delicate state of health had compelled her to seek a change; but, as she continued to get worse, she returned home, after an absence of three weeks. My dear mother’s heart sank within her when she saw her. The dreadful tale was soon told to all of us, though we clung to hope. A physician was called in consultation, and he confirmed the opinion previously given, but the disease had made rapid strides, and she was again ordered to be kept in a room at a certain temperature. At this time she was very low and nervous; we dare not let her see our fears, and painful was it to hide from her our feelings.

From the commencement of her illness her appetite failed, and nothing we could get would tempt her to eat. This was very much against her recovery. Yet occasionally she would rally again, and get out for a little walk or ride. She generally got to Gower-street Chapel on Sunday mornings; but not being able to continue long in one posture, she sat in the vestry. Of what passed through her mind



at this time we are not aware, for we, through mistaken kindness, were fearful of saying anything to her on those subjects about which we most wished to speak, knowing the thought of dying at that time was very distressing to her. Indeed, from the sadly flattering nature of the disease, we all hoped it was not really consumption, and that she would be yet spared to us. About July, she seemed so much better that again change of air was sought as a means of strengthening her. This time our afflicted mother accompanied her. Their stay in the country was about seven weeks. On her return, those who were left behind, on once more seeing her, felt that now there was no hope whatever that she would be restored; but she herself was full of hope. She only remained at home a few days. On the Sunday morning she went to Gower-street for the last time. Mr. G. preached. While dwelling much on the welcome given to each soul as they entered the portals of bliss, a person, who happened to be in the vestry, observed her drop her head, while a tear fell from the eye. The next day, Mr. G. dined with us. Before leaving, he read and engaged in prayer; and though he prayed most sweetly for her, yet he did not once ask the Lord to raise her up again. After I had let him out, on going into the room, I found her trembling excessively; she looked up at me with a look of anguish I can never forget, and taking my hand in hers, said, "Does Mr. G. think I shall not get over it?" I replied, "He did not say so to me, dear." "Ah," she said, "M., dear, he did not once pray for me to get better, which made the blood rush up into my cheeks; but I watched his prayer, and found he prayed for you all in the same way he did for me; and this comforted me a little."

The next day, accompanied by our dear mother, she went to Devizes. While there, she was attended by a cousin who daily watched the case, and paid every attention that possibly could be paid. After examining her lungs, he called our sorrowing mother on one side, and told her the alarming state she was in. The remedies applied in many respects produced favourable symptoms, so that she herself, and she only, thought that she would be restored, and we hoped she might be spared a few months longer.

About this time she writes as follows to the same friend who favoured us with the former extracts:

"Instead of the wretched state I was in when first ill, I do feel a sort of quietness under the illness, a resting upon God's eternal purposes."

Again, she writes:

"It is little enough good we get from looking to ourselves. It is only in looking to the Saviour that real peace and happiness are to be found."

Again:

"'Looking unto Jesus.' It is no use to look to ourselves. Let us try to pray in our poor way for that faith that does look to Him. Let us, then, look to Him in every time of trouble, and in joy may we ever turn to Him."

Another time, she writes:

"I want to feel submissive to God's will, whatever it may be. . . . I hope, if it be God's will, I may feel somewhat stronger before then; but may he teach me to say from my heart, 'Thy will be done.'"

“When I tell my feelings sometimes to those who I believe understand those things, they encourage me, and say, ‘No hypocrite would feel grieved at their darkness and want of feeling. It is, indeed, only while we look off ourselves and on Jesus we can feel happy.’ O that I may be able to say, ‘God’s will be done,’ from my heart; but it requires much of His grace to do so.”

About a fortnight before she left Devizes, there was an anniversary at Mr. D.’s chapel, when Mr. H. preached in the afternoon. Being very anxious to hear him, she went in an invalid chair. On entering the chapel, she was much melted down with those lines of Hart’s:

“But they who in the Lord confide,  
And shelter in his wounded side,  
Shall see the danger overpast;  
Stand every storm, and live at last.”

The first hymn sung, beginning,

“Poor, weak, and worthless though I am,”

was also much blest to her. Faith was given her to adopt the language as her own. The last verse was particularly sweet. Mr. H. read the Psalm, xxiii., which was so blest to her she was quite melted down, as also during his prayer; but the moment he gave out his text, all this sweet feeling left her. She tried to bring it back again, but could not. This distressed her not a little. About this time she lost her voice, and never spoke loudly again.

On the following Sunday, one of the friends, knowing how she generally enjoyed Mr. H.’s ministry, took her in a fly over to Allington, where he was preaching that day. On her return, our dear mother inquired how she heard him. She replied, “Not so well as I wanted.”

She gradually got weaker and weaker, and was daily wasting away, so that when she returned home in October, she had to be assisted into the house, which she never left again until she was carried to her last resting-place. Though, when at Devizes, she had been favoured with such a sweet manifestation of the Lord’s love, and intimation of his will concerning her, yet she still clung to life, which made the evidently near approach of her dissolution doubly painful to her deeply-afflicted mother and sisters. Many were the cries sent up on her behalf, that the Lord would give her a sweet resignation to his will, and also that we might be privileged to witness the same, for the encouragement of our own souls, as well as others of the Lord’s tried family; and to his honour be it spoken, he heard and answered our cries in a marked manner, as will be hereafter related. A few days after her return, in conversation, she said, “If the Lord means to remove me, he can, and I believe he will make me willing to go. I have no one else to look to.” On the Monday following, Mr. H., who was supplying at Gower Street, called to see her. She was enabled to tell out a little of the Lord’s dealings with her from her first convictions, in such a manner as quite satisfied him as to the genuineness of the work of grace in her soul. This visit was very refreshing to her spirit.

She was several times urged by all of us to see another physician, which she always refused, saying she was sure her present doctor dip

all that could be done; but one day she said, "I think I should like to see Dr. N." We wanted to send immediately for him, and while considering the best and quickest way, she stopped us, saying, "No. I would rather not;" without giving any reason. The next morning, she told our dear mother she dared not have sent for Dr. N., as these words came so powerfully: "Be still, and know that I am God."

On the Monday before she died, she said, "I do not know what the Lord is about to do with me, but I feel willing either to die or live." One said, "Should the Lord be pleased to take you, you will have no more pain, no more sorrow." "No," she replied, "no more pain, no more sorrow." She said to her mother, "I have never been to see my dear father's grave, but that does not matter." She was asked if she would like to be laid with him. "Yes," she said, "I should." Soon after, a sister came to see her, who again urged her to see another physician; and she promised, for her and our satisfaction, she would if she got worse another time. She said, "Do not weep, mother, it is all for the best."

On the Tuesday, she was carried up to bed for the first time. The next morning she walked down to breakfast, but it was the last time she did walk down. Feeling much worse on the Thursday, my dear sister, as she had promised, wished Dr. C. to be sent for. When he came, she said to him, with a sweet smile, "I do not expect you can cure me, doctor." In the course of the day, she said to our mother, "Do you think I shall be lost if I have no more manifestation?" "O no, my dear," was the reply. "Jesus has been precious to you." "Yes," she said,

"Did Jesus once upon me shine,  
Then Jesus is for ever mine."

Several other things she said that day; but as we had not the least idea her end was so near, we did not put down what fell from her lips. In the evening she said, "It is not that I am afraid to die, but I do not like the thought of leaving you all."

On the Friday morning, she was carried down stairs for the last time. During that day, at intervals, she was in a nice quiet frame; but, from her extreme weakness, at times felt restless. That night an aunt, who came in, sat up with her. On Saturday she wished to get up, as usual, but was advised not. Soon after breakfast, she said, "Mother, will you read Psalm xl. to me?" After that, she requested her to read that beautiful hymn,

"When languor and disease invade  
This trembling house of clay," &c.

In the course of the morning, when my husband was feeding her with a little jelly she looked at him, saying, "I am so afraid G., dear, of being choked." He replied, "What a mercy you have no pain, dear." "Ah," she said, "'goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life;' and even now, 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.' How beautiful it will be to close my eyes on this world, and open them in heaven on Jesus. Yes; I shall see him as he is. 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered

into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.' What wonderful condescension! He took on him the nature of sinful man; not the sin. He came into this world to die for sinners." Soon after, she said to me, "I am so afraid I shall be impatient. I do so long to go." In the afternoon, when a sister, who had called to see her, was taking leave of her, she said, "I hope, dear, when you come again you will find me gone."

The whole of that day her countenance wore a heavenly smile, indicating the inward peace she was enjoying. She was quite sensible to the last. In the evening, expecting the friend, who at times came up to town on the Saturday, and who so kindly sent the above extracts, she said, "I suppose I must see T. to-night." I said, "Do just as you like, dear." "Well," she replied, "just a minute or two." By this time he had arrived, and, before seeing her, he sent up a beautiful bouquet of flowers. At the sight of them, her eyes sparkled. They were held before her. While she looked at each flower, she said, "O how beautiful." When he came in, she said to him, "I hope you will be resigned, T., for I long to go." "O," he replied, "not yet, not yet." "Yes," she said, "I long to go."

As she earnestly wished all to retire to rest, except the aunt before named, we did so. Soon after, she said, "Are these the rattles?" Aunt said, "Yes, my dear." About five minutes past three o'clock, Sunday morning, she asked her for some jelly. After she had taken it, she said, "Turn me round, and lay me close to my mother," who was asleep by her side. She drew two long breaths, and was gone. Aunt then awoke our dear mother, who was much grieved she should have been asleep. Immediately these words were brought powerfully to her mind: "Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, to be loosed on the Sabbath day?"

Thus sweetly fell asleep in Jesus my beloved sister, her countenance still wearing the peaceful, sweet smile it did the whole of Saturday. In her we have lost a most affectionate sister, one who always made our troubles her own. Her short life was a life of usefulness to all around her. The poor have lost a kind, sympathising friend. Our dear mother's loss is indeed a heavy one; but we have the great consolation of knowing that our loss is her eternal gain.

M. L.

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### A FRIENDLY CAUTION.

"For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks."  
(Ps. xviii. 27.)

TAKE heed thou no regard for sin,  
Nor love to it maintain;  
The least vice hath more ill therein  
Than's in the greatest pain.

If rather than the smarting rod  
Thy choice is sin and vice;  
Thou proudly dost contend with God,  
And show thyself unwise.

If thou, impatient of the stroke,  
His providence accuse;  
Thou dost, by casting off his yoke,  
Thine own, that's heavier, choose.

In trouble, therefore, don't debate,  
Nor with thy Master fight;  
Contention makes thy burden great;  
Submission makes it light.

ERSKINE.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS  
OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

## I.

MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF  
GOD UPON THE HEART.

(Continued from page 164.)

We have undertaken to give our thoughts on a subject, "The Authority and Power of the word of God upon the heart," which is not only in itself of the widest range and of the deepest importance, but one which demands on our part a fulness of understanding, a depth of experience, and a clearness of thought and expression, and on the part of our readers, an amount of divine teaching, a readiness of apprehension, and a fixedness of attention, in which we both may alike much fail. But besides these difficulties which seem scarcely separable from the subject itself, there are, in our case, other incidental circumstances which much add to the weight of our task. One is our limited space, which necessarily cramps our pen, and prevents that fulness of explanation, of argument, and of illustration which the subject requires that it may be fully understood. Another is, the feeling that to the majority of our readers—the best part of them, in every sense of the word, the introductory portion of our subject, on which we are at present necessarily engaged, is most probably new, and therefore either difficult or uninteresting. The Lord's people generally, from want of education and of mental training, cannot readily understand abstract truths, or steadily follow a chain of argumentative reasoning. They can believe, but cannot argue; feel, but cannot reason. Taught by the Spirit, they know the truth by a testimony as much beyond argument as the witness of God is beyond the witness of man. They therefore consider, and in some sense justly consider, all reasoning and argument in the things of God unnecessary; and thus instinctively turn away from them as confusing their mind, and rather hindering than helping their faith.

These and other considerations, which it is unnecessary now to mention, would almost induce us to lay aside our present subject, and take up another less extensive, and more adapted to the taste and feelings of our spiritual readers. Still, as we have put our plough into this field, we feel unwilling to leave it in the midst of the furrow, as if either the ground were too hard or too barren to promise a crop, or the ploughman too weak or too unskilful to complete his task. We admit that the present part of our subject is somewhat dry; but we may perhaps apply to it the words of the prophet: "Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place?" (Isa. xxviii. 24, 25.) We are now ploughing to sow; opening and breaking the clods of the ground, and making

plain the face thereof. But by and by we shall endeavour to cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place; and O, may the gracious declaration be fulfilled in us: "For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him." (Isa. xxviii. 26.) It will then be seen that the ploughing was as needful as the sowing, and that both must be united to give the desired crop. In this hope, then, and confidence, we will again lay our hands on the plough-stilts, and looking to the Lord of the harvest, attempt to draw a fresh furrow from the spot where we last unyoked.

We think that we must have sufficiently opened, in our last paper, the *nature* of divine revelation. We shall now, therefore, advance a step further, and direct the minds of our readers to the *evidence* of revelation; in other words, the *proof* that God has revealed his mind and will to the children of men. This evidence is so large and various, whole volumes having been written on the subject without exhausting the depth and richness of the mine, that it is clearly out of our present compass to furnish anything beyond what may be sufficient to give our readers a general idea of its nature and force. But as we have undertaken to show the authority and power of the word of God, we are bound by our very undertaking to bring forward some evidence that the Scriptures contain a revelation of his mind and will; and though to many of our readers the subject may be new and therefore somewhat difficult to grasp, yet we doubt not that a little attention will easily overcome that apparent difficulty.

But to gain a general idea of the subject, especially if new to us, we must be willing to learn its first principles—to begin with its alphabet. When these simple elements are understood and fairly mastered, the whole subject will become clear. Hebrew and Greek, and indeed many other languages, have their alphabet, which must be mastered before we can read them. So evidence has its alphabet, which we must learn before we can read its open page.

*What*, then, is evidence, and *why* should it be required? These are two simple questions, and we will endeavour to give them as simple answers.

1. "Evidence," then, means *proof*—proof that a certain occurrence took place; proof that a document, as a lease, a will, &c., really is what it purports to be.

2. But *why* should this proof be wanted in the case of revelation? For this simple reason, that otherwise we should not know that it was a revelation from God. Why do we believe the Bible and disbelieve the Koran of Mahomet, receive the Scriptures and reject the Vedas of the Brahmins? For this reason, that we have the strongest, firmest, most indubitable proof that the Bible is a revelation from God, and that, for want of such or similar evidence, these other professed revelations are lying impostures.

But now, as part of the alphabet, consider the simple element of this necessity apart from the Scriptures. Was evidence needed when there was no Scripture? Yes, certainly. Why? For this simple reason, that though the person to whom the revelation was

made, as say, Abraham, had in himself the self-attesting evidence of the voice of God, yet he could not convey that evidence to the mind of another, say Isaac, to whom no such personal revelation was made. Isaac then would want some evidence, some proof that God had spoken to Abraham. What this proof was we shall presently show. We are now merely pointing out the *necessity* of evidence as requisite to establish the truth of revelation. Revelation existed before a line of Scripture was written; for without it there could have been neither faith, nor worship, nor obedience. But those to whom the revelation was not personally made believed it on the testimony of those who had received it from the mouth of God. This testimony was, as we shall presently show, their chief evidence that God had spoken, and to believe and act upon it was their obedience of faith.

Now *we* are similarly circumstanced as regards the Scriptures. *We* need evidence, proof, that they are a revelation from God. Those to whom God immediately spoke needed no evidence beyond his self-attesting voice; but we to whom he has not thus spoken, but to whom he now speaks in the Scriptures, need clear proof, strong evidence, that he speaks to us in them. Thus much for the *necessity* of evidence. Now for its *nature*.

We have seen that evidence means proof. But what kind of proof, for there are many? As applied, then, to the proof of revelation, it means chiefly probable proof, as distinct from, and opposed to demonstrative. Let us show the difference between them. A schoolboy learns from his multiplication-table that 5 times 5 is 25. Now suppose that the incipient arithmetician, being a boy of a doubting mind, should suspect an error in the multiplication-table, and has a strong opinion that 5 times 5 is 24. How is he to be convinced of his mistake? The patient writing-master sets before the young infidel 5 rows of pebbles or shillings, 5 in a row, and bids him count the whole number. He counts, and counts again, and still he finds that they are 25. This is *demonstrative* proof. But this kind of proof is limited to number and figure; in other words, to arithmetic and mathematics. You cannot prove the occurrence of a fact, that, for instance, Charles I. was beheaded at Whitehall in 1648, as the schoolmaster is able to demonstrate that 5 times 5 is 25. But there may be evidence to the occurrence of a circumstance, as the *evidence of testimony*, which though different in kind, may be almost as strong as the multiplication-table. For instance, you believe that Garibaldi has lately been in England. Why? You did not see him land at Southampton. You were not in the crowd which attended him through Lambeth and Westminster. But you as much believe that Garibaldi was lately in England as that 5 times 5 is 25. Why? From the evidence of testimony. Thousands saw him, and on their testimony you rest, though you never saw him yourself. Now apply this to the testimony of the miracles of Jesus. Suppose 5,000 persons were all to testify that they saw, with their own eyes, Jesus take five loaves and two fishes, and with them feed a vast multitude, would not their evidence be as strong to the truth

of that miracle as if 5,000 persons said they had seen Garibaldi? Nay, in some sense their testimony would be stronger, for of all the multitude who saw Garibaldi perhaps five had never seen him before, and therefore, as far as they could tell, he might have been an impostor. But of all the 5,000 miraculously fed in Galilee, every individual would know what bread and fish were, and therefore imposture was impossible. This, then, is one evidence of the truth of revelation—the evidence of testimony—that men to whom God specially revealed himself testified to others that he had so revealed himself to them. Take as an illustration the case of Abraham and Isaac, to which we have already referred as showing the general necessity of evidence to prove the truth of revelation. God commanded Abraham to offer up Isaac in sacrifice. This was a revelation made specially to Abraham, and carried with it the self-attesting evidence of the voice of the Lord. But why should Isaac believe it? Why suffer himself to be bound and laid upon the wood? Because of Abraham's *testimony*. This was Isaac's evidence, for he knew that nothing but the voice of God to his father would induce him to do such a deed. Bear in mind, then, that this kind of evidence which we shall have occasion more fully to unfold, as it is one of our main proofs of the truth of revelation, is called the *evidence of testimony*.

2. But there is another kind of evidence, usually called *internal* evidence. It is so named to distinguish it from *external* evidence, such as is the evidence of testimony which we have been just considering.

An illustration will make this distinction abundantly clear. A will is disputed on the ground that the signature of the deceased testator is not genuine—in other words, that it is a forgery. A witness comes forward to testify that he saw the deceased sign the will, and that he attested it at the time by his own signature. This is *external* evidence, and is the very same which we have endeavoured to point out, the evidence of *testimony*. But on investigation it is found that the provisions of the will are contrary to the known wishes of the testator; that the signature does not at all resemble his usual writing; that the date is at the time when it was known that from paralysis he was incapable of signing it; that the property is throughout wrongly described, all which circumstances put together afford a strong presumption that the will is a forgery, and the attesting witness unworthy of credit. This is *internal* evidence. This kind of evidence we shall have occasion to dwell upon hereafter at some length, and shall therefore now pass it by. These two kinds of evidence—the evidence of testimony and internal evidence, are of daily use in the ordinary affairs of life, and consciously or unconsciously are employed by every one. You cannot send a child with an errand to a shop without employing both. The child comes back with the goods in his hand. He tells you whom he saw and what he paid. This is the evidence of testimony. You examine the goods which he brings back. They agree with what you had before at the same shop. This is internal evidence.



But revelation, being a thing altogether extraordinary and supernatural, demands something more than the evidence of testimony or internal evidence, though it possesses the highest degree of both. Testimony can prove a miracle; but testimony cannot prove that God spoke to Abraham so as to leave it without the shadow of a doubt. Jeremiah, as a true prophet, could say from the Lord: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the king of Babylon, and serve him and his people, and live." (Jer. xxvii. 12.) This was true testimony. But Hananiah could also testify: "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon." But this was false testimony, for he was a lying prophet. We see, then, that in the case of revelation we need something more than ordinary evidence; for being of an extraordinary nature, it requires extraordinary proof. We have, then, as proofs of divine revelation, ordinary evidence and extraordinary.

But this extraordinary evidence again is twofold; one addressed to the minds of men generally, or

3. The evidence of *miracles* and *prophecy*; and one addressed to the hearts and consciences of God's believing people, or

4. The *witness of the Spirit* to the authority and power of the word of God.

From this simple sketch we gather that there are four main evidences of the truth of revelation; two ordinary, and two extraordinary. The two ordinary are, 1. Testimony, and 2. Internal; the two extraordinary are, 3. Miracle and prophecy, and 4. The Spirit's witness. We do not say there are no more, nor do we lay down our limitation of them as authoritative; but they have these advantages; 1. That they are eminently scriptural; 2. That they have been worked out in our mind; 3. That they are simple and intelligible. 4. That they can be brought within a reasonable compass, at least in this general outline. The first reason will especially commend itself to our readers; and that they may prove the truth of our words, we will give them the following references. 1. The evidence of *testimony* may be found 1 John i. 1-5; 2 Pet. i. 15-18. 2. *Internal* evidence may be seen Ps. xix. 7-11; cxix. 18, 103, 104, 129, 140, 160. 3. The evidence of *miracles* and *prophecy* may be observed John iii. 2; v. 36; ix. 32, 33; xi. 40-43; 2 Pet. i. 19-21. 4. The evidence of the *Spirit's witness* to the power of God's word may be seen 1 Thess. i. 5, 6; ii. 13; 1 John v. 9, 10, 20. It may be profitable employ for some of our readers to work these passages out for themselves with the clue which we have given, instead of our doing it for them, and thus impress these four kinds of evidence more distinctly on their minds.

But after this general sketch let us now enter a little more fully into the first kind of ordinary evidence—the evidence of *testimony*.

1. Its peculiar feature is that it admits of all degrees of probability from the highest, amounting almost to demonstration, to the lowest, in which it is almost safer to disbelieve than to believe it.

What, then, makes it worthy of reception? What invests it with such an amount of probability as to make it nearly a matter of certainty? In order that it should be worthy of reception it must be the testimony of a competent, credible eye-witness, or of eye-witnesses, and the more the better, to the occurrence of a transaction. This definition embraces three things: 1. It must be the testimony of an *eye-witness*. This excludes all mere hearsay evidence. 2. He must be a *competent* witness. A child, a drunken man, a madman, an idiot may be eye-witnesses, but they are incompetent from want of the necessary understanding, and therefore are evidently untrustworthy. 3. He must be a *credible* witness, that is, his moral character must be beyond suspicion; for who would believe a perjured wretch who would swear his father's life away for half-a-crown? By way of illustration, apply this definition and explanation of the evidence of testimony to the witness borne by the apostles to the Lord's resurrection. 1. They were *eye-witnesses*. The Lord "showed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days." (Acts i. 3.) This indeed was the grand point which in every sermon they insisted upon, and without which they could not have been apostles, (Acts i. 22,) that they were eye-witnesses that Christ was raised from the dead. (See Acts ii. 32; iii. 15; iv. 33; v. 32; x. 40, 41; xiii. 30, 31.) 2. They were *competent* witnesses. Surely Peter and John and James, after three years' daily intercourse with their blessed Master, were fully competent to recognise his Person, his features, his voice, beyond the possibility of a mistake. Even unbelieving Thomas was compelled to cry out, "My Lord and my God." 3. And they were *credible* witnesses, for malice itself has never ventured to cast the least suspicion on their moral character, and they were willing to lay down their lives for the truth of their testimony.

But it may so happen that *ordinary* evidence, that is, the evidence of human testimony, it being at best but probable, may be insufficient to establish a point of great difficulty or importance. The witness of the alleged transaction might be an eye-witness, a competent witness, a credible witness; and yet the occurrence might in itself be naturally so incredible that ordinary evidence would be too weak fully to prove it. For, 1st, though the witness was an eye-witness, yet his eyes might have deceived him, as in the not uncommon case of mistaken identity, where one person is mistaken for another; or, 2nd, though generally competent, in this peculiar case, as in witnessing some difficult surgical operation, his understanding might be deficient, and thus he might be virtually a child; or, 3rd, though generally credible, yet the circumstance might be of so incredible a character that it would be more reasonable to disbelieve the witness than to credit the occurrence. We see, then, that even in human affairs, in the occurrences of daily life, ordinary external evidence, that is, the evidence of testimony, may be too weak to prove the fact of an alleged occurrence. How much more, then, in things divine, in such a supernatural matter as a revelation from God to man. The evidence, then, of testimony has its place, and a very important

place, in proof of the fact of a divine revelation, as we have shown in the testimony borne by the apostles to the Lord's resurrection. It is therefore necessary, nay indispensable; but being inherently weak, it needs to be backed, and, as it were, supplemented by evidence of a stronger nature—evidence more approaching demonstration. This stronger evidence is the *extraordinary* evidence afforded by miracles and prophecy of which we have already spoken.

Thus we see that there is a connection between ordinary and extraordinary evidences; between the evidence of testimony and the evidence of miracles.

But in order more fully to clear up these points, and to show more distinctly the connection between these two kinds of evidence, we will, by way of illustration, examine the call and mission of Moses, as recorded in Exodus iii. and iv., as, in our judgment, it casts great light on the subject now before us. It may seem, indeed, somewhat illogical in us to assume the truth of the Mosaic record, in order to show the connection between ordinary and extraordinary evidence; but it should be observed that we employ it not as an argument but as an illustration. In our last paper we showed that as regards Moses personally, his call rested on two foundations; 1st, the appearance of God in the burning bush, and the voice with which he spake to him out of it; and, 2nd, the self-attesting evidence in his own bosom that it was the Lord who spoke unto him. Moses then, as regarded his own full conviction and persuasion of the truth of a revelation from God, needed no other evidence but what was then and there given him. It was full and complete. The voice of the Lord, full of majesty, sounded as powerfully and convincingly in his heart as the glory of the burning bush shone brightly before his awe-struck eye. But this special revelation was not given him for himself. It was to be the foundation of a peculiar mission, the effects of which were not only to spread themselves as a mighty sea over the shores of time, but to stretch themselves into the vast ocean of eternity. A mission is given him to bring up the children of Israel out of Egypt. "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." (Ex. iii. 10.) But Moses hesitates. He knew the difficulty of the task. He could believe for himself; but how was he to believe for those to whom he was sent? He felt his own weakness, and confessed it: "And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (Exod. iii. 11.) We need not pursue the inspired narrative further, except so far as it throws light on our present subject. We observe, then, in it, 1st, The evidence of *testimony*. How was Moses to convince the children of Israel that he had seen the Lord in Horeb, and that the God of their fathers had sent him to bring them up from the land of Egypt? By telling them so; by the simple fact of personal testimony. "Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited

you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt." (Exod. iii. 16.) "Go, and say unto them." What is this but testimony?—the testimony of an eye-witness, of a competent witness, of a credible witness; a plain, positive, direct testimony to the truth of what he had seen and heard?

But we see, 2ndly, the inherent weakness of human testimony. Moses felt it to be so. Like the Law, of which he was afterwards the typical Mediator, it was weak, not in itself, but through the weakness of the flesh. (Rom. viii. 3.) He therefore still hesitated, for he felt that his personal testimony would not be strong enough to overcome the natural unbelief and infidelity of those to whom he was sent. Now, this brings us just to the point which we are endeavouring to open; that in such a matter as divine revelation which, as being supernatural, is to fallen man naturally incredible, there is a necessity that the ordinary evidence of human testimony should be as it were backed and supplemented by extraordinary evidence—that is, the evidence of miracles and prophecy. "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." (Exod. iv. 1.) Hear the confession of Moses as to the weakness of human testimony: "They will not believe me, nor hearken to my voice." Now, see how the Lord meets and overcomes this objection: "And the Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." (Exod. iv. 2, 3, 4.) God works a miracle. Why? To confirm beyond all dispute and controversy the truth of Moses's mission. "That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee." (Exod. iv. 5.) The Lord then gives him, as an additional confirmation, a second miracle, to which we need only refer—the leprous hand and its restoration; (Exod. iv. 6, 7;) and then declares: "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign." (Exod. iv. 8.) But if these two miracles wrought before their eyes were not sufficient to prove the truth of his mission, the Lord gives him power to work a third. "And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe also these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land; and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land." (Exod. iv. 9.)

But now let us see the combined effect of testimony and miracle when Moses goes to execute his mission: "And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. And the people believed. And when they heard that the Lord had visited the

children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped." (Exod. iv. 29, 30, 31.)

First, there is *testimony*: "And Aaron spake all the words which the LORD had spoken unto Moses." Next there is *miracle*: "And did the signs in the sight of the people." Thirdly, there is *belief*: "And the people believed." Fourthly, there is *worship*: "They bowed their heads and worshipped." Thus we see that the weakness of testimony is made up for and supplemented by the strength of miracle. Without testimony miracle would be purposeless; without miracle testimony would be inefficacious. Testimony is to miracle what Aaron was to Moses, "instead of a mouth;" and miracle is to testimony what Moses was to Aaron, "instead of God." (Exod. iv. 16.)

But why should miracle possess this peculiar strength? For this simple reason, that it shows the special intervention of the Almighty. Thus the magicians, when baffled and confounded, confessed to Pharaoh: "This is the finger of God." (Exod. viii. 19.) The words of Nicodemus, we think, contain as good an explanation of the force of miracles as could be well put together in a short compass: "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him." (John iii. 2.)

The subject is too important for us to conclude in what remains of our present room; and yet, though we shall have occasion to consider it more largely by and by, we hardly like to close our present paper without adding one more illustration of the nature and strength of the evidence of miracle as confirming and supplementing the evidence of testimony, which may furnish some of our readers with food for thought until we meet again.

We will take, then, the miracle wrought on Mount Carmel, not, indeed, by Elijah, but in answer to his prayer, (1 Kings xviii.) as a forcible illustration of the point before us. We need not go through the whole history. A few hints will suffice for our present purpose.

There was then a controversy in Israel\* which was God, the LORD or Baal. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow

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\* The question may arise, perhaps, in the mind of some of our readers how such a strife could possibly have occurred, or such a controversy existed? Could there have been any general, any wide-spread doubt which was God—the LORD or Baal? In answer to this question, bear in mind, 1st, that the scene of strife was "Israel," i.e., the ten revolted tribes, not Judah, which yet "ruled with God and was faithful with the saints." (Hosea xi. 12.) 2. That about 70 years had elapsed since Jeroboam had set up the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel, the two extremities of his kingdom, and therefore two generations had grown up in idolatrous worship. 3. That all the priests and Levites had left the land, and come to dwell in Judah and Jerusalem; (2 Chron. xii. 13, 14;) and that "for a long season Israel had been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law." (2 Chron. xv. 3.) 4. That there was constant war between Judah and Israel, and the people on both sides thus prevented from mixing together. All these circumstances will sufficiently account for the startling fact that the people of Israel should not know which was the true God, the LORD or Baal.

him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." (1 Kings xviii. 21.) The people were dumb, not knowing how the strife was to be decided. A miracle, then, shall decide it. "Let them, therefore, give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and I will dress the other bullock, and lay it on wood, and put no fire under; and call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD; and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." (1 Kings xviii. 23, 24.) Nothing could be fairer than such a proposition; nothing clearer than such a test. This was the universal feeling. "And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken." The trial is immediately made; with what results our readers know. But it will be worth our while to consider the prayer of Elijah, as throwing a flood of light upon the evidence of miracle: "And it came to pass, at the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the LORD God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." (1 Kings xviii. 36, 37.) What was the miracle to show? 1. That Jehovah was God in Israel; 2. That Elijah was his servant; 3. That he had done these things at the word of the LORD; 4. That the LORD had purposes of mercy to Israel in thus turning their hearts back again to himself. Thus we see how the evidence of testimony was confirmed by the evidence of miracle. Testimony was not enough; for Baal's prophets could set testimony against testimony, and with amazing force, for it was the testimony of 450 prophets against one. But when it came to miracle, to the finger of God, to the special appearance and interposition of the LORD, then the testimony of the one prophet shone forth as the sun in the sky, and the testimony of the 450 vanished like the thin mist before its bright beams.

As the subject of evidence is not exhausted, we shall hope to meet again upon this ground in a following Number.

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GOD brought Israel out of Egypt with a high hand; but did he set them down on the other side of the Red Sea, to find and force their way to Canaan, by their own policy or power? When he had opened the iron gate of their house of bondage, and brought them into the open fields, did he vanish as the angel from Peter, when out of prison? No, as a man carries his son, so the Lord bare them in all the way they went. (Deut. i. 31.) This doth lively set forth the saints' march to heaven. God brings a soul out of spiritual Egypt by his converting grace; that is the day of his power, wherein he makes the soul willing to come out of Satan's clutches. Now when the saint is upon his march, all the country riseth up upon him. How shall this poor creature pass the pikes, and get safely by all his enemies' borders? God himself enfolds him in the arms of his everlasting strength.—*Gurnall*.

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

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JULY, 1864.

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

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET CHAPEL, LONDON.

*(Continued from p. 172.)*

I shall now return to my narrative. I proceeded to Birmingham, as before observed. This was about the latter end of August, 1813. I was most affectionately received by a worthy family, with whom I took up my abode during my visit. The first time I preached, I found much help from the Lord; and after I had done, a person came to me in the vestry, and said to me, "Do you think, Sir, that you have preached the truth to-day?" I said, "Yes, as far as I know, and to the best of my ability. But," I said, "why do you ask that question?" This person replied, "You said, Sir, that when God was about to bring to pass his purpose, he poured out a spirit of prayer on his people; and if they were enabled to find access to God, they might conclude that God was about to grant them their request. Do you think that you really spoke the truth?" I said, "Yes, I am confident of it; for God would never help our infirmities in prayer, without intending to answer prayer." Then said this person, "I am confident that God will settle you over us as our minister." I said, with surprise, "You judge too soon; you are in too much haste; you don't know enough of me; you don't know how I am situated." "That is true," said this person; "but I can tell you that you are brought here in answer to the many prayers that I have put up to God for these six months past. God gave me a promise, and faith to believe the promise; and don't you think that he will fulfil his word, and answer the prayer of faith?" I said, "You seem very confident, my friend, but you don't know how I am situated, and what difficulties stand in the way." This person replied, "I care nothing about difficulties. God has given me the promise, and I can believe it. Besides, I know it will come to pass; for you have expressed my whole desires to God in prayer, and brought out all the exercises of my mind, and repeated the very promises that God has enabled me to plead in prayer this day." "Well," I said, "time will show how far you are correct."

The feelings of many others were very much like this person's. Having spent three weeks amongst them, I was obliged to return home. But before I left them, they had met together and come to

a determination to give me a call, which they did. I could not give them an immediate answer. It required due consideration and much prayer. But I told them they should hear from me in about a month. In the meantime, I said, "I think, my friends, that you have given me a call too hastily. You know nothing of me, or of my moral character. I wish, before you proceed any further, that you will make every inquiry about me, that you may not be deceived as many have been." They said, "We feel satisfied for ourselves; and whom could we write to about you?" I said, "Write to Dr. Hawker. He does not know that I am here, nor have I seen him for some time; but he knows me well;" and to this proposition they agreed. The managers wrote, and Dr. Hawker promptly answered in reply to them. They requested permission to print the letter, but the Doctor put a negative on it. I think it right, however, now the Doctor has joined the general assembly above, to insert the letter in this place, and his second letter too, for I think they will be read with pleasure by many of my friends:

"Plymouth, Charles Vicarage, Oct. 5, 1813.

"Dear Sir,—Grace, mercy, and peace be with you, and with the whole Israel of God.

"In answer to your letter respecting Mr. Fowler, I can only say that I have long known him, and long loved him, because I verily believe he hath loved, and doth love my Lord and Master. And should it please the great Head of his church to employ him, that he may go in and out before you in the ministry of the word, may the Lord who sends bless his services, so that Jesus be glorified, the church edified, and his own soul refreshed.

"If he be with you, give my love to him, and tell him that I hope and trust he will go on to exalt Christ Jesus. And I beg you to tell him that as a faithful servant should honour a kind master, so I hope he will prove himself a faithful servant by honouring the Lord our righteousness,—the best, the kindest, the most blessed, the most dear and precious of all Masters. It is high treason to the Majesty of heaven to preach anything but Jesus, in his Person, offices, character, and relations. And my poor prayers will follow my letter, that my dear Mr. Fowler will above all things honour him whom Jehovah delighteth to honour; and that he will make the Lord Jesus what Jehovah hath made him, the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last, the author and finisher of salvation.

"And if you will allow an old man, hastening on to the close of his poor ministry, to say a word to the church which is among you on the subject of your minister, I would say as Paul did, 'Receive him in the Lord's name, (not his own,) and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake.' Pray for him, and pray with him. It is a blessed sign of good when the Holy Ghost sets his people to pray for a blessing on the labours of his servants. That blessing and that promise is as good as received which God the Spirit teacheth the faithful to ask in prayer. My poor soul hath found, yea, often found, the Lord's blessings, in answer to his people's prayers. And you will find a fulness of blessing from the Lord's blessings on his ministry to your hearts, when the Lord hath enabled you to hold him up to the Lord, in seeking by prayer his grace upon him.

"I commend both you, the church, and him, the church's minister, to the Lord for blessing; and pray the glorious Head to bless both together, to his glory and your joy in the Lord.

"This from the unworthiest of his servants.

"Yours in the Lord Jesus,

"ROBERT HAWKER."



“Plymouth, Oct. 27, 1813.

“Dear Sir,—I beg to make a tender of my Christian love and affection to you, and the church of God which is with you, praying that all grace may abound in the covenant faithfulness of God our Father, through the dear Son of his love, by the blessed influence of God the Holy Ghost.

“Indeed, indeed, I thank the church of God with whom you are one, in that you so kindly and affectionately received my poor letter. It was written, if I know anything of my own heart, in the brotherly love of one that desires (at least) to love the precious name of our dear Lord exalted and extolled, and to be very high. And where Christ and his cause are concerned, there would I feel all that Paul felt, when to the church of the Thessalonians he said, he was so affectionately desirous concerning the people that he would have imparted unto them not the gospel of God only, but also, said he, our own souls, because ye were dear to us. And surely all that a faithful servant of such a Master as Jesus is, all he hath, and all he is, and by every way, and in everything, his one, yea, his only object is, and ought to be, how to promote his Lord's glory in his church's happiness. And though I know not what I wrote to you on the occasion for which you wrote to me, yet certain I am the whole tendency of my letter must have been to this purpose: Let the Lord Jesus and his cause be glorified, and it matters not by what instrument, or by what form of words.

“I pray you, therefore, my dear brother in the Lord, tell the church which is with you, how very highly I prize their affectionate acceptance of my letter. But having said this, there let it rest. Kindly as you all have read it, it cannot be fit for print. It was written in the moment of your question, and no further. Besides, though I have a very high regard for dear Mr. Fowler, and have said no more of him than I believe, yet it would not be suitable or becoming in me to send forth his character (according to my views) to the world. The Lord grant that he may be found faithful, and may my God, if it be for his glory, bless you and him together. And if the sweet savour of Jesus, in his Person, grace, and favour, be among you, the account of this, from time to time, will be more refreshing to my soul than though my poor letter was framed in gold.

“Be assured, my dear friend in the Lord, that my poor prayers will follow Mr. Fowler to Birmingham, and go up before the mercy-seat for you and him, as oft as I think of you all, that Jesus's love may cement you, and cause great soul prosperity among you; and like the flock of Christ coming up from the washing, every one may bear twins, and none be found barren among you. (Song iv. 2.)

“I beg you to give my brotherly love to your pastor; and once more say to him, from me, that as my Lord and his Lord hath advanced him to great honour, he and I ought to seek increasing grace from the Lord, to reflect all that honour back again with great thankfulness to the Lord. It matters not what becomes of such poor worms as we are, provided Jesus is glorified; and as the souls of Christ's people are precious to our Lord, yea, very precious, so ought they (and so will they, I trust) be very precious to us also. And do tell my brother to be looking out for opposition from without, in proportion as the Lord Jesus makes him useful within. The servants most employed by Jesus will be sure to have most of the devil's grudge; and especially if Jesus employs them in soul-comforting and soul-strengthening his people. The more Jesus smiles on them, the more hell will frown. But it is Jesus who must bear up and bear through all opposition. This is his work, and not ours; and his is the glory to make more than conquerors all his re-

deemed, while going on as one is described, Ps. lxxi. 13-16; and always on the look out, as another is represented, 2 Tim. iv. 5-8.

“Brethren, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

“Yours, in the best of all Bonds in Jesus,

“ROBERT HAWKER.”

This journey very much improved my health, and braced my shattered nerves; but the greatest mercy was, the cloud went before me, and the Angel of the covenant to keep me in the way.

Having returned to Plymouth in safety, through the Lord's preserving mercy, I made known to my wife the result of my journey; and I told her it appeared now that the Lord's time was come for me to leave Plymouth, and to be engaged wholly in the ministry; and she was quite willing that I should pursue that course which I thought agreeable to the will of God. After laying the matter many times before God for direction, I came to a determination to accept the call from the people at Birmingham. I then called on Dr. Hawker, who most affectionately received me. “I thought,” said he, “that you were at Birmingham; for I have received a letter from there on your account.” “I judge so,” I said. “I made free to refer them to you for my satisfaction as well as theirs.” “I have written to Birmingham,” said the Doctor, “and was glad of an opportunity so to do on your account.”

After I had stated my motives, and many things relative to the exercises of my mind respecting the ministry, and satisfied the Doctor's many inquiries relating to my temporal prospects, he bade me God-speed. I may say, though I never was ordained by what is called a bishop, I was ordained by Dr. Hawker, in his study; and the charge I received from him I shall not soon forget. He suggested to me many things as to word, doctrine, manner, and behaviour, both in the world and in the church of God, that did credit to his judgment as a venerable and judicious servant of God. At the conclusion, he said, “Now, my brother, I beg you to write to me without the least reserve, if you should be under any difficulty, either in spirituals or temporals, and I shall be glad to have an opportunity to render you any service that lies in my power.” I thanked him for his many kindnesses to me in this instance, and for many others heretofore. “My prayer,” he said, “to my covenant God and Father shall be that he may make you a blessing to the poor people where you are going.”

Dr. Hawker shone brightly as a preacher, nor less so by his humility, condescension, and brotherly kindness.

Having settled upon removing to Birmingham, I had now, with all speed, to wind up my little business. This lay very weighty on my mind; and I was obliged to cry mightily to God for wisdom and direction; for, though the winding up of my affairs neither required an accountant nor a solicitor, yet I was as much perplexed as a tradesman who had carried on a business of a much greater magnitude. I was in debt about as much as I had on my books, and several sums I considered lost.

My unbelief now began to work. My carnal reason said, "There is no probability that you will get in one half the debts; for when it is known that you are going to leave these parts, even those that could pay you will take advantage of your removal, and you will be obliged to leave the town in debt." And so it appeared to me, which brought me into great perplexity for several days; but I gave myself to prayer, and waited for God's answer, as a child would wait on his parents for bread; nor did I pray in vain.

As I was returning from a village where I had been to preach, begging the Lord's direction in regard to the insurmountable difficulties before me, I was stopped in a moment by—I will not say a voice, but it was equal to it; and it was this: "Has not God made all things straight hitherto? Has not God given a spirit of prayer to the people at Birmingham for you, and a willing heart to receive you? Are not the gold and the silver the Lord's? Are not the hearts of all men in his hands? Is there anything too hard for God? Take and make out all your bills, good and bad, and deliver them. Leave the Lord to manage for you." These impressions completely delivered me from all anxious care from that moment, touching my debts. I set to work the next morning, and delivered all my bills as fast as I could make them out; and I told all my debtors, as soon as I delivered the bill, that I was about to leave that part of the country.

Now, reader, you will observe, that though many impressions on our minds may mislead us, some impressions are from God, and the event proves it. As fast as I gave in my bills, so fast they were paid; and some that I considered lost were paid as promptly as the rest. Such as had not money borrowed it of their neighbours to pay me, and expressed many good wishes for my success. Thus I got in, in the course of a few days, the whole that was owing to me, except *one half-crown*, and that I think I might have received if I had had time to find the party. Whether my impressions came from God, let the reader judge. Few men ever wound up their affairs so easily, and with such little expense. I was now enabled to discharge all my bills, which is a great relief to the mind of every honest man, and make preparations for starting, with my wife and four children. I had my goods removed to an auction-room for sale, and it rained in torrents the whole day of the sale; nevertheless, there was a large company, and my goods made considerably more, some of them, than I gave for them when new; so that it appeared to me that God was determined to show me his goodness as a God of providence, and put my unbelief to flight.

These events may be uninteresting to some who have not been situated as I was. But I could not pass by the kind interpositions of Divine Providence; nor am I justified by the word of God to impute my smallest mercies to blind chance; but to acknowledge God in everything and for everything.

I left Plymouth about the 22nd of October, and never was a poor prisoner more glad to escape from prison than I was to turn my back upon Plymouth. I had, indeed, had mercies there, and for

which I desire to bless God; but I was kept twelve months in continual conflicts, crosses, and disappointments; neither did I feel much union to many in that place; for they had plenty of religion in their heads and upon their tongues, but very little real faith "well tried by fire," in their hearts.

When I left Plymouth, I looked back under a sense of sweet gratitude for the mercies which had followed me up to that day, and was fully satisfied that my removal was of God, and that wheresoever I went he would be with me, and bless me. I took several days in going to Birmingham, and stopped at several places for the rest and comfort of my family; and by the blessing of God, we arrived safely, and were kindly received by our friends.

When I was within ten miles of Birmingham, I had a most horrible attack from the enemy, as I imagine, which shook my whole frame. This was the suggestion: "You have acted a most foolish part in this business; you have given up a certainty for an uncertainty. You are going to a strange place, without any prospect of success; you know how often you have been embarrassed in preaching, when you were only occasionally engaged; what are you to do, when you have to preach constantly to the same people? You will never be able to preach above half-a-dozen times, and then the people will grow weary of you, and dismiss you, and then how are your poor helpless children to be provided for, more than two hundred miles from their home? You have not the common feelings of a man towards his wife, nor of a father to his children." These suggestions quite overwhelmed me for several miles, for all appeared reasonable and true. But the good Lord was pleased to help me with a little help, and I saw that my whole dependence for success was on him.

This sharp contest began as we passed over Bromesgrove Lickey; and as I have passed the same spot many times since, I have always recollected this field of battle, and blessed God for the victory by faith. But this seemed a strange trial for me at this time, because I had seen the Lord's hand so conspicuous in my movements before this. But I find the Saviour was sorely tempted by Satan, when he entered constantly on his work; and I believe it is generally so with his servants, that by these things they might be instructed to speak to tempted souls.

I was now at anchor, after many gales and heavy seas; I was now released from that tormenting uncertainty that I had laboured under for so many years; I was now in the situation where I had long wished to be, and found a heart to spend, and be spent, for the dear Redeemer's glory, and for the good of immortal souls. Great things in this world I did not want; popularity I did not desire; and if I had, my line of preaching was not likely to procure it.

I should have observed, that on my arrival at Birmingham, that dear disciple who first spoke to me relative to my coming to Birmingham, met me at my lodging, and said to me, "Well, were my observations to you faith or presumption? I was as sure that you would be sent here, and that God would make all things straight, as

of my existence." I would observe, that my temporal prospects on going to Birmingham were not very flattering. The number of my hearers did not amount to one hundred, and the far greater part of them were poor labouring people. They did indeed enter into voluntary subscriptions, and set down the sums on paper; but many of them, through sickness and for the want of labour, were not able to fulfil their engagements. I had, therefore, some work for faith to do; but these things did not move me, though it roused the fears of several; and they said I never could be supported with my family, unless I went into business again. I said, "No; I have had a sad proof that God does not intend me to struggle any longer in business, but to preach his gospel; and I am persuaded, if he has sent me here, he will support me, and enable me to give myself wholly to the work of the ministry; for God takes care of oxen; and they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel. At all events, I will wait to see God's hand for twelve months."

When I entered on my ministry in this place, I found great liberty, and so it continued; so that I proved Satan a liar, and God true to his word. I perceived, also a gradual increase of hearers; and, according to the testimony of many, the word of God which I delivered was blessed among them, to the comfort of their souls, which became an additional confirmation to me that the Lord had sent me there.

The winter of 1814 was very severe, and I resided in a very cold house. The snow lay for many weeks on the ground, and the frost was most intense. Coming from a much warmer part of the kingdom, my family felt the severity of the weather very much; but through God's goodness we had all good health through the winter. We had not luxuries, but what was much better, we had all that is necessary for the body, and more I did not covet. I had always been accustomed to plain living, and am still; and I am persuaded it is much the best both for the body and for the mind. High living diseases both; and he that pursues that course may expect a pretty large bill from the doctor every year. Poor living, no doubt, has slain its thousands; but high living has slain its tens of thousands. As for dress and gaudy apparel, I detested it, as a proof of a little mind, and highly unbecoming a Christian. "Be not conformed to this world," surely has a meaning, and is not to be treated as an abrogated Act of Parliament. My custom has been through life never to live on the next year's income; never to run into debt, in order to appear genteel, while it was upon other people's property. I would rather make shifts and wait awhile than follow the too prevailing maxims of people of all ranks and conditions in this loose and frivolous age. I claim no merit because of these things. There may be pride mixed up with it; but if there be pride in it, I am saved a great deal of trouble, and others also by this my proceeding. How many ministers and private Christians have I known justly reproached by the public for their careless indifference in the management of their worldly affairs. Some, too, I have known who seek to screen themselves under this idea, that they are

suffering reproach for their religion, while, I fear, they are suffering reproach for the want of its proper influence over them. Also, I have heard such loose persons reproach the more prudent and managing class; but when, through their want of economy, and extravagance in their family, they are brought into difficulties, they know how to beg, and bow, and cringe to the parties they have reproached. "These things, my brethren, ought not to be."

I passed the cold winter in my cold cottage; but in the spring removed to a comfortable little house in the Bristol Road. When I took it, some of my hearers expressed many fears that I should not be able to pay such a high rent, twelve pounds per annum; but I had no fears about it; for I saw that the Lord was on my side; and surely there was nothing like extravagance or ambition in my occupying a house rented at twelve pounds per annum. Some of my London friends may wonder at the fears of some of my then hearers, and wonder more that I could call such a house a comfortable one; and for their satisfaction I will observe, I had a neat parlour and a roomy, good kitchen on the same floor, and two good bedrooms above; an arched cellar below for coals, &c.; a good back-house for washing or brewing; a neat little garden in the front, and a long slice of a garden behind, and the use of a pump of good water for all necessary purposes.

Before I leave these temporal matters, I will make an observation or two on some things which rather surprised me. I perceived in the spring and summer after I arrived, a number of men regularly going to their gardens on a Lord's day morning, furnished with spade, rake, &c., with some shopmates to assist, both to work, and to drink their strong ale; for they were not very sparing in that article. Another thing much struck me, namely, many of the cottage owners preferred Lord's day morning to any other time to collect their weekly rents. Perhaps it was wise to collect their rents weekly, for both parties. But, then, I thought Monday morning was a more proper time, for common decency sake. One of my hearers, too, used to come to chapel very late on a Lord's day morning, which I used to be surprised at; but upon inquiry I understood that he was obliged to collect his cottage rents, and could not come sooner. Shame! shame on such professors of religion! Forethought saw two evils in delaying till Monday morning. The poor cottager with his free companions might perchance run through his weekly earnings before Lord's day night, or if not, it would be a great interruption to business to spend all Monday morning in collecting rents! I hope by this time that that body of people who are so warm for the reform of abuses have begun a reform at home. But enough of this subject; too much, perhaps, some will say.

I now felt the weight of the ministry more than ever; and the different characters I had to mix with tried me not a little. I had many mercies, and many crosses; the common lot of God's people. When I first came to Birmingham, I was given to understand that the debt on our chapel was about three hundred pounds; and I proposed to go to London, and beg, in order to rub off some part of the

debt. This was gladly acceded to, and I went for that purpose in the month of May, 1814. I had a recommendation from Dr. Hawker. I spent six weeks in London, and walked about twelve miles each day; but mine not being a "Board Case," it met with a cool reception.

I continued labouring in this place for upwards of seven years.

(*To be continued.*)

## A GRIEVANCE.

AMONGST the various characters that are ever moving up and down in this busy world, we sometimes encounter that peculiar and by no means pleasant one which we may call *a man with a grievance*. Even amongst your own relations and friends you may find him; for he is usually not very far to seek. Most of us know some querulous, discontented individual who is the worst used person in the world, who is always being injured, and whose general conversation is a tissue of complaints against everybody—but himself.

Most of these complaints are purely imaginary, the mere suspicions of a soured mind, the workings of a proud unhumiliated heart, the heavings of a restless, fretful, discontented spirit. But it sometimes happens that this not very amiable person has a *real* ground of complaint—that some injury, not perhaps a great but a substantial wrong, has been done him. Now he is a man with a grievance, a real, well grounded grievance. And now he is happy. He is like a married woman who, after a long series of disappointments, at last gives birth to a living child. She has now something to nurse, to look at, to press to her bosom, to shew to her husband and friends. So our discontented friend has now a living grievance to nurse, to press to his bosom, to feed, and to show about. An imaginary wrong is like a still-born child. It cannot be nursed or shown about. Nobody will take it up; and though the mother pine over it, it must be put out of sight, buried, and forgotten. But the living child may prove to the mother a worse sorrow than all her previous disappointments. Better have no child than an untoward one; better be ever barren than bear a son to his mother's grief and bitterness. (Prov. xvii. 25.)

I have put an extreme case to show the point more clearly and vividly; but many minor instances will recur to the mind of most. Assume, then, that our friend has a real, substantial grievance, and assume that, with all his wretched temper and disposition, he does possess the life of God in his soul. Now, what shall he do with his grievance? He cannot bury it, for it is alive, and he has not sufficient grace at once to crucify it. He is determined, therefore, to nurse it; but if he nurse it, it must be at the expense of the life of God in his soul, for a more untoward brat mother never bore, one who, when strong enough, will not scruple to rob her of everything she possesses, and of her own life too, unless it be miraculously preserved.

Christian reader, have you never had a grievance—a real, substantial grievance? Were you never wronged by some professor in pocket

or reputation? Were you never wounded in the house of your friends? Has no Christian brother ever treated you unjustly or unkindly? Has your minister, or the deacons, or some one in the church, or the church itself done you what you believe to be a real, substantial wrong? and they will neither admit it, confess it, nor repair it. Well, now you have a grievance—a fair, legitimate, honest grievance. You are not naturally of such a temper and disposition as has been described, and yet you have solid ground of complaint. Now what do you do with your grievance? Do you nurse it? Do you brood over it? Do you press it close to your bosom to keep it warm? Do you listen to its cries and complaints, and do you continually feed it that it may not die away, but thrive and grow, and get stronger and stronger? But be honest with yourself, and see how matters really stand between the Lord and your soul. Do you not find that this overgrown child which you so carefully nurse, which is scarcely ever out of your arms and never out of your mind, which you show about so much to all your friends and visitors, is secretly draining away all the life of your soul. Where is your patience, your forbearance, your broken contrite heart, your submission to the will of God, your love to the brethren, your meekness and quietness, your forgiving spirit, your godly fear of displeasing the Lord by hating your brother, your obedience to gospel precept and walking after gospel practice? You have been wronged, grievously wronged, cruelly and unjustly treated. Well, all the more reason why you should shew your Christian spirit by forgiving those who have wronged you. Will you never forgive? Will you go down to the grave in your unforgiving spirit? Will you nurse your grievance till, like a spoiled child, it becomes your master, and ends in robbing you of all you possess worth having? Do you not see how lean you are getting, wasting away like a youth in consumption? Do not you find how barren your soul is, what little access you have to God in prayer, what little enjoyment of his presence and the smiles of his face? Do you not feel how dark your mind is, and how long it is since you had a visit from Jesus? But why all this darkness, barrenness, and death? Is there not a cause? Do not these increase the more you brood over your wrongs? And should not this lead you to fear lest you be holding an enemy to God to your bosom? In nursing your grievance, could you see the real state of the case, you would find that you are nursing enmity, pride, and self-righteousness; that you are walking contrary to the spirit and the precepts of the gospel; that you are acting against the mind and example of Christ who forgave his murderers; and yet you who call yourself a Christian cannot forgive your brother! “Yes, but he has treated me so unkindly, so cruelly, so unjustly.” All the more reason why you should forgive him. “But he has acted so inconsistently.” Well, reprove him for it; but let not his sin be an occasion for you to sin too. I dare say you think you have more grace than he, for you are sure you would not have treated him as he has treated you. Then show the superiority of your grace by freely forgiving him, if you believe him to be a brother. But whether you have sufficient grace for this or not, take this friendly piece of advice, if you can—do not nurse



your grievance; for depend upon it you can only do so to the eventual grief of your own soul, and to the inflicting upon yourself of a deeper wrong than that from which you are suffering, and an injury worse than any that your worst enemy could inflict upon you.

A WELL-WISHER TO THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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### A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. PYM, OF ELMLEY.

My dear Brother in the Faith,—The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven are great indeed, and apprehended by none but those to whom it is given to believe.

Since you left, I have passed through much, very much in my soul. What have I not seen and felt of my own wretched, lost, undone, vile, sinful self! I have been shown to myself viler and more polluted than ever; while I have seen such glorious things in the Three-in-One Lord God Almighty, that I have turned away from everything else, and striven and sought night and day to be in the constant contemplation of these glorious Persons, as existing from eternity and to eternity in the one self-existing Essence of the one only true God. I find no comfort, no peace, no real happiness, but as setting the Three glorious Persons of this the one only true God always before me, and striving to realise approaching death as the summons to enter into the blessed sensible enjoyment of them, in the presence of Jesus in his manifested, discovered glory, at the right hand of the throne of the Father. We cannot be there but we must be filled with the Holy Ghost sensibly. We shall know that he fills us, and we shall know that he loves us with the love of God, so powerfully revealed in us through seeing Jesus in his glory as we are seen, and knowing him as we are known, in all and every thing. He is and has been unto us everything from eternity, and will be to eternity. But we must be found fully entering into, receiving, and being to the utmost assured of, and resting in the eternal love of God the Father towards us, when the one only God will in the unity of his glorious Godhead be our all-satisfying portion. This being enjoyed in the oneness of all the members of the mystical body in it, so that all our happiness, one in and one with another, let our occupations, pastimes, employments of mind and body, be what they may, or where they may, will be found to be of the grace, mercy, goodness, and love of Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons and the Unity of his Godhead. It is wonderful to contemplate. It fills my poor soul with love to God. It makes all earthly things, be they what they may, tasteless, shrink into nothing; while all this I am not left to look for from myself, from or by means of anything I have or ever can do of myself, or on account of merit, desert, or fitness in myself of my own providing or procuring; no, but of God's eternal provision, eternal purpose, sovereign good-will and pleasure respecting me, which has been of his own eternal love to me; secured in the councils of the Three, and left to none other than the Three themselves, working distinctly and separately, unitedly, and in one never-to-be-opposed stream of acts for its accomplishment.

God in the Person of the Holy Ghost, engaged to the Father and the Son, to make effectual to each one of the human race, beloved and chosen to this blessedness, all and every act of Father and Son, carried out by them distinctly or unitedly, in any way or manner whatsoever, so that the glorious Lord God Almighty shall, in the Unity of his Godhead and distinction of each of his Three Persons, be so known to the Church, in each of his distinct members, as to be to them eternal life, to give which to those the Father hath given to his Son incarnate all power in heaven and earth.

Can anything be more beautifully set forth and described than this is by the Holy Ghost in Eph. i. 16 to 23? I do really delight in the constant meditation, and pondering upon, and striving to realise these things; but I know no way but that of continually setting the Three in One before me as I find him set forth in the word.

Since you left, I have gone through much. The remainder of the week I was quite finished up. On the Wednesday I wrote to Mrs. S. a somewhat long account of your visit, and our proceedings, &c. I was very full on the Thursday to my sister, on account of the preachings you heard, which she told me she laid by for Sunday, as she could not go out. This, she said, she often did with my letters. On the Friday, I wrote Mrs. B. a long letter, full of precious, precious things; but the reply last week was so cold and dead, for a person aged 73, sinking fast into the grave with all the bodily suffering of an open cancer in the breast. I cannot rouse her from that being satisfied with nothing as it respects spiritual blessings, and seeming to rest under the false idea that I have attained to a much higher advancement in divine things than the Lord's people are to look for in this world. I wish she may not be disappointed in the views she entertains of herself. Poor woman! I think it quite possible I may be out of the world before her, though, humanly speaking, her time cannot be long. Her pain and weakness increase. I am not at present by any means fit to go and see her, whatever I may be if my life is spared beyond the termination of hers.

The Sabbath after you left I was good for nothing. Saturday was spent on the sofa. Sunday morning I was sadly down, seemingly quite unable for anything. Mrs. L. was also poorly, and had a long, cast-down face, seemingly no feeling at all. Beautiful subject! Ps. cx. 1, 3. Sadly down between services. Rallied a bit in the afternoon, when Mrs. L. quite revived, and felt and looked happy. The week which followed was most trying. I got down so low, so miserable and helpless, lost all my appetite, and scarce knew what to do; almost came to the conclusion it was all over as regarded ministering the word any more. Friday night, lay awake many hours. Saturday, helpless. Still the Lord was good to me, making himself, as before described, most unspeakably precious to my poor, cast-down soul, giving me very sweet access to a throne of grace, and making himself and his truth precious past everything. I quite thought the Sabbath day must prove a giving-up day. An expected wedding before service; went up feeling I could do no-

thing. But the Lord was with me most sweetly and beautifully throughout the service, though I had accused myself of tempting the Lord by giving up as I was. The congregation was more than commonly numerous, a curious, rough set of hearers. I went into the pulpit, and was enabled to pray. Gave out the text of the last Sabbath, adding the 4th verse. The Holy and blessed Spirit came and preached powerfully, gloriously; made the truth ring again. Both sides of the question. Rich comfort and food were poured out for the Lord's own dear sheep; while for others it was indeed a reality of all that was sad and fearful; all of which came out of the reality of the truth, and the power which so sensibly attended it. David B. came down to dinner. He said it was most awful. There was such an irresistible power attending it, no one could escape it, while at the same time it overwhelmed the Lord's people with such a sense of his goodness to them, and setting all before them as of the Triune Jehovah in his Three Persons. No one could slight it or refuse an ear to it. It was very commanding. I had nothing to do with it. It was the Lord's doing. He had sent me there in entire renouncement of self, and sole dependence on him, and he did not fail me. My own soul felt the power of every sentence uttered. It crossed my mind once or twice, "Is it to be the last time, the finish? Because to come up the helpless creature I did to-day, and to be here now after this fashion, it is out of the common course of things!" I was obliged to compel myself to stop; it seemed to have no end.

I was glad to have David here, and though I did but little in the way of dinner, I returned at the proper time; when by the time I was again in the pulpit there was a large number of persons congregated, rough-looking, curious people, some of them. It was again given to me faithfully, spiritually, and fully to declare the precious things which certain parts of the text suggested; following upon the forenoon. My servant, J. L., said I exerted myself more than in the morning. The things brought to my mind filled my whole soul in giving them utterance, and laid hold of many, rough as some were in their appearance. They listened with close attention, while I did feel thankful, should I never go forth again, that I had been enabled to declare such glorious things. One man from Brighthouse accosted me in the church, and expressed satisfaction that he had heard it. Another, a friend of his, assailed me in the churchyard with all the Arminianism that possessed his mind. Poor man! He attends some church, not Brighthouse, but in the neighbourhood; now and then a little doctrine, but usually, I understood him, it was exhortation to be this, and do that and the other. These people kept me back, so that when I reached with them the top of the hill to turn home, David I found was gone forward with others. There appeared a good many on the road.

O, what a thing it is fairly and calmly to look at death and contemplate it as I am compelled to do in my present uncertain state. I can set nothing against it of any use or avail to my comfort, rest, and peace in the prospect of it but these blessed truths of the Gospel;

these wonderful revelations of a Triune Jehovah. Nothing else. These are all-sufficient. These are wonderful. Here is God himself, all I want, can want, or need for death or eternity. These, and these only, take away the sting of death; cheer up the intervening time between the resurrection morning; lighten that up; deprive a day of judgment of dread; and open a glorious prospect for an endless, coming eternity.

Yours in all these blessed things of our Triune Jehovah,

Elmley, April 16, 1861.

ROBERT PYM.

[This remarkable and most characteristic letter was, we believe, nearly one of the last that Mr. Pym wrote.—ED.]

### WELL WORTH WAITING FOR.

Dear Sir,—I hope you will excuse me taking the liberty of writing to you. For these last ten months I have had a great desire to do so, but have been afraid; but, recollecting well what you said to me the last time you called on me, after my telling you of some of my exercises of mind in regard to my soul affairs, and what I felt under a sermon you preached at Stoke, on August 11th, 1850, from Isa. liv. 11–13, I now feel encouraged.

I felt myself, during and after that sermon, to be a poor, tossed-about sinner, with my sins, and not comforted. O what I felt that morning! How just the Lord would be were he that moment to send me to hell. Were the Lord to spare my life for fifty years to come, I believe I never should forget what a vile sinner I then felt myself to be in the sight of God. When relating some of those things to you, you told me that it was a safe place to be in, but not a happy one. And now, my dear Sir, I hope I can say, without presumption or hypocrisy, that I have found your words come true, that it was indeed a safe place to be in; for, after waiting until Feb. 11th last, the blessed Lord broke in upon my soul and set me at happy liberty. I was in a little room by myself, where I generally go after dinner for a little while, and was calling upon the Lord to look on me with an eye of pity, and show himself to me, and decide my doubtful case, when all at once it appeared as if I heard a voice saying, "Go, and sin no more. I have redeemed thee. I have cleansed thee with my blood." O, my dear Sir, I cannot describe to you what I then felt. My heart was so melted that I wanted more power to bless and praise the Lord for his goodness to such a vile sinner as I had been all my life; that he should have preserved me through so many dangers, while in a far country, where there were so many swept off before my eyes, and to bring me home again to my native land; and after a time to show me what a poor, hell-deserving sinner I was, and make me seek mercy alone through his blood and righteousness for 15 or 16 years, and then to reveal himself to me as my God and Saviour. O that I had a heart to bless and praise him without ceasing evermore. How I rejoiced in the Lord for several days.

On the fourth or fifth day after this, when returning from posting a letter to my dear friend I., (whom I sincerely love,) to inform

him what the dear Lord had done for me, which I knew would give him much pleasure, I had such a sight of the dear Lord on the cross, suffering for me, as if I was the only sinner in the world. O how it made me bless and praise his holy name. I would be going out in the lanes alone, and how I was able to shout to his praise for what he had done for me. My dear friend I. has spoken to me many times, to encourage me, but nothing would do but something from God's own mouth, as Mr. Hart says. I was told by many professors that I was looking for what I should never obtain, and that I should go to the Bible and take the promises; and others, again, would say, "You must not be satisfied because you are seeking." Miserable comforters all. Would a hungry man be satisfied to be told there was plenty of bread and meat in the cupboard, and not to get a mouthful?

And now, as the Lord had granted me such a manifestation of his love to my soul, my next desire was to join myself to his people and obey his command and be baptized. Mr. H. gladly baptized me, and those who had known me for many years, the old friends of Mr. I., gladly received me into the church. So, my dear Sir, I have found the promise of the Lord to be true: "Those that seek shall find."

Mrs. H. joins with me in wishing you, with dear Mrs. P., every blessing the Lord can bestow. Yours sincerely,  
Stoke, Dec. 24th, 1858. H.

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### CHRIST IN YOU THE HOPE OF GLORY.

My dear Sir,—Do pardon my seeming neglect in not acknowledging your acceptable pieces of poetry before. I should have done so long ago, but various obstacles have stood in the way, such as a felt sense of my unworthiness, spiritual inability, and barrenness of spirit.

And now, my dear Sir, in writing this, I feel, unless the Spirit of the blessed Jesus touch my poor heart, and draw out his precious graces, I shall but "darken counsel by words without knowledge." I began writing to you last November, but, for the reasons assigned above, could not complete my letter; but my gracious God having turned my captivity and put a new song into my mouth, I feel more at liberty to write to you, especially as I know you are a fellow-heir, &c. The blessed Lord unexpectedly loosed my bonds on Feb. 13th, this year, while reading Saltmarsh's "Free Grace; or, the Flowing of Christ's Blood Freely to Sinners." The book was lent me by a friend, a few days before; but so low was I sunk in my poor soul and feelings, I thought when it was brought me, what use was it for me to read it? So barren and empty has my soul felt in attempting to approach a throne of grace, more or less, for the last three months, that I have thought I would not attempt it at all. The preached word has been a dry breast. My dear pastor has been blamed, and I have felt peevish, cross, and like a tree withered and pulled up by the roots. On the above evening, my dear wife being

in a low, desponding state, I took up the afore-named book to read a little to her, with a sort of forlorn hope working in my mind that something might possibly be imparted to her, by way of comfort to her heart, little thinking that the set time was come to favour my poor soul by bringing me into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It was by a faith's view of the glorious oneness of Christ and his people. Kent's sweet hymn came in upon it:

" One in the tomb, one when he rose,  
One when he triumph'd o'er his foes."

Faith seemed in a moment to dart back to Calvary, and I felt *one* with him *there*:

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

O the wondrous mystery, "God manifest in the flesh!" Jesus, Immanuel, God with *us*, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh! O the unspeakable blessedness! None know, but those who have felt it, that Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, that we might be made (what?) the *righteousness of God in HIM*. "There is, therefore, *now*," *i.e.*, when the soul realises, by precious faith, joy and peace in believing, "no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

I am a living witness that the sealing of the blessed Spirit gives the lie to those daring wretches that asperse God's truth, and say such things as I have hinted at lead to licentiousness. Never! "Be ye holy as I am holy" was sensibly written, as with a diamond, in my heart. But they affirm what they know not, and evidence that they are still in the gall of bitterness, &c.

My friend, it was grace that made you and me to differ from the world at large. "Such *were* some of *you*; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus," &c.

I wish I was with you a few hours. I cannot tell you a thousandth part of what I feel.

Accept our Christian love, and believe me

Yours, in gospel bonds,

Abingdon, Feb. 24, 1863.

J. F. P.

BEFORE the fall, man's will was free to good, and burned with a pure celestial flame. Original sin has acted as an extinguisher, and leaves the soul in the dark until lighted again by the fire of God's Spirit. —*Toplady*.

WHAT though I am not famed and honoured among men? Let it suffice me that I am precious in the eyes of the Lord. Though he has not abounded to me in the gifts of nature, yet "blessed be the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, who hath abounded to me in all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Is not a true jewel, though buried in the dirt, more precious than a false one, though set in gold? Why art thou troubled, O my soul, for the want of those things which reprobates may have? Why art thou not rather admiring and blessing God for those things which none but the favourites of heaven can have?—*Flavel*.

## Obituary.

### RICHARD HEALY, OF ASHWELL.

RICHARD HEALY, of Ashwell, near Oakham, Rutland, died Nov. 28th, 1863.

There having been a brief account of my late dear husband's life and death on the wrapper of the "Gospel Standard" for December, 1863, some may judge this further Obituary not called for; but the solicitations of some with whom he stood in church fellowship to see it in the body of the "Standard," corresponding with my own feelings and wishes, I desire, with godly fear, to give a short memoir of what I know and recollect of his Christian experience, though I have only a very failing memory to help me.

Richard Healy was born at Wymondham, Rutland, Nov. 28th, 1798. His parents were members of the Established Church, and his mother very rigid in her attachment to it and observance of its forms and ceremonies. His father, a large and thriving farmer, was a man of considerable intellect, a great and active politician and ready speaker at public meetings; of no religion but this, that the worst religion of all was that which most interfered with success in the world. This is named to show the difficulties which my dear husband had to encounter when he was compelled to take up a religion which carried with it the cross. When about 26 years of age, he was married to an amiable and affectionate wife, whom the Lord saw fit to remove by death in the child-birth of her second child—a son, now a man grown, and a member of the church at Oakham, when they had scarcely lived together two years. He was now left with two small children, and for a time was almost broken-hearted; for it has been said of him by those who then knew him, that if ever there were a mourner for a deceased wife he was one. But when his deep grief had subsided he went into the world, and I am grieved to say, but feel compelled to add, ran a course that afterwards made bitter work for repentance. Going down one day to see his baby that was out at nurse in the village of Ashwell, he heard the master of the house in prayer. He was advanced in years, being about 71 years of age, and the father of Joseph Cooper, of whom an Obituary, written by my husband, has appeared in the "Standard." A prayer so humble, childlike, and scriptural, he has said he never before had heard. Such was the impression made by it on his mind, that he would frequently talk with Joseph, who then made a profession, and whose wife was then bringing up the little boy, about the things that he held and believed. These conversations with Joseph, and another old man of similar views and profession, led them both to hope that God had a favour to bestow upon him, although he looked at that time more like filling up the measure of his iniquity than to become a manifested vessel of mercy.

In 1831 or 1832, Mr. Tiptaft preached in a wagon in the Riding School at Oakham, and he went with some companions to hear for

himself, concluding from the reports he had heard that the preacher was not in his right mind. He took down notes of the sermon, which, if it did not powerfully arrest him, yet had this effect, that he searched his Bible to see if what he had heard, though so strange and new, was according to the Scripture; and when he met his companions they used to argue the matter over together. Even at this time, though he could not say he had the feeling part, yet he would declare that the preacher had truth on his side. Mr. T.'s text was taken from 1 Thess. i. 4, 5: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." One sentence that he heard in the sermon he thought very good: "O how blessed to be able to say, experimentally, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God!'"

This sermon, however, though he approved of it as truth, did not bring him out. He still continued very strict in his attendance at church and sacrament, passing through many cutting convictions of conscience, so much so as once to keep him in his bedroom a whole day, when he resolved and vowed again and again that he would depart from evil and keep the law of Moses, but depended upon his own resolutions to do better. All this travail of soul made him greatly distressed at times at the thoughts of death and eternal wrath, but he could find no way of escape. I find no memorandum earlier than June 1, 1834, when he went again to hear Mr. Tiptaft. The text was from Rom. iii. 24. He seemed now greatly cut up, and felt a condemned sinner. Going home to visit his parents, he told his mother there was no hope that such a sinner as he could be saved from eternal wrath. His mother feared that he was deranged. She came over afterwards to Ashwell to see how he was, and before she left she told a neighbour her fears, who promised to look out, and let his parents know if it increased.

In October, 1834, I became his wife. The Lord had, I trust, already begun his work of grace on my heart. I cannot, however, say, that though he had heard Mr. Tiptaft, and was convinced that what he preached was the truth, he was fully decided to follow it, being held so fast to the Establishment by worldly circumstances. But he promised me that he would never oppose my going to hear the truth, and would allow me means to contribute to the cause, and assist the Lord's poor, as far as circumstances would permit. I have many, many times been enabled to thank God for his goodness in this matter. He was a very affectionate and considerate partner, an excellent father, and when fully decided to follow the Lord, a becoming Christian master in his family.

He now took every opportunity of hearing Mr. Tiptaft; and he has also gone to Leicester and Grantham, to hear Mr. Chamberlain; and when Mr. Creasy preached at Whissendine he used to go to hear him. On July 3rd, 1836, he heard Mr. Philpot preach for the first time, at Oakham, from John i. 13. His doubts and fears seemed in a measure removed after this time, and he got comfort and strength. On Lord's day, July 1, 1838, Mr. Tur-



ner, of Sunderland, being to preach at Sleaford, he left home on the Saturday to ride to Laughton, where his parents lived, about 10 miles from Sleaford, in order to hear him. During his ride down, he begged of the Lord that he might be searched and proved, if he was in the right in God's sight. His parents were glad to see him, and very pleasant; and he began to think he would not offend them, but stop to-morrow with them, instead of going to Sleaford to hear Mr. Turner. With those feelings, he fell asleep, and dreamed that he was going on a certain road, when a person passed him and threw down a penny; he picked it up and awoke. This made him think what he had left home intending to do, and he begged of God to give him strength to carry out his intention to hear in the morning. He therefore asked his father to lend him a horse to go to Sleaford to hear preaching, and said he would be back by 2 o'clock. Mr. Turner's text was taken from 2 Thess. iii. 3. He was to return for dinner, but he had heard so well, and felt so assured that he had an interest in God's mercy, that it was food for him for many days. This feeling of confidence, as an earnest-penny of an eternal inheritance, was his interpretation of the penny which was thrown to him, and which he had picked up in his dream.

He now began to think he must give up going to church, though he had become very poor for his station. The clergyman was the landlord's brother, a man of high rank and fortune, and much opposed to dissent, his own father, and all his relatives, disliking dissent also. He stopped as long as he could in the Establishment. Few persons know the difficult position which a tenant farmer without a lease occupies in a small country parish, of which every acre belongs to a high Church landlord, and of whom the clergyman is a near relative, able to prejudice his mind, and inform him of all that is going on. This he felt; but these words were always with him: "No man can serve two masters. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." He felt, therefore, that he must come out and leave the event with God, who had determined he should be no loser, temporally or spiritually. In 1843, a church was formed at Providence Chapel, Oakham, and he was enabled to state the way the Lord had led him, and was accepted, though he had many doubts and suspicions himself as to what he truly was in the sight of God. On August 20th, he was baptized, and as he came out of the water, was favoured with a blessed view of the Sun of Righteousness. He remained a consistent, useful, and respected member of the church until his death; was much attached to the minister, cause, and people, and for more than 20 years was unceasing in his attendance there, with his family. He was still, however, often much tried about his religion; and this was increased by a neighbour dying, who had been very constant in his attendance on the same means; but never was able to say anything on his bed of sickness and death beyond assenting to the truths. The fear that it might be so with himself gave him many errands to a throne of grace, and he prayed most earnestly that God would search the ground of our hearts, that we might not rest in a form of religion, that so when

death overtook us, all our profession should prove as sinking sand. It was a very solemn weight upon his mind for a long time, and seemed to work in a particular way for his spiritual good. In 1854, his father died, leaving him more means than he had ever expected. He did not, however, alter his manner of living, nor did he seem elated or carried away into pride and worldliness, but said he hoped to have a little more to give to the cause of truth and the Lord's poor, as he now had a farm of his own in Lincolnshire, left him by his father, besides the one he rented still at Ashwell. He had some trees cut down and a pulpit and forms made, and asked his spiritual father, Mr. Tiptaft, to preach there once a year, when in this part of the country, which request was complied with. Sometimes the barn has been quite full, and at other times, when in the midst of harvest, not quite so many; but he always felt and expressed his pleasure at seeing and hearing Mr. T., and often spoke of the faithfulness and decision of his ministry. His custom was to go there for two nights once a fortnight in summer, and once a month in winter. He had no acquaintance in that part, and many blessed times has he had there. He always took a book in his pocket, and has said sometimes that his library there consisted of three books—the Bible, Hart's Hymns, and Mr. Tiptaft's Sermon, preached at Helmsley, from 1 Cor. xv. 10, which he read over and over again. To these he added, when it came out, "The True, Proper, and Eternal Sonship," by Mr. Philpot, which he greatly enjoyed and highly prized. He was a constant reader of the Scriptures, and used to peruse with great care and attention the pieces which appeared in the "Gospel Standard," seeking to enter into their drift, meaning, and spirit. This and a constant attendance under the preached gospel, combined with a naturally acute intellect and ready, active mind, were blessed to give him a sound, good judgment in the things of God, and made him a keen, though not a censorious hearer. He never was a very strong, robust man, and yet, from the activity of his mind and the lightness of his bodily frame, he could get through a good deal of work in the diligent superintendence of his farm. But towards the close of his life he began to feel the exertion too much of going so frequently to his farm in Lincolnshire, and so was led to dispose of part of his land there, and to settle his earthly affairs. Although to all appearance in perfect health, he often, very often spoke of death; and when he visited his brother members in illness, he often remarked, "The Lord only knows who is to be taken next." Little, however, did those about him think it would be he.

On the 5th of November, though he attended to business, he did not feel well. On the 6th he had medical aid, and was treated for constipation of the bowels, it not being then discovered that the real disease was an inward tumour, which had formed in the intestines, and was therefore incurable. Under his affliction he was very patient and truly submissive, saying "the Lord's will was best." He told all who came to see him it was for death, and how kindly the dear Lord was dealing with him. On Saturday, November 7th,

the enemy was permitted to thrust hard at the vitality of his religion. But he was enabled to beg that the Lord would be gracious unto him and repel the enemy of his soul; and the Lord granted his request, for he felt more peace and quietness. On Wednesday morning, November 11th, a neighbour and fellow-member came to see him. After telling her how he was, he said, "I have not had great things from the Lord; but I have, thanks be to his blessed name, a comfortable hope. I do not fear death." As she was leaving, his countenance beamed up, and he said, "I shall soon join that blessed number, ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousand of thousands." At another time he said, "I have been sweetly solaced in the night." His eldest son, Richard, a fellow-member with him of the church, who had been quite unexpectedly sent for to see him in such a state, said, "Father, I hope you feel comfortable in your soul." He replied, "Yes; I have no fear of death; I feel it a very solemn matter; but, bless the Lord, I feel no sting in it. I am not anxious to die, but I am willing to die, if it be the Lord's will." He further said, "I never felt dear Tiptaft's words as I feel them now: 'Am I fit to die?' What a mercy to be fit for the great change! What a very great mercy to have a religion of the right sort!" His son said, "Yes; indeed, that seems most of the matter." He replied, "To me it seems *all* of the matter. You must be in it to know it." He said, "What a love I have for that dear man, and dear Philpot too. O yes, and for all the children of God." He spake how he felt the awful state of those who were without God in the world, making no profession; and he said, "Thousands in a profession, no better off. O, a holy God! A holy God!" His other two sons, who had been sent for from a distance to see him, urged that further medical advice should be called in; but he said, "I know all has been done for me that human aid can do. I now fall into the hands of my Lord, to do with me as may be good and right in his sight."

Many, many times during those five nights and days did he breathe out a prayer of thanksgiving and praise to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for all mercies he had received and was receiving. He several times wished me to read the word of God to him, always telling me what portion to read, as the whole of the First Epistle general of John, part of Revelation, and part of Romans. In health, he read the Scriptures daily, and often for hours. In his Bible are marked most of the texts he had heard preached from. He did not put them down as soon as heard, but generally on the Sabbath morning, before he went to hear preaching again, as he felt it to help his memory to keep it in this way in his mind a fortnight.

A few weeks before he was taken ill, a letter of Mr. Tiptaft's was put into his hands to read to the friends who have their tea in the vestry, between the services, and where he always stayed himself for needful refreshment.\* He began by telling them how much he re-

\* It is the custom at Oakham to have tea provided for the friends, most of whom come from a distance, and for which they pay each a penny. This much brings the friends together, and gives the opportunity for profitable conversation.

spected the writer, the Lord in mercy having made him the blessed messenger of glad tidings to his soul, and briefly went through his own experience. Many hearts were knit to him, and there was a general feeling that there was not a word of self; to God he ascribed all the praise.

The last day of his life he kissed me, and said, "Twenty-nine years we have lived together. I do not want to leave you; but the Lord gives me submission; and his gracious will be done. Now read again 1 John i." After a little while, he said, "I do not say that God has never done anything for me; for, bless and praise his holy name, he has done all."

During his illness, the Lord mercifully permitted him full possession of his faculties; not one incoherent word fell from his lips. As to myself, so unexpected was death when it came near, that almost the power of speaking seemed taken from me; but these were the answers to the questions I put to him. I said, "Are you happy?" "Yes, yes." "Is Jesus present?" "I can't say that, but I have no fear of death." I again asked him, "Are you happy?" He answered, "O yes!" After an interval he said, "Christ is very precious. Give my Christian love to all the friends." His daughter Sarah then said, "Bless us, father." He said, "God will bless you; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob bless you all—poor Joseph's\* blessing." He then looked up with a countenance so blessed, and, without a groan or struggle, fell asleep in Jesus.

Ashwell.

MARY HEALY.

[Having known the subject of the above Obituary for more than 20 years, during which period I have had many opportunities of seeing and observing him as a constant hearer, a member of the church, and a private friend, I feel I must add my testimony to the sincerity and uprightness of his Christian character. He was not a man of deep experience of either law or gospel, but never professed the least beyond what he had personally felt and known for himself. As he was a man of considerable intellect, and naturally ready of speech and free to talk, he might easily, but for the fear of God, have boasted of a false gift. But I never heard him the least in that strain. Knowing what the grace of God was, and its experimental effects in the heart, he never presumed beyond what he felt was his real state and standing. It was so in his prayers and in his conversation. But though he had not the experience with which some are favoured, he had evident marks of the grace of God, such as great love to the truth in its experience and power, to the Lord's servants who came amongst us, and to the poor people of God, showing them, especially when enabled by his better circumstances, much kindness and liberality. In the village in which he passed his life, and where his conduct would be closely watched, he was much esteemed for his integrity, sincerity, and uprightness in his temporal dealings, and was especially beloved by the poor for his kindness and devotedness to them on all occasions, for he was truly the poor man's friend, and, as the leading man in the parish, an influential one. It might truly be said, that when the news of his death was known, the whole parish was in tears for him; for, besides his general kindness, being an acute man in all business matters, and of a sound judgment, he was often a wise counsellor to any neighbour who sought his advice.

We know that a man may have all this without grace; but it is a mercy when a man who dies in the Lord leaves behind him a good name, so that it may be truly said of him, "The memory of the just is blessed." J. C. P.]

\* Alluding to Joseph Cooper's blessing his family before he died.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

(Continued from page 196.)

THE evidences of Revelation are so intimately connected with the "authority and power of the word of God upon the heart," that if we wished to do common justice to our subject, it was impossible for us to pass them by. Indeed, to a believing heart, the strongest of all evidences is the very "authority and power" of the word itself, which forms the subject of our present Meditations,\* and which we have already named amongst the proofs that the Lord has spoken to the sons of men. But that the Judge of all the earth should do right; that all excuse might be cut off from the unbeliever and the infidel that they had no positive proof that God had spoken to man; and that his own children might have additional confirmation to their faith and hope, it has pleased God to afford the strongest, clearest evidences that he has given us a revelation of his mind and will.

The nature and number of these evidences we endeavoured to unfold in our last paper. Amongst them, our readers will recollect, was that of "miracle," and we concluded our article by adducing an illustration from the Scriptures of its authority and effect.

Viewed, therefore, *externally*, that is, distinct from all *internal* evidence, which is quite of a different character, revelation may be said to be based upon miracle. Thus we saw in our last No. that the mission of Moses rested upon two grand foundations: 1. The personal testimony which God gave him when he revealed himself to him in the burning bush; and, 2. The miracles which he enabled him to work before the children of Israel and in the presence of Pharaoh. The first was for himself, as an internal testimony; the second was for others, as an external evidence. The one was the mouth of God; the other, the hand of God. *He* only heard the voice; but *all* might see the hand. Nor was there any other apparent means of convincing Pharaoh and the Egyptians that God really spake by Moses than by his working miracles before them. God, therefore, said to Moses, "When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle for you; then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharaoh, and it shall become a serpent." (Exod. vii. 9.) The Lord thus forewarned and, as it were, fore-armed Moses, that he must expect that Pharaoh should demand a miracle as a proof of his divine mission. But why this demand, unless there were deeply lodged in the human breast a conviction that,

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\* So strongly was this the conviction of Dr. Owen that, in his able answer to the inquiry, "How do we know the Scriptures to be the word of God?" he brings forward no other evidence than what he terms "the divine original, authority, self-evidence, light, and power of the Scriptures."—*Owen's Works*, Vol. IV.

as all power belongs unto God, and that as he holds all nature in his hands, he can and will show forth that power as an attestation of his presence and of his authority when he commissions any man to speak in his name? So when Samuel sought to show the people how wickedly they had acted in asking a king, he called unto the Lord for a sign; and "the Lord sent thunder and rain that day." (1 Sam. xii. 18.)

But not only did the succession of miracles wrought by the hand of Moses leave Pharaoh without excuse when he hardened his heart against them, but even for the children of Israel themselves there was a benefit and blessing in such repeated and indubitable proofs that the God of their fathers was on their side; for if they, as believers in the promises made to Abraham, had the peculiar evidence of testimony that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob was now fulfilling his ancient promise of deliverance, and of giving them the land of Canaan for an inheritance, yet certainly the miracles wrought by Moses must have wonderfully strengthened their faith in him as the appointed instrument. Thus, in this sense, the mission of Moses may be said to have been based on miracles; and as it was based on them, so it may be said to have been also sustained by them. The passage through the Red Sea; the healing of the bitter waters of Marah; the daily fall of manna for forty years; the smiting of the rock whence the waters gushed out; the giving of the law from Mount Sinai; the pillar of the cloud day and night upon the tabernacle; the swallowing up of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram—these and other miracles recorded in the Pentateuch were so many continual evidences to the children of Israel that God was with Moses, and that as what he did in God's name was virtually done by God, so what he spoke in God's name was virtually spoken by God. How continually was he upheld in his high and arduous office by express miracle! One instance we have already given—that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. That of Miriam's leprosy is another. (Num. xii. 10–15.) Thus whether against friend or foe, the Lord who sent him upheld him by the display of miraculous power on his behalf.

As the divine authority of the Pentateuch has been lately so much called in question, we cannot forbear, though it may seem to be rather digressing from our subject, to drop a few remarks on it. It is the *miraculous* portion which is the subject of attack. Now infidels may cavil at the miracles recorded in the Pentateuch; but nothing can be more certain than that these miracles are so interwoven with the whole narrative that the historical portion and the miraculous portion must stand or fall together. The miracles in Exodus are not like embroidery worked upon a piece of muslin, which may be picked out and the web left uninjured. If we consider the scriptural narrative as the warp, the miracles certainly form the weft, to take either of which away would alike destroy the web.\* But the

\* In the language of weavers the long threads on the beam are the "warp," the short threads thrown across them by the shuttle the "weft," and the whole fabric the "web."

historical part of the Pentateuch is so strongly confirmed by other independent evidence, and that before our very eyes to this day, that it can never be overthrown. The present existence of the Jews as a distinct nation from all others; their observance of circumcision, of the Sabbaths, of the feast of Passover, of the difference between clean and unclean meats, of the public reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in their synagogues, and their adherence to the law of Moses, nominally if not actually, all prove the truth and genuineness of the historical part of Exodus and the three following books. Let us trace the Jewish history as far back as we like subsequently to the Pentateuch, we still find them the same peculiar people, dwelling in Canaan, observing all the rites and ceremonies laid down in the Mosaic law. All this is clearly explained when we read and receive the books of Moses. There all is as clear as day. There even their present state is actually foretold (Deut. xxviii.) and the reason given. Every minutia of their national character; every jot and tittle of their political and ceremonial law, and of their distinctive difference from all other nations from their earliest history are clear as interpreted by the books of Moses. But take away the historical part of the Pentateuch, and their whole character and history are an enigma. If the question be asked, Why do they practise circumcision to this day? The only explanation is that it was enjoined by the Lord on Abraham and his seed. Or, why do they observe the feast of the Passover? As a standing testimony to the passing over of the first-born in Egypt. No power on earth can make a whole nation commemorate, and that with distinctive features of celebration, an event which never took place. If there had been no gunpowder plot, could November 5th ever have been observed all over England, with bonfires, squibs, and crackers? If Charles II. had never been restored, or if he had been an imaginary king,—a myth, could May 29th ever have been kept as a general commemoration of his entry into London? Nothing so commemorates real events for whole centuries as national observances; but mere legends vanish away, and would be utterly forgotten had not poetry and drama seized some of them and breathed into them a fictitious life. The historical part, then, of Exodus is so confirmed by other evidence that it cannot be overthrown. The lineal succession of the high priest from Aaron, requiring an accurate and public genealogical table; the possession of the ark of the covenant down to the burning of Solomon's temple; the division of the whole land of Canaan among the tribes, every man among whom, therefore, had an acknowledged ancestor in one of the sons of Jacob; the whole code of the sacrifices, and especially of that most important, and in a sense, national one, on the great day of atonement; the laws of inheritance, of marriage and divorce, of the treatment of lepers, of the return of mortgaged property to the original owner in the Sabbatical year—these and innumerable other circumstances bound up in the very life of the children of Israel are so many historical links which bind together narrative and miracle, and are irrefragable proofs of the authenticity

of the books of Moses.\* Thus the historical part and the miraculous part are so entwined that they must stand or fall together. If the historical is true, so is the miraculous; if the miraculous is false, so is the historical.

A similar argument may be applied to the miracles recorded as wrought by our blessed Lord. They could not be taken out of the gospels without destroying the whole narrative. Take, for instance, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. How can we separate the narrative from the miracle, or the miracle from the narrative? To see this more clearly, let us look at the narrative as distinct from the miracle. How simply and, so to speak, naturally is it related, and with what a minuteness and particularity of circumstances which could not, from their very nature, have been invented. The name of the sick and dying man; the place where he lived, not far from Jerusalem, and therefore open to the closest investigation and examination; the names of his two sisters; the absence of Jesus at the time; the deep grief of Mary and Martha, and yet the way in which it was shown, so thoroughly in harmony with their character elsewhere given (Luke x. 38-42); the arrival of Jesus; his conversation with them; his weeping at the tomb, and the remarks of the bystanders—what an air of truthfulness pervades the whole! There is nothing exaggerated, nothing out of place, nothing but what is in perfect harmony with the character of Jesus, as reflected in the mirror of the other gospels.

But this narrative portion of the sickness and death of Lazarus cannot be separated from the miraculous portion—the raising of him from the dead. The first precedes, explains, introduces, and harmonises with the second. Without the narrative the miracle would be unintelligible. It would float on the gospel as a fragment of a shipwrecked vessel on the waves of the sea, furnishing no indication of its name or destination. So without the miracle, the narrative would be useless and out of place, and of no more spiritual value than the sickness and death of a good man who died yesterday. But narrative and miracle combined, interlaced, and mutually strengthening each other, form a massy web which no infidel fingers can pull to pieces.†

What we have thus said with respect to the miracle wrought at the grave of Lazarus is equally applicable to the other miraculous

\* It is rather in our mind, if spared, to work out some day these and similar arguments, and to lay them before our readers as a proof of the genuineness and authenticity of the Pentateuch.

† To show the shifts to which infidelity is driven, we adduce, with some reluctance, the explanation of the raising of Lazarus, given by the present noted French infidel, M. Renan, in his "Life of Jesus." He cannot deny the general truth of the narrative; but he insinuates that the whole was a got up scheme between the sisters and Lazarus and, we almost shudder to write it, the Lord himself, "to restore his waning credit." Now, apart from the horrible blasphemy of casting such an imputation on the blessed Lord, this wretched infidel cuts thereby the throat of his own description of Jesus, as the purest and most spotless character ever known on earth. But such is infidelity—self-destructive!



works of the blessed Lord. Narrative and miracle are so intermingled that they cannot be separated. Narrative introduces the miracle, and miracle sustains the narrative—their combined effect being to prove that Jesus was the Son of God, the promised Messiah of whom all the prophets testified.

Now it is evident that our gracious Lord himself appealed to his miracles as proofs of his divine mission. Thus when John sent two of his disciples unto Jesus with the question, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" what was his answer? "Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see; the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. xi. 4, 5.) The Lord here clearly made his miracles the proof of his mission—the direct, clear, undeniable evidence that he was the "Shiloh," the promised Messiah, "who should come," according to the universal voice of Old Testament prophecy. In a similar way the Lord appealed again and again to his miracles as the proof of his divine mission: "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." (John x. 24, 25.) And again: "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him." (John x. 37, 38.)

But it may be asked, "How could the eye-witnesses of these mighty works refuse to believe, in face of all these miracles, if they were indeed proofs of our Lord's heavenly mission?" The Holy Ghost gives the reason: "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him; that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake; Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them." (John xii. 37-40.)

Thus far, then, have we given a simple sketch of one grand evidence of the truth of Revelation; and if we have been rather long or discursive, our readers will kindly bear in mind, 1. That the subject itself, of miracles, cannot be discussed in a few words; and, 2. That our very title, "Meditations," allows us the liberty of pursuing, within certain limits, the train of our thoughts.

But now a few words on an evidence scarcely inferior to miracle; and, indeed, so closely allied to it that it may be justly called miraculous—that of *prophecy*.

To unfold this evidence would demand a volume; and, indeed, volumes have been written upon it. All, then, that we can hope to

do is, 1. To define its general character as an evidence of the truth of Scripture; and, 2. To point out one or two remarkable prophecies as an illustration of its distinctive character.

1. Prophecy, we have just intimated, is closely allied to miracle, and simply on this ground, that it is in itself strictly miraculous. That an event should be foretold, with the greatest minuteness, hundreds of years before it takes place, is as much the work of Omniscience as a miracle is the work of Omnipotence. If one proclaims the hand, the other proclaims the eye of Deity. A happy conjecture, a probable guess or opinion, formed from a comparison of circumstances, may indeed sometimes look almost like prophecy. Thus Lord Chesterfield predicted the first French Revolution, 30 or 40 years before it took place. But this did not make him a prophet; nor did he claim the gift of prophecy. As an experienced statesman, he saw that there must be a break up of the old French despotic system, and from the temper of the people, he foresaw it would be a fearful one. This, however, is not prophecy, but sagacious conjecture, verified by the event. But Scripture gives us, in the name of the Lord, declarations and descriptions of the desolation and destruction that should come upon Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, Edom, and other countries, at the very time when they were the most populous and flourishing countries and cities in the earth, and when there seemed not a passing cloud to dim their sky. This is not probable conjecture, as a historian might now hazard the opinion, that when her coal-fields shall be exhausted the wealth and commerce of England will pass away. But it was the eye of the omniscient God reading the predestinated future, and revealing the secret to his servants, the prophets.

This, then, is true of all prophecy, whether in the Old or New Testament; but when the prophetic scroll contains a series of events, when it holds, as it were, a mass of distinct rays, and yet all converge to one point, and are concentrated in one focus, the Person and work of the Redeemer, what a strong evidence does it then afford that the Bible is a revelation from God. Thus that Christ should be of the seed of Abraham, (Gen. xxii. 18,) of the tribe of Judah, (Gen. xlix. 10,) of the house and lineage of David; (Isa. ix. 7; xi. 1, 10;) be born at Bethlehem; (Micah v. 2;) be rejected of those to whom he was sent, yet be a light to the Gentiles, and God's salvation unto the ends of the earth; (Isa. xlix. 4-7;) that he should be numbered with the transgressors, and yet bear the sins of many, and make intercession for the transgressors; (Isa. liii. 12;) that he should rise from the dead, (Ps. xvi. 8-11,) as interpreted by Peter, (Acts ii. 25-31,) and ascend up on high, (Ps. lxxviii. 18,)—what a concentration of circumstances, all meeting in one point, the Lord Jesus!

2. But to illustrate this point more clearly, take two prophecies, one in the Old Testament, and the other in the New; and let each be not a solitary verse, but a clear, distinct series of predicted circumstances, all of which closely hang together. As an Old Testament example, take Isa. liii., and compare it verse by verse with the character and history of our blessed Lord, as we find it in the

gospels. We should like to do it for you, but our space forbids, and it may be more convincing and more profitable if you will do it for yourself.

Now, apart from the spiritual aspect of this remarkable chapter,\* as descriptive of the sorrows and sufferings of Jesus, and of the atoning sacrifice which he offered for sin upon the cross, its prophetic bearing is of a most remarkable character, as combining in one portrait the most striking and distinctive features of the promised Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head. The Jews, misled by attending only to the splendid train of prophecy which testified of a triumphant Messiah, quite overlooked and disregarded those passages, scarcely less numerous, though more scattered, which, as we now see, as clearly predicted his humiliation, sufferings, and death. The redemption which they wanted was not from the burden and bondage of sin, but from the burden and bondage of the Roman yoke. The exaltation of the promised Messiah, as involving, as they thought, their own exaltation to earthly honour and glory, they could willingly believe; but his humiliation, his being "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," his being "wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities," they could not see or understand; and yet they themselves, by their very despising and rejecting the promised Messiah, because, in their eyes, he had no form nor comeliness, fulfilled to the letter the very prophecy which they held in their hands as a part of the oracles of God committed to their trust. (Acts xiii. 27.) Thus are they condemned out of their own scriptures; and if they are "wanderers among the nations," (Hos. ix. 17,) they may find in their own inspired record both their sin and its punishment. What stronger evidence can be afforded of the truth of that revelation, which contains in its bosom a prophecy so clear in its description, and so marked in its fulfilment?

The prophecies of Daniel and those especially contained in the interpretation of "the image" shown in dream to Nebuchadnezzar, and in his own vision of "the four great beasts," (Dan. ii. and vii.) might be also adduced as instances how prophecy becomes so strong an evidence of the truth and inspiration of the word of God. But as these predictions demand more historical knowledge and a greater access to books than probably most of our readers possess, we shall pass them by, and direct their attention to a prophecy of the New Testament, and that uttered by no less lips than those of our gracious Lord himself.

We mean by this, that prophetic description by Jesus of the destruction of Jerusalem contained in three out of the four gospels. One of the clearest, perhaps, of these, if not the fullest, is contained in Luke xxi. 5-25, to which we must content ourselves with referring our readers.

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\* The subject properly commences at Isa. lii. 13: "Behold my servant," &c., and this is evident from the words in the next verse: "His visage was so marred more than any man," &c. Chap. liii. is, therefore, merely a continuation of the prophetic description of the Messiah, commencing with, "Behold my servant."

We have the singular advantage in this instance of the full account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem, by an eye witness, and that a Jew—the well-known Josephus, who has in eight books, preserved by the providence of God to our own times, described in the most glowing and yet truthful colours that unparalleled history of suffering. The destruction of Jerusalem took place in the 70th year after the birth of Christ, and therefore about 36 years after the Lord had delivered the prophecy of its coming woes. Now at that time there was little or no probability of such an event as the utter destruction of Jerusalem, and especially of the temple being so thoroughly destroyed that not one stone should be left upon another. The Romans, indeed, were in possession of Judea at the very time that our Lord spoke; but that they should so thoroughly destroy Jerusalem, and especially the temple, its chief beauty and ornament, was wholly contrary to their practice and policy. Indeed, nothing but the inveterate obstinacy of the Jews themselves, as described so graphically by Josephus, could have brought it about. The destruction of the temple was the last thing in the thoughts of Jew or Roman, of besieged or besieger. To preserve their idolised temple was the main-spring of all the labours, and the support under all the sufferings of every soldier and every citizen in Jerusalem. Titus himself was as anxious as they were for its preservation. We read, therefore, that when he had reached the temple and saw the danger it was in of being sacrificed to the obstinacy of its defenders, he was “deeply affected,” and appealed to the gods, to his own army, and to the Jews, that he did not force them to defile the holy house. “If,” said he, “you will change the place wherever you will fight, no Roman shall either come near your sanctuary, or offer any affront to it; nay, I will endeavour to preserve your holy house whether you will or not.” But the decree had gone forth; the Lord had said, “Behold your house is left unto you desolate.” He that spake as never man had spake had declared the days would come in which “there should not be one stone left upon another which should not be thrown down.” Neither Jew, then, nor Roman, neither besieger nor besieged could turn away the hand that smote city and temple with the same destruction. Josephus gives a most interesting account, well worth reading by those who have the book, of the way in which the temple came to be at first set on fire, and then fully destroyed by the Roman soldiery,\* whose sudden fury neither

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\* A short extract will suffice as a specimen: “At which time one of the soldiers, without staying for any orders, and without any concern or dread upon him at so great an undertaking, and being hurried on by a certain divine fury, snatched somewhat out of the materials that were on fire, and being lifted up by another soldier, he set fire to a golden window, through which there was a passage to the rooms that were round about the holy house, on the north side of it. As the flames went upward, the Jews made a great clamour, such as so mighty an affliction required, and ran together to prevent it; and now they spared not their lives any longer, nor suffered anything to restrain their force, since that holy house was perishing, for whose sake it was that they kept such a guard about it.”—*Josephus, “Wars of the Jews,” Book vi., chap. 5.*

their wonted discipline, nor all the threats and persuasions of Titus and his chief officers could restrain.\*

Prophecy, as an evidence of the truth of Revelation, has also this peculiar feature, that it affords what is called "*cumulative*" proof. Let us explain our meaning by a familiar illustration. A man is found by the wayside, dying or dead of wounds inflicted by a knife or some sharp instrument, and in such parts of his body and of such a nature that there can be no doubt he has been murdered. A man is seized, not far from the scene of death, with blood on his clothes, in great agitation and confusion of mind, of desperate character, a personal enemy of the dead man, and having on his person a bloody knife, and a purse of money known to have been the property of the poor murdered creature. Now who can doubt that this man is the murderer? But why? Because of the number of circumstances which all combine to point him out as the perpetrator of the foul crime. This is "*cumulative*" proof, its strength arising from a heap, as the word means, of evidences, each one adding to and confirming the others.

Such is the evidence of prophecy—"cumulative," prophecy upon prophecy, prophecy after prophecy, and all strengthening and confirming one another. Take, for instance, the prophecies concerning the blessed Lord, and especially of his sufferings and death. The treachery and awful end of Judas; (Ps. xli. 9; lv. 12-15;) the precise sum for which he should betray Christ, and the use made of the returned money; (Zech. xi. 12, 13;) that his back should be given to the smiters, and his face to shame and spitting; (Isa. l. 6;) that his hands and feet should be pierced, and his body bruised and scourged; (Zech. xii. 10; Ps. xxii. 16;) that he should have gall and vinegar given him to drink; (Ps. lxix. 21;) that his persecutors should laugh him to scorn in the very words that they used; (Ps. xxii. 7, 8;) that not a bone should be broken; (Num. ix. 12; Exod. xii. 46; Ps. xxxiv. 20;) that his garments should be divided, and lots cast upon his vesture; (Ps. xxii. 18)—what an accumulation of circumstances, all meeting as prophesied in the suffering Jesus. Thus, as in the case of the evidence of the murder, it is the number and character of the various circumstances all put together which form the "*cumulative*" proof that the prophecies in the Scripture are of divine inspiration. The peculiar force of this argument is that the more it is extended, the stronger it is. Take, as an illustration, the prophecies of Jeremiah that Jerusalem should be taken by the Chaldeans and the people carried into captivity. One solitary prediction might be explained as a probable guess, like Lord Chesterfield's foreseeing the French Revolution. But when prophecy after prophecy, warning after warning fell from the prophet's lips, whether in the king's court or in the low dungeon, and the event con-

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\* The temple being thus burnt down, orders were given by Titus to demolish to the foundation the whole city and temple; and these orders were so fully executed that a captain of his army "did with a ploughshare tear up the foundations of the temple," thus literally fulfilling the prophecy of Micah; "Therefore shall Zion, for your sake, be ploughed as a field." (Micah iii. 12.)

firmed to the letter what he had declared, in the Lord's name, would come to pass, this cumulative proof stamped him as the prophet of the Lord.

But prophecy has also another peculiar feature, with which we close our present paper—*much remains unfulfilled*. The call and restoration of the Jews; the universal spread of the gospel; the happy period when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more—alas! seemingly far distant; and, to crown all, the second coming of the Lord himself, in all the glory of the Father; when the prophetic scroll, which holds in its bosom all those events is unrolled throughout, what an evidence will then be afforded that God has spoken in his word! What is dark will then be light; and when the elect lift up their heads with eternal joy, every promise will have its fulfilment, every prophecy its accomplishment, and each man's final state be determined according to the decision already fixed in the Scriptures of truth.

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*SEVENTH ANNIVERSARY OF MY GRACIOUS  
DELIVERANCE IN 1855.*

WITH gratitude and true humility,  
Let me record the debt I owe to thee,  
My God and Father, Friend and Saviour dear,  
And thou, blest Spirit, whom I now revere.  
'Twas Israel's Triune God that set me free,  
And turn'd again my long captivity;  
That fill'd my mouth with laughter, and my tongue  
- Let loose to sing Salvation's wondrous song;  
Sing of his wondrous works, "Good will to men;"  
Repeat his praises with a loud, "Amen."  
Let all his saints, redeem'd with blood divine,  
Add grateful praises to these thanks of mine.  
Blest be thy glorious name; let me extol  
My God and King, whose praise is above all  
That can by men or angels ever be  
Conceived or sung to all eternity!  
Oh! Love Eternal, Love immensely great,  
Remember'd me when in my low estate;  
And Love redemption sent, redemption wrought,  
And made me rich, although a thing of nought.

Nov. 13, 1862.

A. H.

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SEVEN times already hath Israel mutinied against Moses, and seven times hath either been threatened or punished; yet now they fall to it afresh. As a testy man finds occasion to chafe at every trifle, so this discontented people either find or make all things troublesome. One while they have no water, then bitter; one while no God, then one too many; one while no bread, then bread enough, but too light; one while they will not abide their governors, then they cannot abide their loss. Aaon and Miriam were never so grudged alive as they are bewailed dead. Before, they wanted onions, garlic, flesh-pots; now, they want figs, pomegranates, corn. And as crabbed children that cry for everything they can think of are whipped by their wise mother, so God justly serves these fond Israelites.—*Bishop Hall*.

[AUGUST 1, 1864.]

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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AUGUST, 1864.

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

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY  
FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET  
CHAPEL, LONDON.

(Continued from p. 205.)

Soon after I came to Birmingham, I became acquainted with my worthy friends Warburton and Gadsby, and we have continued in brotherly friendship ever since, though many attempts have been made by persons to separate us. Tale-bearers often separate chief friends. I would observe, that my chapel, and the doctrines generally preached there, were held in contempt by most of the good religious folks of Birmingham. We were held up as Antinomians, as a bugbear to frighten people from our place; most of these pious people, such as Baptists, Independents, and Arminians, being all agreed in pouring contempt on us. As a proof that we were vile characters, they would name several persons who had been hearers of Mr. Bradford, but who turned out base characters, which indeed was too true. On the other hand, some of my hearers thought that these pious people should have been silent; because they knew many persons who had been separated from their society for crimes too bad to mention. Some indeed did not wait for dismissal; but hastened, with all the goods and cash they could scrape together, to that great receptacle of good and bad, America. So that my poor people, though not much distinguished for education, really thought these pious people who had reproached them were not good reasoners, nor very fair in their dealings with their neighbours.

I would observe, also, that the pious people alluded to considered the moral law to be their rule of life, were advocates for progressive holiness, and firmly stood to it that it was the duty of all men to believe; but as for the *doing* part, they left that to the despised Antinomians; and they, poor creatures, found that to do the best they could, they were at the best but "unprofitable servants." As we increased in numbers, the opposition of these pious people increased; but their opposition answered the purpose of a bellman, and saved us the expense.

Many, out of curiosity, came to hear me. Having heard many remarks made about me at tea-parties, and sometimes in public, too plain to be misunderstood, their curiosity was stirred, and they

came to hear what the babbler had to say; and some of them carried back a good report of the land, which induced others to come. This much displeased a Mr. B., as if I could help his hearers leaving him. However, I bore the blame; nor did Mr. B. speak to me, or even look pleasant, when I met him, which I often did, as we lived but a few doors apart.

Mr. Brewer, another minister who lived near me, was more friendly, and would often talk a few minutes when we met; but the last time I saw him, I was much grieved on his account. I saw him walking in his garden, and he appeared ill, and somewhat agitated, I thought. I stopped, and asked him how his health was. He said, "I am very poorly indeed." "You appear so, Sir," I said. "I hope all is well with you in the best sense?" He said, "I shall soon leave all here, and be in a happier place, *I suppose.*" "My dear Sir," I said, "I hope your future prospects do not rest upon a supposition?" To which he made no distinct reply, that I could hear, but turned from me, and I never saw him afterwards. As soon as we parted, I could not help lifting up my heart to God with thanksgiving, for giving me the spirit of adoption, as the blessed earnest-penny of the future inheritance. This Mr. Brewer is said to have been the author of that well-known hymn:

"Hail! Sovereign love!"

And if he felt the doctrines that the hymn expresses, he doubtless is singing in nobler strains above, gloomy as he might have been in his last moments.

There was also another minister, who went and settled in Birmingham about the time I did, and from near the same place, a Mr. J. B. He was of the *new school*, and deeply drenched in the doctrines of Andrew Fuller. He knew something of me in Devonshire, and disapproved of my preaching at Ivybridge; and said he would not subscribe two pounds per annum to our little place, if such persons as myself were permitted to preach there.

Some time after I came to Birmingham, a poor man, who was very ill, sent for me to visit him, as he had heard me much to his satisfaction several times. A sister of this poor afflicted man was a member with the above Mr. J. B., and she requested him to visit her brother. As I entered into the poor afflicted man's dwelling, I met Mr. J. B. coming down stairs. As he passed, I paid him the usual compliments, which he civilly returned; but he appeared rather abashed, I thought. When I entered the poor man's room, I found him in a state of great excitement. I said, "What is the matter with you?" He then, as soon as he could recover himself, made the following observations, in substance: "My sister has sent Mr. J. B. to me, and he has upset me. I wish I had not seen him. He asked me how I felt in my mind, and I told him very happy, and I was sure I should go to glory whenever I died; at which he seemed surprised, and bade me not to be presumptuous. He said, 'Whose ministry have you attended?' I said, 'I have been several times to hear Mr. Fowler; and I bless God that I ever



heard him, for by his ministry the fear of death has been removed, and my interest in God's electing love made plain to me." Mr. B. was quite shocked at the poor man's observations, and said, "What! go to hear such a dangerous character as that! He preaches dangerous doctrine." "I know nothing," said the poor man, "of Mr. Fowler, nor where he came from; but I know his doctrine is the truth of God, for I have felt the power of it in my own soul; and if the Lord restores me to health, I shall go and hear him again." "If you are determined," said Mr. B., "I must leave you to do as you please;" and he abruptly departed. When the poor man related these things to me, I was not at all surprised at the confusion the gentleman appeared in as I entered the house. This gentleman was highly esteemed for his candour and charity by most of the professors in Birmingham, and was like a bishop in the Baptist connexion. But, then, I did not belong to his regiment, and so had no share in his candour and charity.

One circumstance connected with the above gentleman, or with his people, I think it right to mention. On one occasion, a very respectable gentleman, of great property, came on a visit to Birmingham. The parties whom he visited were related to him, and the leading persons in Mr. B.'s church. This respectable gentleman had some knowledge of me, and was well trained in the school of Christ, under that venerable servant of God, Mr. Romaine. When he came to Birmingham, he inquired respecting the state of religion, and what ministers they had in Birmingham. He was told of most of the excellent and popular ministers in the town, but myself was left out; upon which the old gentleman said, "Are those you have mentioned all the preachers you have in Birmingham?" "Yes," said the person; "they are all of any respectability. There is a man who preaches to a few poor people, but he is not respected by many persons." "Indeed!" said the old gentleman, "how is that? What sentiments do they hold at that place?" "They are considered Antinomians," said the person. "What night in the week," said the old gentleman, "have they preaching?" And he was told that the said place was open the same evening. "Then," said he, "I should like to go and hear what this Antinomian has to say. Perhaps you will go with me?" To which proposition the party assented. He ordered his carriage, and came to hear me, and was so well satisfied that he, and his worthy partner, came to hear me again on the following Lord's day; and after I had done, he came to me, with tears in his eyes, and said, "I will not support errors; but where I hear Christ exalted, and the union set forth between Christ and his church, and a full and free salvation preached, I feel a pleasure in supporting it;" and he put *twenty pounds* into my hand as a token of regard to me for Christ's sake! I did not then know the amount, as the notes were folded; but I thanked him, and we parted. After he was gone, my managers came into the vestry with the proceeds of the collection at the doors, and were surprised that the lady of the above generous friend had put into the plate a five-pound note, which more than doubled our usual collection.

One circumstance arising out of this smiling providence I will not suppress, though not much to my credit. But first I would observe, I had borrowed, some time before this, fifteen pounds of a friend, but my limited salary, and my increasing family, prevented my paying it; and though the lender was quite easy about it, and would never trouble me for it, that debt often troubled me, and the exhortation, "Owe no man anything," I often found to press upon me. As soon as the worthy gentleman gave the sum before stated, my debt came before me, and I was truly thankful both to the giver and to God for putting it into his heart at such a time. "This sum," I said, "will pay the fifteen pounds, and I shall have five left; and as the Lord has been so kind to me in providence, I will send one pound to an aged disciple in the country." Thus I had disposed of sixteen pounds in my mind. I then began to consider what the children wanted, and what might be needed about the house, and what expenses would unavoidably occur in a month or two after this; but when I had made a calculation of all these items, I found I could not spare *one shilling* for the old disciple, and so I abandoned the thought; for if I had had ten pounds more given to me, it would not have answered my present wants, and those that were before me. So I came to the conclusion to pay off the fifteen pounds I had borrowed, and lay out on my family the remaining five in such things as were immediately wanted, and my mind seemed satisfied that this was the most prudent step. This plan I executed as soon as possible. This done, I was severely reprov'd both by conscience and the word of God. I could not trust God to send more supplies when I needed. My selfishness prompted me to withhold a pound from a poor old disciple, who was dependent on the bounties of Providence for his daily bread. He must do the best he could; my family wanted, or would want, all, nay more than I was likely to get. On reflecting on my baseness, I said to myself, "I shall not be surpris'd if the Lord withholds his providential kindness from me as a chastisement for my base unbelief;" and so it fell out; for I do not think I received any very manifest display of providential kindness for six months after this; so true are the words of Solomon, "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to penury." I set down these things as a buoy that the spiritual mariner may steer his vessel, and avoid the rock on which I ran.

For several years I had no wish nor thought about leaving Birmingham; but about the fourth year I had been there, some characters puzzled and tried me much. The church, also, if it might be so called, was not constituted nor governed in, what I considered, a scriptural manner, which made my mind rather uneasy. I considered whether it was practicable to make an alteration; but I came to this conclusion that, under all circumstances, I had better let it remain as it was; for I thought that to attempt an alteration would be likely to break up the concern, and then those few who were blessed under my ministry would be deprived of it altogether. I remember I one time told some of our managers not to make any

new arrangements about the chapel on my account, for I was persuaded I had a work to do elsewhere; but where or when I should remove I knew not, nor should I inquire, nor use any means to promote my removal.

I had good reasons for thinking I should be removed, but chose to suppress them, lest it should be considered marvellous. My sphere was very limited in Birmingham and in the places round. I preached a few times at West Bromwich, where there was something of the form of truth but little power, with many irregularities in the walk of several. I felt no union of soul to those I met with there, nor am I surprised at it. "How can two walk together, except they be agreed?" There must be something more than building a chapel, establishing a Sunday-school, and huddling people together as church members, to constitute a prosperous church. Where there is no life, there is no real union; and where union is, it will be much tried by reason of the saints' depravity. I had heard from good authority that there were many gracious souls at West Bromwich; but I discovered very few. The less of true religion in the heart, the more noise generally; and real spirituality of mind is often hid under the veil of modesty.

The last two years that I spent in Birmingham, I used to visit Walsall frequently. I went there first to preach at the earnest request of a number of persons who had separated from the chapel in which Mr. T. Grove preached for about 30 years. When Mr. Grove died, the people chose for their pastor a young man who preached, as was said, very different doctrine to what the people had been accustomed to hear from Mr. Grove. Many of the people, therefore, left, and hired a large club-room connected with a public-house. This room would contain more than three hundred persons. My labours there were chiefly on a week-night; and others used to be employed to preach to them on a Lord's day. I seldom had a barren time in preaching to this people, though I never saw less spirituality among a people, considering their number and the person they had been in the habit of hearing for so many years. But, alas! poor Thomas Grove, I fear, did not bring forth fruit in old age; he was not fat and flourishing in his latter years, whatever he might have been soon after he was expelled, as he was, from the University of Oxford, with five others. Grove outlived all the rest of the expelled students, and died when he was about 80 years old. I much respected him, as I heard him with some satisfaction preach in London several sermons, on "He is Precious," "The Precious Blood of Christ," and "Precious Faith." This was about the year 1799; but when I met him in Walsall about the year 1815, and he understood that I preached in the place where Mr. Bradford preached, he left me, I thought, rather abruptly; and I never saw him afterwards.

I had from that time an earnest desire to preach at Walsall, and I had prayed the Lord to open the door for that purpose; therefore, when the people applied to me, I could not refuse. My first text was, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ," &c. How far my testimony was blessed is not for me to say; but I met a person

in Reading, on my return from Bath a few years back, who used to bear me at Walsall, and he told me he was confident my testimony had been blessed to many. He mentioned one person particularly, a common prostitute. This reclaimed poor sinner went, after my removal from London, to join the church where Mr. Grove used to preach, and to which my hearers, for the most part, returned after I left. When this woman was requested to give an account of the means of her conversion, she said, "The life I have lived and the course I have followed is generally known through the town; and these practices I followed till I went, one night, to hear a man by the name of Fowler, at the *mud-hole!* (for that was the name these pious people gave our preaching-room,) where I was struck with horror at the awful state I was in; and I could no longer continue in those abominable practices, but wished to be with God's people—not that I am worthy to be in their company." I have thought, if this was the real work of God on this poor sinner, I am amply satisfied for all my harassings of mind and body, which were sometimes too much for my frail frame. But the day shall declare it. I should, however, be much gratified to hear that this poor sinner wears well.

God has, in all ages, manifested his rich and sovereign grace to many of the worst of characters; as Rahab the harlot, the woman of Samaria, the woman taken in the act of adultery, Mary Magdalene, and others; and in viewing these things, I am ready to exclaim, with George Whitefield, "Free grace for ever!"

I must here relate an anecdote, which I received from the mouth of a character of the above description, at Exeter, many years ago. She had been as notorious as any person of that description in Exeter; but, under the ministry of that blessed servant of God, Henry Tanner, she was snatched as a brand from the fire; and the power of God was so manifest in turning her from darkness to light that she was received as a proper member into Mr. Tanner's church.

Some envious and pharisaic persons raised a report that Mr. Tanner had received into his church a base character. On one Saturday two ministers waited on Mr. Tanner to expostulate with him, and reprove him for the impropriety of his conduct in receiving such an awful character into his church, which was calculated to bring reproach on the cause of God. Mr. Tanner, though very warm in his temper naturally, listened patiently to all they had to say, and casting his eyes toward the field opposite his window, across which was a common footpath, he saw the obnoxious character with a piece of serge on her shoulder, taking it to her employer. He ran to the door, and called aloud, "Molly, come in. Here are two gentlemen who want to speak to you." Molly entered with a piece of serge on her back, and set it down in the parlour. Mr. Tanner then said, "Molly, these gentlemen are blaming me for receiving you into my church. They say you have been a notorious character?" "It is all true," said Molly, "and I know that I am not worthy to be among the children of God." "Well," said Mr. Tanner, "I wish you to relate to these gentlemen your conversion and experience."

She gave them a full account of God's dealings with her; and they had not one word to oppose. Mr. Tanner then said to them, "Find one in all your congregations that can give a better account of God's teaching than Molly, if you can!" and they were perfectly satisfied  
(*To be concluded in our next.*)

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### SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON BY MR. MARTIN, AT WALKERN.

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"For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." (Deut. xxxii. 9, 10.)

THERE are but two classes of people in the world. These are described or set forth by different names, and I believe in my heart that this sometimes causes a great deal of trouble and anxiety amongst poor quickened souls, whom God calls from death unto life, and Satan often makes havoc of. He never tires, but is always trying to harass God's children. I will tell you how he does it. He tries them in this way: "Here are the Church folk, who think they are right; then the Methodists, Roman Catholics, Quakers, &c.; they all say they are right." And says the poor soul, "I should like to know which party is right, for I am so ignorant I don't know who is right and who is wrong." I tell you that there are only two parties, righteous and wicked, sheep and goats, elect and non-elect, and you must belong either to one party or the other. There is no such thing as a half Christian. They are either sheep or goats, dead or alive.

The people spoken of in the text are brought by sovereign grace out of the kingdom and dominion of Satan, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son. It does not matter what we profess; if we do not belong to this people we are in an awful state. The Apostle says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" so that a man being under the law is under the curse. This people is described in Deut. xxxiii. 29: "Happy art thou, O Israel! Who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency! And thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places." And Paul says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." And, poor sinner, if ever God hath granted thee a broken heart and contrite spirit, let men say what they will, and devils say what they will, thou art one of this blessed people: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite heart, and who trembleth at my word." He will not only look to such a man, but he will dwell with such a man.

"The Lord's portion is his people." Now, then, I must just for a moment speak of *this people*. If you have got eternal life in your

soul, you will want to know whether you belong to them; and if God should speak through a poor ram's horn, he shall have all the glory. We shall say with the prophet, "The Lord is my portion, saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him." They are "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people;" and the Apostle says, "The election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." But there must be an experimental knowledge of this. Election must be only known by calling. A man may kick against it, and hate it, but the blessed Spirit will give the poor sinner such a knowledge of what he is that it will be his cry:

"Mercy, good Lord, is all I seek,  
 Mercy's the total sum;  
 Thy mercy, Lord, is all my suit;  
 Lord, let thy mercy come."

Now, then, can you lay your hand upon your heart and say, "This is the feeling desire of my soul?" Well, then, this looks like one of the characters, because the Lord hath brought thee to feel that thou art a poor sinner. Thou, poor soul, art dreading the doctrine of election; but it is only known after longing and thirsting. My dear fellow-creature, you would not long and thirst if you were not one of the characters. Cast your eye back upon the time when you rolled sin under your tongue as a sweet morsel. Now you are longing, hungering, and thirsting after mercy. You are of the number of those that are saved in Christ with an everlasting salvation. If the Lord were to meet with the Queen on the throne, and make her a partaker of grace, she would be a poor woman. How is it that they are poor? Man by nature is rich; he adorns himself with many jewels; makes himself very handsome in his own eyes. John, in writing to the Laodiceans, says, "Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;"—there is a state to be in, and not to know it. But that is just the state of every man by nature. If you speak to a sinner, warning him that if he lives and dies in such a state he will go to hell, he might say, "I am as good as you; I have never murdered anybody; I say my prayers night and morning; I am as good as you, and, for aught I know, perhaps a little better." When a man is brought to know he is a hell-deserving sinner, he feels that if God should send him to hell he would do him no injustice; I say, when a man is brought here, his rags begin to fly. Thou, poor sinner, when thou art here, thou canst not say anything else but, "Guilty, guilty;" thou canst not tell which way the scale will turn. 'Tis his mercy, poor sinner, that has brought thee to see what thou art. Thou art like the poor prodigal, when he said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." The poor sinner says, if he does save me he must save me by his grace, for I have deserved to be damned times and times over. He has not a good prayer, nor a good desire to plead. When Joseph's brethren came from the land of Canaan to Egypt to buy corn, the money was

all returned again, and put into the sacks' mouth. God will not look on your church or chapel goings; he will not look on anything but the Lord Jesus Christ; you are destitute without him. If you have not got a penny nor a farthing in the world, and hunger pinches you, and you say, "I cannot live long in such a state as this," you are completely destitute. How thankful you would be for a little help from a friend or neighbour. Hear what the Psalmist says: "The Lord heareth the prayer of the destitute, and will not despise their prayer." Hear what he says again: "He lifteth the poor out of the dust, and the beggar from the dunghill" of his own depravity and corruption. Here the poor sinner sits upon the dunghill, and sits and pleads God's mercy, and he will beg hard for a crumb. Now, if you had got a sixpence in your pocket, you would not go and beg at anybody's door. When a man is begging, and has got nothing, depend upon it you will have a hard matter to get that person from your door. The Lord just grants him a little. His eternal arms of love and mercy are underneath the poor soul. He grants thee a little crumb for a little while, and when that is all gone you will have to beg for a little more. If we get a little, it will not last long, depend upon it. We shall go begging all the way to heaven. I went once to see poor old Warner, of Welwyn. He raised himself up in the bed, and the first words the old man spoke were: "No language will take a man to heaven but that of a poor beggar." Then they are a poor people, and a longing people; being poor it makes them long.

They are also a hungering and a thirsting people, and a blessed people. All the Balaams in the world, all the devils in hell, never could curse this people. Balaam said, "If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the commandment of the Lord." He would have cursed them if he could, and there are plenty of Balaams now. He said, "They are blessed, and I cannot reverse it." They are blessed with peace. They are blessed with love. They are blessed with pardon. They are blessed with godly fear. God dwells in them, and lives in them. They are blessed with a broken heart, and a spirit of grace and supplication. They are blessed with a tender conscience. They cannot live in sin that grace may abound. The Lord makes their conscience sore. You know what a sore place is, don't you? They don't tell lies; he makes them honest. I heard a man once say that this has nothing to do with it; but it has. It makes the drunkard a sober man.

When a man is dead in sin, his conscience is dead; but when a man is made alive to God he cannot do things he once did; sin is not his element. When a man falls into sin, what will be the consequence when he comes before God? The heavens will be shut up against him, he will have to come with weeping and confession before the Lord. The Lord will not let his people sin cheap; though they often fall into sin, he will not let them sin cheap. They are a blessed people and a saved people. They are safe. They are encompassed with all the perfections of Deity. What a mercy, being built upon the foundation of Christ and his apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the

chief corner stone! "The Lord's portion is his people." Then what a portion is his people. God the Father gave them to his dear Son. He says, "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Now, then, you see a blessed link is in this chain. They are given to the Lord Jesus Christ; and as a proof that they are his, "they shall come." The Lord draws them as with cords of love and bands of a man. They shall come with weeping; they shall come in chains. Their chains are their sins. These chains are their guilt; and these chains rattle about their ears sometimes. They have to come with weeping and supplication. This is the work of the blessed Spirit. Some will keep sinning and repenting, and yet live in their sins. Now this is not the way. They have to come with weeping and supplication. This is the way the Lord draws them. Every faculty of the soul is so drawn out to the Lord Jesus Christ; he is the chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. "The Lord's portion is his people." They are a black portion; as black as the tents of Kedar. They are a dear portion; he had to go through hell for them:

" There's not a gift his hand bestows,  
But cost his heart a groan."

As he is their portion, they are also his portion. Now let me ask thee a question; I must come close. Let me ask thee, (and may the Lord the blessed Spirit lay it on thy soul to give an answer,) would you rather have the Lord as your portion, and poverty, than plenty of this world's goods? Poverty, to dwell here in a cottage, with a drop of water. This is coming close. Would you rather have the Lord, or thousands of gold and silver? If you cannot choose this, you are in a bad state. I tell thee what, a man for whom the Lord has opened his eyes would rather have anything than to have the dreadful flame of God's wrath. He says, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny thee." That is a happy state that can just go from hand to mouth, that can pay every one his own; he is a happy character. Paul says, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Many would be comfortable, if God would give them his love, and let them have the love of money and the world too. The Lord is a blessed portion. Mark you, if you had ever so much of this world's goods, thousands of gold and silver, or if there is a time coming that you may have thousands of pounds, you do not know that you have an hour to enjoy it. Suppose you should live for twenty or thirty years, and after this your poor soul be plunged into the gulf of wretchedness and misery!

" Death, 'tis a melancholy day  
For those that have no God;  
When the poor soul is forced away,  
To seek its last abode."

"The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance;" a lasting portion, a blessed portion. He is a suitable portion, because the Lord the blessed Spirit brings the poor soul into



such a state that he feels he must be lost without him. What a mercy it is to have the Lord as thy portion; it is worth a thousand worlds; you cannot set a worth upon it. Though thy name may be cast out as evil, cast out as a deceiver; though the world may despise thee, professors may scorn thee, thy God will feed thee. He will never let thee be starved to death, poor child of God. I do believe in my heart that God will not let thee be starved to death. He will work a miracle for thee, as he did for the poor prophet Elijah. We read that when he came to the gate of the city, there was a poor widow woman gathering up sticks; and he called to her, and said, "Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a vessel, that I may drink. And as she was going to fetch it he called to her, and said, I pray thee bring me a morsel of bread in thine hand. And she said, As the Lord thy God liveth I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse; and, behold, I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it and die." See how the Lord works: "And Elijah said unto her, Fear not; go and do as thou hast said; but make me thereof a little cake first, and bring it unto me, and after make for thee and thy son; for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, (if you have got a Thus saith the Lord, it will stand as long as the throne on which he sits,) the barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the Lord sendeth rain upon the earth;" and I believe that she touched the bottom of the barrel as long as she went to it. We find that the ravens brought the prophet bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening, and he drank of the brook. He will not leave thee; his word stands as firm as the throne on which he sits. He says, "Thy bread shall be given thee, and thy water shall be sure." He will make a cake for thee, and a blessed cake too: "No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." "The Lord's portion is his people." Then the Lord being thy portion, and thy soul being his portion, this sets forth the blessed union that is between Christ and his people: "My beloved is mine, and I am his." "What!" say you, "such a poor creature as I am? God to dwell in me?" Yes; know ye not that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, although they are accounted as the very offscouring of the earth? The world hates them, the devil hates them; yet they are a blessed people, go where they will. They are a blessing to the village; they are a blessing to the master. The Lord blessed Laban for Jacob's sake. Then thou art a blessing wherever thou goest, poor child of God. Thus they are a blessing wherever they go; a blessing to a city, a blessing to a nation; for as long as there is one of these poor insignificant ones to be found in this world, it will stand. When he shall come in the clouds of heaven, and gather in his elect from the four winds, then this world will be destroyed by fire. Then this poor people, this despised people, shall be ever with the Lord: "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." O sinner! thou dost not know how precious thou art. This people, the Lord dwells in them, and walks in them;

as the Apostle says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time."

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness." Where has he found you? If ever he found thee, it was on the confines of Satan; he found thee a rebel, kicking up thy heels against him; he found thee a wicked and hell-deserving sinner. This is a desert land. You may have a thousand acquaintances, and have your delights here; yet I say this is a desert land. There is nothing precious in it; there is nothing but death in it; there is not a drop of water nor a crumb of bread in this land of death. There he found him; as the poet says:

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

If the Lord had never found thee, poor sinner, thou never wouldst have found him; for "the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness." What does this set forth? When a man has got plenty of this world's goods, he does not want a better heaven than this; but when the Lord shows him what he is, he feels that there is vanity stamped upon it, and that there is nothing in it that can suit his taste; it is a "waste howling wilderness." How Satan bellows and roars! O how he tells the poor sinner, "I shall have thee at last; and if I cannot have thee, I will worry thee to the last moment that thou art in this world. I will have thee as long as there is a probability of having thee." But the Lord keeps the poor sinner as the apple of his eye. He instructs thee more into the things of God, he leads thee more into the heart of Christ; and that is a blessed state, when his mercy is manifested to such a poor sinner as this. How it leads him to adore, bless, and praise the Lord for his great salvation!

"He led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." Mark, the apple of his eye! How that is preserved. The apple of the eye is a very quick thing indeed. Thus the Lord keeps his people as the apple of his eye. If he had not loved them with an everlasting love, he would never have set such a value upon them; as he saith in another place, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye." If there is a persecutor here to-night, let me tell thee, O man, let me tell thee, O woman, if you touch this people, you touch the apple of his eye. O sinner! may the Lord keep thee from touching this people; may the Lord enable thee to weep with those who weep. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures

of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." What say you? To have your name cast out! That rich? Yes. To be called everything that is bad! That rich? Yes. The Apostle says, "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you. On their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified."

May the Lord bless these remarks to a poor, seeking soul, and his name shall have all the praise.

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## A WORD OF SYMPATHY WITH A BEREAVED PARENT.

I have been from home, or my dear friend would have heard from me some days ago.

By your letter I perceive that your son is no more, and in this you have experienced a trial which I am for the present a stranger to. "Children," we read, "are a heritage from the Lord, and the fruit of the womb is his reward." The days of all are numbered by him, which number none can pass. "Behold, he taketh away," we read, "and who can hinder him?" May the Lord grant unto you and the mother also resignation to his sovereign will, and abundantly sanctify this severe affliction to you; for severe, I am sure, it must be. Real submission, we know, is a grant from him; and when granted the head is bowed, the Lord is worshipped, the punishment is accepted, and we are still, knowing that he is God.

If your dear child was before his departure favoured with a hope in God, and you and his mother have reason to believe he had hope in his death, this must greatly lessen the affliction, and be an inexpressible source of consolation to you. To have him spared would have been a great mercy, and an unspeakable pleasure to you, no doubt; but for the Lord to take him out of this evil world unto himself is a much greater mercy still. I hope and pray that this may be the effect upon you both, that by the affliction you may be brought to see more of the vanity and uncertainty of all things here below, to cleave close to Christ, to make up your happiness in him, and attend to the counsel given: "Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel." You must go to him; but your son can never return to you. At most, life is but a vapour, which appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. We know not, as we read, when the time is; but blessed are those servants who are ready, and are found watching when the Lord comes. May this be your happy case and mine.

My kind regards to Mrs. S., and may the Lord support her under this heavy trial, and may she be enabled to rest in him.

Sincerely and affectionately yours,

Granby Street, Leicester,  
Jan. 16, 1827.

JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN.

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FAITH of forgiveness is the principle of gospel obedience.—*Owen.*

## HE THAT KEEPETH ISRAEL NEITHER SLUMBERS NOR SLEEPS.

My dear Mrs. D.,—Your kind letter would have been replied to earlier, but many things have fettered my hand. It is a mercy to be kept low before God and in our own eyes; for a low place is a safe place, and God giveth more grace to the humble. It is very certain that none who put their trust in him shall be desolate or confounded. Present appearances may, indeed, seem to contradict this assurance; but wait until the set time arrives, and God's word will be found to be true: "Verily there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off."

Our path is chosen for us by One who cannot err, and whose mercy endureth for ever. Shall he order the way of the sparrow, and neglect that of his trusting people? Shall he take charge of the hairs of their head, and be indifferent to the welfare of their body and soul? Impossible! We may cry out, in fear and unbelief, "My way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment is passed over from my God;" but still, the Keeper of Israel "neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." "He fainteth not, neither is weary; there is no searching of his understanding." Our trials do not come by chance, nor our blessings descend from the rolling clouds; and if we belong to Jesus, there is not a sorrow, a care, or an exercise of any kind which we feel but he knows it, and sympathises with us in it. It is sometimes his pleasure that his children shall enter the lion's den; but it is only to show them his love and power in preserving them, and to make them feel that he keeps them as the apple of his eye.

I trust that you are enabled, with your husband, to cast all your care upon Jesus, and to wait at his throne of grace, for the supply of all your need, temporal and spiritual. With our love to you all,

I am, Yours faithfully in Christ, G. I.

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## IT IS GOOD FOR ME THAT I HAVE BEEN AFFLICTED.

My dear Friend and Sister in the Great Covenant Head of all Grace and Mercy,—I duly received your kind letter, and, although so long neglected, it has not been forgotten; but my inability to write has much increased with my infirmities, through my affliction and increasing age.

Through the tender mercy of a long-suffering and gracious God, I am now better in body, though last week I felt very poorly. I now expect to be a sufferer, more or less, while it shall be the Divine Master's will I shall still be in this poor earthly house; but I would humbly adore his holy name. I have for some time been kept in a measure of submission to his will, so that I have felt I could not move a finger to cause my pains to cease, nor to alter what of sufferings that may yet be in the future, while at times I have felt my long and sore affliction to be among my many mercies, and have, in a little degree, said with David, "It was good for me that I have been afflicted;" and I have blessed his sacred Majesty for the same; by

which I hope I have, in a little measure, experienced the truth of Heb. xii. 11, both the former and latter parts of the verse. Yet I feel to be a poor and unprofitable creature.

I have been at the Dicker two Lord's days, and have to be there one more. My dear wife has been with me. I hope, in some measure, the Lord has blessed me in my own soul in speaking, and blessed my feeble ministry to some who have heard. The first Lord's day, I rode in the day 18 miles, and preached three times, and last Lord's day three times, and two on two week evenings. I am surprised at the strength of body the Lord gives me, and I think my voice is stronger than it has been for thirty years. I have felt much tried, exercised, and cast down, in coming here to stand up before 500 or 600 people; and while I have felt myself to be indeed a poor preacher, to whom the Lord has not given gifts or abilities, I have felt one thing to give me boldness before the Lord and before his people, which is this, that what I preach I never borrowed or stole, neither was I taught it by man, but by God, in my own soul's experience. My affliction, in which my soul has very solemn seasons, has not lengthened my arms to grasp more professors, nor given me a more favourable judgment of religion in general, but it has given me to see and feel, in an increased degree, the unutterable value of a soul-saving religion.

I should once more like to look upon my poor and afflicted brother Morse. Give my very kind and unfeigned love to him. Tell him I trust I shall be with him in that blessed and eternal Sabbath where there will be no more sighing nor sorrowing, no more weeping nor watching, no more tears nor trials, no more temptations, troubles, nor tribulation, no more sin nor sufferings, no more pains nor prisons, no more paralysis nor abscesses. May these light afflictions, which must be short, be so blessed to us as to wean us from this time state of things, and work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

May the Lord abundantly bless you both, sustain you in the furnace and fire, graciously supply your every need, and appear for you in every strait.

I am at times, although the most barren, favoured a little to reach and press forward towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, and feel a little enabled to say, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Also, "I have fought a good fight. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory (or righteousness) which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." I cannot say, "I have finished my course;" but I feel it will not be very long, and it may be very soon. I have fought a good fight. It is indeed a good fight, but I have fought in it very badly. Few, if any, have been such bad fighters in this good fight; but in it I am and shall be a victor, through the great Captain in whom all the blood-washed are "more than conquerors." "And this is the victory, even our faith." John heard a voice saying in heaven: "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony."

“O sacred hour! O blest abode!  
 I shall be near and like my God;  
 And flesh and sin no more control  
 The sacred pleasures of my soul.”

I feel at times humbled and crumbled down in the dust at the undeserved favour of God to such a poor, hell-deserving sinner as I was and am still. Tell my weather-beaten brother, a little more faith and patience, and then comes the end of all toils.

“The earth will soon dissolve like snow,  
 The sun forbear to shine;  
 But God, who call'd me here below,  
 Will be for ever mine.”

There, and there for ever and for ever, with immortal tongues in immortal songs, shall we unweariedly and unceasingly sing the holy praises of him who loved us, lived and died for us, and redeemed us by his most precious blood from the wrath to come, the inflexible and terrible justice of God, the curse and condemnation of a broken law, the guilt of sin, and the power of sin, and from the love, and practice, and dominion of sin. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sin.” O that I felt more, knew and lived more in the blessedness of it from day to day.

I am just called upon to go out, so must finish at once.

My dear wife unites in love to yourself and to our brother Morse.

I am, Yours very sincerely, in hope of the grace of life,  
 Framfield, Sussex, 14th Aug., 1861. J. T.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER (IN MS.) FROM  
 HENRY TANNER, FORMERLY MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL  
 AT EXETER, TO X. Y. Z., OCT., 1789.

Dear Sir,—What can I write but love? and what love but everlasting love, displayed to me in all the dispensations of providence and grace? Whether seeming frowns, or delightful smiles, all is love; for what can my dear Saviour, the wisdom of God, do but love his redeemed? He hath bought them with his own blood, and he will bring them to glory. But I am a very untoward child, so that the rod had need be always in hand for me. I have often thought (if I may be allowed the expression) that I gave my heavenly Father more trouble than any one of all his elect children beside. And in respect of grace, my precious Lord will not suffer me to be deceived, but proves it genuine by frequent trials, in different furnaces—the world, the flesh, and the devil. The world's furnace is often fire-hot (*sic?*) of various distresses, exigencies, reproaches, &c. &c., which would rather cement carnal reason and unbelief. But my precious Jesus communicates as the gift of God a resignation to his will. Then reason falls; faith increases, suitable to my present circumstances, and cursed unbelief subsides. Then I rejoice in the Lord. The flesh has its furnace, whose fire seems of a different quality, and subject to much smoke, the exhalation of which is very intoxicating, and robs a man of his regular sensations. It has its

different influences. At one time it fires the whole fabric, so that all they who dwell within it are thrown into agitation. At another time it smothers every faculty and power of nature, and stagnates for awhile the operations of divine grace, and produces a hypochondriacal melancholy, attended with slavish fears, which is very uncomfortable indeed. But my precious incarnate Jehovah Jesus extinguishes this fire, and causes the smoke to evaporate, by taking me often to Gethsemane, to the Hall, and to Calvary! And what a scene do I behold there? The eternal Son of God, or God the Son, in my nature sweating blood! His dear flesh torn with scourges! His sacred body spiked to the accursed tree! His human soul in an agony under a suspension, crying out, in the language of the deserted church, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These things, my dear Sir, I find an antidote which counterworks and repels fleshly lusts, carnal desires, and inordinate fears, which arise in corrupt nature. And the devil's furnace I think is the hottest of the three, for very often he takes coals from under the former furnaces and mingles them with his own; and his artifices are too sophistical for depraved natural understanding; or at least I find them so. His many snares laid in the way without, and his often prepossessing the carnal mind, or the unrenewed part, with prejudice and pride, passion and lust, of every sort; his darkening the conception of holy things, or suggesting diabolical things; representing monstrous spectres, and horrid, yea, fiery temptations, too heinous to mention, enough to shake the very pillars of faith and hope, and weaken the confidence of the strongest believer. But we are kept by the power of God through faith, so that, notwithstanding all the above, and though ten thousand times more of the hellish troop were to sally forth, the arm of Jesus Jehovah, the believer's strength, is sufficient to crush them to atoms; and the ever-running and ever-flowing torrent of the immaculate blood of the incarnate God drives all before it, and drowns all the host of the Egyptians.

Ah! my dear Sir, the miraculous deliverance of the Red Sea; the discomfiting of Amalek; my daily manna from above the clouds; with the soul-refreshing streams of the higher Rock than that in Horeb, hath supported and refreshed my soul and body for more than 45 years in the wilderness, and yet does strengthen my soul in believing that never-failing promise of Jehovah in Jesus: "I will never leave, I will never forsake thee."

HENRY TANNER.

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You take it hard that you are not answered, and that Christ's door is not opened at your first knock. David must knock: "O my God, I cry by day, and thou hearest not, and in the night season I am not silent." (Ps. xxii. 2.) The Lord's church: "And when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer." (Lam. iii. 8.) Sweet Jesus, the heir of all, prayed with tears and strong cries, once, "O my Father!" again, "O my Father!" and the third time, "O my Father!" ere he was heard. Wait on, die praying, faint not.—*Rutherford*.

## Obituary.

### LETITIA LAX, OF COVENTRY.

My dear Friends,—I now attempt to fulfil a promise I once made, of sending you a line or two respecting the last days on earth of one beloved of her God, and one to whom I felt, in life and in death, and to whom I still feel, great union, for “the memory of the just is blessed.” In this vale of tears it is a means of refreshing me to remember the conversations and communion I have had with those whose bodily presence I shall no more look upon; for at times they seem near me, and I feel we are still one, only they have done with sin and sorrow, my constant companions, which often make me long for and have a desire to depart and be with Christ. They are now resting from their labours. We have had the benefit of their example, and even their death has not been without its benefits. One of old, Paul the apostle, once wrote, “And to you that are troubled, rest with us;” and sometimes the remembrance of the help afforded, the consolation given, in the trying hour to the dear departed, seems to speak very forcibly to me, “To you that are troubled, rest with us. We, like you, were once in the same conflict; we have overcome, and so shall you.” O thrice blessed hope!

“We shall be conquerors all, ere long,  
And more than conquerors too.”

My old friend, Letitia Lax, was for years after the Lord had quickened her soul mixed up with the general dissenters, and knew not that there was such a people as the Particular Baptists until some time after a little room had been opened at Coventry. When I went to speak to the people, her son told her there had been a man speaking in Mr. Barber’s room; “and, Mother,” he said, “I believe you would like to hear him.” When I went again the son was to let her know, and either that time or the next she was there. She had heard some strange reports about the people, and was almost afraid to come; but when she heard the first hymn given out she felt interested, and she said to me, “When you began to preach it was just what I wanted; but I thought after the first Sunday, well, the man has preached all his experience to-day; he cannot preach so again; but,” she said, “I found it different, for ever since you came it was better and better. I felt satisfied these were the people of God, and I have never left the room since.” But although she was feeding upon the word she was afraid to speak to any one, and as soon as the service was over she went off for fear any one should speak to her. This in time wore away, and being poorly upon one occasion I went to see her, and from that time a union sprang up between us that will never be destroyed. In September, 1853, she was baptized and admitted a member with us, and until the time of her death walked in the fear of the Lord. Often in health, although but of a weakly constitution, she was in much darkness, and had much exercise of soul; but in affliction, and she had several



very heavy afflictions, her soul was remarkably favoured. Once I went to see her, and in conversation quoted these words:

“Though in a foreign land,  
We are not far from home.”

She replied, “They have been on my mind much of late,” and said, “Some people might not like it, but I can’t call mine an affliction; it is all indulgence.” What an expression for a poor, forlorn widow, without any parish allowance, and living entirely upon the providence of God!

In 1861–2 she was often very poorly; and in November, 1862, I had been to London, and the Lord had been very gracious to me that journey, so that I came home with both money and clothing to give away to the poor. I had something like 15s. for the poor old lady and her daughter, a cripple on two crutches, and a flannel petticoat for each. I came from London on the Wednesday; the dear old lady was taken ill that night and died on the following Monday. So the Lord provided her with all the earthly comforts she needed just to take her through the valley. I noticed this; and last summer I was out and had a sovereign given me for a poor afflicted man, a saint of God; and I said to his daughter, when I gave her the money, “This is come to make him comfortable at the last;” and so it was, for he did not live many days after.

“Wonders of grace to God belong;  
Repeat his mercies in your song.”

The last time I saw my dear old friend was December 6th. She had been expecting me, and was raised up in bed to receive me. She said, “My friend, you have been indeed a friend to me, and I wanted to see you once more.” “Well; but you have a better friend than I. How is it with you?” She raised her hands and repeated those lines—

“On the Rock of Ages founded,  
What can shake my sure repose?  
With salvation’s walls surrounded,  
I can smile at all my foes.”

When we parted, she said to me, “We shall not meet again here; but *I shall* see you again. O my dear friend, this is my hope.”

The following was given me by a friend of ours, who was with her two days before she died. She said she had known what it was to have a calm and thankful heart, and now she wished to be resigned to his will, either to live or die: “I have no fear of death, no fear of hell.” I said, “You feel no condemnation, and that is a mercy.” She said, “No. It must be dreadful to come to a deathbed and have nothing but hell staring you in the face. I am a poor, guilty sinner; I have not a good work to record. I have left undone what I ought to have done, and I have done what I ought not to have done; but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from *all* sin—not a part, but *all*,” and the word “all” seemed very precious to her. Thinking her end was near, I said, “Well, you have seen your children, and your children’s children.” “Yes,” she replied, “and yet I never was a strong woman in my life. It is quite a mystery.

It shows there is a time to be born, and a time to die." Speaking of her illness, she said, "I fear the night; but I know the Lord has a just and a sovereign right to do what he likes with me and mine as he pleases; but I cannot help asking him to be merciful to me." I said, "He delights in mercy." "Yes," she said, "he is very good to me." She then referred to a passage in Isaiah that had been much blessed to her soul: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins. Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." (Isa. xlv. 22.) And these words came so powerfully: "'I have redeemed thee.' What! me, Lord? 'I have redeemed thee.'"

When she was evidently sinking in the arms of death, she said, "I shall soon reach the harbour. There is rest for the weary, and truly I am weary; but the Lord will soon take me home. He has prepared a mansion for me;" then eagerly looking round for one of her sons, when he came to her she took hold of his hand and said, "Now let me depart in peace;" and after looking earnestly at us all she said, "I love you all. May God bless you all;" then she breathed her last breath; and thus she passed the river.

O what an unspeakable blessing is a good hope through grace, and what an unspeakable mercy to have so many testimonies to the truth of God's gracious word: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." He lived, he laboured, he sweat, he died, he arose, he ascended, he ever liveth—ever liveth; precious truth—precious Saviour, Friend of sinners, and he is about to save to the uttermost. Here, my dear friend, is my hope.

Coventry, May 4th.

T. M. G.

SOME preachers are constantly pressing men to help forward their own conversion, upon pain of damnation. It is as absurd as if I were to stand in a churchyard, and say to the dead bodies there interred, "Why will ye die?" In my idea, it would not be less so, were I to ask a spiritually dead sinner, "Why wilt thou die?" Alas! He is dead already; and to put such a question to one in such a state would be, in reality, to ask a man who is already fallen in Adam, "Why wilt thou fall in Adam?"—*Toplady*.

READER, art thou a young Christian? Keep close to Christ; balance thy accounts between him and conscience two or three times a day; and expect your daily penny from him, and your expectation shall not be cut off. Real religion consists in a pure and heavenly mind, a purged and peaceable conscience, and gospel affections, going out after the dear Redeemer. These thou canst not enjoy, unless thou maintainest a close union and communion with Christ, which communion is kept up by living faith and fervent prayer. There is much head and tongue religion in the world, while there is little of this vital religion. I have been amazed at times to think how such hardened hypocrites could sit under the gospel. But the Scriptures convinced me it was always so, for devils appeared among the angels in heaven before they were cast out. Cain got into the first church, Canaan into the second, Ishmael into the third, Esau into the fourth, Saul among the prophets, Judas among the apostles, Nicolas among the deacons, and Ananias and Sapphira among the primitive saints.—*Huntington*.

### INQUIRY.

Dear Mr. Editor,—As your kind, concise, and scriptural replies to questions in the “Gospel Standard” settle many disputes, and often set the minds of some of the Lord’s weakly children at rest, would you kindly give your thoughts upon the following subject?

If a member of a gospel church founded upon Strict Baptist principles, as laid down and commanded in the New Testament, should remove to any distant place, whether for profit or pleasure, whether for a longer or shorter period, should such a member, under such or similar circumstances, sit down at the Lord’s table with those holding Open Communion views? And upon discovery of a member acting so, if when the minister (or deacon, where there is no minister) remonstrates with the erring member in love and affection, he finds, instead of a falling under the reproof kindly and gently administered, a spirit of self-justification and an open avowal of an intention to do so again when opportunity occurs, what is the church’s duty in such a case?

Your kind reply will be esteemed a favour by several lovers of the “Gospel Standard” and of its Editor, and by

A LOVER OF BIBLE TRUTH AND BIBLE ORDER.

### ANSWER.

We have no doubt what answer to give to the above Inquiry; but before we do so, we shall endeavour to state as simply and as briefly as we can the grounds and principles on which strict Baptists act in such a matter as the case before us, as they are often much misunderstood or misrepresented.

It may seem, we freely admit, at first sight, somewhat contrary to the love and spirit of the gospel, not only to refuse the Lord’s Supper to acknowledged brethren, if unbaptized, but to carry the point to such a degree of rigid and extreme strictness as to visit with church censures members of our churches if they sit down at the Lord’s table with Open Communion churches. It is necessary, therefore, to have good grounds on which to rest a practice which seems to many so opposed to the spirit of the gospel.

As we cannot, in our limited space, prove the point for which we are contending, though it is most capable of proof, we shall merely state the principles on which strict Baptist churches act. We start, then, from this point, that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are both of them ordinances of divine institution, and as such were intended to be permanent memorials of what are represented thereby. This simple fact takes completely out of our hands both ordinances; and we are no more at liberty to change and alter the one than the other, either in its mode of administration, or the persons to whom it is to be administered. If we may at our pleasure attend to, or neglect and despise one ordinance, we may do so to the other; and if we may, just as we choose, either baptize or not baptize, sprinkle infants or immerse believers, we may, in a similarly loose, self-chosen way, utterly neglect the Lord’s Supper, or substitute some

other elements for bread and wine. It is against this laxity of principle and practice that the strict Baptists set themselves. They assert, what none can deny from the Scriptures, that the apostles required Baptism as the door of entrance into the church, and that the Lord's Supper is a church ordinance. They argue, therefore, that an unbaptized person is excluded by Scripture precedent and practice from partaking of the church ordinance of the Lord's Supper. Believing this to be the Scripture rule, they dare not violate it or depart from it. We are not here, let it be observed, proving the point, which would require pages to do, but merely stating the grounds and principles on which strict Baptists act. Now, believing, as they do, that it is unscriptural to break bread to unbaptized persons, they carry out that principle in visiting with church censures those members of their church who sanction and encourage an unscriptural practice. They say, and that most justly, "It would be highly inconsistent in us to sanction, directly or indirectly, what we believe is unscriptural, and thus deny our own faith and practice. We firmly believe that the inspired apostles of our blessed Lord would not have suffered an unbaptized person\* to sit down to the Lord's Supper. If, then, any of our members sanction, by sitting down with unbaptized persons, what we believe to be an unscriptural practice, we cannot pass it by. It is a violation of church order, a breaking down of a hedge built up, as we believe, between the church and the world by the inspired apostles of our blessed Lord. It may seem hard to punish our members for partaking of the Lord's Supper with believing brethren; but these believing brethren are acting unscripturally, and walking, so far, disorderly. If therefore we take no notice of our members encouraging and sanctioning disorderly walking, we are partakers of their sin, and are ourselves guilty of disobedience in winking at theirs. Thus, hard though it may seem to be, we visit them with church censures, that we may clear ourselves of being consenting parties to their act of disorder."

It is, then, on these grounds that the strict Baptists visit with church censures those of their members who sit down with Open Communion churches. The case is purely a point of gospel order. It does not at all touch the question whether those with whom the member sits down are believing brethren or not, and whether the love and spirit of the gospel should supersede, and, as it were, overrule and override the rules and practice of the gospel. Between the two, gospel spirit and gospel practice, there can be no real collision. But the point is whether those who desire to walk orderly may countenance and sanction a brother who, in their judgment, walks

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\* We have sometimes felt and said that Paul would no more have allowed a converted heathen, say the Philippian jailor, to sit down unbaptized to the Lord's Supper than Moses would have allowed an uncircumcised Israelite to partake of the Passover. Not that we put Baptism and Circumcision on the same footing; for the one is of the gospel, and the other of the law. The one is the obedience of a believing heart (Mark xvi. 16); the other was imperative on pain of being cut off from Israel. (Gen. xvii. 14.)

disorderly. It is not a question of brotherly love, but of gospel order; and it comes much to this, If I love my brother, and would, as a pledge of love, partake with him of the memorials of the Lord's dying love, may I do so at the expense of disobeying what I believe to be the revealed will of the Lord whom we both love? I say, "No;" and he ought to say "No" too; for he should not wish me to wound my conscience by my disobedience, or by acting contrary to my principles.

But now the question arises, What should the strict Baptist church do when one of its members acts as represented in the above Inquiry? Does removal from a church by distance justify a member breaking through that rule of church order which rests on the grounds already stated? If it do, the same case of removal would justify any other act of disobedience or disorder, making Christian conduct, or at least rules of church order, depend on so many miles distance by road or rail. On this principle, what would be very wrong for a member to do who lived in London would not be wrong at all if he went to live in the country; and what he would not and should not do if he were a mile or two from his own chapel he could do and might do if he lived 80 miles off. But church rule and church discipline cannot be measured by distance like a cab-fare, or adjusted by a railway time-table. If certain conduct be wrong at home, it is wrong abroad; and removing to a distance, even where there is no church near of the same faith and order, cannot justify breaking the rules of church order, and of the church to which the member belongs.

But what should the church do when the erring member justifies himself for the act, and avows his intention to repeat it when opportunity occurs? Now, we are much opposed to severe measures in church matters, where there is no positive breach of morality, or open sin. We should therefore first try affectionate counsel and admonition, pointing out to the erring member the grounds on which strict Baptist churches act. If this be ineffectual, and the conduct be repeated, we see no alternative but suspension, for a church must have discipline and order; and if this step be unsuccessful, then we must come, however painful be the act, to separation. But we are much against rash, hasty proceedings, such as cutting a member off at once for the act, as if he had committed some dreadful crime. Harsh measures should never be used till milder means have been employed and failed; and it is far better to win our erring brother by kind and wise counsel, than drive him away by sharp censures, which, besides their effect upon his mind, lead other Christians who do not see with us, or understand the grounds on which we act, to condemn both our spirit and our practice.

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THERE is no better remedy for ambition than to cast up our former receipts, and to compare them with our deservings, and to compare our own estate with inferiors; so shall we find cause to be thankful that we are above any, rather than of envy that any are above us.—*Bp. Hall.*

## REVIEW.

*Letters addressed at various Times to Members of his Church and Congregation. By the late G. S. B. Isbell. Stonehouse: John Lewis, 85, Union Street. 1864.*

WHEN one whom we have loved and esteemed in life passes away from this mortal scene, and leaves behind him that fragrant recollection which grace alone diffuses over those who manifestly live and die in the Lord, a desire, partly perhaps natural, but partly also spiritual, springs up in the breast that some enduring monument should be reared as a tribute of affection and respect to his memory. To this feeling we may, perhaps, ascribe many, if not most of those Obituaries which some of our readers consider the most profitable and interesting part of our pages; for though we would willingly attribute to those who send them the higher motives of seeking thereby the glory of God and the good of his people, yet no doubt, in very many cases, there intermingle with these holier and loftier aims promptings of natural love and affection to raise some abiding memorial to the departed. But when the deceased object of this esteem and affection has occupied a public position; when to the claims of private and personal love and esteem there are added those peculiar ties which bind a minister to a people in particular, or, if his labours have been more widely diffused, to the church of Christ in general, then there seems to be a more widely-spread desire that some means should be adopted to preserve his name in enduring remembrance.

Now there is no such enduring memorial of a servant of God as his works, whether we understand by that term those living souls that were begotten under his word to life eternal, or, if a writer, the living productions of his pen. Other memorials soon pass away, for the seeds of mortality are naturally in them; nay, time gradually removes from earth the living witnesses of the most powerful ministry. How few, for instance, now remain of Mr. Huntington's attached friends and bearers; and his sons in the faith, Beeman, Turner, Vinall, and Chamberlain have followed their father to the mansions above. If affection raise a tomb over the spot where the remains of the deceased repose till the resurrection morn, stone gradually moulders and decays; and the deepest-cut inscription sooner or later fades and becomes indistinct under the corroding effects of wintry storm and summer sun. Besides which, the richest tomb which affection can rear over the grave of the departed is but local, bounded by the walls of a cemetery; and the carefully penned inscription is often only read by the idle eyes of a few summer strollers, or listlessly spelt out, letter by letter, by wandering nursemaids to their little troop. Even the very chapel where the well-known voice once sounded forth the gospel of the grace of God can give no guarantee of permanency to the tablet which records the memory of the departed servant of Christ. What has become, for instance, of that rich marble tablet which the respect and affection of a bereaved church and congregation raised to the memory of the immortal Coalheaver, in Providence Chapel, Gray's Inn Road, bearing that renowned in-

scription which he dictated just before his decease? In a few years it was torn down, as desecrating the place which a bishop had consecrated for another church, another service, another congregation, and another gospel. But Mr. Huntington's writings had already reared a memorial to his name which will last when St. Bartholomew's, as we believe it is now called, shall have been swept away by the all innovating rail, or become re-consecrated and re-christened for the celebration of high mass and the gorgeous ceremonial of Popish worship. If there were no other memorial of Mr. Huntington than the few aged members of his church and congregation who are waiting their dismissal, or his monument at Lewes, now that his London tablet is gone, his name would soon live only by tradition. But, with a better intent and with a holier purpose, he had, like Absalom, in his lifetime reared up for himself a pillar in the king's dale, (2 Sam. xviii. 18,) in those productions of his pen which will last, if not as long as the English language, at least as long as truth, in its experience and power, shall be prized by English saints.

It is hard, if not wrong, to put asunder what God has joined together, but we have often felt that separate from the grace and wisdom, truth and power which shine so eminently forth in "The Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer," and the "Contemplations of the God of Israel," merely viewed as literary productions, they claim, from their eloquence, their vigour and variety of expression, their originality, and their constant flow of thought, a high place amongst our English classics. The wonder to us is, where the poor coal-heaver, amidst all the poverty and rags of childhood, youth, and manhood, picked up his vocabulary—the tools of his tool-chest, with which, in after years, he constructed his immortal works.\* But his was a master mind, and when released from manual toil he cultivated it by deep and assiduous study, his powerful and tenacious memory storing up for ready use every word that met his eye or ear. We do not expect to carry with us the assent of all our readers when we express our decided opinion that whatever writings are given to the public, either by an author himself during his lifetime, or by his friends and relatives after his decease, something more than grace is needed to give them permanent endurance. To make them the hand-book of successive generations, genius must be combined with grace—the master mind and the vigorous pen with the anointing which is from above. For proof take two well-known books, which will live till the angel which shall stand upon the sea and the earth shall lift up his hand to heaven and swear, "There shall be time no longer,"—we mean, Bunyan's "Pilgrim," and Hart's Hymns. Do not think, gracious reader, that the only difference between you and

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\* By the word "vocabulary" is meant here the number of words which a speaker or writer uses. Now it has been ascertained, by a curious calculation, that a country labourer, such as he was, does not know the meaning of, or at least does not use above 300 words of the English language. As a contrast to this limited vocabulary, an educated, literary man would know the meaning of at least 20,000. Milton used about 7,000 for his poems, and Shakspeare 15,000 for his productions.

these men of God is that they had more grace and experience than you. Do you suppose that if you had Bunyan's experience, you could sit down and write a "Pilgrim's Progress;" or if you had had such a view of the sufferings of Christ as Hart was favoured with, you could compose a Gethsemane hymn? It was not grace only, or the depth and variety of his experience, which drew the immortal pictures that have made the "Pilgrim" a household word. Without grace, there would have been no "Slough of Despond," or "Castle of Giant Despair;" no "roll in the bosom," or view from "the Delectable Mountains." But genius was needed for the graphic descriptions, the life-like touches, the sharp-cut characters, the varied dialogue, the constant succession of picturesque incidents which delight all ages and all readers. So with Hart's Hymns. It is not merely the richness and savour, depth and variety of experience, nor even the wondrous dew and savour so copiously shed upon them by the Holy Ghost, that we have sometimes felt and said that they were written under his special inspiration, which have given his hymns such a place in the church of God. Mr. Hart was a great poet, as well as a great Christian; not, indeed, in the same sense that Milton is a great poet, as full of beautiful imagery and sublime expression. Hart rarely allows himself the use of poetic language; but he was gifted with a style unrivalled for power and what is called terseness of expression; that is, the packing of the greatest amount of ideas into the smallest amount of words, which critics consider one of the rarest and most valuable features of authorship. You and we, dear readers, in our talk, in our letters, in our prayers, and in our preachings, and you will add, "Yes, and you in your Reviews," are like cotton-spinners; one pound of raw cotton goes a long way in thread. But there is no thread-spinning in Hart's hymns. Every word tells. Treasures are in a line; and like the Bank of England ingots, they are all so closely packed that you can scarcely find in them a useless or superfluous word. This is what we call genius. You will, perhaps, prefer to call it "gift." We shall not differ here, for it was a special gift. But you who think that you, too, possess a special gift for writing "poetry," and especially hymns, just try whether you can put your experience into Hart's rhymes, or condense it into Hart's lines. Why, you can no more do it than you can give yourself Hart's revelation of Christ, or Hart's view of Christ's sufferings in the garden of Gethsemane.

But we have wandered from our subject, which was to pen a few lines on a more simple and, doubtless, less enduring memorial than the immortal works of the three great English worthies—fit to rank among the three mighty men who stood first and foremost of David's thirty captains, Bunyan, Hart, and Huntington. The little work before us does not assume such a position, or take so high a flight. It is simply intended as a slight memorial raised by the hands of a widow, at the solicitation of many friends, who wished some tribute of affection to be rendered to their esteemed and beloved minister. When we add that this widow is a sister in nature as well as a sister in grace, it will be sufficiently obvious that we feel some difficulty



and delicacy in reviewing the book. And yet it is but due to her and due to ourselves to declare that we had no hand whatever in suggesting its publication, in collecting or revising the letters in MS. or for the press, and that no wish has been expressed for us to take any public notice of it. On these grounds, therefore, we feel as free to express our opinion of these letters as if their writer were not a brother-in-law in nature as well as a friend and brother in grace. And yet our personal knowledge of the writer puts us into a position to make a few friendly remarks upon him, as a little introduction to the letters now given to the public.

Mr. Isbell, both as a man and as a minister, was much beloved by his friends and those to whom his ministry had been blessed. He was naturally of a highly sensitive disposition; and if this made him acutely feel neglect and unkindness, it was compensated by a proportionate warmth of affection, when it met with a suitable return from friends. It was this kindness, this amiability, this willingness to oblige which endeared him to his friends more than falls to the lot of many ministers. And yet this sensitive, affectionate disposition, which we cannot but admire, had, in his case, as in others similarly gifted, attendant inconveniences. A minister should not be too sensitive. If he is to feel every slight, and be deeply wounded by every arrow, directly or indirectly aimed at him, he is on the continual fret. His friends dare hardly speak lest they should hurt his mind, and his enemies are glad that he has a mind which they can so easily hurt; and thus friendships are cooled or lost, and enmities made irreconcilable. We have often thought that if we were as sensitive as our departed friend Isbell was, and felt as acutely as he did the scourge of the tongue and pen, we must have sunk long ago under the missiles thrown at us from every side. Whether our skin be naturally more tough, or has become hardened by war, we will not say; but this we know, that if our mind were as tender as our body, and we felt the cold blasts from the mouth of man as we feel the cold blasts from the mouth of the wintry east wind, we should not be fit to hold the helm, or even stand on the deck of the ship which we are now steering through the eddying waves. It was not that he was deficient in faithfulness, for he was a remarkably bold speaker, and never truckled to any man, in public or in private. Nor did he show his feelings by warmth of temper; but an unkind word from a friend, which some would no more regard than a passing breath of wind, wounded him to the quick. We may often admire what we do not envy. Warm, sensitive, acute feelings are very beautiful, but not very desirable. A word, a look, some unintentional neglect, an unanswered letter, a hasty remark, a tart reply, so wounds your sensitive friend, and he so broods over it that, perhaps, it costs you his friendship for life. And as this sensitiveness often costs him his friends, so it lays him open to the attack of enemies. We speak thus not to disparage the dead, but as a word of counsel to the living. Brother ministers, we have all much to bear with from friends and foes. Our blessed Lord had to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, and was forsaken by his disciples and

friends. But he has left us an example how to act that we should walk in his steps. If, then, one who has had to bear much from friend and foe may give you counsel, he would say, "Be not too sensitive. Be firm, be faithful; but bear with your friends, and bear from your enemies. We have found the benefit of both." But if our friend and brother Isbell was too sensitive, it was well balanced in his case by affection; and there was this advantage, that whilst he chiefly suffered from the one, his friends benefited by the other. He had also a very forgiving spirit, and was thus, if soon offended easily conciliated; nor could he do enough for his friends, and especially those of them to whom his ministry had been blessed, and who for the most part were as much attached to him as he to them. Our dispositions are often well balanced and mutually corrected. Sensitiveness without affection makes a man a selfish wretch; balanced and corrected by affection, it gives warmth to friendship, though it will sometimes turn it into partiality. On every side are extremes snares and dangers. Sensitiveness without taking offence, affection without partiality, boldness without bitterness, gentleness without giving way, cautiousness without cowardice, faithfulness without fury, and contention for the faith without compromise of the spirit of the gospel—how desirable, yet how rare are such qualifications for a servant of Christ.

But as we are sketching his character, we may add that, together with this naturally sensitive yet affectionate disposition, Mr. Isbell possessed considerable natural abilities. His was not indeed a deep, but a singularly active, ready mind, and one which he had much cultivated by patient and assiduous study. He had also a peculiar aptness of eye and hand, and a turn for scientific pursuits, which, as we do not wish to disguise his failings, proved, we think, in the end rather a snare, and not only injured body and mind, but weakened the force of his ministry. We all have our snares—none more than the writer of this Review; but he knows, from painful experience, that it is as sad to be caught in them as hard to avoid them. That their profiting may appear to all, ministers must give themselves wholly to their work. (1 Tim. iv. 15.) Every pursuit, therefore, however useful for other men as a part of their business or profession, which is not of the things of God, hinders the real and visible profit of a servant of Christ.

He perhaps, for we wish to speak tenderly as well as truthfully, from constitutional irritability of nerve, needed more recreation and relaxation of body and mind than harder, stronger natures, and sought to find it, not in fresh air and exercise, which we have always found to be the best remedy for a wearied brain and nerves unstrung, but in almost continual reading and study. But a good long walk or a dig in the garden would, we think, have been a better remedy for his languid nerves; for the cure eventually proved worse than the disease, and taxed his brain instead of relieving it.

Thus worn out by a sensitive mind, an overtaxed brain, ministerial labour, and mental anxiety, joined to a constitutionally weak bodily frame, he fell asleep at the early age of 45, as his mourning

widow has recorded in the interesting little memoir prefixed to the Letters which she has published.

And now a few words about the Letters themselves which are thus given to the public. Though, from our personal knowledge of the writer, we were prepared to give them a favourable reception, yet we must say that they have exceeded our expectation. Knowing his abilities, and that he was a very good letter-writer as well as one who well knew and loved the truth, we quite expected that they would outshine the general run of religious correspondence; but we did not look for so much of the writer's own experience. Not that we doubted his possession of it or his ability to express it; but we knew that from his peculiar sensitiveness, and we might almost say shyness of mind, for they usually go together, he was wont to keep back both in public and private much of his own personal feelings. But these letters appear to have broken the seal that was often on his lips. In this point, therefore, they have exceeded our expectation; and yet we need not wonder at it as an unusual feature. Letters, especially when written to beloved friends in the Lord, as nearly all these were, draw forth much of the inmost experience of the writer's heart. The very freeness of correspondence unlocks those bosom secrets which are often almost necessarily held back from a public congregation. You know that your friend will not abuse your confidence, betray your secrets, or make you an offender for a word. As you write, your friend comes before your mental eye, affection softens your heart towards him, the springs of inward feeling gradually rise, and they flow forth, according to the gift bestowed, in streams upon your paper. It is this freedom of communication and this writing out of the fulness of the heart which give letters by the saints and servants of God such a peculiar sweetness and power. Not being intended for the public eye, they are specially adapted for private reading. We can take the book up or lay it down, read a long letter or a short one, without straining the mind or distracting the attention. If it suit us, we go reading on, letter after letter, as we have often done with Mr. Huntington's Letters. If it do not suit heart, time, or place, we can but lay the book down. It is a patient visitor, not jealous of a rival or sensitive of neglect, but bearing any amount of rebuff, coldness, or silence, and ready to speak again only when asked to do so.

The letters before us are written in a pleasing, easy, agreeable style, full of kindness and affection, for such was the man, and unfold much of his own exercised mind. Judgment, we think, has been shown in the selection of the Letters; and we are glad to see the early ones given as well as the later, as, in our opinion, there is in them more vigour and force, more freshness and originality, boldness and decision. It is the case mostly with us all. With advancing years we get, perhaps, a sounder, riper judgment in the things of God, more maturity of views, and greater firmness and solidity of experience; but the life and warmth, the fire and force of what Job calls "the days of our youth" (xxix. 4) are usually much

diminished; and of few of us, beyond middle age, can it be said, either naturally or spiritually, as of Moses, that "our eye is not dim, nor our natural force abated." When a writer at a certain period of life (we speak here from experience) looks over his early productions, he sees in them many hasty expressions which he would not now make use of, and which he may sigh over, as scarcely becoming the meekness and spirit of the gospel. But if he has a sigh for undue expressions, he has a still heavier, more deep and long-drawn sigh for the loss of that zeal, warmth, and animation which then glowed in his breast and fired his voice and pen, but which he can no more recall than he can give himself back the strong arm and elastic step of early manhood. But every age has its place in the church of God. Babes, children, young men, and fathers, all are necessary to the being and well-being of the family. If the fathers have a deeper and riper knowledge of him that is from the beginning, the young men are more strong, and the word of God abideth in them, and they more stoutly fight, and more manifestly overcome the wicked one. O that we had more of these young men; that as the fathers are taken home or laid aside by sickness and infirmity, we could see rising up "men of might and men of war, fit for the battle, that can handle shield and buckler, whose faces should be like the faces of lions, (against error and evil,) and as swift as the roes upon the mountains," to run upon the Lord's errands. (1 Chron. xii. 8.)

But as our readers will desire to form their own judgment upon the Letters before us, we will give them two, as specimens of their general character. The first and longer one unfolds much of the writer's exercises and experience; the second bears his faithful and decided testimony against a well-known error:

"My dear Friends,—Accept my thanks for your affectionate letter. I quite agree with you, that there may be a resisting the call of a church of God to the oversight of them; but I do not consider this to be at all applicable to me, as I am simply waiting the Lord's time, and am willing to go or to stay, just as he shall make known his will. If I could find one or two supplies for the people here during my absence, I should have my path made considerably plainer; and, I can assure you, that there is no church to which my poor services would more freely be given than to that at Leicester; for I cannot doubt that the Lord of the harvest has condescended to work by me when with you, and has not let the word return to him void. I confess, however, that the sense of my insufficiency is no small mountain in my way, and that I am exercised with fears on this account, which greatly impede me. The Lord alone can make our mountains become a plain, and exactly level the rough and crooked path by an assurance that 'as our day our strength shall be, while our shoes shall be iron and brass,' to enable us to pass through the thorns and briars, and to tread upon thorns and scorpions unharmed. I feel that I could go anywhere, if God's presence would go with me. This is all and in all to a weak and ignorant stumbler such as I am. He knoweth my frame, and remembereth that I am dust. Poor and helpless, needy and sinful, I have none but Jesus to look to, and can see none that can strengthen my weak hands, confirm my feeble knees, direct my tottering feet, and bless my fainting heart but he. 'To whom shall we go?' said Peter. 'Thou hast the words of eternal life.' And to whom do we desire to go but to him, when feeling that all our springs are in him? O that I could love and serve him better, and not to be such a base and wandering wretch, as I am constrained to confess to him that I am. He has, before now, filled my heart, and I have seen myself 'complete in him.' Unexpectedly, suddenly, has my soul beheld

his beauty and glory, and I have felt solemnly and sweetly satisfied that he is my portion for ever, a portion inexhaustible and precious. But, alas! how little do I appear to profit by this, when I wander from him and grow cold and vain. Truly, my dear friends, I know, that unless he display his charms in our hearts, by the blessed Spirit, and draw our affections after him, we cannot praise him in sincerity, cleave to him with love, fear to offend him, and wait upon him to teach us to profit, and to lead us in the way we should go. To be made conscious of our utter emptiness, poverty, and corruption, as I am, is painful and trying; for sometimes I can see no 'good thing towards the Lord God of Israel' in my soul, but so many bad things against him, that I am obliged to say, 'Behold, I am vile!' and to put my mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He may well be called 'wonderful' who bears with such a base thing, and such base workings as are in me; and he must be felt to be 'wonderful,' whose mercy, notwithstanding, endureth for ever. It is a sad proof of our fallen state, and of the depravity of our nature, that we are so little affected by his goodness, and so ready to depart from him, 'forsaking the fountain of living waters, and hewing out for ourselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' Who would be so happy as we, if we could be always drinking deep into his love and grace, and having our hearts melted at the fire of his dying love, with sin subdued, and Satan bruised under our feet? But, 'in the world,' Jesus declares, 'ye shall have tribulation,' and from this we cannot escape, if we are truly his disciples. Nor do we desire to escape and be at ease in the flesh when our minds are enlightened from above, for then we see the need of tribulation and trials.

"I must expect a daily cross;  
Lord, sanctify my pain;  
Bid every furnace purge my dross,  
And yield some real gain."

I have far more trial to endure than many suppose, not only within, but from without. 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy.' Sometimes my burdens have been so many, and my heart so unbelieving and faint, that I have been bewildered, and 'ready to halt,' and have been cast down indeed; and yet I hope I may say, without any presumption, 'Lord, thou hast been my help,' thou hast made a way for me to escape, thou hast not given me over to the will of my enemies, nor hast 'broken the bruised reed, nor quenched the smoking flax.' In my troubles I have found little disposition to make them known to man, but have kept them secret in my own bosom, and have carried them where I know help only to be laid up for the poor and needy. Here I have, I trust, found a Friend; here I have been able to lay hold of better strength than that of man; and never, when I have been permitted to roll my way simply, sincerely, and confidently upon the Lord, have I been forsaken or failed of help. I can look back to seasons when I felt sure the Lord had heard and answered my petitions, and it has been marvellous in my eyes. But I shall appear egotistical, if I write so much about myself. My friends must forgive me if I weary them. I am often a 'burden to myself;' but I would not burden my indulgent correspondents. I hope you are helped still to seek the Lord on my behalf, to give me life, light, wisdom, grace, humility, and clear direction in my way. Both will and power do I need to do anything that is good.

"Stoke, August, 1847.

"G. S. B. I."

"My dear Friend,—I hasten to reply to your questions respecting what occurred at Bath. I preached there very strongly against Preëxisterianism, and maintained the doctrine of the Eternal Sonship of Christ in opposition to those who believe the term, 'Son of God,' to refer only to his incarnation. At the close of the service, the person you refer to came into the vestry, and said he did not believe in what I had stated respecting the Lord's eternal Sonship, but regarded him as the Son of God by his assumption of his human nature, because he thought the doctrine of the eternal Sonship implied that the Father existed before him. I disputed with him for some time before the deacons, and plainly told him that he held a fatal error, against which the church of God had ever protested, and that the inferences he drew were false

and contrary to the express statement of Scripture. However, he still persisted in denying the Lord's Sonship, as having any reference to his divine personality, and as I found it useless to argue with him, I left him. In my view, the eternal Sonship of Christ is a fundamental and essential truth. He that believeth in the Son of God hath life, and he that believeth not the Son of God hath not life. Arians, Sabellians, and Præxisterians cannot bear this doctrine, and consequently I always expect opposition from all who are tainted with their errors. The deacons heard all I said on this subject, and know well, as they would state, how firmly I withstood Mr. —, and how strongly I warned him. They will, if referred to, confirm what I have said, and declare how constantly I have opposed the Præxisterians, and maintained the true, eternal Sonship of Christ. I have not heard of the division you speak of, but it is better to separate than to be united with erroneous men. The truth of God is too precious to be tampered with. I think Mr. W. did quite right in refusing his pulpit to Mr. —. He has received the truth in the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore cannot endure error, or countenance those who hold it.—Yours, &c., "G. S. B. I."

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### MUSINGS IN SICKNESS.

When darkness fills my mind,  
And troubles load my breast,  
When evidences I can't find,  
And am of consolation 'rest,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When Satan like a lion  
That, seeking for his prey,  
Comes roaring in my soul,  
To fill me with dismay,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When on the ocean toss'd  
Of tribulation's sea,  
And such huge billows rise  
That hide my God from me,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see,  
That thou dost still remember me.

When sickness smites my frame,  
And prostrate I do lie,  
My body fill'd with pain,  
And I afraid to die,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When sin doth so abound,  
And fill my soul with dread  
Lest I should not be found  
In Christ the living Head,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When, leper-like of old,  
I shout and cry, "Unclean,"  
And sin infects my soul  
With leprosy within,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When the reproach of men  
Like lead sinks in my soul,  
And I forsaken stand,  
With grief that can't be told,

Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When lover both and friend  
Aloof from me do stand,  
While troubles thick and fast  
Abound on every hand,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When faith, and love, and hope  
Seem cold, and damp, and dead,  
And every grace seems stopp'd  
In Christ the living Head,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When I review the past,  
And fear it all is wrong,  
And unbelief holds fast  
My soul in irons strong,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When cold and dead I feel  
To all that comes from God,  
Without salvation's seal,  
And trembling at the rod,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When my deceitful heart  
Doth make me start aside,  
And I almost forget  
That Jesus bled and died,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

When my career shall end,  
And death, at thy command,  
Body and soul shall rend  
With its cold, clammy hand,  
Then, then in love, Lord, let me see  
That thou dost still remember me.

[SEPTEMBER 1, 1864.]

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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SEPTEMBER, 1864.

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

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THE EXPERIENCE OF THE LATE HENRY  
FOWLER, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN GOWER STREET  
CHAPEL, LONDON.

*(Concluded from p. 235.)*

In 1818 and 1819, I occasionally preached at Coventry, but not in a chapel. No pulpit could be obtained for me; but I used to preach in a private house. There were a few who loved to hear a free-grace gospel, and but a few. Those few used to meet together for prayer and reading, when they had no preacher. I have preached there a few times since I settled in London; but some who used to hear me formerly I found declining, and were content with doctrines preached that were far enough from gospel truth. Politics, and outside religion ran high in this dark place. Very few there know either themselves or Christ, from all that I can gather. Carnal security and self-complacency are true symptoms of the want of spiritual life. But if you do not acknowledge such persons as Christians, it is an iniquity, in their estimation, to be punished by the judge. I once had permission to preach in some school-room at Coventry, and it was announced in different directions; but when I arrived at the place, I was given to understand that a dissenting minister had interfered, and I was not permitted to preach in the school-room; so I took refuge and preached in a private house. Had I been an Arminian, or an Arian, I might have found no difficulty in obtaining a pulpit. O how busy the devil and his agents are in labouring to keep Christ and his people in the background!

In August, 1819, I received an invitation to preach in Bodicott, in Oxfordshire. I had had a previous intimation that in all probability I might be invited to supply a chapel in London a few weeks, if I had no objection to go. I signified my assent, provided I saw no obstacle in the way when I received the invitation. Not having heard from London on the subject, I wrote to Bodicott to say that I would be there for four Lord's days, as requested. On the morning as I was packing up for my journey, a letter arrived from London, requesting me to supply the chapel in Conway Street three Lord's days. I had no time to consult my friends on the subject; but when I arrived at Bodicott I wrote to London to say

that I would supply for them. I spent five weeks at Bodicott, which was a much longer period than I had intended, in order to suit the arrangements of the managers in London. At Bodicott I found but few persons that I could be satisfied with, as partakers of the grace of God in truth, though we were very well attended as to numbers. I was as barren and lifeless in my own soul the five weeks I was there as I ever was since I knew the Lord. How far my preaching was of use to any one, I know not. I received the greatest tokens of kindness from my friend Mr. A. and family; but nothing of the creature's can cure a barren soul, or make a miserable man happy. It added also much weight to my trial, that I must go to London in this miserable and barren state of soul, and have to preach to a large congregation who had sat for years under Mr. Huntington, and other great men, the latchet of whose shoes I was not worthy to loose. I was vexed that I had so hastily given my promise; but now it was too late. As I had engaged, I proceeded to London when I had finished my engagement at Bodicott. This was early in October.

When I arrived in London, I was kindly received by the friends, but greatly tried in my mind, from the bondage and darkness of soul I had laboured under for many weeks. I was also but delicate in my health, and the distress of my mind added to my weakness of body. This was a time of much prayer; for I felt most sensibly that if the Lord did not help me I could neither pray publicly nor preach; for I seemed stripped of everything, and like a man bound fast, hand and foot. O how I grieved that ever I should have been so foolish as to make any engagement to preach in London! But I believe the enemy had great power over me, though I could not then see it. When Lord's day morning came, I was surprised to see such a number of people crammed together, so that it was with some difficulty I could get to the pulpit. The heat of the place was such, from the low-pitched ceiling, and being but feeble, that I feared I should not be able to speak so as to be heard. I was obliged to lift a prayer to my gracious God and Father that, as he had often brought me through my difficulties, so he would be pleased to give me all I needed, both for myself and his people. I felt, indeed, the need of his helping hand; and he was graciously pleased to grant it me; for as soon as I began to pray, I found nearness of access to his blessed Majesty, and I was overwhelmed at the sight of his goodness, which was made to pass before me. My text was, "Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name." This had been my prayer for many weeks; but the answer was delayed till this time of greater necessity. Suffice it to say, I never found so much liberty in preaching as at this time; and I was persuaded that the presence of God was with his people, as well as with myself. Nor was I deceived, as several now with me can testify, from their own experience. I spent three weeks with this people, and left them, in love and affection, with a promise, at their request, to see them again. This event led ultimately to my being settled in London.



Having finished my engagements in London, I returned to Birmingham, to my family and little flock, after an absence of about two months. But while I was absent, a spirit of fear and suspicion worked in the minds of my Birmingham friends, as I found when I had returned, that I should leave them; not that I had said a word on the subject to them; nor had any correspondence on that subject taken place between me and the friends in London. The first Lord's day I preached again at home I was completely fettered, though my soul's desire was to impart unto them some spiritual blessings that they might be refreshed. This tried me much; but as I was returning from chapel, I said to my wife, "I think that the people in London have been praying that my mouth might be stopped this morning, that the people here might be willing to give me up." Thus I continued for some time preaching in bondage and darkness; and as I felt, so it appeared to me the people were; but I might be mistaken.

This brings me to the conclusion of my "Travels in the Wilderness," up to 1819, which I shall conclude, by taking a retrospective view of my exercises while I was at Birmingham. As respects temporal things, I was never more comfortable, and I enjoyed the friendship and affection of most of my hearers, who would have gladly rendered me any further assistance if I had wanted it. My people, generally, were not polished, but plain and rude, as some would say. They had, however, that which was preferable to fine manners; they were open, generous, and kind, which I speak to their praise.

In regard to my exercises as a minister and as a Christian, my path was sometimes rough, and at other times smooth; but in general the Lord helped me by his power, in delivering his truth, and on some occasions my heart was greatly enlarged, and my cup was made to run over. Several young persons were called out of darkness into marvellous light, and some of them are still living and walking in the fear of God, who will be my crown of rejoicing in that day when the Lord shall make up his jewels. I have travailed in temptation, in great darkness, in bitterness of soul, many times for them, and God has heard my prayers for them and for their salvation; and through their prayers for me I have been strengthened in weakness, both of body and soul. Though, by a variety of circumstances, I cannot see them to break to them the bread of life, my prayer shall be in their calamities, that God may bless them abundantly with a rich enjoyment of his covenant love.

If at any time I have injured any of these my brethren in word or action, (which is very probable,) I hope they will be able to cast a mantle over these my infirmities; for I am nothing in myself but a most miserable sinner! My boasting must be in the Lord, and in the Lord only. The filthiness of the flesh, and the filthiness of the spirit, cleave to me to this day; and but for the fountain which cleanseth from *all* sin to apply to, I should sink in black despair.

I was kept while at Birmingham in constant exercise of mind. Sometimes I have laboured under the most horrid temptations, for many nights and days together, before the Lord has delivered me. Those temptations have often furnished me with texts and sermons which have been made a special blessing to many poor souls labouring under temptation. "Out of the eater comes forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness."

Again, I have been beset with a spirit of blasphemy, and at other times with awful presumption, till I have feared I should be carried headlong before them. But that which I had to grapple most with was inordinate affection; and many hundred times have I cried to my God to subdue it, lest it should break out to the dishonour of his blessed name and cause; and such were the snares that often lay in my path, that if the Lord had not been my keeper, I should have fallen a prey to the evils of my heart; but these things, under God's management, served to humble me and keep me little in my own esteem. These trials also enabled me to preach to the comfort of such as were tried in the same way.

I remember a good man once came to me full of trouble, and on inquiry I found that a trap had been laid for him, which was suited to his constitutional sin, and he had fallen foully, which had brought him into great distress of soul, as I evidently saw. The poor man said, "I never once supposed that I should have fallen into the commission of that sin, and should have been ready to have cut off any man that had." I said, "I have laboured under fears for these twenty years that I should fall; and from what you have said to me, I feel thankful for my fears; for they have been the means of my preservation." This poor man had his bones sorely broken; but the Lord put away his sin, and restored unto him the joy of his salvation; and he made a most blessed and triumphant end. He was for months before he died longing to depart and to be with Christ. "Who is a God like unto thee?" If a man depend on his own strength, he will be as sure to fall as a temptation may lie in his way.

There are many things calculated to promote a man's fall, all comprehended in "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life;" and these should be well watched by the child of God, lest, by getting off his watch tower, and gratifying his vile flesh, he should go limping down to the grave. "Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses."

Thus I conclude my "Journeys in the Wilderness." I have sufficient materials for another volume; but my continuing my narrative will depend on circumstances.

May the Lord bless what I have written agreeable to his holy word, and mercifully forgive all my errors and mistakes.

Re-perused, corrected, and finished by the Author, Aug. 3, 1838.

## SOME ACCOUNT OF MR. FOWLER'S LAST DAYS.

Dear Mr. Editor,—As one of your readers, I have much pleasure in providing you with an account, so far as I have materials reliable, concerning the last days of my beloved father. It consists of three letters, each written under varied circumstances, showing the state of his mind within two months of his decease. These letters I number 1, 2, and 3. No. 1 was written to the late Mr. Charlwood, formerly of Norwich, now gone to his rest. No. 2, to his brother John, still living in Devonshire, and in his 87th year. No. 3, some few particulars of his last days, by his son Ebenezer, who was wrecked in the ship *Madagascar*, on his return from Australia, in the year 1855, where he had been to recover his health. It was addressed to Mr. Ebenezer Morris, Sussex.

Copy of No. 1, to *Mr. Charlwood*:

“ London, Oct. 21, 1838.

“ My dear Friend,—On my return from the Isle of Wight, Sept. 28th, I read your kind letter, and would say something to your case, if I could; but I am afraid I can say but little that would be of any service to you. You know that power belongeth unto God; but he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.

“ Well, you have been in trouble without and within, as you tell me in yours; but these last troubles of yours have not been your first troubles. O no. If you look, my dear friend, to years that are past, no doubt you can recollect many a trial, within and without, that you at the time thought you could not possibly get through; yet you were brought through them all, not by any wisdom of yours, nor, perhaps, by any direct application of any promise; but so it fell out. Not by chance, but by the overruling power and providence of God were you delivered. God made darkness light, and crooked things straight, according to his promise. Can you be so base as to deny this? Well, then, if God has helped you in times past, it is a proof that he has heard the crying and sighing of the poor prisoner, according to his blessed promise, Ps. xii. 5.

“ But I perceive your letter has some few rays of light; and I think God is separating you more from yourself and from men, good and bad. This is what God designs by putting his children into the furnace. A man makes a wrong judgment of most things, till God chastens him and teaches him out of his law. We are apt to look too much at the Christian character, and too little at the Person and character of the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence we are often stumbled and perplexed. We see great infirmities in many we believe to be saints, and that is trying; and we see so many that outdo us in the race that we are apt to faint and write bitter things against ourselves, and set ourselves down for nothing, because we cannot keep pace with them. But this is our error, and this error God alone can remove. O! How hard it is to learn what the Holy Ghost means by these words: ‘Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils.’ This I would say, whatever brings us more to feel our en-

ture dependence on God, both in providence and grace, is a great mercy, though it may at the time make us think that he is going to tear us in pieces.

“ You seem to think that there are some in and about Norwich who wish to hear experimental gospel truth. I hope it is so; but the difficulty is in coming across men who are sent to preach such truths, and are not engaged. And then again, most of the real preachers of truth are poor, and cannot, in justice to their families, travel and preach for the bare expenses of their travelling. Your friends who wish to have truth preached to them, must consider these things. I am afraid that the wealthy in your parts have very little heart to support the cause of God; though, perhaps, they can talk bravely on doctrines sound, and split hairs in divinity. The chief lovers of simple, naked gospel truth lie among the poor and the struggling tradesmen, who are more perplexed and distressed from week to week than the day labourer. But the Lord reigneth.

“ I have been silent four months, and have been travelling for my health most of the summer. I am certainly much better, and for these last three Lord’s days have preached a little; but I am obliged to be cautious. I am still weak, and have complaints upon me of a serious nature. Many of my friends thought I should preach no more, and I thought so too; but the Lord has had mercy on me.

“ I thank you very kindly for the basket and contents, which were duly received by my children, and made use of. I was at that time at the back of the Isle of Wight, with my wife, as I was advised by my doctor. Since then, I have been into Berks, and last week to Eastbourne, Sussex.

“ Yours truly,

“ HENRY FOWLER.

“ P.S.—I am happy to say I am still able to continue my public labours, and with a measure of increasing strength. My cough still continues, and seems fixed in the constitution, and, like Jacob’s lame thigh, I expect to carry it down to my grave.”

Copy No. 2, to his brother John:

“ London, 23, Grafton Street East,  
Nov. 9, 1838.

“ My dear Brother,—I hope this will find you and your family well. I have had a long affliction, as you are aware. It is now twelve months since I first ruptured a small vessel in my lungs, and the vessel has opened again seven times since, but not lately. I have been laid aside from preaching four months; but through God’s great mercy I was helped by his power to commence preaching again the first Lord’s day in October, and I have continued to preach my usual times ever since. I have still a troublesome cough, but it is better than it has been. My appetite is good, and I gain strength. Surely the hand of the Lord must be seen in my recovery, for most of my friends thought mine a hopeless case; but nothing is too hard for the Lord. May I never forget the mercy of the Lord, which endureth for ever. I have travelled much, by the advice of friends and my doctor, the past summer, and have been at great ex-

pense; but my gracious God has furnished me with ample means in his kind providence. I know not that my travelling about did me any good, for I have been better since I have been at home and left off medicine. I would rather say, 'It is the Lord that has restored me,' and give him the glory.

"I found, brother, in my affliction, the mercy of having a good hope through grace. I was not at all anxious to live, nor distressed by the fear of death, for I knew that I was saved in Jesus with an everlasting salvation. The sin of my depraved nature and the absence of Jesus made me often groan; but I could say he was the chief desire of my heart; and he is still, while I write, though I often feel as if his mercy was clean gone for ever to this day. Blessed be God, his love is unchangeable. He does not withdraw his love because we cannot love him as we would. O no!

"God has been very gracious to our family. Our brother and two sisters, I believe, are enrolled in the book of life, and are gone to glory, and I hope that we who are left shall join the redeemed multitude.

"O my dear brother, let not a sense of your unworthiness cast you down. The more vile and helpless you are in your own eyes, the more fit you are for Christ to look upon. I have more plague with my blind, legal heart to this day than I have with all my outward sins, and they have been great; so that I wonder at the long-suffering and patience of my God to such a rebel.

"HENRY FOWLER."

Copy No. 3, by his Son, *Ebenezer Fowler*:

"London, Dec. 17, 1838.

"Dear Sir,—I have the painful intelligence to communicate of the death of my dear and honoured father. He breathed his last on Sunday, 16th Dec., at 1 a.m. I was among those present at the time. His departure was so easy that I was not aware that his spirit had fled. The last time he preached was on Tuesday evening, Nov. 15th. He was obliged to take to his bed on the Monday, after which, during the last fortnight, he only left it to have it made three or four times, on account of his great weakness. His cough was very violent at first, and as weakness increased, his suffering became very great. Not being able to lie down, through a sense of suffocation seizing him when he did so, he sat up almost the whole time of his confinement to his bed. He spoke frequently with great affection of his friends in London and in Sussex, and it was a source of grief to him that he was unable, from the nature of his complaint, to hold conversation with them. During the first part of his confinement, he said to my mother, being asked how he felt in his mind, 'I am under shades and glooms. The Lord sees fit to lead me through much tribulation; but I know it is well with me, whatever my frame of mind, and will be so at the last. I must come in on the old ground,—redemption free, justification free, salvation free.' I cannot remember the precise order in which these expres-

sions of his feelings were uttered; it was at different times, for his breath would not allow him to say much at a time.

“On Sunday, December 2nd, when my brother Samuel went up to see him in the evening, he said, ‘Satan has been very hard with me since my affliction, very strong with me; and at times I have had hard work to keep hold of the hem of the Saviour’s garment; but this is my consolation, that though he is not now so feelingly precious to me, yet I know I am precious to him;’ and he added, ‘Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.’

“For the last fortnight, his mind was in a far more happy frame. He seemed quite tranquil, and many times expressed his firm reliance on Christ, and his assurance of Christ’s love to his soul. At one time he sang this verse:

‘If thou, my Jesus, still be nigh,  
Cheerful I live and joyful die;  
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,  
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.’

“On Friday, December 14th, feeling himself easier, in an expressive manner he quoted these lines:

‘Tis he forgives thy sins,  
Tis he relieves thy pains,  
Tis he that heals thy sicknesses.’

“On Saturday he was much worse, and symptoms of approaching dissolution appeared. In the evening he took my mother’s hand, and said, ‘My dear, I feel quite happy. Christ is very precious to me;’ and added, ‘I think I have been wandering a good deal this evening, but what I now say, I speak from the real feelings of my heart.’ He asked the time, and when told, he said, ‘Not later! Lord, when, when?’ and other words which we could not distinguish. These expressions were uttered about three hours before his departure.

“Towards the closing scene his voice changed, and he spoke with great difficulty. At this time he said, solemnly, ‘Christ is the *substance* and *end* of the law.’ Soon afterwards, ‘Come, Jesus, come quickly!’ and repeated the word ‘Come’ several times.

“The last words we could distinguish as connected, were, ‘My God! my God! take me to thee, to see thy face and sing thy praise;’ and directly afterwards, in a broken manner, ‘Come, dear Jesus, fill every corner of my wandering heart.’ This was not more than ten minutes before he died. He spoke several times after that apparently in prayer, as we could distinguish plainly the words, ‘Jesus,’ ‘My God,’ ‘Come.’ After a little silence, with a long sigh, he breathed his last.

“EBENEZER FOWLER.”

In concluding my communications of my beloved father, I would inform you, simply to illustrate the firmness of mind he was kept in by the power of God in his dying moments, and when under clouds, of an opportunity that occurred, uninvited by himself or me, of his expressing his experimental standing in Christ in the hour of dissolu-

tion. Though causing me at the moment painful anxiety, yet in the end Satan was thrown and God glorified. It was this: For many years I had heard and enjoyed the word of life from his lips under his ministry, confirming and building me up in the hope of the gospel, and I was resolved, before he departed, to open up my mind thereon to him more fully than I had ever done before. I called on him for that purpose after morning service, December 2nd, 1838, and said, "Futher, I want to speak to you on eternal matters regarding myself;" and nearly choked with anxiety of mind therein, I got out the words, "It is all right with me," purposing to enter lengthily therein. To my utter disappointment he thought I asked him whether it was all right with him. Then, in a solemn, loud voice, sitting up in his bed, and with measured utterance he answered me thus: "My—testimony—is—before—the world." I was in confusion. I embraced him, and ran down stairs to my mother and told her to hasten up and inform him he had misunderstood me,—that I meant myself, not him. She did so, and he said, "Mother, I am glad to hear it, for I began to reflect that I must have mistaken Sam." The evening of the same day I went up to him again, determined to have it over. Several of the family were standing around the bed; and, with an earnest expression in his eyes, and calm serenity in his countenance, he grasped my hand before I could utter a word, and said, "My dear Sam, Satan has been a great enemy of mine. He has been very hard with me since my affliction; very strong with me; and at times I have had hard work to lay hold of the hem of the Saviour's garment; but this is my consolation, that though I cannot lay hold on him as I would, he holds me up; for I know that underneath me are his everlasting arms." He immediately threw himself back on the pillow, from exhaustion and want of breath, closed his eyes in silence, and I saw him no more alive.

Now, dear Sir, I will give you a few more extracts of his last days, from a pamphlet published many years since by Mr. A. Charlwood, of Melbourne, Australia, entitled, "The Voice of Years," but which I believe has not been publicly circulated. It is addressed to the late Mr. John Gorringe, of Eastbourne:

"A little before his (Mr. Fowler's) death, I was in London, and heard him for the last time, at Gower Street. Before he read his text, he related the following anecdote of old Borroughs, one of the reformers: 'I have read,' said he, 'that old Borroughs once got up to preach, and said, 'Now, all I have to say this morning is to the children of God; so, all you hypocrites, go out every one of you;' and that several got up to go out, hanging down their heads, when he called them back by name, as, 'Dame So-and-So and John So-and-So, come back! You are not the hypocrites; not you! but it is these hardened, presumptuous wretches that sit here, (pointing at them,) and laughing in my very face. These are the hypocrites. They have heard the gospel till they are gospel hardened. They are like a blacksmith's dog; the very sparks of hell will not move them.' 'You have it,' said he, 'as I read it, whether true or not;' and then gave out his text from Isa. i. 18: 'Come, now, let us

reason together,' &c. I cannot remember much of the sermon, but the Spirit of the Lord seemed to rest upon him that day. Although so feeble and so near his end, yet he spoke with great power, and gave an account of a wicked man's visiting him in the vestry; and, pointing to it, he repeated with peculiar energy, 'I have had a hundred hypocrites in that vestry!' This man told him he had not had a doubt of his state for seventeen years, and it was afterwards found out that he was then living in a sin that ought not to be named; 'And I,' said he, 'stood trembling before him, and could bless God that there was such a text in the Bible that the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and in those that hope in his mercy. 'What,' said he, 'perhaps some one may say, 'have you been brought so low as this, and you a minister?' Yes, after I had stood up for many years in God's great name;' and you know, dear Sir, it was his being thus brought low at times that made his ministry acceptable to you, and me, and others that were in a low place. Also, I remember hearing him once from Micah vii. 18: 'Who is a God like unto thee?' &c. After saying many gracious things, he broke out, and said, 'If you forget everything else, don't forget the last clause in my text, for it hath comforted my soul hundreds of times: 'He delighteth in mercy.' I remember it seemed to cause hope to spring up in my soul *then*, and it cheers my heart *now* to reflect on it. He was one of the very few that understood the largeness of God's mercy, having felt much of the bitterness of sin. Whilst speaking from the words, 'Come, and let us reason,' &c., he said, 'The devil is reasoning with some of you: "What, would you go now? What, after sin so recently committed? Would it not be better to stop till conscience is deadened, and the effects a little worn off?" But, looking down again to his Bible, he said, 'No; my text says, Come *now*, saith the Lord.'

"I called and saw him the week following for the last time, and found him so feeble that I was the more surprised at the manner in which he had preached on the Sunday previously, and could but see that the Spirit of the Lord had carried him above himself on that occasion.

"Yours to serve,

"June 14th, 1863."

"SAMUEL FOWLER.

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#### COPY (EXTRACT) OF MR. H. FOWLER'S WILL.

"Resting upon the sure foundation God has laid in Zion; believing that God has loved me with an everlasting love, of which he has given me sundry proofs by the most Holy Spirit's gracious operations; and acknowledging that, from the day the Holy Spirit quickened me by his power unto this present moment, my God has been faithful to his promise; and knowing the uncertainty of life, or when my most gracious God and Father may call me home, to receive the crown of life, as the free gift of his grace, I think it right to hold myself in readiness, and set my house in order. This, therefore, is my last Will and Testament. Unto my beloved wife, Ann Fowler, I give and bequeath the whole of my property, whether it shall consist at the time of my death of money, stock, securities, goods, chattels, jewels, or plate. And I appoint my beloved wife my sole executrix."



## LINES TO THE MEMORY OF THE LATE HENRY FOWLER,

MINISTER OF GOD'S WORD AT GOWER STREET CHAPEL, WHO DIED  
DECEMBER 16, 1838.

*Dedicated to his beloved Church and Congregation.*

"The memory of the just is blessed."—PROV. X. 7.

To friendship due, I shed the silent tear;  
'Tis nature weeps; grace lifts our thoughts on high,  
Does o'er the spoils of death her banner rear,  
And wipes the tear from sorrow's weeping eye.

'Twas gain to die, to him whose only hope  
The Rock of everlasting ages bore;  
He saw the goodly land from Pisgah's top,  
Where sin and death are felt and fear'd no more.

While kindred weep beside the dreary tomb,  
The church triumphant vent their swelling joys,  
And greet the weary pilgrim welcome home  
From sorrow's vale to mansions in the skies.

Swift as the holy prophet's wondrous flight,  
On angels' wings his spirit soar'd away  
Up to the regions of eternal light,  
And left to earth and worms the sleeping clay.

Steadfast his hope, that anchor of the soul,  
Which sin, nor hell, nor death could e'er remove;  
While o'er his shatter'd bark the billows roll,  
Firm as the basis of eternal love.

As death approach'd, calm as the summer's sea,  
Without a ruffling wave to wash the shore,  
Such was his passage to the realms of day,  
He died to live, and lives to die no more.

*Walmer and Deal* his friendly visits hail'd;  
With joy they greet him to the eastern shore;  
Till pale disease his mortal frame assail'd;  
He bids farewell, to share their joys no more.

Near his fond heart that little Sardis lay,  
Without a shepherd; yet a chosen fold,  
Where Jacob's God still condescends to pay  
His Bethel visits, as in days of old.

No more to preach salvation to the lost,  
The silver Thames shall bear thee to and fro;  
Long as her waters roll from coast to coast,  
Or in perpetual motion ebb and flow.

In manners gentle, and of soul sincere,  
Grave without gloom, in conversation free,  
To human woe he ever lent an ear,  
And dropt the tear of friendly sympathy.

His lonely fold, the Church, send one to feed,  
Who shall immortal souls to Jesus win;  
No hireling clad as with a shepherd's weed,  
Who never yet by Christ the door came in.

O church of Jesus! as a virgin pure  
May he still keep thee with his watchful eye;  
From every error well the fold secure,  
And from his fulness all thy wants supply.

Ordain'd a pastor, by the Spirit led,  
 He took the pastoral charge and fed the fold;  
 E'en that dear flock for whom their Surety bled,  
 Whose goings forth were from the days of old.

Such was the man I still to memory hold,  
 Whose pledge of friendship oft-times meets my eye,  
 Nor has my fond affection yet grown cold,  
 Nor does mortality dissolve the tie.

Not at Gamaliel's but at Jesu's feet,  
 As from the fountain head he wisdom drew;  
 'Twas there he sat his studies to complete,  
 Jesus the Alpha and Omega too.

From Jonas Eathorne's blest obscure abode,  
 Beside the bed whereon that cripple lay,\*  
 Reflection wakes, my thoughts retrace the road  
 That to his future labours led the way.

'Twas there, nor is the pleasing scene forgot,  
 Where from his lips at first salvation flow'd;  
 Nor was that little consecrated spot  
 Less than a temple dedicate to God.

No more the standard of the cross to rear,  
 No more to set the battle in array;  
 Nor yet with Amalek to break a spear;  
 The conflict's o'er, and victory crowns the day.

Beyond the reach of sorrow, sin, and death,  
 Where brethren false no more thy peace annoy,  
 Nor the base whisperer's pestilential breath  
 Shall damp the pleasure of eternal joy.

His sword and buckler for the winding-sheet,  
 The veteran soldier of the cross laid down;  
 The promised great reward of grace to meet,  
 To bear the palm, and ever wear the crown.

Write on the tablet o'er his sleeping dust:  
 "Here rests in hope, through Jesus' blood and pain,  
 Till the last trump the hollow tomb shall burst,  
 When with his Lord in glory he shall reign."

Yet still he speaks, as from the silent dead,  
 The hollow chambers of the dreary tomb,  
 Repeat what Jesus to the church has said:  
 "Watch! for, behold, I quickly, quickly come."—KENT.

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THE wisdom of God has planned, his grace alone has given, and his unchangeable faithfulness secures, my salvation. Of whom shall I be afraid? But if God withdraw this light, and this comfort, I return to my own sad place again, and doubt as bad as ever. Still I remember Christ saves them that are lost, and receives all weary, heavy-laden sinners; and I am driven to him again to get him to undertake for me again; and if I cannot pray, I groan out my case to him. I then find him the same at all times; I sin, he pardons; I get lost, he finds me. When I can believe, then all is well, and I sing, "O be joyful."—Hardy.

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\* He was bed-ridden for the extraordinary space of twenty-seven years in the town of Plymouth. Some account of him may be given in a future No.

## WHO COMFORTETH US IN ALL OUR TRIBULATION.

My dear P.,—You will be glad to hear that my soul has been greatly blest. It was a blessing similar to the one I enjoyed at Oakham, Oct. 15th:

“ Thus far my God hath led me on,  
And made his truth and mercy known.”

The friends were anxious that my soul might be blest in my new house. Friend H. had been praying that my soul might be blest on Lord's day, at chapel. Although a conveyance was sent twice for me, I was not well enough to go. About tea time, on the 10th, my soul began to enjoy the Lord's loving-kindness and goodness. I shed very many tears, and could realise my interest in the covenant of grace, so that I was not afraid to die. I did not want to be robbed. Friends came to see me, and were witnesses of my blessed frame of soul. Friend H. told them at the prayer-meeting, at half-past six, of my divine enjoyments, and they were made glad, especially those who had been praying that I might be blest in my return to Abingdon. I valued the blessing, and do still. Any one afflicted as I am will surely be grateful; and if their mouths were not filled with praises, they would be condemned for ingratitude. I would not barter away my spiritual blessing for riches and honours. I read the March “Standard” of 1843, where the blessing is recorded of the first baptism at Abingdon. My soul was blest at Oakham, May 22nd, in the evening; but I had a greater sense of God's loving-kindness and of his pardoning love this last time. I am near the cemetery. What a very great mercy to be made fit for the great change! May the Lord cause me to pray earnestly that my last days may be my best. What a difference there is in having a knowledge of gospel mysteries and having the soul blest with heartfelt experience of the various portions of Scripture setting forth the liberty of the gospel, and also sweet enjoyments of hymns exalting the riches of God's grace in saving vile sinners. We cannot value too highly a grain of humbling grace. Such a religion must be bought; no cross, no crown. It is through much tribulation that we are to go to glory. Then what can we say in favour of a smooth path, or of such ministers as please their hearers by encouraging those who have a knowledge of gospel mysteries and a little morality. Real saints, who fear God, find that they have many crosses and trials, and that they need them. How few ministers in London preach the Spirit's work! How little there is of that preaching which goes from heart to heart! Those who want to be searched and tried would be a very small proportion to those who want smooth things and peace. It is a narrow way to heaven, and none can be rightly in the path except by God's grace; nor can they keep there, except by grace. What debtors we are to grace!

“ Come, thou Fount of every blessing,  
Tune my heart to sing thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,  
Call for songs of loudest praise.”

It is 32 years ago this month since I first preached in the large, dark city of London. Many have died in Christ, with a blessed experience of divine things; but how very many have died who have not had a religion of the right sort! Many great professors in town, before they die, may be brought low enough to say that it is a mercy to be well laid in the grave. God has been a kind and good God to me, in various ways, for more than 61 years. I wish to acknowledge his goodness to me:

“ Mercies of providence and grace  
Flow from thy bounteous hand;  
These claim incessant songs of praise,  
And fervent love demand.”

How little gratitude for such great blessings, in upholding, keeping, and preserving us to the present moment! If we know that it is a mercy to be out of hell, we have no room for boasting. What a precious Saviour Christ is to those who really need him!

I am much the same. I suffer much when spitting and coughing. I am urged to take nourishing things.

Give my love to Mr. and Mrs. C., and the deacons. Any inquiring friends, greet for me.

May the Lord bless your own soul in preaching, and others will be blest also.

Abingdon, July 12, 1864.

Yours, very affectionately,

WM. TIPTAFT.

### HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER.

My dear Friend,—I have just received yours, and should have been very glad of your company with us, to have spent Christmas day. Truly, what you say is correct, “that charity begins at home.” It does in all things, and I am glad to find that in some of us it is so drawn out that we do not forget the needy and the tried ones; so that they may have a crumb and a sip of that blessed stream and fountain of everlasting life which cheers and revives the cast-down soul. He who has once felt the want of that cannot help feeling for others; for he has been in the same hungering and thirsting condition.

O my friend, how sweet the love of Christ is to such unworthy, worthless wretches. I really do feel myself to be such, not worthy of the least of his mercies. No. Truly his mercies are new every morning, and great is his faithfulness. This I do feel morning after morning, when I sit down by myself; though not by myself. No; for I do at times feel completely humbled and broken down to think of his goodness and protection in sparing, watching over, and keeping me by his almighty power in existence; for if he were but to deal with me according to my deserts, I know that he would cut me off in my sins, and send me where hope never could come. Yes; and then he would be just in so doing. Well might the psalmist say, “His mercy endureth for ever.” And so say I, “Amen” to that; for it is all of his boundless love and mercy that I am not consumed. “The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. He

hath given meat unto them that fear him. He will ever be mindful of his covenant." (Ps. cx. 1.) This psalm has been sweet indeed to me at times, when needed.

The time you mention will suit us very well; and may it please the Lord to come with you and be your help, strength, and stay in all your labours, and give you to see that you do not labour in vain in the Lord's vineyards, wherever he pleases to send you; so that a precious Jesus, the Saviour of sinners, may be exalted; and the creature laid low in the dust of self-abasement. He ever has been, and ever will be, your support and strength, equal to the day. He always fits the back to the burden, and will not lay upon his people more than he will enable them to bear. This you and yours have found to be the case; for "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Why is it so? Because "he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." What a passionate God and Father towards such rebellious children!

My friend, the fewness in number made no difference to the Lord's blessing and presence dropping down into your soul, and the souls gathered together in his name; for I do believe it was a refreshing time to both speaker and hearers, and a further fulfilment of that portion in Matt. xviii. 20: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Your well-wisher in the truth,

Faversham, Dec. 18th, 1846.

G. BROADBRIDGE.

FROSTS and snows conduce very much to the well-rooting of the seed. So do those sanctified afflictions which the people of God usually meet with after their calling, and often in their very seed time. "And ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction." (1 Thess. i. 6.) But if they have fair weather then, they will meet with weather hard enough afterwards. "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions." (Heb. x. 32.)—*Flavel*.

To be lost and saved—condemned and justified—brought in guilty and freely pardoned—to have the sword of divine justice brandished over us, and the blessed Mediator coming between—to feel the earnest of damnation, and the earnest of heaven—Doubting Castle confinement, and the enlargement by the precious blood of the covenant—the servile fear, straitness of the captive in the dungeon, and the sweet goings forth under the banner of everlasting love in the dances of them who make merry,—the close searching for evidence of interest in the Lord, and all beclouded, shut up and hid until the blessed Comforter comes in with a little light and softening, a little remembrance of past favours, and gives present support; to be made to feel our Adam ruin, our vile nature, our past transgressions before calling—our backslidings, shortcomings, infirmities, and base returns for providential and gracious, covenant mercies since our calling—thus to winnow, sift, and purge us from pride, self, and sin, is the working out of the hidden wisdom of God in a mystery, reducing saints to dust, and bringing all glory to a Triune Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.—*The Collier*.

## Obituary.

### JOHN BAILY, OF CANTERBURY.

JOHN BAILY, of Canterbury, died June 25, 1864, aged 25. It is the wish of several friends that I should write a little concerning our dear departed friend.

The early part of his life I am not able to say anything about, as I did not know him. I wish to write of that which I have heard from his own lips. He was first made known, or found out, while on trial as an apprentice to a cabinet maker in Canterbury. He was then among the Weslevans, attending the class meetings, &c.; but the foreman under whom he was placed was led unexpectedly at times to drop a word or two about experimental religion, and having the form without the power, which caused John to tell his parents he could not stop there, for there was such a curious man there; but his father, thinking it better for him, tried to reconcile his mind to it. After this he was bound apprentice; but still he was much tried about this man, Mr. Bradshaw, (for that is who this curious man was,) and what he talked about, which led him to search the Scriptures, to see if what Mr. B. said was right. The result was, he was obliged to give up attending the class meetings; and one day he asked Mr. B. where he went to worship. Finding it to be a little place called "Zoar," he went there also. Mr. Bradshaw at that time, when there was no supply, used occasionally with the deacons of the place to lead the service, and he did so on this occasion, and dropped some remarks upon the exercises of a living soul, which were applied with power to the heart of the young man. After this, a door being opened for Mr. Bradshaw at Ashford, our young friend followed him, and his soul was much blessed; and about 12 months since, I think, feeling a union to the minister and people, he expressed a wish to cast in his lot with them. The members of the church, being quite satisfied with his testimony, with pleasure received him, and he was baptized and became a member with them; but through the distance he could not attend every Lord's day.

He was very much tried because he had not experienced so much of that law work which he had heard others speak of; so that he was very dissatisfied with his standing in the divine life. This often made him groan, being burdened.

About three years ago he had a fall, and ruptured a blood vessel, which proved to be a prelude to his death. During the last year I was privileged to receive a letter from him nearly every week. The greater part of the letters expressed his extreme darkness. Indeed, at times it was quite painful to read them. At one time, yea, I might have said many times, he wrote: "O Rhoda! All is dark. The heavens are as brass. O! Is the mercy of the Lord clean gone? Will he be favourable no more? O that the dear Lord would be pleased to deign to look upon me and cause one ray of light, give me one proof that I am in the right way. O! Christ is able to cause a calm, for the winds and the sea obey him." At another time he was

mourning over his apparently lifeless state, when he said, "O! Can I not go with the poet when he said,

'Of feeling all things show some sign  
But this unfeeling heart of mine?'"

When answering his letter at this time, I said, "If you were without feeling, how could you know it? Can a dead man say he is dead? Try," I said, "and bless God for having given you light to see your darkness, which no person dead in sin ever can see." I tried in my poor way to trace out the way the Lord would lead his people by a rough way, but it always proved to be a right way; and though weeping lasted the whole night, and it seemed a long one, yet joy was promised in the morning, and it would surely come. Then he wrote again: "O that what you wrote could be applied to me! O that I knew mine was a right darkness! I want the Lord to come and show me that he has loved me with an everlasting love. O, I have no other name to plead! He is all I need. He is all-sufficient. O that the Lord would but bless me, even me!"

At other times it would seem there appeared to be a little light, but not clear enough for him to read his title clear. I have often tried to sympathise with him, and he has often said I was the means of administering a little comfort where distress seemed to abound. No thanks to me for it.

About three months ago I received a letter from him telling me he had been to Ashford, and how well he had heard Mr. Bradshaw. He said, "I could see the dear Lord was leading me by a right way, and I felt then willing to suffer anything, that I might win Christ; and I felt such a love to him and his people that my trials and afflictions seemed as nothing." Then it appeared the enemy was not far off; for in a moment his mind seemed turned, and he said, "But, alas, alas! it is all gone. Could it have been a right feeling? Was it in the flesh? Am I sowing to the flesh, and shall I of the flesh reap corruption?" And then he wrote with such a feeling of apparent despondency, "O! I know not what to do! But the Lord knows my eyes are up unto him. I have no where else to look."

At this time, our friend was taken much worse on his journey home, and he continued to get worse and worse until his death. But I think I have written sufficient to show what darkness of mind he was called to pass through almost to the last. In May, the anniversary of the chapel at Ashford was held, and though our friend was so ill, he still kept hoping that he should be able to attend on that occasion, and wrote for me to meet him there; but, alas! that fatal disease, consumption, had taken too fast hold of him to allow him strength to travel so many miles. He, as might be expected, felt very disappointed. His mother then wrote to me, asking me to go and see him, as he was too ill to attend the anniversary. I accordingly went, first to Ashford to the chapel, and the next day to see our dear friend. I think I shall never forget the feelings it caused me when I entered the room where he sat. Disease had reduced him to a mere skeleton. As soon, however, as I could

sufficiently recover myself, I began to speak, first of what I had heard on the day previous at Ashford, and then, feeling obliged to be more pointed, to ask him how matters stood with him. He looked up at me with that anxious look which seemed to almost send a thrill through me, and said, "Tell me, tell me, can there be room for such a vile worm as I?" I said, "Yes, dear, there is room for all that Christ shed his blood for, and none ever perish that call upon him in sincerity and in truth." I then asked him where he got that desire from. A desire to love God did not spring from nature. He then said, "O Rhoda!

' All is dark, and vain, and wild,  
Can I deem myself a child? "

At length I felt quite overpowered, seeing him in such distress of mind, and, as it were, death so near. He then turned to me and asked me if I thought his lungs were diseased; "because," said he, "sometimes I think they are, at other times I think I shall get better." With pain I told him the doctor had said two or three days previously his disease was rapid consumption. He then said, "O Rhoda! Eternity! eternity! Shall I die without the Lord appearing for me?" This seemed to shake me to the centre; but I, though with difficulty, quoted these beautiful lines of the poet:

" Can his pity or his power  
Suffer thee to pray in vain?  
Wait but his appointed hour,  
And thy suit thou shalt obtain."

"Ah!" he said, "but it is hard work to wait." I said, "Can you give up asking?" He said, "No; if I perish I must perish suing for mercy!"

I took my leave of him that night, thinking it was the last time I should be privileged to see him in this world. I must leave others to imagine how I felt in leaving a dear friend in that position, for words cannot express it.

I received several letters from his mother after that, and in each letter said, "John would like to see you again;" but, being very delicate, my friends thought it better I should not go again; but on the 21st of June I received a letter from his sister telling me the doctor said he could not last long, and that he kept asking for me: "Do try and come, as he wants so much to see you." Then my father and mother both thought it right for me to go to him, which I did the same day, hoping perhaps he had something brighter to tell me. I found him very low. That night he could not say much. The cough was fearfully distressing. The next day he seemed a little more revived, and told me of Mr. L. visiting him, and how the words seemed to drop from his lips; such as these: "John, whatever made you go to Ashford to meet with us few despised people, if there is nothing more than nature in you?" "O!" he said, "because I love to meet among the Lord's dear people." "Then," said Mr. L., "that is quite proof enough that you have passed from death unto life, because you love the brethren." He seemed a little lifted up with that, and he never sank quite so low afterwards; still



he was not satisfied. He said to me that day, "Rhoda, I will tell you what my mind seems resting on the last few days: 'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Lord and stay upon his God.'" In the evening Mr. Bradshaw came to see him. After saying a few words to him, John looked up to him, and said,

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

Mr. B. replied, "Can you go through that hymn feelingly?" He said, "Yes, Mr. B., I can." "Then," said Mr. B., "at evening time it shall be light."

On Thursday morning, about 4 o'clock, he was taken worse, and we thought he was dying. He said he felt very ill. I had been watching him all night. He said, "Will it hurt you sitting up so much with me? Because I want you to stay with me, not to leave me any more." I said, "The Lord giving me strength, I will not leave you. Is Jesus precious?" "Not as I could wish," he said; "but, dear Rhoda, I have a humble hope he will come and satisfy me with his presence before I die." I said, "Do you wish to get better?" He said, "If the Lord appears, I have no will either for life or death." All that day he was very weak and low. No one but myself could catch his words, his voice being so very weak and low. His mother came in and asked him if he felt happy. "Not as I could wish, mother."

About 3 o'clock on Friday morning I said to him, "Shall I give you a little drink?" He looked up and said, "How did you know that I was awake?" "O," I said, "your cough has kept you from sleeping to-night." I gave him a little in a tea spoon. He then turned his grave, weary eyes round, and said, "Lift me up, dear, please." His brother helping me, we set him up. After a time, we set him down, and in a few moments we heard him in prayer. Though he spoke in a low whisper, we heard him say, "Come, Lord Jesus! Do come, and show unto me thy salvation! Do, Lord, let me know that I am thine!" Seeing he was worse again, his mother went and called his father, &c. His sister was and had been watching him.

I would just add here, as I had forgotten it before, he told me several times how very kind all his dear relations were to him, at the same time telling me what each one did for him, as a proof of their love to him as their brother, and the unceasing kindness of his dear mother and father. "Words," he said, "could not tell it out to the full. O!" he said, "how good the Lord is in granting me such a blessing."

But to return to the time when his father and mother were called in. They had not been in long before their John broke out in an ecstasy of joy, and said, "O blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! Help me to praise him! O! Is this heaven? It is beautiful. It is more than I can bear! O blessed Jesus! Thou art my all and in

all! O help me to praise him! O this is heaven! I never thought it would be so beautiful. It is more than I can bear; it is more than I can bear!" Then he said, "O my dear father and mother, and all my dear relations, if the Lord will, may I meet you there. O father, father, it is so beautiful! Jesus is my all!" This vision, for that is what I must call it, lasted about a quarter of an hour, or a little more. When he had lain quiet a few minutes, he looked up really disappointedly and said, "O! I thought I was going home. I thought I had done with earth. O! Am I deceived? Is it all a delusion? O! am I deceived after all?" His brother W. said to him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?" He then seemed a little more composed, but very soon afterwards the pain came on very badly again, and he looked up and said, "O Rhoda! The pain is so great. I thought I had done with pain. I thought I was dying." I said to him, "It will not be long, dear. You are going." He said, "Do you think I am? I am afraid I am not. I am afraid I shall get better. O! I did think I should have been in that beautiful place that I saw by the eye of faith." I said to him, "Those were sweet moments, were they not?" He looked up with a sweet smile in the midst of that dreadful pain and said, "O my dearest Rhoda, how I wish I could tell it, or the half of it, what I then saw. It was the happiest season I ever had, O!

"If such the sweetness of the stream,  
What must the fountain be?"

I then asked him if there were any person he wished to see. He told me he should like to see Mr. L. and Mr. B. They were immediately sent for. He said, "I must tell out what great things the Lord has done for me. Now I can

"Tell to all around  
What a dear Saviour I have found."

His dear, weeping mother and sister were standing by, when one of them said, "O John! It is nice to see you so happy." "Ah," he said, "this is happiness indeed!"

When Mr. L. and Mr. B. came into the room, a solemn awe seemed to pervade it. Mr. B. broke the silence, and said, "Then the Lord has been pleased to answer our poor, broken petitions." "O yes," John replied, "if I am not deceived, he has indeed, far, far beyond telling out. O help me to praise him!" That, I think, was nearly all he said to his two friends, the pain being so great it seemed too much for him. The perspirations were so profuse, it was like pouring water through a sieve.

About 12 o'clock in the day he said, "Do, dear, try and think of something to ease me, for I do feel so bad. O! Do try something, for the pain seems more than I can bear. O! This perspiration is so trying. I feel so bad." I must leave the reader to imagine my feelings at this time; but I said, "I know it is very bad; but what must it have been when our Saviour sweat great drops of blood?" "O!" he said in a moment, "I can bear it all! I can bear it! O Lord, do forgive my murmuring. I do wish to bear it patiently. I do not wish to murmur at the Lord's dealings with me."

About 2 o'clock the pain left him never more to return, neither did he seem to have a doubt of his interest in the blood of a precious Christ. During the afternoon he lay very quiet, as if he was dozing, till about 7 o'clock, when he wished me to raise him up in the bed to rest him; which I did; after which I said to him, "Have you any text you would like Mr. B. to speak from after you are gone?" He said, "'The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble;' but," said he, "perhaps Mr. B. had better have what is given him. I don't mind, only the Lord has proved himself strong in supporting me through such a long, dreary night of darkness. O! He is good, he is good!" He seemed quite exhausted; so I said to him, "Do not talk any more now; you are tired." He said, "Am I tired? O Rhoda dear, I am so happy!" I think he said several things after that, but I forget what they were. His father, mother, brother, and sister stayed with him as well as myself on Friday night, which proved to be his last on earth.

On Saturday morning I felt quite worn out in body, as I had sat with him four days and three nights, scarcely leaving his bedside, which seemed to cause my spirits to give way, much as I tried to keep up before him; but he then perceived it, and, turning to me, said, "O Rhoda! Don't grieve; don't fret. I know it is painful; but you said you could give me up if the Lord appeared." "O!" he continued, "he has appeared! All, all is well!" Then he turned to his mother and sister, and said, "Mother, don't fret; Jennie, don't fret; all is well." They both kissed him, and left the room. After a time he said,

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

Then turning his face to me, he said, "Have you asked the Lord to spare me?" I did not speak. In a few minutes he said again, "Rhoda, have you asked for me to stay?" I then said, "No, I could not do that." "O no," he said. "Ask the Lord to come and take me home. I long to go home. O! Who would live always away from his God, away from yon heaven, that blissful abode?" He then lay quiet until about 3 in the afternoon, when he said, "Heaven will give me sweet repose." About 4 o'clock, he put his hand out and tried to wave it, but did not get it up far before it fell; after which he never moved. His happy spirit took its flight to its blissful home, where he so much wished to be.

It might truly be said of our dear departed brother in the faith, "His end was peaceful. We have lost in him a true and sincere friend, one who was always ready to share our joys or sorrows."

RHODA S. S.

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By faith, I would not mean what is generally meant in the world, where almost all who call themselves Christians imagine they believe; but I mean that faith which we have of God, and which is the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart, whereby we have the firm persuasion and assurance that Jesus the true God was made a man, and suffered, out of pure love and mercy to us, our death and curse, and has now fully pardoned our sins and given us eternal life.—*Cennick*.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

(Continued from page 228.)

WHAT an unspeakable mercy it is for the living family of God that the faith through which they are saved (Eph. ii. 8) and by which they are sanctified (Acts xxvi. 18) is not a faith that depends on evidences—at least not on such evidences as those the consideration of which has hitherto occupied our attention. Faith itself, indeed, is an evidence, for it is “the evidence of things not seen;” (Heb. xi. 1;) but being “the gift of God,” and “a fruit of the Spirit,” (Eph. ii. 8; Gal. v. 22,) it “stands not in the wisdom of men but in the power of God,” (1 Cor. ii. 5,) and is, therefore, entirely distinct from those evidences of the truth of revelation which address themselves to, and are apprehended by the reasoning powers of our natural mind.

Why, then, it may be asked, are such evidences needed, and what purpose do they serve? “Is not the Scripture,” an objector might urge, “written for the sole benefit of the church of God? (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) What, then, have the ungodly to do with it? If faith is the gift of God, if none but the elect to whom it is specially given can believe, (Eph. ii. 8; Matt. xiii. 11,) and the rest are hardened, (John xii. 39, 40; Rom. ix. 18,) all which, according to your own creed, you must admit, what need can there be for those external evidences with which you have been wearying your spiritual readers, and about which, perhaps, not one in a hundred cares or even understands? Do you mean to say that these evidences can convince or convert a natural man, or do him the least good? If you admit this, which according to your principles you are bound to do, you yourself plainly confess that these evidences are of no real use to the non-elect; and as to the elect, they do not want them, for their faith, as God’s gift and wrought in them by his divine power, is altogether independent of them.” Well, you have shot your arrow from a strong bow, for you have Scripture on your side to strengthen both it and your arms. But let us take your arrow up, and see whether it cannot be shot back from no less strong because no less scriptural a bow.

1. Please, then, first to bear in mind that there is such a thing as *drawing perverse, one-sided conclusions* from Scripture texts, which conclusions the Scripture itself repudiates and rejects. Thus you may pervert the doctrine of predestination into a fatal necessity to commit evil as well as good, delivering men to do all manner of abominations, (Jer. vii. 10,) and thus make God the author of sin; from superabounding grace you may argue for a continuance in sin that grace may abound; (Rom. vi. 1;) and from our unrighteousness commending (that is, setting off and exalting) the righteousness of God, you may conclude, “Let us do evil that good may come.”

Rom. iii. 5-8.) But such perverse, one-sided conclusions as these are damnable conclusions, for such we may well call them as already judged and condemned by the word of God. Beware, then, of one-sided conclusions, for such yours is.

2. But now let us come to our point—our shot-back arrow. Has God no other *attribute but mercy*? And does the Scripture which reveals that mercy speak no other language but that of pardon and peace to the elect? Does it entirely ignore and take no notice whatever of the ungodly and the unbelieving? Are there no warnings, or threatenings, or denunciations in the Scripture against the impenitent? If so, which none can deny who read and understand the Scriptures, the Bible has something to do with the ungodly, and the ungodly have something to do with the Bible; and it is not, according to your one-sided view, a book only for the elect.

3. But look at the point under another aspect. View the *justice* of God. He is the Judge of all the earth, and as such must do right. (Gen. xviii. 25.) If "mercy and truth go before his face, justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne." (Psal. lxxxix. 14.) "Is God unrighteous," asks the apostle, "who taketh vengeance? (I speak as a man;) God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?" (Rom. iii. 5, 6.)

Here, then, we see one use and necessity of the *external* evidence of the truth of revelation, such as miracles, &c. If there were no other proof of the truth, power, and authority of revelation than its *internal* evidence, of which we shall presently speak, the unbeliever might justly say: "I am condemned for not believing what I had no evidence to believe. Is that just? Would it be just in a judge in a court of law to fine the jury heavily for not returning a verdict of 'guilty,' when not the least evidence was brought forward to sustain the charge against the prisoner? Give me sufficient evidence, and I will believe."

Now, we who know the heart of man are quite certain that no amount of proof can overcome man's natural unbelief, and that this demand for sufficient evidence is like the Jews asking for a sign from heaven, and the cruel taunt of the chief priests and scribes, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." (Matt. xxvii. 42.) But though no amount of evidence, not even such a miracle as raising Lazarus from the dead, (John xi. 46,) can be sufficient to convince the heart of man, yet it may be amply sufficient to clear the justice of God in condemning him for unbelief. This, then, is one of the main reasons why external evidence, as miracle and prophecy, has been given—to leave men without excuse for disbelieving and rejecting a revelation attested by such a weight of proof. If you still doubt this point, can you account for the destruction of Jerusalem, the casting off of God's ancient people, and scattering them all over the earth, on any other grounds than their rejection and crucifixion of the Son of God when he came to them as the promised Messiah? And do you not think that the mighty works which the Lord Jesus wrought amongst them were

designed to be evidences of the truth of his mission? According to your view that the Bible has nothing to do with the non-elect, the words and works of Christ had nothing to do with the non-elect Jews. But this was not the doctrine which Christ preached and taught. What did the Lord himself say? "But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." (John v. 36.) And again: "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me." And did not their rejection of him after all his mighty works add to their sin? What are the Lord's own words? "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloke for their sin." (John xv. 22.) Thus we see that one main use of external evidences, such as miracles, is to clear the justice of God, and leave the unbeliever without excuse. It is a great mistake to think that the Bible is only for the elect. Is not the Law in the Bible? And for whom is this? Paul shall tell us, "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers," &c. (1 Tim. i. 9.) And has the Gospel only to do with the elect? Has it nothing to do with the unbeliever? Hear what the Lord says: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark xvi. 16.) Then there is a being damned for not believing the gospel. And what says the Holy Ghost by Paul? "And to you who are troubled, rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. i. 7, 8.) Then there is flaming fire for those who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. And what think you of another passage? "That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." (2 Thess. ii. 12.) Then there is a being damned for not believing the truth.

We have enlarged upon this point beyond our desire, because it has already been objected to our dwelling so much on the external evidences of revelation, that we thereby assume some power in man to believe in the strength of those evidences. This assumption we deny. That they may produce a natural faith we fully admit, as is plain from John vi. 14; xi. 45; xii. 42, 43; but spiritual faith it is not in them to raise up, though they may instrumentally strengthen and confirm it when given. So our Lord's disciples believed on his name, as "born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and from "beholding his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." But their faith was strengthened by a sight of his miracles. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested

forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him." (John ii. 11.) Thus, these external evidences which some of our readers will not give themselves the trouble to understand, and others slightly pass by as useless, though given us by God, serve two important purposes: First, they leave the infidel and the unbeliever without excuse, and thus vindicate and glorify the just judgment of God in their condemnation; and secondly, they strengthen and confirm the faith and foothold of the church of Christ in her arduous and unceasing conflict with sin, Satan, and the world. If you doubt this, take all the miracles of Christ out of the gospel, and especially that last and greatest miracle of all, his resurrection from the dead and ascension on high, and see whether it would not weaken your faith in him as the Son of God, and strengthen the natural unbelief and infidelity of your heart. Thus, though many of the family of God may not be able to enter into the nature of these external evidences, or even fully understand the subject when put before them, yet the evidences themselves are made useful to them, almost without their consciousness, to confirm and strengthen their faith.

But we come now to a distinct species of evidence, and one more generally adapted to the understanding and conscience of the family of God, as being more closely allied to that greatest and most convincing of all evidences, which forms the title of our Meditations, and to which all we have yet written has been but preliminary and introductory. Our readers will, perhaps, remember that we divided evidences into *external* and *internal*. The *external*, consisting mainly, 1. of Testimony, and 2. of Miracle and Prophecy, we have already considered. We have now, therefore, to examine the *internal* evidences of the truth of revelation, as bearing upon the subject of our present Meditations—the power and authority of the word of God upon the heart.

But as we wish to make the subject as plain and as intelligible as we possibly can even to those of our readers to whom it may be somewhat new, we will endeavour briefly to explain what is meant by *internal* evidence as distinct from *external*.

*Internal* evidence, then, is that mode of proof which dwells as it were in the very bosom of the subject under investigation. Two simple illustrations, one negative and the other positive, will explain the nature and force of this kind of evidence. 1. Two parties contest in a court of law the fact of a written agreement alleged to have been made between them. The plaintiff produces the alleged agreement, duly signed and sealed, and bearing the date of Sept. 1, 1860. The defendant's counsel asks to look at the deed. It is handed to him. He holds it up to the light, and finds that the water-mark of the paper is 1864; in other words, that the paper on which the said agreement was written was not made till at least three years after the date of the forged document. This is *internal* evidence; the proof of the forgery being in the very bosom of the agreement itself. Here internal evidence is *negative*, that is, *against* the authenticity of the deed, and at once settles the question, to the dismay and discomfiture of the forger. 2. Now, take an illustration on

the *positive* side, as a mode of proof for the truth and authenticity of a writing; and to make it more forcible and interesting we will give you a real case. A few years ago, at the bottom of an old family chest at Ely, a bundle of letters was discovered, written apparently by Oliver Cromwell. The owner of the chest, an old Tory gentleman, and therefore much prejudiced against the great Puritan captain, carefully copied all the letters, but from some unaccountable reason destroyed the originals. Now when these letters were made known, the natural question immediately arose, Were these letters thus mysteriously brought to light, and professedly copies, really written by Oliver Cromwell, or an impudent forgery? The non-production of the original letters, which, as mere autographs, were exceedingly valuable, and the tale of their being purposely destroyed, were very suspicious, as the well-known handwriting would almost have decided the question of itself; and yet the style and character of the writer, the minute events of the period, and the historical coincidences form such a body of proof that they were written by the great Protector that they are fully received by our acutest critics as the unquestionable productions of his pen. This is *internal* evidence, as dwelling in the letters themselves, independent of, and in this case almost opposed to external testimony. But how strong this internal evidence must have been to overcome all the doubts and suspicions that they were forgeries, strengthened as they must have been by the unaccountable perverseness, if not stupidity, of the inheritor and owner of the old family chest in burning the originals. Now, dear readers, God has given us similar evidence that the Scriptures are not "cunningly devised fables," but were written by his own divine inspiration; and as this evidence dwells in the very bosom of the Scriptures themselves, and shines through them as with rays of heavenly light, it is called *internal* evidence. Thus, though the original gospels and epistles, as written by the evangelists and apostles, have long since perished, yet we receive them as copied from those manuscripts with as much implicit faith from their internal evidence as though their very handwriting was before us.

But, having thus far explained the nature of internal evidence generally, we will now see how it bears on the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. When, then, we look more closely into the subject of the internal evidences of the truth and authority of the word of God, we find that we may *divide* them into two distinct classes; 1. those which address themselves to our natural understanding, the reasoning powers of our intelligent mind; and, 2. those of a strictly spiritual and supernatural character which belong specially to the family of God when the word of truth is made life and spirit to their soul. As the distinction we have thus drawn between these two classes of internal evidence may not at first sight be evident, for from their close resemblance to, and their frequent intermingling with each other, even so good a man and so great a writer as Dr. Owen has somewhat confounded them, we will, before we proceed any further, illustrate the difference between them by a Scriptural example of each.



1. Take, then, the teaching and ministry of our blessed Lord, when here below, as an example of the first. His *words* were as striking as his *works*; but they differed in the evidence which they afforded of his being the Christ of God. His *works* were striking as an *external* demonstration of his Messiahship, and were addressed to the senses of the spectators, making them eye-witnesses of his almighty power. But his *words* were striking as addressing themselves to the understanding, the heart, and conscience of his hearers, and demonstrative of his authority as speaking in God's name. The former, therefore, we call *external*, the latter we term *internal* evidence. Our Lord sometimes wrought a miracle to confirm the authority of his words, as in the case of the man sick of the palsy, (Matt. ix. 2-6,) where, "Arise, take up thy bed" confirmed the words: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." But at other times, as in the synagogue at Nazareth, the Lord taught and preached without working any miracle to confirm his word. In this and similar cases (Luke iv. 15) there was a power and authority in the words themselves which he spake, which carried conviction to the minds of his hearers. This we call *internal* evidence, because the proof of the power and authority of his teaching lay in the force of the words as they fell from his lips. We therefore read: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes." (Matt. viii. 28, 29.) So again: "And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" "And they were astonished at his word, for his word was with power." (Luke iv. 22, 32.) So, also, we read, "As he spake these words, many believed on him." (John viii. 30.) Thus we see that there was a power and authority attending the words of our blessed Lord which addressed itself to the intelligent minds and natural consciences of his hearers. (See John viii. 9.) But though they felt the power of the word of God, they were not quickened thereby into spiritual life. They were not begotten by the word of truth, (James i. 18,) nor born again of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever; (1 Pet. i. 23;) for to those very persons who are said to believe on him, the Lord said afterwards, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." (John viii. 44.) Can we, then, doubt that there is an internal evidence addressing itself to the understanding and conscience distinct not only from external evidence, but from the inward evidence attending the word when applied by the Holy Ghost to the soul?

2. But now let us find a Scripture example of our second class of internal evidence, viz., when it accompanies the words of the blessed Lord as made life and spirit to the soul: "Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God;

thou art the King of Israel." (John i. 47-49.) The internal evidence that he who saw him under the fig tree was the omniscient Son of God, not only fell upon Nathanael's mind, but the unction of the Holy Ghost attended it with a divine power to his heart. So it was in the call of James and John; (Matt. iv. 21, 22;) of Matthew from the receipt of custom; (Matt. ix. 9;) and doubtless of the other disciples of the Lord. In these cases, besides the weight of internal evidence on their mind, there was a divine light and power which made the words of the blessed Lord life and spirit to their soul. (John vi. 63.)

The subject of internal evidence, when we come to apply it to the word of truth, is so vast and so branching out into a variety of proof that we can only briefly sketch a few of its prominent points as they occur to our mind.

1. Take, for instance, first the *wonderful harmony* which runs through the whole Scripture from Genesis to Revelation. Consider that the mere writing of the Bible which you hold in your hand embraces a period of nearly 1,500 years. View the inspired penmen, who lived during the days of the Old Testament, such as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and all the prophets down to Malachi, Ezra, and Nehemiah. Remember that they were men of different periods, ranks, ages, and employments,—kings, shepherds, priests, herdmen; and yet observe the harmony which pervades all that they wrote, whether history, prophecy, psalms, or proverbs. Then take a glance at the New Testament, consisting of 27 distinct works written by eight different evangelists and apostles, and see the harmony of truth which runs through the whole of that sacred book. We are so familiar with the fact of this harmonious agreement that it is scarcely observed by us. Ministers take their texts from every part of the Scriptures, and prove their points of doctrine, experience, or practice indiscriminately from any or every book of the Old or New Testament, without perhaps even thinking what wondrous harmony of truth must run through the whole Bible to enable them to quote at pleasure this and that text from Genesis to Revelation, and what an internal evidence this affords of its truth and inspiration.

2. Now consider, as another point of internal evidence, the revelation given in the Scriptures of those glorious *truths* and heavenly *doctrines*, which are the foundation of our most holy faith, such as the existence of one Jehovah in a Trinity of Persons and Unity of Essence, the incarnation, blood-shedding, death, resurrection, and ascension of the co-equal, co-eternal Son of the Father in truth and love; the Personality and operations of the Holy Ghost, with every sacred doctrine, every holy precept, and every gracious promise. Surely to conceive such stupendous truths is as much beyond the natural powers of man as to create light or make a sun. What an internal evidence is this, what a proof in the very doctrines themselves is thus afforded, that none but God himself could have inspired the holy penmen thus to write what lay hidden in his eternal bosom.

3. Look also at the *character of the Lord Jesus* as represented in the gospels of the New Testament. What dignity, majesty, holiness,

purity, tenderness, meekness, wisdom, authority, truth, and grace shine through all his words and works. Infidels themselves, save the vilest and worst, have expressed their admiration of the character of the Lord Jesus, and thousands who will never see him as he is, have admired him as he was. Let any man with ordinary feeling, or common apprehension of what is good and right, tender and affectionate, read the sermon on the mount, the discourses of the Lord to his disciples, (John xiv., xv., xvi.,) and his intercessory prayer, (John xvii.,) and one must think he could not but see an indescribable force and beauty in them, and that he who thus taught and spoke must be the Son of God.

4. Look again at the *life, character, and writings of the apostle Paul*. Disjoin from his conversion the miraculous circumstances attending it, and merely view him as a man brought from conviction of mind to embrace Christianity. Trace his character as so faithful yet so tender, so wise and yet so gentle. Look at his unwearied labours, his cruel persecutions, his perils and sufferings, of which he has given us such a catalogue, (2 Cor. xi. 23–28,) his undaunted zeal, his glowing love, his godly sincerity, his holiness and self-denial, his deep humility, his prayerful spirit, his contentedness under poverty and shame, his devotedness to the Lord even to willingness to die for his name; and then see what a weight of evidence all this affords to his being an apostle of the Lord Jesus, and, if so, to his inspiration from above. But all this is *internal* evidence which approves itself to the mind from its apprehension of the various circumstances of Paul's character which we have thus faintly sketched out.

5. From his character and labours, turn to Paul's *writings*, those epistles which he sent to the various churches, or to individuals, as Timothy and Titus. Take, as an instance, the Epistle to the Romans. We well know that it needs divine light and life to understand, believe, and feel the glorious truths unfolded in that wondrous epistle. But if you cannot fully enter into the way in which the apostle has brought all the world in guilty before God, and unfolded the way of justification by grace, through faith, take one chapter, Rom. viii., as an instance of the weight and force of internal evidence to the truth of the word of God. Think who the man once was who wrote that chapter; what he was as brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, a blood-thirsty persecutor of the saints, an approving witness of Stephen's martyrdom. Now, that a wretch who once rode full of fire and fury to Damascus, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, should, about 27 years from that time, write in a strain so wise, tender, and affectionate to Christian saints, is little short of demonstrative proof that his whole heart and soul had been changed, altered, and subdued to the faith and obedience of Christ. Is it not as great a miracle of grace as the change of a lion into a lamb would be a miracle of power? Or read the Epistle to the Ephesians, and fix your eye first on the doctrinal part of the epistle, and then on the preceptive. Whence did this Pharisee of

the Pharisees get those sublime doctrines, those heavenly truths, which he unfolds with such holy wisdom, and such a demonstration of the Spirit and of power? What an internal evidence does every line afford that he received them by special revelation and divine inspiration from heaven! Then examine the preceptive part of the same epistle, and view the wisdom, the holiness, the tenderness, the spirit of love and godliness which pervade and animate those precepts and directions for conduct under every relationship of life; and think what individual believers and Christian churches would be, were these precepts obeyed and acted upon. In a similar way and with equal force we might enlarge upon such chapters as I Cor. xiii. and xv., 2 Cor. iii., iv., v., Phil. iii., 1 Thess. i., and show, if time and space admitted, that they bear such a stamp of grace and truth, reality and power, that by nothing short of divine inspiration could they have been written. Nor would the Old Testament afford less striking examples. The separate histories of Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, &c., might all be drawn out, and shown to carry with them the strongest internal evidence that they were men led, taught, and blessed of God, and that the pen of inspiration has written all that has been recorded of them. The history of Abraham, for instance, as the father of all the children of Israel; of Joseph, as connected with their going down to Egypt; of Moses, as bringing them out of that land of bondage; of Joshua, as taking them into the promised Canaan—if these separate yet connected histories were traced out, and the different marks and proofs of their truth and reality carefully worked out, what a weight of internal evidence would attest the authority and inspiration of the sacred record in which they are contained!

A similar course of argument might be drawn from the Psalms of David, the prophecies of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets, and, in fact, every part and portion of the Old Testament Scriptures. But these are things at which we can only hint. A volume, aye, volumes would be needed separately to unfold the evidence afforded by the peculiar character and nature of the inspired writings, as bearing upon their face the stamp of their divine Author; and a most instructive, interesting, and edifying work it would be, at least to those who could and would at all enter into and appreciate it. But we trust we have said enough on this subject to give our readers some little idea of the nature of *internal* evidence. It has also peculiar advantages as distinct from external evidence, some of which we will now very briefly enumerate.

1. First, it has a peculiar *persuasiveness*. Read, for instance, Acts xx. 17–35. The address of Paul to the elders of the church at Ephesus. What a sincere, faithful, truthful, affectionate, noble spirit runs through and pervades the whole. And with what tender affection was it reciprocated! How touching, how pathetic the closing scene; and how we seem almost to see with our bodily eyes the kneeling, praying apostle and the weeping elders: “And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down, and prayed with them all. And they all wept sore, and fell on Paul’s neck, and kissed him, sorrow-

ing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. And they accompanied him unto the ship." (Acts xx. 36-38.) What conviction does all this carry to every unprejudiced mind of the truth of the events thus recorded! Just read Paul's words again, Acts xx. 22-27. How persuaded one feels that this man of God felt every word that he said, and that they came out of a heart overflowing with faith and love. This, then, is what we mean by the *persuasiveness* of internal evidence. Now compare with this Acts xxviii. 3-9, where we read of certain miracles wrought by this same man of God, and their effect on the minds of those who witnessed them. This was *external* evidence; but do you not feel that his address to the Ephesian elders carries with it a persuasiveness of conviction which seems quite equal, if not superior to the miracle of the viper, or the healing of the father of Publius? Thus you may contrast external and internal evidence by the effect produced by each on your own mind. If the former awes, astonishes, and convinces, the latter persuades, allures, gently overcomes. If the one resemble the lightning flash which rives the heavens and the pealing thunder which rolls over our heads, the other is like the succeeding shower which falls upon the bosom of the thirsty earth, sinking into and softening every opening pore.

2. Another advantage of internal evidence is that it is *always present*. The days of miracles are past. We believe them, not because we see them, but from the testimony of the Scriptures. But the word itself, which abideth for ever, is in our hands, and in every open page we may read, spread before our eyes, its truth and inspiration.

3. A third advantage of internal evidence is that, like prophecy, it is what we may call *cumulative*; that is, it is not only abundant, but each testimony confirms and strengthens the foregoing. See how this feature of evidence tells in a court of justice. Witness after witness comes forward, and as each gives in his testimony every fresh proof adds to the weight of the evidence given before, until the case is as clear as day, and the jury at once decide on the verdict without ever leaving their box. We have only brought forward a few witnesses to the truth of the Scripture; but a whole body remains behind, whose united testimony would gather force till, like a descending avalanche of snow in the Alps, it would bear down all opposition, or like a rain cloud would cover the very face of the heavens before it fell in innumerable drops upon the ground.

4. The last distinguishing feature of internal evidence which we shall name is, that it is *satisfying*. It does not merely convince the understanding, but it comes with a satisfying influence and power into the heart. Take, for instance, the character of Moses as drawn in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy, and just by way of concentrating your attention upon it, view him as interceding with God for the children of Israel, after the sin of the golden calf. (Exod. xxxii. 31, 32; xxxiii.; xxxiv. 1-10.) What a blending and intermingling of holy zeal for the glory of God and indignation against sin with the tenderest pity and affection for his covenant

people. If health, strength, and grace should be given us ever to write our meditated work, "A Plea for the Pentateuch," the internal evidence of its authenticity and truth drawn from the character of Moses would form one of its prominent features, for we have felt it so convincing and satisfying to our own mind.

But our limits warn us to pause. Dear readers, highly prize the internal evidence of the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures. It needs no learning, and but little education or intellect to understand, and, we may say, enjoy it. All it needs is a simple, open heart; and bear in mind, that though it is in good measure adapted to the intelligent understanding of all who are open to conviction, it possesses peculiar force, as we shall have hereafter occasion to show, when the blessed Spirit illuminates it with his heavenly light, and carries it home to the believing heart with his vivifying power.

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#### THE LORD KILLETH AND MAKETH ALIVE.

As appetite prepares for meat, So sense of wrath makes mercysweet; And those who feel the pains of hell Will surely prize deliverance well.	As debtors will a surety prize, So those who want will hail supplies; And those who feel their burden great Will watch and wait at mercy's gate.
As sickness makes one value health, So poverty prepares for wealth; And those who feel their souls are lost Will love their souls' salvation most.	As wretches fitted feel for hell, So Christ will suit a sinner well; And he who does a Saviour want Will be a welcome suppliant.
As prisons go before discharge, So bonds are felt ere Christ enlarge; And those who mourn their unbelief Will find by faith a bless'd relief.	As sorrow must precede true joy, So Christ will come where sins annoy; And those who feel themselves undone Will prize redemption in the Son.
Gosport, Aug. 17, 1863.	A. H.

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WHEN once a soul is raised to hope, and a knowledge of interest in Christ is longed for, or a revelation of Christ to the soul, and when faith lays hold of him and gives him a dwelling in the heart, this is "God's mystery among the Gentiles, Christ in you the hope of glory."  
—*Beeman.*

Do but observe the first Adam's carriage, and the manner of it, a little before the promise was made: First, they believe the serpent rather than God; then they break the commandment of life, when they had neither need nor occasion so to do. This done, and finding themselves lost, they do not so much as seek after God for help, but rather to hide themselves from him; so far from confessing themselves faulty, they charge God foolishly, and shift the blame of their miscarriage upon him: "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree—and the serpent, (which also is a creature of thy making,) he beguiled me," &c. Here is nothing in their deportment that looks like the motive of such a promise. But, though they run from God, he will not so part with them; yea, he follows them, finds them out, and, for a door of hope, freely pronounceth this gracious promise, of sending his Son to destroy this old serpent, the devil; and, consequently, the serpentine nature that had now instilled and mingled itself with theirs. It is the first promulgation of the gospel, and speaks with as much absoluteness as words can express, "It shall bruise thy head." This I insist the more upon, because it is the first that was made in time, and that out of which all the following promises were educed.—*Coles.*

[OCTOBER 1, 1864.]

# THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

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OCTOBER, 1864.

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

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## THE BLESSEDNESS OF A THRONE OF GRACE.

"WATCHMAN, what of the night?" Perhaps you will not think it altogether out of order to pass the time of night with one who, I trust, is travelling to the same desired haven as yourself, or to have a word or two about poor Zion, the city of the Great King, the building of mercy; and if we begin at home, which is, I think, the safest place to start at, how seldom is it the case that we are brought to the top of Pisgah, and with the bright clear sight of faith have a glimpse of the land that is far off, and soar above the clogging, dying things of this perishing state! How often rather is it the case with us that we seem so interwoven with them as though we had nothing better before us. But what a mercy it is that God is pleased to do unto us as the eagle doth unto her young ones in the nest; that is, to bring us out of it, and not let us rest in it, but to stir us up; that he will not let us rest or settle upon our lees, which we most certainly should do if he were to leave us unto ourselves. God hath said, "This is *not* your rest; it is polluted;" and sometimes the means that God is pleased to use to accomplish this is like a something that would tear the very flesh from the bones. The Cross seems so weighty, so galling to the flesh, that I have thought, "Surely no one ever had to bear so galling a cross as I." I have cried, groaned, and prayed that it might be removed; but still it remains. I have been assured all the time that God hath a cross for each and for all; but mine, I have thought, is so different to any of the rest; so that many times I have thought I shall never hold out to the end, but shall surely one day fall by the hand of mine enemies. And at times I have plunged and kicked like a wild bull in a net, and should have plunged myself into the deeps of hell if my God had not stayed me, and brought me down, and given me to see what an unworthy, fretful, ill and hell deserving creature I have been, am now, and ever shall be while in this waste-howling wilderness.

It is not crosses, and losses, and afflictions of themselves that will ever do us any service or good; not in the least; but it is the overruling hand and power of the Mighty God, sanctifying them and overruling them for our good and his own honour and glory; and

when God hath thus worked for us and in us, what a sweet, what a blessed change it produces in the soul, as I trust I experienced the other day, while, secreted away from the eyes of mortals, I endeavoured to tell my God about my troubles and about poor Zion. I was led to view the Lord of Life and Glory as coming into this dark, benighted, sin-smitten world as a babe, yet the mighty God; he that was rich, yet for our sakes becoming poor; ah, poor; so poor he had not where to lay his head, and was not allowed the common privilege of a wayfaring man, but must be thrust into a stable with oxen and with asses. There my mind was fastened, gazing upon so deep a mystery, and I was lost for a few moments in wonder at the great condescension, love, and mercy of the eternal God. My heart was melted, like wax before the fire, and my eyes streamed with tears of love and gratitude at the infinite compassion of God. Ah! Who can tell what I saw and felt in my heart for a short time? None but those who have been in the same place. I felt a power in my soul which made all my frame to shake. I said, "O my dear Lord! I am ashamed to think that ever I should have said one word about my troubles, or thought that I have had any troubles. O my Lord! I have never had any troubles. My path has been a path of ease and comfort, but thine on earth was a life of grief and torture. O thou compassionate Saviour, the Giver of every good and Dispenser of every comfort! O that thou shouldst have condescended to be laid in a manger for a cradle." I wept aloud as I was led to look upon him as the humble Babe, yet the mighty God. Ah! Blessed be God for a throne of grace; for many times I have gone in secret to try to pour out my heart unto God when, according to my feelings, it was little less than presumption; but have often found such a spirit of prayer fall upon me in a moment that I have been enabled to tell the Lord all my troubles, sorrows, and fears, and to beg for Zion that her cords might be lengthened and her stakes strengthened. Often have I found my darkness, misery, and deathliness depart from me for the time, so that I have been encouraged many times to come unto the throne of grace, yea, in the greatest extremity.

I can well remember when I was under the Law as the ministration of condemnation, feeling the wrath of God lying heavy upon me, so that I have started away from my work on purpose to try to ask God to have mercy upon me; when I have dropt upon my knees before God, Satan hath said in a moment, "If you dare to open your mouth before God, he will strike you down dead at once; and I have been so horror-struck I have rushed out of the place in a moment, worse than I was before.

But O! Blessed be our God, there are times, when he is pleased to give the spirit of prayer, when all the powers of earth and hell appear to be paralysed, when there is nothing allowed to come between God and the living soul. I believe I had a sweet realisation of this the other night, when I felt a sweet drawing of soul unto God, and I went where no mortal eye could see me, and was enabled to confess my sins before God with a feeling, broken heart, humbled



by God's softening, melting mercy. I could plead with him for grace to act, speak, and walk, and I begged that he would sooner take me out of this world, there and then, than leave me to live to sin against so kind and so merciful a God as he had proved to be unto me, so utterly unworthy of the least of all his mercies. I could say, "O my God! Thy will be done, not mine. Let me be anything or nothing, that shall be most for thine honour, praise, and glory."

This is the place to be brought into, where faith hath self under its feet and the world in the dust. This is as great a victory as when the stripling David laid his foot upon the neck of the great Goliath. The soul can pray feelingly for Zion and for all her faithful watchmen, that God would raise up more labourers in his vineyard, that Zion might be led and fed in the green pastures of God's everlasting love and mercy, and that God would gather his elect together from among men out of the quarry of nature, from the ruins of the fall.

I can say truly I have been brought into this place many times; and why it is I know not, but at this time I prayed that my dear and ever-blessed Lord would speak and tell me what he would have me to do, but not a single word was there applied; but after this last sweet visit, when I went to my bed, I had not been asleep long when I was aroused out of my sleep with these words: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates." The words would not allow me to sleep. They did not come unto me with sweetness and power, yet they kept passing through my mind all the rest of the night and part of the next day: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates."

When God is pleased to bring his precious word to the soul, the soul is so arrested that all the powers of body and soul are brought to a stand in a moment. What light, what love, what power, what unction and sweetness are brought into the soul. It cannot be set forth as it is felt and enjoyed under the light of God's countenance and smile, as I have often experienced it. Blessed be his adorable name for it, who giveth as he will and withholdeth at his pleasure. "If he hideth his face, who then can behold him, whether it be done against a nation or against a man only?" Or if he hideth his face from a cause, and when Ichabod is clearly seen written upon the walls, its glory being departed, what is there left? Nothing but death. I have been called a bigoted Huntingtonian, for speaking after this fashion; but I still believe it from my very soul. I ask, "What is the great work of Satan in this our day?" A mixing up of the people with this motto over them: "Love and Union." Let us watch this, and put it alongside the word of God, and then see how the matter stands. (Amos iii. 3.) Can two walk together except they be agreed? And what agreement can there be between free will and free grace? None whatever. The one is a lie of Satan's, and the other is the truth of God. There is just this much difference, and no less.

We can look back upon our short past life, and look upon certain spots and places where we have seen the mighty arm of God made

bare in our deliverance and salvation, when we have been brought into those circumstances that none but the arm of God could deliver us; and here we have seen it to the joy of our hearts. And can we ever forget them? Did Jacob ever forget Bethel and the many places where God appeared unto him? Never, unto his dying day. Did David ever forget the hill Mizar? No; nor do I think I shall ever forget ——— Chapel. How can I, when I have gone with my heart as full of grief and my soul as full of terror, condemnation, and hell as I think a soul could stand up under, and have come out again as for the last time, never to go again; and when a dear friend said unto me, "Well, how is it now?" I said in the bitterness of my soul, "I am a lost man; I will never come again;" feeling in my very soul lost, lost, lost; but when the time came on, I could not carry out my own plan, but was constrained to go once more; and this was the time when it pleased God to deliver me from going down into the pit. Can I ever forget it? No, I cannot. Blessed be the name of the Lord, my soul hath these things still in remembrance, and is humbled within in me.

May God help us to come out of the world, as to its vanities and pleasures; and may he be pleased to give us a watchful spirit, that we may watch our hearts, groan over our prayers, and watch the leadings of God with us and upon us; and may we know what it is to be often secreted with God in prayer, that we may be blessed with that faith which overcometh the world and holdeth it under its feet.

J. B.

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### "MY LOVE."

BY RICHARD SIBBES, PURITAN MINISTER.

Cant. v. 2.

I. IF we consider what he has done and suffered for her, we may well say the church is "his love." Beside the former favours, to speak of election, he chose us before we were. In time he chose us by actual election, by which he called us. And then also he justified us, and clothed us with his own righteousness, and after feeds us with his own body. As the soul is the most excellent thing in the world, so he has provided for it the most excellent ornaments. It has food and ornaments proportionable. What love is this, that he should feed our souls with his own body, and clothe us with his own righteousness!

"He loved me," saith Paul. (Gal. ii. 20.) What was the effect of this love? "and gave himself for me." He gave himself, both that we might have a righteousness to clothe us with in the sight of God, and he gave himself, that he might be the bread of life: "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed." (John vi. 55.) The guilty, the self-accusing soul feeds upon Christ dying for its sins. Again, in Rev. i. 6, you have his love set forth: "He loved us;" and how does he witness it? He has washed us in his own blood, and made us kings and priests. The like you have in Eph. v. 2: "He loved us, and gave himself a sweet sacrifice to God for us."

When this world is at an end, we shall see what his love is. He is not satisfied till we are all in one place. What does he pray for to his Father? "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me be with me where I am." (John xvii. 24.)

Run through the whole course of salvation, election, vocation, justification, glorification, you shall see his love in them all. But it were an infinite argument to follow to show the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge; (Eph. iii. 19;) and it is too large for us to know all the dimensions of it, to see the height, breadth, length, and depth of it, which we should ever think, speak, and meditate of, because the soul is then in the most fit temper to serve, love, and glorify God, when it is most in the apprehension of his love.

II. It is a most invincible love, that nothing could quench it. As we see here the church droops, and had many infirmities, yet she is Christ's love; so that the love of Christ is a kind of love which is unconquerable. No water will ever quench it; no sin of ours, no infirmity. So it is very comforting that the church considered under infirmities is yet the love of Christ. "I sleep, but my heart waketh;" yet Christ comes with, "My love, my dove," &c.

But what? Cannot Christ see matter of weakness, sinfulness, hatred, and dislike in the church? O yes, to pity, help, and heal it; but not at all to diminish his love, but to manifest it so much the more. His love is a tender love, sensible of all things wherewith we displease him; yet it is so invincible and unconquerable, it overcomes all. Again, he sees ill indeed in us, but he sees in us some good of his own also, which moves him more to love than that which is ill in us moves him to hate. For what he sees of ours, he sees with a purpose to vanquish, mortify, and eat it out. The Spirit is as fire to consume it; he is as water to wash it. But what he sees of his own, he sees with a purpose to increase it more, and to perfect it. Therefore he says, "My love," notwithstanding that the church was asleep.

This serves, however, greatly for our comfort, to search what good Christ by his Spirit has wrought in our hearts; what faith, what love, what sanctified judgment, what fire of holy affections to him and to the best things. O let us value ourselves by that which is good, that Christ has in us. We are Christ's love, though we are sleepy. If we are displeased with this our state, that as Christ dislikes it, so if we by the Spirit dislike it, the matter is not what sin we have in us, but how we are affected to it. Have we that evil in us, which is truly the grief of our hearts, which as Christ dislikes, so we abhor it, and would be purged and rid of it? And is it the grief of our souls that we cannot be better and more lovely in Christ's eye? Then let us not be discouraged. For Christ esteems of his church highly, even as his very love, even at that time when she was sleepy. This may teach us, in time of temptation, not to hearken to Satan, who then moves us to look altogether upon that which is sinful in us, thereby to abate our love to Christ, and our apprehension of his love to us. For he knows if we are all sensible of the

love of Christ to us, we shall love him again. For love is a kind of fire, an active quality, which will set us about glorifying God and pulling down Satan's kingdom. As we say in nature fire does all, (a man can scarce work any instrument without fire,) so grace does all with love. God first manifests to our souls his love to us in Christ, and quickens us by his Spirit, witnessing his love to us, wherewith he warms our hearts, kindles and enflames them so with love that we love him again; which love has a constraining, sweet violence to cause us to suffer, to do, to resist all opposition. If a man is in love with Christ, what will be harsh to him in the world? The devil knows this well enough; therefore one of his main engines and temptations is to weaken our hearts in the sense of God's love and of Christ's. Therefore let us be as wise for our souls as he is subtle and politic against them; as watchful for our own comfort as he is to discomfort us and make us despair. Let us be wise to gather all the arguments of Christ's love that we can.

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### HE MAKETH INTERCESSION FOR THE TRANSGRESSORS.

Dear Sir,—I felt sorry I was unable to give an answer to your inquiry respecting the Lord's goodness to me at B. Believing, however, you would be glad to hear, and having a desire to write a short account of it, I will try, as far as the Lord may bring it to my remembrance, to relate what he showed me.

But perhaps it would be best to tell you something of the state my poor soul had been in for some time previously. I was brought down, through bodily weakness, almost to death's door; and in this state the Lord's sensible presence was withdrawn. I was tried about the beginning, middle, and end of my religion. My sins of omission and commission lay heavy on my conscience, and all my former experience of the Lord's mercy was quite out of sight. All my hope seemed perished from the Lord. It appeared a most awful and solemn thing indeed to be called away out of time into eternity without a well-grounded hope in the finished work of the Son of God. In this state, cries and groans were pressed out of my heart for the Lord to appear and give me some token of his favour, and a fresh manifestation of my interest in his everlasting love; and, for ever blessed be his dear name, he did appear for my help in his own appointed time and way. May he help me, in all sincerity of soul, to show forth his praise.

On the night of Lord's day, April 20th, 1862, soon after I had retired to bed, my hard heart began to melt down under a feeling sense of the Lord's goodness and long-suffering towards me, one so very unworthy of the least of all his mercies. I said, "Dear Lord, I am such a base transgressor; I don't deserve the least favour at thy hands;" when these words fell with power on my spirit: "He maketh intercession for the transgressors." They were repeated over and over again, and at the same time I beheld Jesus, as the eternal Son of God, coming forth out of the bosom of the Father, as the source

and foundation of all grace. Then I was led to view him as the slaughtered Lamb of God, with his pierced hands, and feet, and side; and these words came with great sweetness and power:

“ ’Twas Jesus, my Friend, when he hung on the tree,  
Who open'd the channel of mercy for me.”

I exclaimed, “What! For a vile wretch like me, Lord?” The answer was: “He maketh intercession,” &c. My eyes were all the time drowned in tears, and my heart melted like wax before the flame, under the gracious presence of Immanuel, who appeared to be the chiefest amongst ten thousand and the altogether lovely. I begged of the Lord to show me if I was deceiving myself with mere natural excitement, when this verse was brought to my mind, which quite settled the matter in my conscience:

“ Our seeking thy face was all of thy *grace*;  
Thy mercy demands and shall have all the praise.  
No sinner can be beforehand with thee;  
Thy grace is eternal, almighty, and free.”

It is impossible for me to describe half the blessedness I enjoyed; but this I can say, my poor, weak tabernacle almost fainted beneath the bliss. It brought to my mind that eternal weight of glory the apostle Paul speaks of in his Epistle to the Corinthians. It made me feel willing to drop this vile body in the dust, from whence it sprang, that I might be able to live in the enjoyment of his presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. I could say, with David, “Now, Lord, what wait I for? My hope is in thee, and my expectation is from thee.” I was enabled to cast myself, my family, and whatever concerned me into the Lord’s hands, whether for life or death. O how I longed to honour him and speak well of his dear name! I felt it was impossible to exalt him high enough, nor loathe myself as I would. I lay blessing and praising his holy name for about two hours; after which a sweet sleep stole over me for an hour, when I awoke up again, the same blessed feelings returning with all their former power and sweetness. What a union it produced in my soul to God’s manifested people. I felt I could live and die in their company. On opening the Bible in the morning, I was led to Ps. ciii., which confirmed every feeling of my soul. I trust I was blessed with a measure of the same grace that the psalmist experienced when, under the blessed teaching of the Holy Ghost, he wrote that precious portion of God’s most holy word. I felt constrained to tell my kind friend Mrs. S. (where I partook of breakfast) a little about it, which caused her in some measure to rejoice also. Though unable long to retain the blessing in its sweet unction and power, yet for several days after, I could sing, with good old Berridge:

“ When Jesus’ gracious hand  
Has touch’d our eyes and ears,  
O what a dreary land  
This wilderness appears.  
No healing balm springs from its dust,  
No cooling streams to quench the thirst.”

That sweet hymn spoke the very feelings of my soul. But, alas! how my poor mind has been entangled and overcome with the trifling things of this vain world many times since. I must confess, a desire had been at work in my soul for many years, at different times, that the Lord would bless my soul with a sense of his pardoning love in Christ, so that I might follow him in the ordinances of his house. Thus he fulfilled that word in my soul's experience, where it says, "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him, and show them his covenant." It brought to my mind that most precious cluster of promises mentioned in the latter part of Micah vii., which were made very sweet to my soul several years ago: "Who is a God like unto thee," &c.

So now, dear Sir, I must conclude with praying the Lord to bless you with every needful favour, and thanking you for your great kindness. Begging you will excuse all blunders,

I remain, Yours, with all due respect,

Stamford.

W. R.

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### HE SHALL SIT AS A REFINER.

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My dear Friends,—I have often desired to see you once more, but so far have been prevented, through illness and other things. I must tell you I have had a long, wearisome, painful illness, which brought me to death's door; but the Lord had his own work to accomplish, and did not lighten his hand till he gave grace to submit. O the awful rebellion I felt to the dispensation! and my carnal heart was no less than enmity against God; but at length he brought down my heart with labour, and made me to fall down and find none to help. In this place I was forced to exclaim, "Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed;" and here all contention ceased. I felt the deepest repentance and contrition, and was brought feelingly to utter, "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." These texts were applied, at different times, to my mind: "I will sit as a refiner;" and, "As a man cleanseth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down, so will I cleanse Jerusalem." I was taught by experience, that what the Lord said he meant, and that it was my fresh lesson again and again to humble myself under his mighty hand,—to stoop lower and lower. One affliction followed another, but underneath, and often quite out of sight were the everlasting arms, though, as Bunyan says, my head was just kept above water, and that is all I could say.

The night I thought I was going, I had such an awful view of the cold river of death. It was as if the Lord Jesus asked me if I could follow him through that, and I stood quite appalled; and then he continued the question: "Leave every earthly tie?" "Stripped of mortal flesh?" "Corruption cannot inherit incorruption." O! I shall never forget how this prayer burst forth in an agony from my heart: "Save me, O God, for the waters are come into my soul." And here it was as if the Lord Jesus proclaimed his name before me, beginning with, "Because thou hast known my name, merciful and

gracious, longsuffering, pardoning iniquity, transgression, and sin, but will not at all acquit the guilty." I felt God was holy; and while I beheld his mercy, my flesh trembled for fear of him, and I was afraid of his judgments.

We were next visited with scarlet fever, and all my cry was, "Howbeit thou art just in all thou hast brought upon us;" and whatever fresh and fresh came, I was secretly helped to turn to the hand that smote. I think I really had strong faith in the Lord at this time, though if I had been asked, I should have said I had no faith at all. It pleased the Lord to turn the afflictions at last, after giving me this: "He knoweth not his anger in great extremity;" and I believed it would be even as he told me.

I was kept to my bedroom from July to March, above eight months; and when I first came down stairs I was asking the Lord where was the fruit of this long illness, for I could see none; when this word distilled very sweetly: "What does the Lord *thy* God require of thee, but to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" I saw how he became of no reputation for our sakes, and that having fellowship with Christ consisted as much in hatred to sin and sorrow on account of it, as in rejoicing in his love and mercy.

After I recovered, my spirit became burdened exceedingly and great fears of delusion were ready to swallow all up; and shall I venture to say that after all this I uttered hard speeches against the Lord, and that I said, "I feel the power of unbelief so great that I do not think God can ever persuade me to believe with assurance again?" O, how awful! It may well be said, he bears with our manners in the wilderness. But God's time was not come to deliver me. I went to T. W., and heard a sermon. The word would enter, whether or not; and then all closed again. I could understand and know all the minister preached about, and was sure the things he spoke of had been wrought in my heart; but I could not lay hold of them now. Still, my visit there was a great help to me.

About six weeks ago, being about as usual, an expectation was kindled in my heart that the Lord was waiting to be gracious; and some days afterwards I went to hear Mr. H. preach. His text was: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals." It was indeed the voice of the Lord to me. He remembered the work of his own Spirit on my heart. He remembered me, the earnest longings, pantings, and groanings after him in my early days. He remembered that he had manifested his love, and entered into a covenant with me, and I became his. He remembered he had cast all my sins into the depths of the sea, no more to be remembered for ever. He beheld no iniquity in Jacob, nor transgression in Israel.

O, my dear friends, this was a sound healing. I came home, and when I sat down I said, "Lord, I never looked for this. It is too much." And then he applied this with much power: "I have made with thee an *everlasting* covenant, ordered in all things and sure." Is anything too hard for the Lord? He can make sure, notwithstanding the mighty unbelief that is in us. The enemy thrust sore

at me in the night; but the Lord helped me in answer to this cry, which he seemed to put in the extremity: "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." And I must say he does still keep me, so that Satan does not have the mastery.

His word one day filled me with awe: "And they feared as they entered the cloud;" and while I pondered over it, a deep sense of sin being hateful to God's holiness pressed my spirit, and those words in Jude came before me: "Hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." I felt I was that sinner which had thus sinned against a holy God, that my sins were against love and blood, immense as is the sea. I was made deeply to mourn; to look on him whom I had pierced, and grieve. It was not wrath I felt, but love. Love flowed in, and love flowed out. Hart beautifully describes what I felt in his hymn:

"Jesus is our God and Saviour," &c.

I must add no more, but hope to hear from you. I believe you will rejoice with me, for there has been a long night of weeping, and yet joy comes at last.

With Christian love to our friends, with you,

Faithfully yours,

Nov. 23rd, 1863.

P. B.

## REPORT, SAY THEY, AND WE WILL REPORT IT.

My dear Friend,—As I find that many false and foolish reports are in wide circulation about the causes of my resigning the pastoral care of my two churches and congregations at Stamford and Oakham and moving to another locality, and as there are many surmises on the subject, I take an early opportunity of explaining to you and to my numerous friends, through the medium of the "Standard," in which I hope to insert this letter, the real and only reasons for my taking such an important step as to relinquish the charge of a people amongst whom I have laboured more than 26 years, and almost like Abraham, to go out not knowing whither I am going. Be assured, then, that all the vain and foolish rumours that may have reached your ears about any mutual dissatisfaction between me and my people at either place, or because of any divisions in the church, or because either of them "winks at sin," as I hear some public libeller has falsely and recklessly insinuated, or that I am quitting them to better myself, as servants call it, or, in the cant language of the day, to seek a wider and more exalted sphere of usefulness, and all the hodge-podge rubbish which is being scraped together to entertain the religious newsmongers who dearly love a bit of gossip, especially if well spiced with scandal, as a part of the "News of the Churches," are as false as sin and Satan can make or spread them. Beyond the common infirmities which always cleave to minister and people, I believe I may boldly say that my two churches and congregations are not dissatisfied with me, nor I with them. Indeed, I may freely tell you that there is great grief and lamentation among them that I should be compelled to



dissolve the tie that has bound us close for more than 26 years; and as regards myself I may as freely say that when I have been asked whether I could not move to another church and people, as, for instance, to London, where I am so cordially received and well attended during my annual visit, my answer has been, as they will testify, "Two great turnpike gates locked and fastened, with long spikes at the top, stand in the way: 1. My want of health and strength; and 2. The two churches and congregations among which I have laboured so many years." Thus I had no intention of leaving them, and I am sure they had no intention of dismissing me.

But we are sometimes compelled to do what we are very unwilling to do, and what perhaps we have thought we never should do. There is such a thing as necessity, hard necessity; and as necessity is laid on the servants of the Lord to preach the gospel, so sometimes necessity is laid upon them to cease wholly or partially from preaching the gospel. This in some measure is my case.

The sole cause, then, of my giving up the charge of my two churches and congregations and moving to another and a warmer locality, is the *state of my health*, which will not allow me to persevere in the continuous work of the ministry. Being also liable to attacks of a peculiar form of bronchitis which, without being severe or, I believe, what is called dangerous, not being of an inflammatory character, yet often lays me aside for some weeks together, and I having suffered in this way for several successive springs, I find the climate of Stamford, which is peculiarly cold for its latitude and exposed to the east wind, though otherwise dry and healthy for sound and strong lungs, quite unsuitable to my tender chest. Being so often thus laid aside from the work of the ministry, and being otherwise unable from delicate health to visit the sick, bury the dead, and carry on that supervision of the flock which seems needful for the proper exercise of the pastoral office, I have long felt I was almost practically useless to my churches, and a burthen rather than a benefit. I cannot say, indeed, that they have either felt or expressed this, for nothing can exceed their kindness and forbearance, and I believe they would sooner have a little of me than none, and keep me, with all my defects and deficiencies in body and soul, than cast me off as worn out and good for nothing. Still I feel it, and it is a burden to me to be to any one a burden.

But besides this, I began to find that my long and continued labours with the pen, with all the anxieties and cares of my position as the editor of the "Standard," all of which are added to the work of the ministry, were telling on my constitution. The wonder with me and others who know me is, that I have not broken down before this. Other ministers, stouter and stronger than I, can rest when their work is done; but mine is ever going on, and only beginning when theirs is ending. Frequently after a Lord's day of hard ministerial labour I have spent two hours and more writing before I went to bed; and hard writing, too, for it was my "Meditations," or some subject which demanded much thought and most careful consideration and examination from the word of God and expe-

rience. Many a Lord's day I have worked with tongue or pen pretty well from morning to night, except at meals, and sometimes have scarcely had an hour of quiet rest. All this a strong, healthy young man may do, and do it too without sensible fatigue or injury; but all this bodily and mental labour tells heavily in the end on one naturally of weak constitution, and now advancing in life. I feel, therefore, that I must either stop in time or go on and drop. Can any one, then, rightly blame me if, with a family to provide for, and, I hope, the church of God to think of, I do not sacrifice my life to stay at one post? I am neither dead nor dying, as has been reported,—except in a spiritual sense, nor in a consumption, threatened or confirmed, a slow or a galloping one, as some have thought,—except a gradual and now more rapid wasting away of my own strength, wisdom, and righteousness; but am labouring under weakness of the chest, the result of inflammatory attacks many years ago, and some dating even from childhood and boyhood.

When I was in London last July, I had one of my attacks of that peculiar form of bronchitis to which I am subject, brought on mainly, I believe, by overwork. My kind friend and skilful physician, Dr. Corfe, attended me in that illness, and, after a long and careful examination of my case, gave it as his decided opinion that I should, for a time at least, cease from my ministerial labours, and leave Stamford for a warmer locality. This seemed to me quite a providential interposition, as it had been for some time the conviction of my own mind; but when it was thus fortified by a medical opinion in which I could place full confidence, it seemed almost like the voice of God bidding me prepare my staff for removing. As, then, my year always closes towards the end of October, and as I wished to move into warmer quarters before the winter, I with great reluctance laid the case before my two churches, giving them the reasons, the only reasons, why I felt I must dissolve the tie between us, and my wish to leave them before the winter. At both places much sorrow was expressed at my decision; but the friends knew so well the state of my health, and that I should not have left them but for that reason, that no opposition was made to my wishes,\* and they consented kindly to give me up.

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\* I hope I shall be forgiven if I insert here an extract from a letter lately received from a dear and valued friend, a member of the church at Oakham, which I should not have given except to show the kind feeling which there is toward me:

"Alas! I could not wish you to remain with us, and hazard your further usefulness. For ourselves, I have to say, 'The thing which I feared has come upon us.' My exercises of mind about it have been great. I have said, and do still say, that we shall never, in word, and doctrine, and experience, be so favoured again, nor can I ever meet in another Pastor with that kind entering into my concerns and trials, that brotherly kindness and charity which I have received from yourself. I mourn as an individual; I see individually others mourn, and, as a body, I see the hearts of our people deeply grieved in the view of your removal from us. Our aged friends, under whom our cause was first opened, feel it most deeply. I have necessarily only touched upon what I might sincerely have said upon this subject."

I need not say that it is a great trial to me, and has caused me much mental exercise to leave my people after labouring amongst them so many years, to part from kind and attached friends, with whom I have so long walked in union and communion, to give up my own comfortable home, to which I have done so much, and submit to other sacrifices which I will not name, but which must be an evident proof that nothing but necessity would compel me to make them.

I desire, however, to submit to the Lord's will, and to bend my back to the heavy burden laid on it, in the hope that I shall still find him what he has been to me for so many years, the God of all my mercies, both in providence and grace.

I am about to move to Croydon, and have been induced to pitch my tent there for several reasons. First, there is a place of truth and a preached gospel there. Secondly, it is a dry, warm, and healthy locality. Thirdly, it is near London, and offers very great convenience for getting about, should the Lord kindly please so far to restore my health as to enable me, after the present winter, when I mean to rest, to visit my friends occasionally, and preach to them the word of life. But I cannot accept general invitations, or knock about in all winds and weathers, like the healthy and strong, regardless of summer's heat or winter's cold, the rainy south wind or the biting east.

I desire to see the will of God and the hand of God in all my movements; and if I am but favoured with his presence and smile, I shall feel myself in my right place anywhere, and without them in my wrong place everywhere.

Yours, very sincerely,

J. C. PHILPOT.

Stamford, Sept. 14, 1864.

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WERE there but this single instance of converting grace on record in Scripture, I mean the instantaneous conversion of Matthew, it would be sufficient to put the point out of all doubt. He was a person who sustained the character and discharged the office of a publican or tax-gatherer for the Romans; an employ, above all others, odious to the Jewish nation, and at the same time infamous to a proverb. We may suppose that it was a principle of covetousness and attachment to the world which induced Matthew, who, as both his names declare was an Israelite by birth, to engage in a way of life which could not fail of rendering him hateful to his countrymen; who considered every publican, and more especially if he was a native Jew, as a tool to foreign tyranny, and a betrayer of his country. Notwithstanding the odium and detestation he was sure to incur, Matthew, previous to his conversion, accepted of the office; and, in all probability, was as avaricious and oppressive in the execution of it as the rest of his hireling brethren. To see such a man, and in the very midst of his actual employment, wrought upon at once by a word's speaking; so wrought upon as instantly to leave all, rise up, and follow that blessed but despised Person, who had not where to lay his head. All this evidently shows that a conversion so speedily and so total, and of such a person too, could be effected by no less a power than that which is omnipotent, and may vie with the greatest miracles which the Son of God performed.—*Toplady.*

## Obituary.

### WILLIAM TIPTAFT, OF ABINGDON.

WILLIAM TIPTAFT died at Abingdon, August 17th, 1864, aged 61.

A warm and general desire having been expressed by many who knew and loved my late dear friend and brother, William Tiptaft, that a little Memoir of him should be published, embracing a longer account of his life and death than could be comprised within the limits of an Obituary, and the execution of that task devolving by their wishes on me, I find myself placed in a strait. On the one hand, I feel that I must not and cannot decline the labour of love thus allotted me, especially as it falls in with my own wishes that some more full and abiding memorial should be raised of one so much esteemed and greatly beloved by the living family of God than our scanty and fleeting pages can afford; and as I was intimately acquainted with him for more than 35 years, I shall feel a solemn pleasure in rearing, as far as the Lord may enable me, this last tribute of affection to his name and memory, which I shall ever hold dear.

But, on the other hand, there is such a general desire among the churches of truth that some account of his last days on earth should appear without delay, that I know it would be a great disappointment were it deferred until the completion of the Memoir; which might and probably would require several months to bring out.

Under these circumstances, I have thought it best to make a compromise, not between truth and error, not between the spirit and the flesh, which my dear departed friend would have abhorred and cried out against with all his soul, but between the present and the future, between a Memoir and an Obituary; and to insert in the present No. a short account of his illness and death, with the mention of a few such other circumstances as would not only be interesting in themselves, but would throw some light on the last days which he spent on earth. The Memoir, if I am spared and enabled to execute it, will contain some account of his early days, of that remarkable period of his life when, in the providence of God, he was brought into the neighbourhood of Abingdon, of his secession from the National Establishment, and his building a chapel in that town out of his own substance, and many other particulars which I need not here enumerate. All this detail, which will, I trust, be interesting and edifying in a Memoir, would be out of place in an Obituary.

His illness was so widely known, and its eventual issue so generally expected by those who personally knew him, that very many of our readers must have been prepared to hear of his removal from this scene of sin and sorrow before the tidings reached their ears. The last letter which he wrote to me I inserted in the September No., not then, indeed, anticipating his being so soon called away, as I had not seen him for more than two months, and therefore was not an eye-witness of his increasing decline, nor did he speak of it

in his letters. But the words kept following me with respect to the blessing to his soul there so sweetly related—so much so, indeed, that I was all but putting them at the head of the letter, “Anointed for the burial.” Thus, though the tidings of his death came upon me with a great shock, I could not but feel thankful, after my first emotions subsided, for that merciful stroke which cut short his sufferings and carried his ransomed soul into the fulness of eternal joy.

But before I proceed any further I will give a brief account of his last illness. The disease of which he died was an abscess, which gathered internally in the right side of the throat, accompanied by a malignant ulcer seated on one of the vocal cords, as they are called, that is, just in the very spot where the voice is formed, at the top of the windpipe. The complaint being out of sight, and coming on slowly and insidiously, there was for some time no suspicion of its real nature, or apprehension of its dangerous character; but it had been observed by his friends and hearers for some months previous to the commencement of 1863 that he looked ill and broken in health, and that his once clear and powerful voice had become weak and hoarse. He still, however, persevered in his ministerial labours; and his chest having been for so many years healthy and strong, he exposed himself as freely as he had done before to damp and cold after preaching, walking home sometimes through mist and fog for near three miles, after attending a prayer-meeting in a small room, at a village near Abingdon. He evidently was himself for some time not aware of the nature or danger of his complaint, but thought it was a common hoarseness, which would in due time pass off, like an ordinary cold. Nor could he bring himself to the thought that he should suspend or even diminish his ministerial labours, in which he had been so much favoured and blessed. He still, therefore, with his usual readiness and self-denial, accepted invitations from various churches where he had been before to preach, though it was evident to his friends and hearers that the hoarseness of his voice increased instead of being diminished. Still he persevered in his labours, as the glory of God and the good of his people were to him dearer than his own comfort or even health and life; preaching sometimes, when he went out among the churches, five times in the week, besides twice on the Lord's day. He preached at Abingdon, to his own beloved people, on Wednesday, April 29th, 1863, he and they little thinking it would be for the last time, from 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17, previously expounding from 1 Thess. iv. 1-3, to the word “sanctification.” In May, 1863, he supplied, as usual with him, for a month at Gower Street Chapel, London, when his altered appearance and the weakness and hoarseness of his voice were so apparent that he was induced to consult a skilful physician, who, after due examination of his case, most earnestly advised him to cease from preaching, at least for the present. It was to him a deep and heavy trial to cease from his beloved work, but feeling the wisdom of the counsel and the necessity of the case, when he returned home after the conclusion of his engagement at Gower Street, he did not attempt again to preach. On Wednesday, June 24th, 1863, he

read hymn 667, and on Lord's day, June 28th, he gave out hymn 591, which was the last hymn he read in an audible voice in his own chapel. I will quote the last verse, as so appropriate, and as if the dear man had some anticipation of his approaching end:

"The time is now fix'd, and soon it will come,  
When Christ will his messenger send,  
To fetch him from Meslech and carry him home;  
And then all his sorrows will end."

On Thursday, July 2, he came to Oakham, on a visit to his sister, Mrs. Keal, and on his way thither called at Stamford to see me, and went with me to the chapel where I preached that evening. I was much struck with his altered appearance and loss of voice, and though then it had not sunk, as afterwards, into a whisper, I had some difficulty in maintaining a continuous conversation with him. As I left home next day, to fulfil my engagements in London and Wilts, I did not see him again till September 5th, he being then still at Oakham, when I perceived that his health had become more broken, and his countenance more pallid and deathlike; and though his complaint seemed still obscure, it was evident that some organic disease was preying upon his life. During the whole of the autumn and winter he remained at Oakham, under the hospitable roof of his brother-in-law, Mr. Keal, where everything that kindness, affection, and medical skill could suggest was done for his comfort, and, if it were the will of God, his restoration. During that period, therefore, I saw him constantly, spending nearly four days every fortnight in the same house with him. His loss of voice, however, and weakened, broken health much prevented conversation between us, as he could scarcely be heard across the table, and to talk at any length brought on cough and exhaustion. But I was an eye-witness of his patient submission to the afflicting hand of God, and on one occasion particularly to the consolations with which he was favoured. But for the most part he was very silent, living chiefly, except at meals, in his own room, and during the winter almost wholly confined to the house. Still, whenever he could, and weather permitted, he attended the chapel; for his heart was ever with the dear people of God and in the house of prayer, though it was painful to us and to him that he should be a silent listener where he had been so often a bold and faithful preacher. It being the will of God to lay his afflicting hand on me in the early spring of 1864, I did not see him from the end of February till the close of April; when again on visiting Oakham, I did not observe so great an alteration in his appearance as I had anticipated. Still the disease was evidently making progress, and though from the very first I doubted whether he would ever recover his voice or health, I felt more confirmed in my fears that his sickness was unto death. As his voice was gone, his work seemed done and his ministry ended; and as he had given us an example of *doing*, so now it appeared as if he were appointed to set us an example of *suffering* the will of God. The dear man must indeed have suffered greatly in his body, as we all know what a tender spot the throat is; and the nature of his complaint

not only made swallowing difficult, but brought on sometimes such violent fits of coughing as it was painful to witness. But in all my observation of him, I never heard him complain or murmur. The precise nature of his complaint being obscure, and knowing from the description of those who had witnessed it what a fearful disease it would be should the affection in his throat prove to be cancerous, which was at one time apprehended, I have often prayed that the Lord would cut short his work, and spare my dear friend the dreaded suffering.

Further medical advice being thought necessary, he expressed himself willing to consult a London physician who had paid great attention to throat disease. He therefore, May 30, left Oakham for London, after a sojourn there of about eleven months.

I have often admired the kind providence of God over him in giving him such a comfortable home during his illness. His complaint being very weakening, he needed much support and constant attention; and those who are acquainted with his abstemious, self-denying habits, will feel with me that he would not have allowed himself what he once viewed as luxuries, but which had now become, such as meat thrice a day and wine, necessities. I was with him the last morning that he was at Oakham, praying with him and for him in the family, and most kindly and affectionately we parted, though I did not then think I should never see him alive again. The London physician, who had paid great attention to throat disease, decided, by ocular inspection, that there was a malignant ulcer, as had previously been suspected, on one of the vocal cords, but would not pronounce any decided opinion upon the thickening in the throat, but thought it might ultimately prove cancerous. This, however, was not the case, as the event proved that it was a simple abscess, gradually wearing him out, but not approaching that fearful disease, cancer, in its symptoms or effects.

At various times the Lord abundantly blessed his soul, reconciling him to his heavy affliction, though from the loss of voice he could not converse much with those who came to see him. On June 11 he left London for Clifton, near Abingdon, and the next day being the Lord's Day, after hearing Mr. Knill with great sweetness, he assisted him in administering the Ordinance to the church of which he had been so many years the beloved pastor, taking the bread round on the one side of the chapel and the cup on the other. He had previously chosen Hymn 1121 to be sung, and was much blessed when Mr. Knill gave it out, especially at the fourth verse:

"Do this," he cried, "till time shall end,  
In memory of your dying Friend!  
Meet at my table, and record  
The love of your departed Lord."

Most affecting was the scene, and many tears were shed on both sides, he feeling so deeply the coming back amongst his own people with the blessing of God resting on his soul, and they rejoiced to welcome him amongst them, yet sorrowing over his altered appearance. A friend from whose account we have gathered most

of the above particulars thus describes it: "To see the friends come to him and shake hands with him, the tears of love and sorrow flowing down every face, was a scene that we hardly expect will ever take place in our church again." Being thus so specially favoured and blest in returning and revisiting his own beloved people, it seemed powerfully laid on his mind that among them he would come to live what remained of his span of life, die, and be buried; for he told the friend with whom he was staying on returning to his house at Clifton that "he should like to live at Abingdon, die at Abingdon, and be buried at Abingdon." When this desire of his was named to the friends, it exactly met their wishes, for they had much felt the long separation from them, and earnestly desired that their dear pastor's last days should be spent among them. On June 13, he went to Brinkworth, Wilts, to spend a short time with a dear and esteemed friend, and whilst there was again much blessed and favoured in his soul. Meanwhile his wish to come to the friends, they exerted themselves to procure a suitable house for him, and put everything in readiness for his reception on his return. On Friday, July 1, he came back to Abingdon, and entered into and upon his last earthly abode. Being quiet and out of the town, it well suited him; and as it faced the cemetery, in which he knew his body would soon lie, it much met his feelings, which we, who knew him well, remember even in health were much engaged on the solemn subject of death.

It may not be here, perhaps, out of place to say that having given away or spent for the glory of God and the good of his people every sixpence of his own property, he was now in good measure dependent on the friends. This he need not have been but for his own excessive liberality, for if he had but a shilling he would give more than half away. When remonstrated with on giving away so freely and leaving himself nothing, he used to say he had no fear but that he should be provided for when he needed it. And so he found it; for the Lord, who gave him that faith, owned it, and he never lacked anything which could add to his comfort to the last day of his life.

Being again much favoured and blest in his new abode, he said that he was grateful to the Lord that ever he returned to Abingdon, for he felt now that he was in his right place. Though I should for some reasons have been glad for him to return to Oakham, that he might have all the comforts there so much needed and so freely given in his declining state, yet I could not but feel and say it was a gracious decision when he fixed to live and die amongst his own people; and I am sure that all who knew and loved him will own with me it was just the man—the final and suitable close to his godly, self-denying life.

But I will now give an extract from the letter of a friend who was much with him in his last days, and stood by his dying bed:

"I have had the pleasure and privilege of attending upon him in some small way or other almost daily ever since his return to Abingdon. The first Lord's day he was able to come to chapel,



but the second he was not; and in the morning of that day he was very low and tried in his mind; but about four o'clock in the afternoon the Lord broke in upon his soul and greatly blessed him. He told the friends afterwards who came to see him that 'the Lord had crowned it all now;' and he never sank so low after that time; but, in answer to my daily questions, said that he was quite comfortable in his mind. He came after that every Lord's day to chapel, a kind friend lending me a sociable to fetch him and bring him back. But the last Lord's day, August 14th, I could see a great change in him. While we were at dinner by ourselves in the school-room, at the chapel, I told him he was very ill. He thought that he was not so ill as he was on the previous Lord's day; but it was plain to many of our friends that he was much weaker. He told me that he had heard Mr. Beard well, that it was the right sort of preaching, and that he was glad to be there. I saw him again on Monday; he was still weaker, but did not appear like dying so soon. On that day, however, the abscess broke internally, and he brought up a great deal of fetid matter. Indeed, on the previous day his breath was so offensive that I could scarcely bear to be near him. After the abscess broke, he began gradually to sink, having lost apparently all power to swallow his food, and what little he took coming back with what he spit up. I arranged to come on Tuesday morning to him again, which I did. I heard he was worse, and went to him at once. When I got to his house I found him very weak, and sitting upon the sofa, for he had managed to get up and dress himself. I said, 'How are you this morning, Mr. Tiptaft?' and his answer was, 'I am greatly blessed this morning.' The 472nd hymn was much blessed to him:

'When languor and disease invade  
This trembling house of clay,' &c.

He had come down stairs at six o'clock, shaved himself, and had breakfast, but was very weak. I might say he did not eat any breakfast, but brought back what he had tried to swallow. He asked me if I thought he had better go to bed. I said, 'Yes, Sir, you had.' He said, 'Well, then, I will.' I got him up stairs with great difficulty, and then he was obliged to rest. When he recovered a little strength, he let me take off his clothes and get him into bed. After he had been in bed a little while, he said to me, 'What two great mercies these are—to be made fit and willing to die.' He was then suffering very much, apparently struggling with death; but he said, 'Death has lost its sting, and the grave its victory.' He told friend Hicks so when he came to see him, soon after he had repeated it to me. He then asked me to read, and friend Hicks to pray. I read Psalm cxvi. to him, and said to him, 'You have said a great deal about this psalm.' He said, 'Yes.' Friend Hicks prayed, and after that I asked him if he was still happy. Though in appearance greatly suffering, he said he could look death in the face, and added, 'What a mercy!' Friend Hicks said, 'You used to give out that Hymn (406), which reads as

follows in the last verse;’ and friend Hicks then repeated the verse:

“ ‘When called to meet the King of dread,  
Should love compose my dying bed,  
And grace my soul sustain,  
Then, ere I quit this mortal clay,  
I’ll raise my fainting voice, and say,  
Let grace triumphant reign.’ ”

Friend Hicks said, ‘Is that verse your mind now?’ and he said, ‘Yes.’ After this, friend Hicks left him, and a friend came wishing to see him. I told him it was Mrs. Paxman, of Clifton. ‘Can you see her?’ He said she might come and shake hands and withdraw, as he could not speak to her. I told her, and she came to him and shook hands. He smiled and said to her, ‘As my afflictions abound, so also do my consolations.’ Mrs. Paxman shook hands, and withdrew. He continued for about three hours with only himself and me in the room. I frequently asked him if he was happy, and he said, ‘Yes.’ During this time he said I might write and tell friends ‘how happy he was; that his last days had been his best, and that Christ was precious to him.’ But he was still suffering, and I could not help praying that the Lord would cut short his sufferings, and take him to himself; but at the same time thought I ought to pray that the dear Lord would grant him strength and resignation to suffer all his holy will. He about this time (8 o’clock) tried to take a little chicken broth, but could not swallow it. I here might say that I had sent for the doctor some hours before, and the doctor said he had not power to swallow; and that was the case, for he did not swallow any more. About half-past 8 o’clock he said, ‘How do I look? Does my forehead look thin and pale.’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He then said, ‘Why did you think I was worse last Lord’s day?’ I said, ‘You looked worse, and you were weaker.’ He said he was in more pain the Lord’s day previously. I said, ‘The battle will soon be over.’ He said, ‘Do you think so?’ I said, ‘Yes; you will soon be in glory.’ He replied, ‘Yes, and what a mercy!’ He tried to take some tea, but could not swallow it, and could only wash his mouth out with it. His cough now left him, and he was better able to speak, and in a louder whisper. About 9 o’clock he was still in great restlessness of body. I again asked if he was happy, and said, ‘Is Jesus precious?’ He said, ‘Yes, yes.’ He said again, ‘What a mercy that my last days have been my best!’ I said, ‘Yes, and your last hours have been your best.’ He said, ‘Yes.’ He then wanted to get out of bed and have his bed made up afresh. I got him into his chair, and he told me I must do the bed up myself. I did so, and got him into bed again; and he then said, ‘What a mercy to have the greatest blessings when most needed! To me it would be better to die; to die would be my gain.’ He was still very restless in body, and said, ‘O dear! It is almost enough to wear any one out.’ I said, ‘Yes, the battle will soon be over.’ He said, ‘Yes. Miss Richmond and Mrs. Bobart, both of them members of the church, came in. He shook hands and smiled, said he was still

happy, and hoped to meet them in glory. Mrs. Hall, his house-keeper, now came into the room, with two other friends. He told Mrs. Hall he was happy. About half-past 11 he got more quiet, and his restlessness was nearly over. He then began as though he would preach to us, and said, 'What a mercy! My last moments are my best.' I then said, 'You will soon be in glory.' He said, 'Yes.' I said, 'You can say, 'I shall soon be landed.' He said, 'Yes, and join the happy throng, and it is *free grace, free grace*. Free will sentiments will not do to die with. It is free grace that will stand for ever; but free will will be dashed.' He said something else, but I could not hear distinctly the other words. He then said, 'What troubles and sorrows attend the true followers of the Lamb! But what a mercy to endure to the end.' And again, 'My last moments have been my best.' I heard him now say, 'Thy love is better than wine. Praise God, praise God.' He said that he 'longed to be gone and praise the Lord in glory.' I answered, 'You can say, 'Behold his chariot wheels, and say,

'Let grace triumphant reign.'

He said, 'Yes, and grace shall have all the praise.' He then got very quiet, and gently breathed his last at 25 minutes past one in the morning of the 17th of August, 1864. How forcibly those words struck my mind as his last breath was gone: 'Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.'

"Culham, Abingdon.

"EDWIN PORTER."

Had I been permitted to fulfil my engagement at Abingdon for August 21st, it would have fallen to my lot to bury my dear friend and brother; but I was not able, from general ill health and from an attack of cold and sore throat just at the time, even to attend the funeral. He was laid in his last resting-place by Mr. Tanner, of Cirencester, assisted by Mr. Gorton and Mr. A. Hammond, and it might be truly said that "devout men carried him to his burial, and made great lamentation over him;" (Acts viii. 2;) for many tears—tears not only of sorrow but of affection, tempered with holy joy at his blessed end—were shed by the members of his bereaved church and by the friends who came far and near to pay the last tribute of respect to his memory. And I must say for myself that, though I should have much felt it, I have often since wished that my eyes could have rested upon his coffin as it was lowered into the earth, and that I could have seen him, as he has so often prayed, "well laid in the grave."

Stamford, Sept. 16, 1864.

J. C. PHILPOT.

If an angel could appear to one and tell him of his being in the favour of God, and beloved by him, it would not have the effect upon us which we at first might imagine; for it would be easy afterwards to doubt and reason if it was not a delusion, a fancy, or Satan transformed to deceive us; but the "Spirit is the witness, because the Spirit is truth," and cannot deceive; and he does not only once or twice give us a glimpse of the lovely Jesus, and him crucified, but he makes our bodies his temple; he comes in and dwells with us, will never leave or forsake us, but will abide with us for ever.—*Cennick*.

*LINES TO THE MEMORY OF THAT DEAR MAN OF GOD,  
WILLIAM TIPTAFT.*

Go, faithful soldier, go; thy Captain calls thee home;  
No longer in dark Meshech shall thy blood-bought spirit roam.  
How sad will fall the tidings on the living children's heart  
From such a guide and father for a season now to part.

But we sorrow not as hopeless; we know thou art with thy Lord;  
For them that sleep in Jesus, says the Spirit in the word,  
Shall God bring with him evermore to see his glorious face,  
And sing the eternal anthem of free and sovereign grace.

Full long at Sinai's fiery mount thy God did make thee stay,  
That thou might'st teach the certainty of that condemning way.  
But when the law's dark shadows before Jesus fled away,  
Then thou couldst teach true liberty and preach the gospel day.

O! Bold and faithful pastor, all sin didst thou reprove,  
Yet to the contrite, broken heart, meek as the gentle dove.  
One grain of godly sorrow, one sigh for Jesu's name,  
How like a tender nurse wouldst thou fan into a flame.

Contending for that living faith deliver'd to the saints,  
Yet thou couldst feel heart union with the little one's complaints.  
No taking things on trust, but the Spirit's mighty power,  
Revealing Christ alone in the dark and trying hour.

Reality, reality, if this thou couldst but find,  
Though often mix'd with ignorance in the dark and carnal mind,  
Thy searching hand would ne'er destroy the helpless in his need;  
Didst never quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed.

But many a polish'd hypocrite has gnash'd his teeth on thee  
Because thou didst unmask his secret robbery;  
No stolen experience could thy faithful soul allow;  
To the Antinomian Moloch thy knee did never bow.

The hireling's human eloquence nor error's gift were thine,  
But grace, true grace from union with Christ, the Living Vine.  
This was the secret of thy strength, from which rich fruit there sprung,  
Shining in rich abundance in thy heart and life and tongue.

"Search Jerusalem with candles," says the unerring word;  
Thou wast a chosen instrument to do this for thy Lord.  
Yes; by the Spirit's mighty power, thou hast probed my desperate case,  
Destroy'd my earthly idols, but cherished true grace.

The tried and chequer'd path where my soul has oft been in  
Reveal'd in thy true ministry against Satan, self, and sin.  
But ah! Methinks I hear sweet music! How the ransom'd sing,  
"Welcome, dear brother, welcome home, to crown thy Saviour King."

O, hour of glorious freedom from sorrow, self, and sin!  
Thy weary footsteps stand e'en now heaven's pearly gates within.  
Now put thy armour off; Christ bids thee lay it down;  
The battle now is over, receive the victor's crown.

Grace put thy armour on; grace kept thee in the way;  
By grace on earth it brightly shoné; grace won the hard-fought day;  
The brightest saints' nor angels' tongue can ever fully tell  
The height and depth of Jesu's love, which saved thy soul from hell.

"May my last days be my best days," was register'd and heard  
And answer'd to thy soul's full joy by thy dear and faithful Lord.

O, what sweet encouragement for living souls to pray,  
Against hope to believe in hope, to wait on him alway.

The church above rejoices, the church she mourns below;  
But go, thou sinner saved, go to thy Saviour, go!  
In many a living heart thy memory shall remain,  
Like sweet flowers and fragrant spices, till we shall meet again.

Then should my sightless eyes behold that sacred, loving Form,  
My everlasting hiding place from wrath's tremendous storm,  
Then will I join with thee to sing before his glorious face,  
"I am the greatest monument of free and sovereign grace!"

Caledonian Road.

J. W.

[We are glad to insert so seasonable and so just and faithful a tribute to the memory of our dear departed friend and brother. It well expresses what he was, by the grace of God, as a godly man and as a man of God.—ED.]

### A LETTER BY MR. HUNTINGTON.

Grace, mercy, and peace be with thee. If God permit and you approve, I will honour your pulpit next Thursday evening; honour it, I say, with the person of the vilest sinner that ever lived in the possession of a hope that can never die. If you want to know my pedigree, I am by birth a beggar; by trade, a coalheaver; by profession and possession, a sinner saved; by principle, a stiff Dissenter, and one of God's own making, for it was he alone that called, ordained, and sent me out, and he has been my Bishop, my Tutor, my Provider, and my Defence ever since; else I had been killed or starved long ago. If you or your people are fond of the original languages, of eloquence, oratory, or grammar, I am the man that can disappoint them all. But if apostolic ignorance will suit them, they might go nigh to glean a few scraps of that sort; but my degrees will promise nothing further than that.

But to inform my reverend father a little about my irregularities, I am in my prayers very short, in my sermons short also, unless the Master attends the feast. If so, and the cruse gets a spring of oil in it, then I generally drop all thoughts of working by the day, nor can I give out until I have emptied the whole contents, though I know I shall get no more without much knocking and a deal of calling at mercy's door. This I call liberality, and am vain enough to think that this is fervent charity, and that charity which, if applied, covers a multitude of sins; and no wonder, when we hold forth freely the blood and righteousness of him that cleanseth from all the guilt of sin, and the robe that covers all the remains of sin.

God bless you; abundant happiness, comfort, and success attend both you, your family, and your flock; while I remain, though unknown,

Affectionately yours,

Bristol, Nov. 15, 1786.

WM. HUNTINGTON.

[The above letter is most unmistakeably from the pen of the immortal coalheaver; for who but he could have struck off, without effort, so pointed and pregnant a production, so humorous and caustic, yet so faithful and true? But, though sent to us as unpublished, it certainly has appeared already in print, for we have ourselves read it before, though we cannot now say where, except it was in some religious periodical.—ED.]

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

*(Continued from page 292.)*

HITHERTO we have been dealing more with externals than with internals, more with the outer works and defences of the Scripture than the central, inward citadel of revealed truth, and have been handling the shell rather than breaking through the rough husk, and bringing out the sweet, juicy kernel. Not but what the outer defences, as once at Sebastopol and now at Richmond, are necessary for the protection of the inner citadel; not but what the rough husk guards and preserves from injury the imbedded kernel; but our heart and home are in the inner city, of which God hath appointed salvation to be for walls and bulwarks. There these walls and bulwarks stand in all their dignity and grandeur. Infidels and unbelievers may indeed walk about Zion and tell the towers thereof; they may mark well her bulwarks, and, on a nearer inspection, wonder at their strength, and the beauty of the palaces which they inclose, (Ps. xlviii. 12, 13,) when they have said in their folly, "If a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall;" (Neh. iv. 3;) but to enter and dwell within the city is not theirs, for it is only the righteous nation which keepeth the truth that can enter therein. (Isa. xxvi. 1, 2.)

These outer defences of revelation, then, we could not pass by, though we have felt ourselves, with most of our readers, that the subject was dead and dry compared with that inward experience of the kingdom of God, which is not in word but in power, which it is the peculiar portion of the living family of God to know, realise, and enjoy, and which was to form the main subject of our Meditations. We now, then, come upon ground on which, we trust, we shall see more eye to eye and feel more heart to heart with the poor and needy family of God, and to which all we hitherto have written is but preliminary and introductory—the power and authority of the word of God upon the soul.

God is essentially invisible. "He dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, nor can see." (1 Tim. vi. 16.) When, therefore, he would make himself known to the sons of men, it must be by his works or by his words. The first way of making his power and glory known is beautifully unfolded in Ps. xix.: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handy-work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world." This is the testimony which God gave of himself to the Gentile world, but which, through the depravity of man's heart, has been universally

misunderstood, perverted, and abused, as the apostle speaks: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them. 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; so that they are without excuse. Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." (Rom. i. 19-21.)

The secret spring whence this flows, and the eternal foundation on which this rests, is the incarnation of God's dear Son. He is "the Word"—the Word emphatically, originally, essentially; and so called not only because he is the express image of the Father, as the word is the image of the thought, but because he has declared or made him known, as our uttered word makes our thoughts known. John therefore bare witness of him: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." Had there, then, been no incarnate Word, there would have been no revealed word; and had there been no revealed word, there would have been no written word; for all that was revealed was not necessarily written, as John was bidden to seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not. (Rev. x. 4.) And as without the incarnate Word there would have been no revealed or written word, so the power of the written word is derived from the power of the incarnate Word.

God's witness by his works, then, being insufficient, and failing, so to speak, through the depravity of man's heart, he has revealed himself by and in his word, in those precious Scriptures which we hold in our hands, and the power of which some of us have felt in our hearts. It is, then, of this power of the written word that we have now to speak. But when we speak of the power of the word of God we do not mean thereby to convey the idea that it possesses any power of its own, any actual, original, innate force, which acts of itself on the heart and conscience. The word of God is but the instrument of a higher and distinct power, even the power of that Holy and eternal Spirit, the revealer and testifier of Jesus, by whose express and immediate inspiration it was written. The power of an instrument is the power of him who uses it. This is true literally. The strength of the sword is in the hand of him who wields it. A child may take up a warrior's sword, but can he use it as a warrior? If, then, the word of God is "quick (or living, as the word means) and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword," it is because he wields it of whom it is said, "Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips; therefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty." (Ps. xlv. 2, 3.) John, therefore, saw him in vision, as one "out of whose mouth went a sharp two-edged sword," (Rev. i. 16,) both to pierce the hearts of his people and to smite the nations. (Rev. xix. 13.) So with the word which he wields.

"Where the word of a king is there is power." (Eccles. viii. 4.) And why? Because it is the word of the king. Another may speak the word, but it has no power because he that speaks it has no power to execute it. When "the king said to Haman, Make haste, and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate; let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken," (Esther vi. 10,) it was done. The man whom the king delighted to honour was honoured. (Esther vi. 10, 11.) When again the king said, "Hang him thereon," it was done: "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai." (Esther vii. 9, 10.) Here were life and death in the power of the tongue. (Prov. xviii. 21.) Thus we ascribe no power to the word itself, but to the power of him who speaks it. The apostle therefore says of his speech and preaching that it was "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power;" (1 Cor. ii. 4;) and of his gospel, that is, the gospel which he knew, felt, and preached, that it came unto the Thessalonians "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 5.) Twice had David heard, that is on two solemn and special occasions: "that power belongeth unto God." (Ps. lxii. 11.) To understand and explain this power passes our comprehension. It may be and is felt, and its effects seen and known, but "the thunder of his power who can understand?" (Job xxvi. 14.) When God said, "Let there be light," light burst forth at his creative fiat. But who can understand or explain how light came? Yet it could be seen when it filled the future creation with its bright effulgence.

But now let us consider the *exercise* and *display* of this power in its first movements upon the heart. Man being dead in sin, it needs an almighty power to make him alive unto God; for what communion can there be between a dead soul and a living God? This, then, is the first display of the power of the word of God in the hands of the eternal Spirit. "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." (Eph. ii. 1.) And how? By the word. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures." (Jas. i. 18.) So testifies Peter: "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.) What James calls "begetting" Peter terms "being born again;" and this corresponds with what the Lord himself declared to Nicodemus: "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John iii. 3.) Almost similar is the language of John himself as taken, doubtless, from his divine Master: "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John i. 13.) So in his first epistle: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and every one that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him." (1 John v. 1.) We need not therefore enter into the controversy about the difference between begetting and being born again, as if the new birth exactly corresponded with the old, and as if the analogy could be precisely carried



out between natural and spiritual generation. Figures (and this is a figure) must not be pressed home to all their consequences, or made to fit and correspond in all their parts and particulars. It is sufficient for us to know that the mighty change whereby a sinner passes from death unto life, (1 John iii. 14,) is "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son," (Col. i. 13,) is by the power of the word of God upon his soul. Nor shall we, as we wish to avoid controversial topics, enter at any length into the question whether light or life first enters into the heart: "The entrance of thy words giveth light." (Ps. cxix. 130.) There it would seem that light came first. And so the passage: "To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light." (Acts xxvi. 18.) So Saul at Damascus' gate saw and was struck down by the light before the quickening words came: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 4.) In grace, if not in nature, it would seem evident that we see before we feel; and thus the disciples "beheld his glory, as of the only begotten of the Father," before they received the Son of God into their hearts and believed on his name. It will be seen from these hints that without entering into the controversy, or pronouncing any dogmatical opinion, our own view inclines to the point held by Mr. Huntington, that light precedes life. And yet, when we look back on our own experience, how difficult it is to determine whether we saw light before we felt life, or whether the same ray which brought light into the mind did not bring at the same moment life into the heart. At any rate we saw what we felt, and we felt what we saw. "In thy light do we see light." To see this light is to be "enlightened with the light of the living." (Job xxxiii. 30.) And this our blessed Lord calls "the light of life." "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii. 12.) So we will not put asunder what God has joined together—light and life. We know, however, the effect better than the cause; and need we wonder that we can neither understand nor explain the mystery of regeneration? Does not the Lord himself say: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) It is our mercy if we have seen light in God's light and felt the Spirit's quickening breath, if we cannot understand whence it came or whither it goes, except to believe that it came from God and leads to God, that it began in grace and will end in glory.

The beginning of this work upon the soul is in Scripture frequently termed "a calling," as in the well-known passage: "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called." (1 Cor. i. 24-26.) And thus we find "calling" one of the links in that glorious chain which, reaching down to and stretching

through time, is fastened at both ends to eternity: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." (Rom. viii. 29, 30.) The very word "call" has a reference to something spoken or uttered, that is, a word addressed to the person called. If I call to a man, I speak to that man. My word to him is my call to him. Thus our Lord said to Levi, the son of Alphæus, sitting at the receipt of custom, "Follow me." Power attended the word. It fell upon Matthew's heart. Light and life entered into his soul. His understanding was enlightened, his will renewed, his heart changed. What was the instantaneous effect? "And he arose and followed him." (Mark ii. 14.) Similar in cause and effect was the calling of Peter and Andrew, of James and John. (Matt. iv. 18-22.) This calling is "by grace" or the pure favour of God; (Gal. i. 15;) a "heavenly calling," as coming from heaven and leading to heaven; (Heb. iii. 1;) a "holy calling," (2 Tim. i. 9,) not only holy in itself, but leading to and productive of that "holiness without which no man shall see the Lord;" (Heb. xii. 14;) and therefore a calling "to glory and virtue," or excellency, as the word means—excellency here, (Phil. i. 10; iv. 8,) glory hereafter. It is also a calling out of the world, as Abraham was called to "get out of his country, and his kindred, and his father's house;" and so we are bidden to "come out from among them and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing." (2 Cor. vi. 17.) It is "a high calling," and therefore free from everything low, grovelling, and earthly; "into the grace of Christ;" (Gal. i. 6;) a calling "to the fellowship of the Son of God, Jesus Christ our Lord;" (1 Cor. i. 9;) a calling "to peace" with God and his dear people, and as far as lieth in us with all men; (Col. iii. 15; 1 Cor. vii. 15; Rom. xii. 18;) "to liberty," (Gal. v. 13), to a "laying hold of eternal life," (1 Tim. vi. 12;) and "to the obtaining of the eternal glory of the Lord Jesus Christ." (2 Thess. ii. 14; 1 Pet. v. 10; John xvii. 22-24.)

As, then, those who are thus called are called to the experimental enjoyment of these spiritual blessings, with all of which they were blessed in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, according as they were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, it is plain that they must have a knowledge of them communicated to their soul; and as we know nothing of divine truth but through the written word and cannot by any wisdom of our own, even with that word in our hands, attain to a saving knowledge of these divine realities, it is equally plain that they must be revealed to us by a spiritual and supernatural power. This is clearly and beautifully unfolded by the apostle in 1 Cor. ii. We cannot quote the whole chapter which, to be clearly understood, should be read in its full connexion, but we cannot forbear citing a few verses as being so appropriate to, and casting such a light on our subject: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But

God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." (1 Cor. ii. 9-12.) The things which "God hath prepared for them that love him" are the things which his people are called to know and enjoy; and that not merely as regards the future state of glory but the present state of grace—the things to be known on earth as well as the things to be enjoyed in heaven. This is plain from the words, "But God *hath revealed* them unto us by his Spirit,"—not will hereafter reveal and make them known in heaven above, but hath already revealed them on earth below. And where, but in the heart of his people? For it is there that they receive "the Spirit which is of God," and this "that they might know the things that are freely given to them of God."

*Knowledge*, then, is clearly and evidently the first effect of that divine light of which we have spoken; and this corresponds with what the gracious Lord said in his intercessory prayer: "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) The knowledge of the only true God must precede any fear of him, or any faith in him. Whilst I am in nature's darkness and death, I do not know God, and, therefore, I neither can nor do fear him. Some of our spiritual readers may feel surprised at our putting the knowledge of God as the first effect of the power of the word upon the heart; and some may tell us that we should put conviction of sin, and others might insist that we should place the fear of God first. But if they will bear with us for a few moments, we think we can show them that a true spiritual knowledge of the only true God must go before both right conviction of sin and before the right fear of the Lord. 1. First, then, what is conviction of sin but a conviction in our conscience of having sinned against and before a pure, holy, and just God? But where can be my conviction of having sinned against him, if I have no knowledge of him? In nature's darkness and death I felt no conviction of sin, not only because my conscience was not awakened or divinely wrought upon, but because I knew nothing of him against whom I had sinned—nothing of his justice, nothing of his holiness, nothing of his power. And 2. What is the fear of God but a trembling apprehension of his glorious majesty? But how can I have this apprehension of his glorious majesty if I am ignorant of his very existence, which I am till he makes it known by a ray of light out of his own eternal fulness? Where do we see the fear of God more in exercise or more beautifully expressed than in Psalm cxxxix? But how the whole of it is laid in the knowledge of the heart-searching presence of the Almighty: "O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down,

and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me." (Ps. cxxxix. 1-5.) We can sometimes read past experience best in the light of present experience, as a traveller emerging from a dark and tangled wood sees from the hill-top the way by which he came far more clearly and better than when he was struggling among the thickets. When, then, *now* do we seem most to see and feel the evil of sin? When do we *now* seem most to fear that Lord in whose presence we stand? Is it not in proportion to our knowledge of him, to our present realization of his majesty, power, and presence, and to that spiritual experimental acquaintance which we have gained of his dread perfections by the teaching, as we trust, of the Holy Spirit through the written word? And take the converse. When are our views and feelings of the evil of sin comparatively dim and cold, so that we do not seem to see and realise what a dreadful thing it is? Is it not when there is no sensible view nor present apprehension of the majesty, holiness, and presence of God? Similarly with respect to godly fear. When does this fountain of life to depart from the snares of death run shallow and low, so as to be diminished, as by a summer drought, almost to a thin thread? When our present vital, experimental sight and sense, knowledge and apprehension of the majesty of the Lord is become dim and feeble, when the old veil seems to flap back over the heart, and like a half-closed shutter shuts out the light of day. If we read the early chapters of the book of Proverbs, we shall see how much is spoken in them of "wisdom, instruction, knowledge, understanding, and the like, and how closely there the fear of the Lord is connected with the knowledge of the Lord: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; but fools despise wisdom and instruction." (Prov. i. 7.) And, again: "My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and bide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." (Prov. ii. 1-6.) And, again: "When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee." (Prov. ii. 10, 11.) So those that perish, perish from want of this knowledge and of this fear as its fruit: "For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; they would none of my counsel; they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices." (Prov. i. 29-31.) And more plainly and emphatically: "Fools die for want of wisdom." (Prov. x. 21.) Indeed, there is such a connection between true wisdom, which is "a knowledge of the holy," (Prov. xxx. 3,) and the fear of the Lord, and such a connection between ignorance of the Lord and sin, that saved saints are

called "wise," and lost sinners are called "fools," not only in the Old Testament, as continually in the Proverbs, but in the New. Many of the Lord's people look with suspicion upon knowledge, from not seeing clearly the vast distinction between the spiritual, experimental knowledge for which we are now contending, and what is called "head knowledge." They see that a man may have a well-furnished head and a graceless heart, that he may understand "all mysteries and all knowledge" and yet be "nothing;" (1 Cor. xiii. 2;) and as some of these all-knowing professors are the basest characters that can infest the churches of truth, those who really fear the Lord stand not only in doubt of them, but of all the knowledge possessed by them. But put it in a different form; ask the people of God whether there is not such a divine reality, such a heavenly blessing, as being "taught of God;" (John vi. 45;) having "an unction from above whereby we know all things;" (1 John ii. 20;) knowing the truth for oneself and finding it maketh free; (John viii. 32;) whether there is not a "counting of all things but loss for the excellency of Christ Jesus our Lord," and a stretching forth of the desires of the soul to "know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings;" whether there is not "a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins;" (Luke i. 77;) "a knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" (2 Cor. iv. 6;) a being "filled with the knowledge of his will," (Col. i. 9,) an "increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Col. i. 10;) "a growing in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," (2 Pet. iii. 18,)—ask the living family of God whether there be not such a knowledge as this, and if this knowledge is not the very pith and marrow, the very sum and substance of vital godliness? and they will with one voice say, "It is."

By putting knowledge, therefore, as the first effect of the word of truth upon the heart, we are not setting up, God forbid, that vain, empty, useless, deceptive thing, that delusion of the devil, head knowledge, but that divine, spiritual, gracious, and saving knowledge which is communicated to the soul and wrought into its very substance by the teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost. This knowledge embraces every truth which we learn by divine teaching in living experience, from the first sigh to the last song, from the earliest conviction to the latest consolation, from the cry of despair to the shout of triumph, from the agonies of hell to the joys of heaven. Need any one wonder, therefore, that we put first what stands first, that we lay down the first stone which is the foundation stone, and draw the first line where the Holy Spirit makes his first impression? If, then, this knowledge is communicated by the Holy Ghost to the heart through the written word, two things follow, and we believe that the experience of every child of God will bear testimony to what we now advance concerning them: 1. That the word of God comes into the heart and conscience in and by regeneration, with a new and hitherto unfelt power. How carelessly, how ignorantly, how formally, if we read it at all, did we read the word of God in the days of our unregeneracy. What little heed we paid

to the word preached, if we heard it at all. What thorough darkness and death wrapped us up, so that nothing of a spiritual, eternal nature touched, moved, or stirred us either with hope or fear. But at a certain, never to be forgotten time, a power, we could not tell how or why, was put into the word and it fell upon our hearts as a sound from heaven, as the very voice of God to our conscience. The word of God laid hold of us as the word of God; it was no longer the word of man, a dry, uninteresting, almost if not wholly hated book; but it got, we could not explain how, so into the very inside of us armed with authority and power as a message from God. But here let us guard ourselves. It is not always the exact *words*, or indeed any word of Scripture which lays hold of the conscience; but it is in every case the *truth* contained in the Scriptures. Eternity, judgment to come, the justice of God, his all-searching eye, his almighty hand, his universal presence, from which there is no escape—these, and other similar truths which fall with such weight upon the quickened sinner's conscience, are all revealed in and only known by the Scripture. The truth of God is, therefore, the word of God, as the word of God is the truth of God. If, then, no particular word or words are applied to the conscience by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, the truth, which is the word, is applied to the heart, and it is this entrance of the truth as the word of God, which giveth light. As a proof of this, no sooner do we receive the solemn truths, of which we have spoken, into our conscience and feel their power than we run to the Scriptures and find a light in and upon them hitherto unseen and unknown. The light, life, and power, which attended the truth as it fell upon the conscience gave the word a place in our hearts. And we shall always find that the place which the word has in the heart is in proportion to the light and power which attended its first entrance. Let us seek to explain this a little more fully and clearly. The heart by nature is closed, shut, barred against the entrance of light. The light may, so to speak, play around the heart, but does not enter, for there is a thick veil over it. Thus our Lord said of himself, "Whilst I am in the world I am the light of the world." (John ix. 5.) The light shone upon the world, but did not enter, for the "light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended (that is apprehended or embraced, for it is the same word as is so rendered, Phil. iii. 12, 13) it not." (John i. 5.) "My word," said the Lord, "hath no place in you." (John viii. 37.) But when the word comes with power, it seizes hold of the heart and conscience. They give way before it and leave a place for it, where it sets up its throne and becomes their Lord and Master.

Here, then, we shall for the present pause, leaving the word of truth in possession of the heart.

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WE are justified with that which truly appeaseth our conscience before God; but faith in Christ doth appease our conscience, and not the law; therefore by faith we are justified, and not by the law.—*Marginal Old Bible*, 1610

[NOVEMBER 1, 1864.]

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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NOVEMBER, 1864.

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

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REJOICING IN THE LORD.

“Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”—PHIL. iv. 4-7.

It might be supposed, my brethren, that those to whom the apostle wrote were persons that found it easy to live a most happy life, according to the power of the words of my text; but it is manifest that they and we must needs be in heaviness through manifold temptations; and in the midst of them being, by the sanctifying grace and mercy of the Lord, delivered from that worldliness of heart and spirit in which we are all sunk by nature, are driven by that power, under a sense and feeling of the danger, to flee unto Christ; driven to enter there, to fall down before Christ, that he would open the door of his sovereign and divine mercy and enable us to enter in, and find, by his grace there, a real joy with which the stranger meddeth not, a joy wrought by the blessed operation of the Spirit of God, that spiritual joy of which he has testified in his word that it is one of the fruits of the Spirit in the soul: “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, long-suffering, gentleness,” &c. O, if we may be favoured, my brethren, more and more to enjoy this, it will fulfil the apostle’s words in my text: “Rejoice in the Lord always.” He does not speak so because you and I have power to enter into the joy when we will, but he speaks thus on this account, because there is no state in which we can be, however painful and tried with affliction, outward and inward, but there is an especial ground for joy in the Lord, if we may be favoured to find it. It does not spring up in the sinner’s heart, but he is driven, through the strong hand of the Lord upon him, in temptation, affliction, perplexity, and trial, from that worldliness of spirit in which he was satisfied.

There is another joy, quite of another sort, which does no good, which is vanity, which is not grounded on the favour of God; and

what stability or good can there be in that? Such is all the joy we can attain to without the coming in of the gospel of Christ into the heart. That is the only foundation of the true joy, as our eyes are opened to discern, know, and feel it.

In the state in which we are by nature, there is no prospect but the wrath of God, through the sin in us; so there can be no joy except in the power of that gospel which is preached 'in the world through God's sacred will, that there is grace in Christ, that sin shall be taken away through his blood and righteousness, through the free coming of his Spirit to sinners, who cannot bring him themselves or enter into peace without him; but they are made to cry, watch, and wait for him, according to his word, through the power of faith. Where there is that entrance of the blessed gospel, there is always ground for joy, and sensible sinners shall be favoured to find it so. It shall not be said in vain, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," because that "alway" means this way; that in circumstances which, without the gospel of Christ, would produce the greatest trouble; that in circumstances of great outward destitution, trial, pain, sickness, weakness; where affliction is pressing many ways and there is no power of ourselves to rejoice at all; for these things are not joyous but grievous, they have a pressing down effect on the hearts of all who are simple before the Lord. They find they are pressed before the Lord, and they cannot overcome till the Lord has mercy on them; but they do seek him and say, "Now, Lord, do not let me sink in this trial, for if thou givest me faith I shall prevail." Faith, more faith; that blessed gift and work of God, wrought by him in the heart! If there be but one grain of mustard seed of that blessed faith, it will surely be strengthened and subdue all things; nothing shall be impossible to it. We cannot always realise that victory of faith, but we should always ask for it, wait for it, and expect it. It is the part of a child of God who has tasted that the Lord is gracious so to do.

This word, "Rejoice in the Lord alway" is not given in vain. It is given to the afflicted church, not to those in ease and who feel no danger, but to the tried and tempted. The enemy seeks to overthrow their faith and tries to overcome their hope. In some temptations of the enemy, it is his work to set things before our eyes, that our heart shall sink and we shall suppose that nothing can save us from sinking. The Lord is almighty and knows how to come unto the afflicted ones. He is gracious to his people in their temptations, and afflictions, and weakness; he is gracious, and in one way or another, sometimes in an invisible way, supports them in a wonderful way. They cannot imagine how they were supported and carried through; but it is their privilege and mercy to press forward to this joy: "Rejoice in the Lord." Just when you think, "Well now, I cannot rejoice, it cannot be that joy can be brought in now!" then says the word, "Again I say, Rejoice."

"Rejoice *in the Lord*." O the power of the gospel of Christ, or there would be no such thing in a sinner's heart. If that be taken out of the way, all is dreadful and fearful. The acquaintance of a



sinner with God is dreadful and fearful except through the coming of the gospel. That makes the change. It turns the fear into a strong confidence. The Lord grant that we may know it and find it increasingly, as the apostle prays for them: "Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown," &c., "Stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved;" and then he says soon after, "Rejoice in the Lord alway."

Now, my brethren, we should pray that we may have a true spiritual discernment in what this is: "Rejoice *in the Lord* alway." Behold, he says, "Rejoice in *the Lord*, not in yourself, the prayers or favours shown to you, or in self-complacency, thinking you get on, you find help, you are right; but the Lord knows that when he will reveal his grace and mercy he will make the soul sensible of its lost state, and there shall be nothing of our own we can rejoice in; but it is the coming in of the gospel that causes the rejoicing; and what does it reveal? It reveals God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. It reveals the covenant of God made before the foundations of the world were laid, and that covenant ratified in Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ is the effectual Saviour of his church and people; that he would send forth Christ that he should fulfil all things, and send the Holy Spirit; that Christ should atone for all sin, and should fulfil all righteousness; that Christ's work should be the refuge and defence of our souls, the work of sanctification and obedience which he accomplished; that we should rest in that, and through the merit of that work; that we should be renewed in the spirit of our mind, and enabled to serve the Lord in the power of his Spirit; that it should be the Lord that works, not ourselves. Why, if we may, by the mercy of God, enter into that, we cannot expect to enter into it without opposition. The power of the enemy will come in where this joy enters into the spirit. There will be evil raised up; and that cursed, grievous sin of unbelief, how it would blast and blight all in the heart of the man who has faith that he cannot lift up his heart in his own time, but is made to groan before the Lord, to bring his bad case before him. He is brought to this if he has life. If he has only knowledge, he will say carelessly, "O! the Lord will do it." That will do for the dead man, but the living man says, "Lord, save, or I perish."

I know it is the grace of God which so stirs up the man. Where that grace comes, there is a great difference made by it. It stirs up the heart to cry after the blessing. And, my dear brethren, this, which is said to us in the 5th verse, is understood where the heart is thus engaged and turned to the Lord, and by the mercy of the Lord kept faithful to him, seeking joy and peace through Christ's name: "Let your moderation be known unto all men; the Lord is at hand." They were greatly tried, as well as we, and the favour and mercy of the Lord appeared to them a long way off, and as if the Lord did not readily turn and hear their prayer; and that is one reason for this word: "The Lord is at hand;" and it is a blessed thing if we consider what is set forth of Christ in the Spirit of pro-

phesy, in Ps. xxii. 1-7. It is a marvellous word, because it sets forth that great truth testified of Christ in his sufferings that he was tempted in all points like as we are; therefore, because he prevailed, let us draw near with boldness, and ask for mercy and help at his throne of grace. May we now find it so, my brethren, a certain boldness of faith to cause us to be steadfast when we find the darkness and trial and cannot prevail in our own time.

The Lord says men ought always to pray and not to faint. Those who are very much tried for a season and cannot find the power of these things, do not find that their prayer enters; but how do they know the blessing they shall find another day through the trial of this day? Let them wait on, according to the word in Ps. cxxx.: "I wait on the Lord; in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning," &c. There is earnestness, anxiety, and trouble there, great fear and exercise there, but you see the morning does come. Even so it must be. The Lord helps his people in the day of their trouble. He gives efficacy to the word which they did not find before. "The Lord is at hand." There is power given to believe it, though they do not find it yet; and, indeed, we must always ask for this, that through the favour of God, for Christ's sake, it may be bestowed on us to keep us steadfast and to do this.

"Let your moderation be known unto all men." This seems to apply to this: "Be not too much cast down in your trouble or too much lifted up in your joy." Not that we can do this for ourselves; we must ask for it, that we be patient in adversity, quiet and humble in prosperity and in all relationships of life, in all outward things. The Lord keep us here, and enable us to see the necessity of a deep cry to him that he would keep us sober and in the state he would have us in in all things, not exceeding in anything. "Let your moderation be known unto all men." But what is it that will make this precious to us and enable us to fulfil it? Why, finding, through faith, the gospel of Christ and his favour and mercy in due time granted to the soul. Though there be trouble and interruption to the joy, yet, nevertheless, the Lord is able to restore the comfort and hope to those greatly tried; but sometimes the trouble seems as if it could not be overcome; at another time the same trial is nothing at all, so great is the change that the power and mercy of the Lord can bring with it.

May the Lord make us faithful and willing to bear the word of exhortation, and to entreat him that we may never be suffered to begin in any course which is wrong in the coming in of a worldly spirit secretly; for there is a certain temptation which says, "It is only a little thing, it is of no consequence, it is not wrong;" but a tender conscience will reprove a person in that state. It is a blessed thing to find a tender conscience and to be quickly sensible of reproof from the Lord, that we should exceed in nothing. Do not think that a tender conscience is a legal one. They are different things. A child of God in light and liberty will have a tender conscience, and it is the Lord's blessing to make him afraid of a little

sin, as we call it; and the more we find of a tender conscience the better. How will it work? It will bring the man to Christ, saying, "Let the blood of Christ purge my sin and keep me from the sin." It will bring the sinner to Christ; so the sin is taken away. But on the other hand, there is a terrible perversion of this in those who have a legal conscience, who are never satisfied that they are right, never able to manage it because they are trusting in their own work. They do not come to the blood of Christ, the cleansing through faith. They are not set on obtaining that; but if they walk carefully they think they may have a good conscience. There is the temptation and evil; that is what we must pray against, entreating the Lord to give us a sense of sin and the evil of the heart, that we can do nothing or be cleansed without Christ. The blessing is to bring our heart in confession and prayer before Christ, to take away the sin and to take away the love of it, and to give holiness instead. These things are blessed if we can live in them. "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God." He sets before us that which cannot really be fulfilled without the Lord's blessing; but if there is that in the heart, he will help our infirmities to fulfil it.

"Be careful for nothing." Be not over anxious in the midst of your trials, temporal or spiritual. There is a certain over anxiety in the feeling of the trouble and weakness, leading you to a labouring, and to perplexed thoughts, forgetting the only way of deliverance, that you must in every step and everything find the mercy and grace of Christ and his help, and must pray for it—for it may be the spiritual trial becomes very perplexing; and what is the relief? It must be crying after Christ and looking to him; he it is who can work the change, and do all things, and take away the evil. For if there is a labouring which seems spiritual but which is not so, which is not the labouring in the Lord, it will be in vain. That labour in the Lord is that which brings the heart down in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, for there will be a little mingling in of thanksgiving for that spiritual hope, and we shall bless the Lord for it. He gives it to prevent over anxiety and over care, and that dark perplexity and foreboding of trouble and evil; and instead of all that, there shall be spiritual hope and looking for the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ. "By prayer and supplication." It is as if he said thus: "You will have to pray and entreat;" and why is that entreating? Because we cannot readily find the help. It is not an easy path the one we are led in; it is full of trouble, full of infirmity; and the Spirit helps our infirmities. If it were all easy, where would be the need of the exhortation? But because you are perplexed, because of the enemies, because of your weakness and insufficiency, therefore the word must enter, and reprove, and set before you the way you must take,—"prayer and supplication." To be sure it is dreadful when the heart is shut up from this spirit of prayer, for it is found at intervals by the children of God that it is so; and what then? The Lord can even help their infirmities there by a groan

that cannot be uttered. The heart is hard, and the perverseness, temptation, and opposition are felt, and they must acknowledge what they find. They may do it tenderly in the fear of God. Being sick, they need the Physician; being full of disease, they need the Saviour; and that is the way they are brought to Christ. If there were not that impression of their weakness, and the evil and oppression felt in consequence, they would not find out their bad state or come to Christ; and no sinner was ever yet saved except by the coming of Jesus Christ to him.

“Sick sinner, expect  
No balm but Christ’s blood,” &c.

Therefore it must needs be that the sin is felt, that there may be the turning to the Saviour. That is the sanctifying of the trouble, when so it is brought by the mercy and power of the Lord into the heart. “Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer,” &c.

Now, I say, if these things be entered into, if the Lord stir up our hearts and make us spiritually obedient, what is the issue of it? “The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” It is a blessing including many things and fulfilled in various degrees, but the least degree is blessed. Those who find it in a little measure shall find it in a greater. “The peace of God shall keep your heart,” &c. It alludes to those who are passing through the trial in prayer and supplication. They need defence, they need help, and they would be soon spent if they had no more help; but the word says, “The peace of God shall defend you.” The word signifies, “It shall be as a fortification round about you.”

“The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and are safe.” What is it but the gospel proclaimed through it in the soul? That is the name of the Lord, and it is a strong tower; and who are the righteous? Those who have faith. God makes the sinner righteous. He makes him go to Christ, put off his own righteousness and find a better. There are none but these who are righteous. It is the guilty, the lost, the miserable sinner entering into Christ by faith; and the Lord gives that faith to the needy, and enables him to enter into Christ. He is the fortification and the fortress. There is the peace of God passing all understanding; you could not tell or understand how it came, how it effected the change. But the Lord can marvellously show that secret help with which he supports the soul in prayer and supplication, in the darkness, trouble, and opposition of the enemy; so that, though so weak, he holds on his way, and no power of the enemy can turn him back, for his face is toward Christ, to look to him. The peace of God is a fortress round about him; he is being brought to that point. “The righteous runneth into it and are safe.”

It shall keep your hearts through Jesus Christ. You shall be altogether kept through Jesus Christ, and by Jesus Christ only. Therefore may the Lord have mercy on us and enable us to understand and receive these things, and to find more faith; and we shall find more faith if led to see our need of faith; for it is altogether a course which none but the Lord can direct us in. But surely the church

of God, from that day in which these words were written to this, has found the fulfilment of them.

The Lord make it a timely word to us, that we may find the fulfilment of it, and the salvation of the Lord with exceeding glory. Amen.

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“OPEN UNTO ME, MY LOVE.”

BY RICHARD SIBBES, PURITAN MINISTER.

Cant. v. 2.

HE calls her his love, especially for two respects; partly because his love was settled upon her. It was in his own breast, but it rested not there, but seated itself upon and in the heart of his spouse, so that she became Christ's love. We know the heart of a lover is more where it loves than where it lives, as we use to speak; and indeed, there is a kind of going out, as it were, to the thing beloved, with a heedlessness of all other things. When the affection is in any excess, it carries the whole soul with it.

But, besides this, when Christ says, “My love,” he shows that as his love goes, and plants, and seats itself in the church, so it is united to that, and is not scattered to other objects. There are beams of God's general love scattered in the whole world; but this love, this exceeding love, is only fastened upon the church. And, indeed, there is no love comparable to this love of Christ, which is above the love of women, of father or mother, if we consider what course he takes to show it. For there could be nothing in the world so great to discover his love as this gift, the gift of himself. Therefore he gave himself, the best thing in heaven or in earth, withal to show his love. The Father gave him, when he was God equal with his Father. He loved his church and gave himself for it. How could he discover his love better than to take our nature to show how he loved us? How could he come nearer to us than by becoming incarnate, so to be bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh? He took our nature to show how he loved us. (Eph. v. 30.)

Love draws things nearer wheresoever it is. It drew Christ out of heaven to the womb of the virgin, there to be incarnate; and after that, when he was born, not only to be a man, but a miserable man, because we could not be his spouse unless he purchased us by his death. We must be his spouse by a satisfaction made to divine justice. God would not give us to him, but with the strict maintenance of his justice. What sweet love is it to heal us, not by searing or lancing, but by making a plaster of his own blood, which he shed for those who shed his in malice and hatred.

What a wondrous love it is that he should pour forth tears for those who shed his blood! “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,” &c. (Matt. xxiii. 37.) That he prayed for those who persecuted him; (Luke xxiii. 34;) and what wondrous love it is now that he sympathises with us in heaven, accounting the harm done to the least member he has, as done to himself! “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” (Acts ix. 4;) and that he should take us into one body with

himself to make one Christ. (1 Cor. xii. 27.) Also, he does not content himself with anything he can do for us here, but his desire is that we may be one with him more and more, and be for ever with him in heaven, as you have it in that excellent prayer, in John xvii. 24: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

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### LOOKING UNTO JESUS.

Dear Friend,—I received yours, dated Feb. 28th, and sincerely thank you, both I and my wife, for the enclosed note. Truly it came in a time of real need, and I have not a single doubt that the impression came from Him who gave you a heart to act as you did, though Satan, the grand enemy, tried to oppose it, which he always does.

I rejoice that you have such discoveries of your own heart. It is the true light, for "all things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light" which doth appear, for "whatsoever maketh manifest is light." If you were in an empty profession of the gospel only, though you might talk about these things, you never would see or feel them. Blessed be the Lord for quickening our souls to feel, and opening our eyes to see our need of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's best gift and man's best blessing. Now, as you go on you will find the path very rough, for it is a path of tribulation; but there is no relief for you and me but by looking to Jesus. Every affliction we have to go through speaks two things to you and me. It will say, "Hast thou not procured this to thyself?" and at certain times we can say, "Yea, Lord;" and, Secondly, it says, "Look to Jesus." O that God's children were better acquainted than they are with this one way, *looking to Jesus*. We are for working. This is the old way, but not God's living way. Still, he will let us try what we can do, till we are worn out; for this is the way that we learn that we have no strength; and he will teach us, by degrees, that salvation lies in believing, and not in working: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly."

Now, let me treat briefly about this *looking*, and the blessed effect of it.

1. When under a feeling sense of the burden of sin, when our sins appear to lead us captive, having such a love to those things God hates, our bosom sins that stick close to us, and we never can break the yoke, such a love to idols, &c., these things, though pleasing to the flesh, become a sore burden, sooner or later, when we consider that the Scriptures condemn us. Now, after we have gone on for a length of time in a legal working way, the Holy Spirit will lead our thoughts to the Lord Jesus Christ, telling us that he came into this world to save sinners; and we think, "Who knows but I may be one of those whom he came to save?" and a hope of mercy springs up in the heart. Now, "the Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him, and in them that hope in his mercy;" and we

feel the burden of sin, for that time, greatly removed. Hence David says, "They looked unto him, and were lightened." (Ps. xxxiv. 5.) Take notice, it is not enlightened, but lightened. But the burden will come on again, worse than ever; yet you and I never can find relief but by looking to Jesus; for all our help is laid upon one that is mighty. Here it was that Paul gained ground: "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" But the good Spirit led him to Jesus by faith: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," &c. This is God's way, a new and living way, a path that is hidden from every one but sensible, elect sinners; and they shall be brought to know this way, not only to lighten their burden, but fully to deliver their souls from all sin, by looking to the Lord Jesus.

2. Salvation from sin, wrath, every enemy, the curse of the law, and the second death comes to us by looking: "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." And where should we look but where these enemies which we have were conquered, even to the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Sin? Our old man was crucified with him. Satan? "Through death, he destroyed him that had the power of death." The law? This he took out of the way, nailing it to his cross. This world? "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom (by which cross and the victories of it) the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Death? "I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." Who would think that looking by faith to Jesus would manifestly give us the victory over all these enemies? Over sin; "purifying their hearts (or consciences) by faith; over Satan, "whom resist, steadfast in the faith;" "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you;" over the law and the curse of it, for though "as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse," yet Christ "has delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us;" and "as many as are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham;" for the blessing of Abraham comes on us Gentiles through faith. Over this world. This is overcome by faith in Christ's cross; for "this is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." Over death; for he that believeth on him that completed the whole, saying, "It is finished!" hath everlasting life, whether his faith be weak or strong. Read carefully the book of truth, and you will see what affliction Jonah went through; yet he says, "I will look again toward thy holy temple." This holy temple was the Lord Jesus Christ, who, as God, is the fountain of all holiness, and as God-man the same. He was called that holy thing, born of the virgin. His body is called a temple: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up; but he spake of the temple of his body;" and the Holy Ghost was upon him without measure. Now Jonah says, "I will look again," which shows he had looked before; but how did he succeed? Why, he tells you, "Salvation is of the Lord;" for the Lord spake to the fish, and it vomited Jonah up upon dry land. This also was set

forth, as you may see, when the Israelites were bitten by the fiery flying serpents. Moses is ordered to make a serpent of brass, and put it on a pole, and whosoever looked at it lived. These serpents typified devils. Satan is called the old serpent. Now, if you and I break the hedge, "He that breaketh a hedge, the serpent shall bite him." The hedge is the fear of the Lord; and a love to sin sometimes will draw us, so that we gratify our lusts against light, knowledge, and understanding. This is breaking the hedge; and we feel hardness of heart follow: "Why hast thou made us to err from thy ways, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?" Then this serpent bites us, and we feel the venom of his bite; but is our case hopeless? No, blessed be God; he that looked, lived; and as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so was the Son of man lifted up upon the cross, and he is and shall be lifted up on the gospel pole, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have everlasting life. When by faith we are led to Jesus, again and again, we get rid of the biting of these serpents. You must not wonder at feeling and seeing yourself such a sinner, for you will feel and see yourself worse and worse, and the path more and more perilous. You will find insurmountable difficulties crowd in troubles of all sorts, to teach you to look to Jesus and live upon him, in all his offices and covenant characters; for he is only precious to us as we are kept sensible of our need of him. Hence David says, "He is my rock, fortress, deliverer, high tower, refuge, helper," &c.; all of which showed the dangers David got into; and so shall we, more or less; but he is a present help, a strong-hold, and a sure foundation; and blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Again David says, "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." So we look to the Lord to have mercy on us. But how long is this to go on, and how long shall we need this mercy? I answer, we shall need it all along till the day of our death. Who needs it? Such as the publican: "God be merciful to me a sinner!" and we shall feel and see ourselves sinners till death; so that, as Jude says, we are to be "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus unto eternal life;" and then "mercy will be built up for ever, and God's faithfulness established in the very heavens." Here is regeneration by the Holy Ghost, washing away all our evil frames and wretched feelings, and raising up a better crop, in that it is putting off the old man and putting on the new: "Of his mercy he saved us," &c. (Tit. iii. 5.)

Again says David, "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord, for he shall pluck my feet out of the net." As a natural man, falling into any sudden temporal trouble, will think in his mind who will stand his friend, so do we, after many ups and downs, ins and outs, look to and trust in the Lord Jesus, "a Friend that loveth at all times;" which no other friend ever did, and one that has all power in heaven and on earth:

"Trust him, he will not deceive us,  
Though we hardly of him deem;  
He will never, never leave us,  
Nor will let us quite leave him."



God bless you with a rich and unctuous experience of these things. Cleave to him with all your heart, for he is your life and the length of your days; that is, if you have long days of prosperity in this world, it will be by abiding in him, looking to him for the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.

My heart in these things goes beyond my strength; for on Friday, and last night especially, I was very ill, forced to go to bed at half-past 7 o'clock; and, indeed, we are all ill, and five of us have got bad coughs; but I see that I need the rod, and am at times led to acquiesce in all God's righteous dealings towards me. Perhaps you have thought before this that your letter did not come safely, as I have not answered it sooner; but I have not been able. I feel the outward man weaker and weaker; but, blessed be God, he maintains my heart in life and soul in hope. But it ever will be the fight of faith.

Yours, in Christian affection,

March 12th, 1820.

JOHN RUSK.

P.S.—Take particular notice of the painful experience of the prophet Micah, in chap. vii. He has no cluster to eat, as the grape gleanings of the vintage; then he looks at the villany of men; he finds the insufficiency of trusting in a friend, and putting confidence in a guide; his wife, also, is a bitter enemy, and discovers his secrets; and then he speaks of the son dishonouring the father, &c., and that a man's enemies are those of his own house. And what were all this painful teaching and these sore exercises for? I answer, to teach him to look to the Lord. So you find it was with the prophet, and had the desired effect. "Therefore," says he, seeing everything is out of order, and no help to be had, "therefore will I look unto the Lord." But did he succeed immediately? No; this is not always the case, and therefore he says, "I will *wait* for the God of my salvation." Now, if you read on, you will find he first gets a confidence that God will appear, then confesses that he had sinned against him, and declares that when he falls (down in the dust) he shall arise, and at last pardon to his soul is manifested: "Who is a God?" &c. But remember, it is God's work after all, the whole of it; for "faith is the gift of God," and it requires a supernatural power every time to bring it into lively act and exercise. So I write, and so you will find it. The best of blessings attend you.

J. R.

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### A LETTER BY THE LATE JOHN KEYT.

My dear Friend, Sister in the Faith, and Fellow-traveller in the Thorny Path,—Many anxious thoughts have passed through my mind on your account during the last three months, and many petitions have flowed from my heart for your present welfare, prosperity of soul, and everlasting good.

As a fellow-pilgrim in this inhospitable wilderness, I am not ignorant of the difficulties and perplexities which attend the wayfaring soul, whose treasure and best portion is laid up in reserve, and who is in this time-state training up and becoming meet for the eternal

inheritance and blessed rest that remaineth for all the Lord's chosen and redeemed family.

The path to the heavenly kingdom, my dear friend, lies through much tribulation; and in this rough, dark, and mysterious passage the souls of God's people are oftentimes greatly exercised, discouraged, and cast down. But our whole pilgrimage, with every crooked dispensation, and every opposition and obstruction we meet with in it, are all divinely appointed. Every bitter as well as sweet ingredient is wisely mingled in our lot, and apportioned out for us in number, weight, and measure by him who loved us before the foundations of the earth were laid. (See Deut. xxxii. 8-10.) We find in experience many things come to pass, and many unexpected afflictions, bereavements, and sharp trials befall us, which we fear will quite overwhelm our spirits, and sink us so as never to rise again. Thus it was with the chosen remnant of the Jews who were carried away captive with the rest of the people; they, no doubt, considered their sad case hopeless and desperate, for they said, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts." (Ezek. xxxvii. 11.) But if we read the chapter through, it is evident that the Lord's gracious purpose and their conclusions were as far different as the east is from the west. God's message to them in Babylon, by the letter of Jeremiah, (xxix.,) was to encourage and instruct them how to act, and what to do during their long captivity. Moreover, the Lord reveals to them by the prophet what was his gracious design and merciful will concerning them: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." So in the case of Hezekiah; (Isa. xxxviii.;) he drew the most gloomy and bitter conclusions when the heavy affliction came upon him; but when the light broke in again on his dejected spirit, and the Holy Spirit operated afresh upon his own implanted grace in Hezekiah's soul, then he uttered a very different language: "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the fathers to the children shall make known thy truth," &c.

A few nights past, my mind was led to read the book of truth, in which is detailed the chequered path of Naomi. The early part of her life appears marked with some prosperous and smiling providences; but when the land of Israel was visited with a famine, she, with the whole family, emigrated into the country of Moab, where she sojourned about ten years. During this period, the stroke of death took away her husband and both her sons, and she was left a desolate widow, in a strange land. By some means she heard that "the Lord had visited his people, in giving them bread." Then her heart was influenced to return to her native country again; and the Lord inclined Ruth to cleave to and go with her to Bethlehem, where her old friends and acquaintances cordially received her. But her present poverty and widowhood state drew from her heart a sorrowful lamentation, (Ruth i. 20, 21,) expressive of her inward sensations. Nevertheless, there were good things laid up in store for the poor widow, Naomi, though she feared all would be bitterness to the

end of her life. Yet, such was the over-ruling hand of God in his wonder-working providence, that, notwithstanding all her misgiving fears, her name must be Naomi, the Lord's "pleasant, comely one," to the end of her days. When reading this most interesting account in the records of divine inspiration, dear Mrs. Martin was presented to my view, and my mind ever since influenced to inquire concerning your welfare; for I am rather in fear that either your health is somewhat impaired, or that you are depressed in spirit on account of some dark dispensations in providence, which in the present evil time most certainly bear with a heavy weight upon the minds of those that fear God, and view, with trembling eyes and troubled hearts, the heavy judgments that hang over this sinful land. But in the midst of all these surrounding tribulations, our "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with every temptation, make a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it;" for "the Lord knoweth the days of the afflicted, (both adverse and prosperous,) and their inheritance shall be for ever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied." (Ps. xxxvii. 8, 19.)

Indeed, my dear friend, I sensibly feel what I have written more than I can express in words, having been long afflicted with various afflictions and sorrows. During the winter of 1863, I have been called to endure a severe indisposition of body, together with a corresponding outward trial and inward depression of soul, which altogether brought me very low; but in the midst of all the trial, was very mercifully sustained, and in tender mercy intermingled the exercises of a man's tokens of his providential goodness; and with some precious consolations, sweetly upheld my soul in life and my heart in hope, so that, upon a review of the whole, I can testify with one of our old men, "It was good for me that I was afflicted."

Another peculiar circumstance was, that our dearly-beloved Mr. Chamberlain was with me in the same furnace—the same affliction, and at the same time. Two successive Sabbaths we were both prisoners, confined at home; and during the course of 10 days I received two letters from him, the contents of which were to me more precious than the golden wedge of Ophir, inasmuch as we enjoyed the sweetest fellowship together, both in tribulation and consolation; and I feel a humble confidence that we shall spend a happy eternity together, when every sorrow will be left behind,

"And earth exchanged for heaven;"

when we shall come to Mount Zion above, with songs of victory, and everlasting joy upon our heads.

These blessed prospects, my dear sister, when faith is in exercise, abundantly counterbalance every trial we meet with by the way, as our apostle, under the sacred teachings of the Holy Spirit, saith: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us;" "For (in the midst of all our conflicts) the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God," &c.

(Rom. viii. 18, 19.) Therefore, seeing these things are so, let us lift up our drooping heads, and join with the royal psalmist, when he was sorely tried: "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.) These cheering considerations, realised by faith, do at times encourage my spirit in the midst of surrounding perplexities; and they will have the same effect upon the spirit of my dear friend, if she feels the need of divine consolation. In the present sad day, in which iniquity abounds and the love of many waxes cold, the afflicted and poor people left in the midst of our Zion stand in need of all the encouragements they can obtain. It is their privilege to strengthen each other's hands in the good ways of the Lord; and we are to comfort one another with the same comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. This was exemplified in the experience of the apostle Paul, as he thus states: "Our flesh had <sup>no</sup> rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings; within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that <sup>are</sup> distressed down, comforted us by the coming of Titus," &c. (2 Cor. i. 4-7.)

Not <sup>to</sup> please the Almighty to <sup>communicate</sup> only a small measure <sup>of</sup> <sup>his</sup> <sup>grace</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>comfort</sup> by the means of this <sup>letter</sup>, written in much weakness, it <sup>will</sup> <sup>greatly</sup> rejoice my heart; <sup>I</sup> know how prone we all are to <sup>fall</sup> upon second causes, and how <sup>easy</sup> to

"Forget the mighty God,  
That feeds the strength of every saint."

As my sheet is nearly full, I have no room for many letters only to entreat my dear friend and fellow-pilgrim to favour me with a few lines, that I may learn how the warfare goes on, and whether the great Author of all salvation is present with you, and his blessed name to you as "an ointment poured forth." This is all I ask or desire; only to know your state, if I may be counted worthy of such a favour.

The Lord's day that dear H. was in town, I was confined to my room; neither did those of my friends he then saw know my situation. Please give my most cordial love to him; to Mr. C. and Mr. and Mrs. J., when you write to them; together with all in your circle that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

My dear wife unites with me in true affection and regard; so also do my family.

I remain, in the Bonds of the everlasting Gospel,  
Yours affectionately,

London, Feb. 7th, 1831.

JOHN KEYT.

[The above letter was written to Mrs. Mary Martin, the friend and correspondent of Mr. Huntington.—ED.]

"THIS poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles." (Ps. xxxiv. 6.) If that poor man did so, and had that blessed issue, why should not we do so also? David makes it a great encouragement unto waiting upon God, that others had done so, and found success.—*Owen.*

## A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. IRESON.

Very dear Friend in the Lord,—I received your affectionate token of remembrance, and prize it. I should have acknowledged it sooner, but various things have prevented me. My times are in the Lord's hands.

I am glad to learn you are favoured with the sight of the Lord's countenance, and that you are watching the Lord's hand in his leading. The cloudy pillar of the Lord's providence, the light of his word, the leadings of his Spirit, with the glorious **HE** that was with the church in the wilderness of old, lead Jacob now, and there is no strange God with him.

My last visit to L. was a marked one, as well as the former. Much might, in my own experience, be recorded to the honour of his sacred name, who is the faithful God, in answering my prayers about a visit to that place. Among other favours, I had communion with you in speaking of Jesus,—his Person, his sufferings, his love, his condescension in drawing nigh and melting the heart. How precious are those sweet, though short, seasons to my soul, which is too often like the desert that knoweth not when good cometh. What a mercy that it is not always the case. My Lord drops me a token for good now and then, when sheer necessity seems to require it.

The Lord has for some years been leading me about, and I have learned slowly a little about myself as a fallen sinner in Adam. By the offence of this one man, I became dead and lost, dead in sin and lost in darkness, and knew it not. What an awful state; without God in the world! I have been learning, through mercy, somewhat of what I have gained by the second Adam, and what I am in him; and here I have a goodly portion. If I am allowed and enabled to have any thing, or do anything, it is of grace; matchless, peerless grace. Here I am an increasing debtor. Mercy is built up for ever; one pile of mercy upon another; and when Jesus comes to my poor, wretched, miserable soul, how dear is mercy!

How precious the cross in atoning blood! This brings life for evermore. Here is wisdom. The cross, with the tree of life cut down upon it, turns the bitter waters of Marah sweet by an ordinance for ever; the curse is drowned in atoning blood; sin is buried in everlasting love; the serpent's head is bruised; he has lost his power; death is unstrung and destroyed; and life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel.

Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept; has entered into heaven as the forerunner of his church, and ever liveth, the Hope of Israel, on his Throne. I would be a humble disciple. I would sit at his feet and learn of him, and copy after his fair example. I would have my mind collected, abstracted, guided, and fixed on himself; follow him by faith in the regeneration; have my feeding times and my resting-places pointed out by him; and thus know him as my good Shepherd. I would desire to know and feel him my way, truth, and life in me, and live a life of faith upon him, and upon every manifestation of himself to

my soul, with wondering joy and adoring love. I would worship him with my whole heart. His groans, and prayers, and tears; the Wilderness, Gethsemane, and the Cross; his words, and looks, and smiles are all rich food, when the Lord the Spirit leads to the banqueting house of love.

My banqueting days are seldom; but I do sometimes get one of them, and I am satisfied with manifested favour. But I have many seasons of deadness and darkness, bitter sorrows, heavy temptations, dreary marches, a powerless frame of my inner and outer man, and fears I should die by the way a rotten hypocrite, forsaken for ever; but the good Samaritan passes by and picks me up again.

How deep, and rich, and free, and sovereign is the love of Christ! The same love that constrained him to leave his heavenly Father's bosom fetches him down into the deep sorrows of his elect. When his Zion is a helpless captive, overpowered by her enemies, sold under sin in her feelings, even then his love and pity says, "It is my people." Alas! I am a dull scholar, an unprofitable servant. I would take my proper place in the dust, and be a humble beggar. Mercy by the crumbs is sweet, where there is appetite. What a mercy to have an appetite for the bread of life. Alas! Here I am, more brutish than any man at times, for I have no appetite for anything of a spiritual nature; but a little wormwood and gall bring me to my senses again, and I seek Jesus. All is blank, loss, and shadow on this side eternity, if put in the place of Jesus.

"Be this the portion of my soul  
While earth's my dark abode,"

Christ crucified, Amen. He is the rock of my heart, and he should be the Shiloh and centre of my bosom. I with him as my abiding place, but my wandering heart will depart in spite of myself. Jesus must abide as long as he pleases with his servant, and keep all things in their proper place. He must draw if I run; he must look down if I look up; he must cause something to flow into me ere anything can come out of me. In this way, by the grace of God, I am what I am,—I am the dust of his creation, the clay of his hand, and the worm of his power; a poor, helpless thing. How much I need his Spirit to move me, to melt me, to form me! Not a breath of real prayer, nor a sense of my wants, nor a desire for Jesus, nor any knowledge of sin that will do my soul any good can I have without him.

How different the soul feels under any measure of divine influence to what it does in the absence of it. How essential is his power and presence to glorify Jesus. May the Father of our Lord Jesus give unto his dust the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, (Christ,) his almighty Person in his essential divinity and spotless humanity; his rich atonement; "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified;" and his eternal redemption which his rich blood procured when he entered into heaven, there to appear in the presence of God for us. The vesture of his atonement, which he still wears, bears his dignified

title, "King of kings, and Lord of lords;" and upon his thigh, which is emblematical of his Majesty, dignity, and power.

Honours crown the sacred brow that once was crowned with thorns! I shall one day see him as he is, I humbly trust. I have founded my all on his cross, and that will not fail me. He suffered without the gate. May I be willing to suffer the measure of tribulation appointed for me to fill in, so that I may suffer and reign with him, and crown him Lord of all worlds, angels, and men, Lord of creation, redemption, providence, grace, and glory. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Could I but give him the glory due unto his name, my heart should set its "Amen" to all the honours of his everlasting name that are folded up in it: "I AM, THAT I AM."

And what shall I more say? The Lord pardon the ignorance of my poor feeble attempt to speak of Jesus. I sadly mar everything. I have not said all I should like to say about the chequered scene of light and shade, hill and valley, grace and corruption, but enough at this time, I think, to try your patience; but I have a confidence that your kindness will receive this scrap in love, and if the Lord smile upon it, it will be another proof of the infinite condescension of Jesus.

I regret to say that my much-esteemed friend in the Lord, Miss H., is very ill, and I fear there is little probability of her recovery; but there is nothing too hard for the Lord; and it is a great mercy that all is safe for eternity. The Lord has given her his "fear nots;" and his promise that he will be with her.

I am much exercised about my little place, and the little company. You will see by my letter that I have a cloud and a burden upon me; but the Lord is all-sufficient, and here I desire to rest. The Lord's wisdom, and love, and power cannot fail his people. Hitherto he has helped me.

You kindly inquire after my health. It is much the same as when I was at L. My Elizabeth is not to say well, but is held up with a little medicine occasionally, by the mercy of our God; and it is of the same mercy that we are not consumed. How great is his goodness! Once more, my dear friend, farewell.

May the God of love and peace be with you.

King's Cliffe, Oct. 22, 1852.

R. H. IRESON.

GOSPEL ministers are in great danger of dwelling only on generals in their public ministrations. This is commonly the case when religion is more in the head than in the heart. But their sermons, when this is the case, are lifeless and unsavory, totally destitute of that holy unction which is the beauty and glory of gospel preaching.—*Charles*.

THAT God which gave his law in smoke, delivered it again through the veil of Moses. Israel could not look at the end of that which should be abolished; for the same cause had God a veil upon his face, which hid his presence in the holy of holies. Now, as the veil of God did rend when he said, "It is finished," so the veil of Moses was then pulled off. We clearly see Christ the end of the law. Our Joshua, that succeeded Moses, speaks to us openfaced.—*Bishop Hull*.

## WHAT AND WHERE AM I?

Madam,—Understanding that you profess to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, and being one of that happy number myself, and feeling a love to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth, in token of this I send you the following lines, hoping you are also of that happy number, although it is a truth that many in this day profess to be his disciples who never knew his power; for some, saith the Scripture, receive the word in word only, (1 Thess. i. 5,) and their faith stands in the wisdom of man, (1 Cor. ii. 5,) being only taught of men, while others receive it in power and tremble at it. (Isa. lxvi. 2.) These take not their lamps only, but oil in their vessels, the Spirit of God in their hearts, with their lamps, an enlightened understanding, (Matt. xxv. 3, 4,) and so prove themselves to be not bastards, but sons, by the chastenings they endure, (Heb. xii. 7,) while others have a name to live while they are dead. (Rev. iii. 1.)

Now it becomes every Christian seriously to inquire to which of these he belongs; whether he has received the word as the word of man, or whether he has received it as accompanied by the power and Spirit of God. He that receives it as the word of man hears the minister say, "All men are sinners," and this he takes for granted. He hears also that Christ died for our sins; this he takes for granted also, not from any power he feels, but from what the man saith; so his faith stands in the wisdom of men, and not in the power of God. But he that is taught of God, he that receives the word in power, receives it accompanied by the Holy Ghost, the entrance of which giveth life and light; (Ps. cxix. 130; John vi. 63;) life to feel, and light to discover the sinner's sins, not externally only but internally, so as to set his secret sins in the light of God's countenance. (Ps. xc. 8.) For "the spirit of a man," when thus enlightened by the Spirit of God, "is a candle searching the inmost parts of the belly," or heart; (Prov. xx. 27;) and it discovers such depths of iniquity as he never saw before, and little thought there were such within, though God has declared there were. (Gen. viii. 21; Rom. iii. 9.) He now thinks Christ will never save such as himself, though Christ declares he came to save no others. (Luke v. 32.) "I came not to call the righteous," who are so in their own eyes, "but sinners to repentance," of which they are sensible. He now begins to fear the judgment and wrath of God; (Ps. cxix. 120;) for he feels so much evil within,—pride, covetousness, &c. &c.; and this he thinks can never be consistent with a child of God, although the apostle declares it is: "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." (Gal. v. 17; Rom. vii. 15.) It is consistent with no other, for they are not in trouble like other men: "They have no changes, therefore they fear not God." (Ps. lv. 19.) They are at ease in Zion, and they are settled on their lees.

This poor but rich man, for "there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches," is emptied from vessel to vessel, and all to empty him of his own righteousness, his own wisdom, and his own



strength, that he might be emptied into Christ, "who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." But he is ready to say under these feelings, with one of old: "If it be so, why am I thus?" It is thus—to humble the soul; for, "before honour is humility;" and except ye be humbled, and become as a little child, weak and helpless in ourselves as they are, and willing to be taught, (for "thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power,") without this no kingdom of heaven; for the haughtiness of man must be humbled, and the loftiness of man brought low, before the Lord can be exalted. "The Lord bringeth low and lifteth up," and blessed is the man or woman that is under this teaching; for without this teaching we are bastards, and not sons; "for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" "As many as I love," saith God, "I rebuke and chasten," and he "scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

But how does God chasten and teach his sons? David tells us: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law; that thou mayest give him rest" in Christ, for there is no other resting-place. (Matt. xi. 28.) The apostle says, "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." But how is a man judged? "When he," the Spirit, "is come, he will reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment," by erecting a judgment-seat in the sinner's conscience, and setting the law of God before his eyes, by which he teacheth him that he has no strength; (Deut. xxxii. 36; Rom. v. 6;) and this he is taught by striving hard to keep the law, knowing no other way of obtaining the favour of God; and when he fails, as he often will, he falls to vowing and resolving; and the more he strives the worse he gets; for sin, taking occasion by the law, will work in him all manner of concupiscence. (Rom. vii. 8, 9.) "For by the law is the knowledge of sin;" and now the fear of death and hell gets hold of him, he is afraid God will not hold him innocent. (Job ix. 28.) The law, in the hand of the Spirit, is a sharp two-edged sword; it discerneth the thoughts, pierceth and woundeth the sinner's heart. If he reads it, it condemns him, and every sin he commits opens the wound afresh; for it is by the law a sinner is made to feel he is lost, that he might fly to Christ to be saved; for there is salvation in no other. It is by the law a sinner is made to feel the sentence of death, for the law is the ministration of death, that he might fly for life to him who is the resurrection and the life. By the law the carnal enmity of the sinner's mind is stirred up, for "the law worketh wrath" that he might flee to Christ to be reconciled. (Col. i. 21.) By the law he is made to feel himself tied and bound by sin, for "the strength of sin is the law," that he might fly to Christ to be delivered. (Matt. i. 21.) By the law he is taught that his righteousness is as filthy rags, that he might fly to him that is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. And thus the law is a schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ. But these are hard lessons to learn. The sinner wants to do all these things himself, then he thinks he could go to Christ boldly; but if ever they are done

aright he must go to Christ and have them done, for he will have nothing to do with them that are full; for "the whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." He thinks he could go through anything if it would atone for his sins, not considering that God will not accept of anything to atone but the blood of Christ: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Here is salvation from sin and justification before God, and all to be obtained by faith in Christ.

But he cannot believe, because he sees and feels himself such a wretch. He thinks there are none so vile as himself. He detests and hates both his crimes and himself, and so proves himself to be a real disciple of Christ, (Luke xiv. 26,) only he does not know it. He thinks he cannot pray aright, because he cannot talk to God as some do; but, poor man, he does not know that every sigh and groan that he utters from a sense of want is a prayer: "For the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." The Lord heareth both the sighings of the needy and the groanings of the prisoner, and cometh down to deliver them. But who are the prisoners? Such as are taken captive by sin against their will. (Rom. vii. 23.) "I find a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am."

This is the chastening hand of God, not in anger but in love; and O what a blessing it is to be under this chastening rod; for all must pass under the rod before they are brought into God's covenant; and all this is only to prepare the way for the free grace of God in Christ Jesus. And when he has truly broken the heart and made the spirit contrite, then, and not till then, he will come and make it his habitation; (Isa. lvii. 15;) therefore, in such a state, "it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God." For he "will bring the blind by a way they knew not, and lead them in paths they have not known," and "though it tarry," we are commanded to "wait for it, because it will surely come and not tarry."

P. BRICE.

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THE hearts of believers are like the needle touched by the loadstone, which cannot rest until it comes to the point whereunto, by the sweet virtue of it, it is directed; for being once touched by the love of Christ, receiving therein an impression of sweet, ineffable virtue, they will ever be in motion and restless, until they come unto him and behold his glory. That soul which can be satisfied without it, that cannot be eternally satisfied with it, is not partaker of the efficacy of his intercession.—*Dr. Owen.*

THE experience of one saint becomes advantageous to another, through their mutual interest in the same root of spiritual life in Christ, by which they are one with him, and co-partners each with other of the same grace. From this ground there is no member of Christ that can say he has not need of another's help, because the Spirit of God, by which they are united into one body, conveys its operation through one to another, as it pleaseth him; (1 Cor. xii. 11;) which Spirit of God is the new life of the weak as well as of the strong.—*Dorney.*

## Obituary.

### MARY FERRIS, OF STEDHAM, SUSSEX.

On June 23rd, in the 81st year of her age, died Mary, widow of the late R. Ferris, of Stedham, near Midhurst, Sussex.

She had known the Lord for upwards of 50 years, and had been privileged many times to hear the late Mr. Vinall, Mr. Oxenham, and other good pastors, who used to preach in a malt-house belonging to her brother, Mr. Thomas Bridger, who also was a lover of God and these good men. Afterwards a chapel was built at Midhurst, in which Mr. Parsons, of Chichester, preached occasionally until his death, and subsequently Mr. Hallett and others, who continue to supply, as there is no settled minister.

Mrs. F. was seldom missing from the chapel on the Lord's day, although she had a distance of three miles to walk each way; and the very last Sunday before she was taken ill, she walked both ways. In her middle life she had known great reverses and much trouble; but for the last twenty years she had been highly favoured, both in providence and grace. In the things of this life she had enough, and those who knew her can testify to the grateful sense she had of the Lord's goodness to her, and also how much she enjoyed of the Lord's presence. Her heart was indeed filled with gratitude and her tongue with praise. Her letters also to her children were filled with extolling the Lord and his goodness to her, as an extract from her last letter, dated May 23rd, 1864, to one of her sons, will show. She is speaking of a member of the family who had met with a severe affliction: "I must tell you how grieved I am at the sad news; but O! There is nothing certain in this uncertain world. May this deep and heavy trial lead the dear girl to his dear and blessed self for her heavenly Husband; and may you be found of him, my dear and blessed Lord, I do sincerely pray. This blessed Husband she can never lose, and may she find him precious to her soul, as, bless his dear name, he is to mine, and has been for upwards of fifty years, but more particularly in my widowhood. I feel his precious love to my soul like the shining light, shining more and more unto the perfect day. O how clearly do I see there is nothing to be depended upon but his dear and blessed self. Here, my dear boy, is my rest; here will I dwell, for I have desired it. In him are durable riches which cannot be lost; and blessed are all they to whom they are given."

On the 4th of June she was stricken with apoplexy, which paralysed one side. It appears she never entirely lost her consciousness, although unable to make herself always understood; and here I cannot but say that I fully believe the Lord came with the stroke; for the first words she uttered, (after expressing a wish that her sons should be sent for,) were blessing and praising his dear name. Her sons found her in a half unconscious state; but she seemed to know them, and tried hard to make them understand what she said, which was that she was happy and going home. Two days afterwards I found her much restored from the attack, and her countenance radi-

ant with happiness. As she had always enjoyed such good health, I could not forbear weeping at seeing her lie so helpless, when she said, "Don't cry; I am going home. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!" waving her hand at the same time. She took no notice of anything around her, but lay much in prayer and in evident communion with her dear Lord. I used to listen to what she was saying, and would drop a word of a hymn or a passage of Scripture, which she always took up and responded to. As once she was saying, "My dear Lord," I said, "My Beloved is mine." She answered quickly, "And I am his." The doctor coming in, I said to her, "The doctor says you will soon be gone." She said, "The sooner the better. Come, Lord, I want to be gone." I said, "What shall I tell your boys?" She replied, "That I am gone." I said, "Shall they grieve for you?" "No, no," she answered, with a happy smile. I said, "Do you want to see them again?" She said, "No; I have seen them both." I said, "Is there any one of the family you would like to see?" She said, "No; I have done with this world;" and so it seemed, for she never mentioned any person or dropped a word about any worldly thing whatever from the time she was first taken ill until her death. "I want my dear Lord to come," she cried; "why tarry his chariot wheels?" "I want to go home," was her constant cry, not impatiently, but because her whole soul was evidently taken up with her dear and blessed Lord. Some friends coming in on the Sabbath evening, she seemed pleased to see them. I said, "Shall we sing your favourite hymn?" She replied, "Yes, do." We then sang hymn 9, Gadsby's Selection, in which her lips joined. I said to her, "Can't you sing?" "No," she replied; but I shall soon, louder than Paul." She bade the friends farewell, saying, "We shall meet above." One evening she turned to me with such a heavenly smile, and said, "I am feasting." I said, "Are you feasting on Jesus?" She said, "Yes; the bread of life." Another time she said, "I am dying! I am going through the river!" I quoted the passage in Isaiah: "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee," &c. She repeated it after me. Also the hymn beginning,

"Yes, I shall soon be landed."

I read to her part of John xiv.: "In my Father's house are many mansions," &c., which she seemed to enjoy, and said, "I shall soon be there."

In speaking of her illness, she fully recognised her Father's hand, and said, "He hath done all things well." She seemed to lie passive in his hands, but was continually longing to be gone, saying, "I do love him." She suffered much from thirst, so that she could not speak till her mouth had been moistened, when the first words she uttered were invariably, "Bless the Lord!" "Bless his dear name!" or, "I do love him!"

She continued in this happy frame during the first week of her illness, filled with love to the Lord, and to those about her, expressing her thankfulness for the attention she received, saying, "O how good you are!" or, "How kind of you!" and, "How comfortable you

do make me," &c. Indeed it might be truly said, "Grace reigned." It was a pleasure to be with her, and I hoped the Lord would have taken her home in this rejoicing frame, and that she would not suffer either from the pains of death or from the enemy of souls; but the Lord had ordered otherwise. About the tenth day of her illness, a change took place. From the spread of the disease on the brain, she became partly delirious, which was a sad contrast to the quiet state she had been in. Now nature showed herself in fretfulness, impatience, and even rebellion at times; and all one night she had a severe conflict. Her cries and groans to the Lord were incessant. I said, "Mother, has the Lord withdrawn himself from you?" She said, "Yes. O! I do want him to come!" She kept saying, "I love him, I love him," as if in answer to some suggestions of Satan. The nurse who sat up with her, being a God-fearing woman, endeavoured to comfort her, and spoke about prayer. "O!" she said, "I can't pray," which before this attack she was constantly doing. And one petition I would not pass over. It was that she might be kept humble. "O!" I thought, "what a feature this is of a child of God!" Here was this aged, dying saint lying like a little child, showing her humility to all around her, yet praying for more. I said, "The Lord will bruise Satan under your feet shortly. He shall not prevail." She said, "O do, Lord!" I said, "The Lord will never forsake you." She said, "No; but I want him to come." She continued in this state for some days, when she became more quiet, but very weak, and was evidently sinking.

On her last Sabbath, one of her sons came to see her. She showed much emotion, and said, "My dear boy!" several times. After some conversation, she asked him to go to prayer, which he did. She followed him in all his petitions with much fervour; and when he was asking that we all might be ready, with our loins girt and lamps burning, like those who wait for their Lord, she spoke out audibly, "Yes, when he shall return from the wedding." After this she spoke but little, but would answer any question, as to whether she was happy, and whether the Lord was precious to her, in the affirmative.

On Wednesday, the 22nd, she changed for death. I said to her, "Mother, do you find the Lord present with you in the valley of death?" She turned her dying eyes towards me, and said, "I do." I said, "Are you resting all your hopes on Jesus for eternity?" She said, "Yes, yes!" I said, "Do you feel you are on the Rock?" She said, "Yes."

These were the last words she uttered, which was some hours before she died. I did not think it necessary to disturb her in her dying moments, feeling perfectly satisfied with the dying testimony she had already given. She lay in a dying state for 24 hours, when her happy spirit took its flight, after a severe illness of 20 days. We scarcely could say, "She's gone!"

"Before her happy spirit took  
Its mansion near the throne."

P. FERRIS.

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

*(Continued from page 324.)*

HOWEVER vital godliness, either in its inward experience or in its outward fruits, may be imitated by the craft of Satan or the deceptiveness of man's heart, there is as much real and essential difference between the work of grace on the soul, as begun and carried on by the power and operation of the Holy Ghost, and any base counterfeit, as between light and darkness, life and death, Christ and Belial, heaven and hell. It may indeed be exceedingly difficult for any man or minister clearly to discern the distinction, or accurately describe the difference between grace in its lowest degree and nature in its highest—between a saint in his worst state and a hypocrite in his best; for there is not a fruit of the Spirit which cannot be imitated, not a heavenly feeling, divine sensation, or gracious movement which cannot be counterfeited. Who, with all his real or fancied discernment, can at all times and under all circumstances discover all the delusions of Satan as an angel of light, or detect all the turnings and windings of a self-deceptive, hypocritical heart?

“For neither man nor angel can discern  
Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks  
Invisible except to God alone,  
By his permissive will, through heaven and earth.”—MILTON.

But of all the varied and intricate circumstances which puzzle the mind and perplex the judgment when we would try our own case or that of others, none seems to us more puzzling and perplexing than this—that every grace and fruit of the blessed Spirit has its corresponding counterpart in the natural mind. Thus is there an enlightening of the eyes of the understanding by the gift of the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ? (Eph. i. 17, 18.) There is a corresponding enlightening of the natural mind to receive the knowledge of the truth. (Heb. vi. 4; x. 26.) Is faith the gift of God and a fruit of the Spirit? (Eph. ii. 8; Gal. v. 22;) and does it come by hearing, and hearing by the word of God? (Rom. x. 17.) There is a natural faith—a believing for a while, and in time of temptation falling away. (Luke viii. 13; John viii. 30; xii. 42, 43.) Is there a conscience made tender in the fear of God, as a choice new covenant blessing? (Jer. xxxii. 40; Acts xxiii. 1; xxiv. 16.) There is a natural conscience bearing witness in a heathen mind in its accusing or excusing thoughts, and convicting a graceless hypocrite with a stone in his hand ready to hurl it at the open sinner. (Rom. ii. 15; John viii. 9.) Is there a receiving of the love of the truth, so as to be saved and sanctified thereby? (2 Thess. ii. 10; John xvii. 17.) There is a hearing of the word gladly by a Herod, (Mark vi. 20,) and a receiving of it with joy by a stony ground hearer. (Luke viii. 13.) Is there “a good hope through

grace," an "anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil?" (2 Thess. ii. 16; Heb. vi. 19.) There is the hope of the hypocrite that perisheth, and a trust which is but a spider's web. (Job viii. 13, 14.) So might we run through the various fruits and graces of the Spirit, as repentance, and its natural counterpart in Ahab and Judas; (1 Kings xxi. 27; Matt. xxvii. 3;) humility, and its imitation in Saul; (1 Sam. x. 21, 22, 27;) zeal, and its fleshly mimicry in Jehu, (2 Kings x. 16,) and in the false spirit of the sons of Zebedee; (Luke ix. 54, 55;) love of holiness, and its sanctimonious counterfeit in the murderers of the Lord who, for fear of defilement, would not enter into Pilate's judgment hall. (John xviii. 28.) But we need not enlarge on a point so evident, and of such every day observation. Suffice it to remark that it is this counterpart of nature to grace, this correspondence of many if not most of the features of the old man to many if not most of the features of the new, which so greatly perplexes our mind when we sit in judgment on our own case or on that of others.

When, then, we attempt to trace out the operation and effects of the word of truth on the heart of the saints of God, and to show the authority and power which in the hands of the Spirit it exercises on their conscience, we are met at the very outset by the perplexing difficulty of which we have just spoken—the counterpart of flesh to spirit, the fruits and effects of the word on the natural conscience, as resembling the fruits and effects of the word on the spiritual conscience. Still, as there is a vital and essential difference between them, we will, with God's help and blessing, make the attempt to trace out that peculiar work and those peculiar effects which seem especially to distinguish the authority and power of the word of God on the heart and conscience of his people from all its imitations and all its counterfeits. And we more particularly dwell on this point as being well convinced that by nothing is the true work of grace more distinguished from all counterfeits than by the power which attends the word in the hands of the Spirit to the heart of the elect family of God.

In our last No. we left the word in possession of the heart. At this point, therefore, we now resume our subject. In describing, however, this work, we drew rather a general sketch than worked out our subject in detail. We rather laid down the general truth, that light, life, and power attend the entrance of the word into the heart, than minutely described either the way in which they enter or the effects which they produce. To this more detailed description we now, therefore, come; for truth, it may be observed, is often lost, or if not altogether lost in, is much obscured by generalities. A map of a district to be of any real value must be minute. A school map would be of little service to a belated traveller in a foreign land.\*

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\* Some friends of ours, many years ago, taking a walking tour in Switzerland lost their way on the mountains, and would probably have perished if one of the party had not had with him a most minute and accurate map (Keller's) of the country, by following which they soon arrived at a place of safety.

To a wanderer on the mountains of Israel, a map Zionwards must be not only accurate, but detailed, that he may know, not only that he is in the way, but whereabouts in the way. May wisdom and grace be given to us to line out the map not only plainly but accurately. To make it more clear and simple we shall go back a few steps, and take the vessel of mercy in his carnal, unregenerate state before the mighty work begins whereby he is turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.

To help our understanding on this point and establish our faith, the Scripture has given us a variety of figures, such as the quickening of the dead, (Eph. ii. 1,) the breathing of life upon the dry bones, (Ezek. xxxvii.,) the taking up and rearing of the outcast child, (Ezek. xvi.,) besides the more ordinary emblems of begetting or being born again, of a new creation, of a resurrection, &c. But we shall, for the sake of clearness, adopt the Lord's own figure of the strong man armed keeping his palace. (Luke xi. 21, 22.) View, then, the strong man, strong in his unregeneracy, in his palace and equipped in his armour. His palace is the heart; his armour his defence against the word of truth, the sword of the Spirit. How strong is his armour and how confident his trust in it. See him clothed from head to foot in his panoply; and as every truth has its opposing error, and every grace and fruit of the Spirit its counterfeit, so the armour of the saint has its counterpart in the armour of the sinner. He stands, therefore, in the whole armour of sin and Satan. The girdle of error, the breastplate of unrighteousness, the shoes of enmity, the shield of unbelief, the helmet of perdition, and the sword of the old man which is the word of carnal reason, equip him from head to foot as with armour of proof. And lest these be insufficient, he is firmly entrenched behind all such bulwarks of his palace as the prayerlessness, carelessness, watchlessness, and slothfulness of the carnal mind. Who can overcome this strong man armed? None but the stronger than he, the mighty One, the strength of Israel. His goods are in peace. False peace and security wrap him in their folded arms, and he bids defiance to every fear and every foe. But Jesus comes upon him by the power of his word, assaults him in his castle, overcomes him, and takes from him all his armour wherein he trusted, stripping it off, piece by piece. Whilst this armour was on, no arrow of conviction could reach the heart, for it was at once met and turned off by the shield or breastplate. But when the armour is stripped away, then there lies a naked, exposed, defenceless soul for the sword of the Spirit to enter. Did we not find, when eternal realities were first laid with weight on our mind, that something came over us which we could not describe, but which was sensibly felt? and that under this peculiar power there was a breaking up and a loosening of that ignorance, hardness, unbelief, prejudice, and carelessness which had hitherto held us locked up in carnal security? This was the coming upon us of the stronger than we, and this falling off of unbelief, hardness, ignorance, &c., was the stripping away of the armour in which we had stood encased, and to which we had trusted.



But now let us move a step onward. We have seen how the soul lies naked and bare, all its armour gone. Now comes the sword of the Spirit. Its operation and execution are clearly and beautifully described by the apostle: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Heb. iv. 12.) Before this entrance of the sword of the Spirit, the word of God was not "quick," that is, living,\* (John vi. 63,) but dead, for it did not communicate life; nor "powerful," for it was weak through the flesh; (Rom. viii. 3;) nor did it "pierce to any dividing asunder of soul and spirit, or of the joints and marrow," for it did not enter where soul and spirit, joints and marrow are; nor did it "discern the thoughts and intents of the heart," for all things were not yet made naked and opened before the eyes of him with whom we have to do. This sword has two edges, and therefore cuts as it goes, and cuts both ways at one and the same stroke. (Rev. i. 16; ii. 12.) It is not sharp on one side and blunt on the other, like a table knife, which cuts but does not pierce, but it severs as it enters with both its edges at once, and thus effectually divides asunder soul and spirit, separating, as nothing else can, the natural religion which is of the soul from the spiritual religion which is of the Spirit.†

It thus also becomes "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," laying the inmost movements of the mind, whether in imagination or intention, naked and bare before the eyes of the omniscient Majesty of heaven. Before this entrance of the sword of the Spirit, it was not known or felt that "the thought of foolishness is sin," (Prov. xxiv. 9,) and that "every imagination of the thoughts of the heart is only evil continually." (Gen. vi. 5.) Heart sins were not seen or regarded. As long as the outside of the cup and platter were made clean, the inward part might be full of ravening and wickedness. (Luke xi. 39.) As long as the whited sepulchre appeared beautiful outward, the dead men's bones and all uncleanness within were considered of little moment. But God searcheth the heart. And how? By his word. (Prov. xx. 27; Ps. xlv. 3-5;

\* This is the old English meaning of the word "quick." Christ is therefore said to be "judge of the quick (that is, the living at the time of his coming) and the dead." (Acts x. 42; 2 Tim. iv. 1; 1 Pet. iv. 5.) So we read, "And they go down quick (that is, alive) into the pit." (Num. xvi. 30, compared with verse 33.) So "You hath he quickened," (Eph. ii. 1,) that is, made alive.

† If any consider this interpretation forced, let them consider the following points: Paul draws (1 Cor. ii. 14, 15) a distinction between the "natural" man and the "spiritual" man. Now the word there translated, "natural," is literally, if we may coin an expression, "soulish;" that is, the man has a soul, but not a spirit, as not being born of the Spirit; for "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." His religion, therefore, in this state is natural, its seat being not the new man of grace, but the mere intellectual, mental part of man—the soul as distinct from the body. So James, describing a carnal, earthly religion, says, it is "sensual," ("natural," margin,) or "soulish." Similarly Jude, speaks of certain ungodly characters, and says of them that they are "sensual," using precisely the same word as is rendered "natural," 1 Cor. ii. 14, and "sensual," Jas. iii. 15.

cxxxix. 1, 2, 23, 24; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25; Rev. ii. 23.) This searching of the heart is effected by the entrance of the law into the conscience, for "by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.) This is the coming of the commandment in its spirituality and power, armed with all the authority of God, and discovering to the awakened conscience that to lust is to sin, because God hath said, "Thou shalt not covet." (Rom. vii. 7-9.) The light which attends this entrance of the word (Ps. cxix. 130; Eph. v. 13) reveals his character as a just and holy, righteous and inflexible Judge; the life which accompanies it makes the conscience bow and bend like a bruised reed, or a tender plant beneath the stroke; the power which clothes it awes and impresses the mind with solemn and ineffaceable convictions that it is the voice of the mighty God who speaks, for his voice is now upon the waters of a troubled heart, and as such is powerful and full of majesty; (Ps. xxix. 3, 4;) and the knowledge of the only true God which it communicates (John xvii. 3) fills the soul with godly fear before him. (Hab. iii. 16.) It is in this way that the authority and power of the word become established as the lord of conscience. This is the grand point of the Spirit's first work—to make the word master of the heart. Before, it was rather the servant than the master, a book like other books, which we could neglect or despise or criticise at will; air it, perhaps, on the Sunday, and lay it on the shelf or lock it up in a drawer for the rest of the week. But no more neglect, no more cold supercilious treatment, no more secret if not open contempt, no more pharisaical reading of it now. If we neglect it, it will not neglect us; if we struggle against the convictions it produces, and seek to draw away soul and spirit from the word, there it is firmly fixed; and the more we plunge, the more deeply it penetrates and sharply it cuts. Satan may muster against it all his arts and arms; unbelief, infidelity, love of sin, unwillingness to part with idol lusts, fear of man, gloomy prospects of temporal loss and ruin, family ties, religious connections, a whole lifetime of schemes and projects, education and prospects toppling to their very base, if these things be true—all these and a thousand other obstacles and objections which array themselves against the power of the word, plead against it, but plead in vain. Where the word has no authority or power on the heart, or only what we may call common power, these, or similar hindrances, either prevent a profession, or induce the professor, after a longer or shorter time, to draw back unto perdition. We see this again and again in the gospels. Many felt the power and truth of the Lord's words with transient flashes of light in the understanding, and of conviction in the conscience, who became his persecutors and murderers. It needs, therefore, a special, an uncommon, a spiritual, and a divine power to give the word that place in the heart and conscience which it is ever after to maintain as its lord and master. Until this power be felt, we do not really know that it is the word of the Lord. To establish, then, its authority and supremacy is the special work of the Holy Ghost. By this peculiar power it is effectually distinguished from the word of man. God himself gives this

test: "The prophet that hath a dream, let him tell a dream; and he that hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord. It not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" (Jer. xxiii. 28, 29.) The false prophets had their word; but it was the word of man, and therefore light as chaff, not heavy and weighty as wheat. It had no fire to burn, as shut up in the bones; (Jer. xx. 9;) nor was it a hammer, to break to pieces a stony heart. All the killing, (1 Sam. ii. 6,) slaughtering, (Ezek. xxi. 9, 10; Zech. xi. 7,) hewing and slaying, (Hos. vi. 5,) stripping, (Hos. ii. 3,) emptying, (Jer. xlvi. 11, 12,) bringing down, (Ps. xviii. 27; cvii. 12,) and laying low (Isa. xxvi. 5; Jas. i. 10) of the soul before God are wrought by the power of the word. God speaks by and in it, as if by a voice from heaven; and what he speaks is listened to because he speaks it. We see this in the saints and prophets of old. The word of the Lord came to Noah, (Gen. vi. 13,) to Abraham, (Gen. xii. 1; xv. 1,) to Isaac, (Gen. xxvi. 2-5,) to Jacob, (Gen. xxviii. 13; xxxv. 1,) to Joseph, (Ps. cv. 19,) to Moses, (Exod. iii. 4,) to Joshua, (Josh. i. 1,) to Gideon, (Judges vi. 12-14,) to Samuel, and to all the prophets; and was known by them to be the word of the Lord, by the power which attended it and the effects it produced upon their heart. Surely these men of God knew who it was that spake unto them, and what he said. Sometimes it was "the burden of the Lord," (Jer. xxiii. 33; Hab. i. 1,) or "the burden of the word of the Lord," (Zech. ix. 1,) implying the weight with which it pressed upon their minds; sometimes it was "the vision of the Lord;" (2 Sam. vii. 17; Isa. i. 1; Obad. i.) the word coming to them when their bodily senses were locked up, but their spiritual eyes open; (Num. xxiv. 4; Acts x. 10; xxii. 17, 18;) and sometimes God spake to them in a dream in the hours of the night. (Gen. xxxi. 10; Job xxxiii. 14-16; Matt. i. 20.) But however the mode differed, the power and the effect were the same. It was still the word of the Lord, and known by them to be such. In a similar manner the Scriptures are known by the people of God to be the word of the Lord now by their power and their effects; for they are to us what the direct word of the Lord was to them; and though the same degree of power may not attend the word now as attended it then, the power is the same and the effects are the same, though bearing each a proportion to the measure of influence put forth. Among these effects is trembling at the word; (Isa. lxvi. 2; Ps. cxix. 120; Hab. iii. 16;) standing in awe of it; (Ps. cxix. 161;) hiding it in the heart, that we may not sin against God; (Ps. cxix. 11; refraining the feet from every evil way, to keep it; (Ps. cxix. 101;) being afraid of God's judgments; (Ps. cxix. 120;) receiving it as a lamp unto the feet and a light unto the path; (Ps. cxix. 105;) choosing the way of truth, and hating every false way. (Ps. cxix. 30, 104.) By this power of the word experimentally realised and felt the conscience is made tender, the heart humble, and the spirit broken and contrite; and thus, like wax to the seal and clay to the potter, the soul is rendered susceptible of divine

teachings and heavenly impressions. Pride and self-righteousness are brought down; human traditions and old ceremonial forms of religion lose their power and influence, and drop off the liberated hands and heart like chains and fetters from a loosened prisoner; an empty profession and a name to live are dreaded as awful delusions, and as stamped with the hateful impress of hypocrisy; all known sins are forsaken and repented of, with many bitter tears and sorrow of spirit; convictions are hugged, lest the guilt of sin should go off the wrong way, and not be purged by the blood of sprinkling; the world is come out of, never to be returned to; retirement and solitude are sought, that far from human eye and ear the almost bursting spirit may pour itself forth in groans and sighs, prayers and tears before the Lord of heaven and earth, the heart-searching, re-trying God. The word is thus received into an honest and good heart, (Luke viii. 15,) made so by divine grace, where it takes root downward and bears fruit upward. Light attending the word in its first entrance, in that light the Scriptures are read; life accompanying the light, in that life the Scriptures are felt; knowledge being the fruit of light and life, of divine teaching and testimony, in that knowledge the Scriptures are understood; and power clothing the word, by that power faith is raised up to believe what the Scriptures reveal and declare. By this power and influence the ear and heart are circumcised to discern truth from error; the veil of unbelief and ignorance is rent off; (2 Cor. iii. 16;) obedience to the word is produced; (1 Sam. iii. 10; Acts ix. 6; Rom. vi. 17; xvi. 26; Heb. xi. 8;) the stony heart taken away and the heart of flesh given; (Ezek. xxxvi. 26;) and the soul turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

Until the authority and power of the word are thus established in the heart, nothing real, nothing effectual is done for the soul. Look at this point as exemplified in the case of the professors of the day, who, acknowledging the Bible as the word of God, and compassing perhaps sea and land to distribute it, yet have never felt its killing, subduing, renewing and regenerating power in their own soul. What a halting in them between two opinions; what a sheltering themselves under the rags of their own righteousness; what a cleaving to forms and ceremonies, self-imposed rules or traditionary duties; what blind attachment to walls, whether of church or chapel; what love to the world and conformity to its ways, fashions, and opinions; what dread of the cross, of being an object of contempt and derision, or a mark for persecution; what unwillingness to make any sacrifice of money, respectability, or comfort for Christ's sake or his people's; in many what indulgence in secret sin; what dislike to separating truth, to the bold and faithful servants of Christ, and to the poor despised family of God. Why all this, but because they have never felt the keen edge of the sword of the Spirit letting out the life-blood of a carnal, sensual, earthly religion? We can look back and see that such was once our own case; for what they are we, more or less, were; and we can see that it was nothing but the power of the word felt in our heart and conscience

that pulled us out of their ranks, and put the Redeemer's yoke upon our necks.

It is the power of God's word which men and devils oppose and hate, as being the only weapon which they really dread. To them the mere letter of the word is as straw, and a form of godliness as rotten wood. Such darts are counted as stubble, and they laugh at the shaking of such a spear. (Job xli. 27, 28.) But they dread, though they hate, the power, because it is the very voice of God. By the power of the word the dear Redeemer foiled and defeated the tempter in the wilderness. (Matt. iv. 1-11.) By the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony the ancient martyrs overcame the accuser of the brethren; and the remnant of the seed of the woman with whom the dragon made war, were such as kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ. (Rev. xii. 11, 17.) It is against the authority and power of the word that all infidels, unbelievers, and erroneous men set themselves. What are such men as Colenso aiming at, but to destroy the authority and power of God's word, by undermining its authenticity and inspiration? If not authentic, if not inspired, it has no power; and if it have no power, it can have no authority. The two are proportionate. What gives authority to a magistrate? The power to execute his decisions. Strip him of this power, and his sentences are not decisions, but opinions. So with the word of God. Take away its power by denying its authenticity and inspiration, and its authority to bind and loose, condemn and justify is gone at once. So again, what is Puseyism, or as it is now called, "Ritualism," but a setting up of traditions forms and ceremonies, kneelings bowings and intonings, vestments buildings and decorations in the place of the word of truth? Can a new Gothic window, or a purple velvet altar-cloth, or a pair of huge wax candles lighted or unlighted, or a long procession of surpliced priests and choristers, or all the sounds of the pealing organ point out the way of salvation to a lost sinner, bind up a broken heart, or purge a guilty conscience? What, again, is all error but the setting up of carnal reasonings and natural deductions in the place of, or against a "Thus saith the Lord?" And what do so many preachers and writers really intend when they set their bow against what they call "frames and feelings," but to aim an envenomed shaft against the power of the word of God on a believing heart?

But does not all our daily and dear-bought experience convince us that in this power stands all our hope of eternal life? We have been hunted out of our false refuges by the power of the word, and brought to embrace the Son of God as revealed by the same divine power to our souls. We therefore know that "the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power;" and that our faith "stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Cor. ii. 5; iv. 20.) The preaching of the cross was once to us foolishness; but it has been made to us the power of God; and Christ crucified has become to us both the power of God and the wisdom of God. (1 Cor. i. 18, 24.) After this power we are seeking and feeling, we may say,

every day in our lives, and sometimes often through the day and the lonely hours of the night. By this power we live, and in this power we hope and desire to die, as being well assured that nothing but this power can rob death of its sting and the grave of its victory, and land us on that happy shore where ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands will for ever sing, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

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COMFORT YE, COMFORT YE MY PEOPLE.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah."—ISA. xliii. 10.

THIS is the honour that I covet, Lord,  
To be a faithful witness to thy word;  
To know and love the precious gospel sound,  
And in its proclamation much abound.

To see thy glory and to feel thy power,  
And oft receive a sweet refreshing shower  
Of grace and mercy, peace and pardoning love,  
Flowing down freely from thy courts above.

I love and long to speak and testify  
Of him who did for vile transgressors die,  
And to describe the Spirit's work within,  
Convicting guilty rebels of their sin.

And then to show how God the Holy Ghost  
Directs the hearts of those who feel they're lost  
To Jesus Christ, for refuge from despair,  
And teaches them on him to cast their care.

Then to proclaim glad tidings to the meek,  
Whose hearts are taught a precious Christ to seek;  
And tell to those whose face is Zionward,  
That Christ shall be their sure, their bless'd reward.

To comfort those that mourn for Christ indeed,  
And to encourage those who feel their need  
Of pardoning mercy, and who heartily cry,  
"Lord, let thy mercy come, or I must die."

Feb. 7th, 1863.

A. H.

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As in nature, though there are all the faculties in all, yet some faculties are in some more lively and vigorous than in others; some have a more vigorous eye, others a more ready ear, others a more voluble tongue; so it is in spirituals. Abraham excelled in faith, Job in patience, John in love. These were their peculiar excellences. All the elect vessels are not of one quantity; yet even those that excel others in some particular grace, come short in other respects of those they otherwise excel, and may be much improved by converse with such as in some respects are much below them. The solid, wise, and judicious Christian may want that liveliness of affection and tenderness of heart that appear in the weak; and one that excels in gifts and utterance may learn humility from the very babes in Christ. And one principal reason of this different distribution is to maintain fellowship among them all: "The head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you."—*Flavel*.

THE  
GOSPEL STANDARD.

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DECEMBER, 1864.

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

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A WORD OF EXPLANATION.

As I have good reason to believe that there is much misapprehension in the minds of many of the readers of the "Gospel Standard" respecting the participation of the Editor in its profits, and as the late proposed Testimonial has necessarily drawn much attention to the subject, I feel it due to myself as well as to the Publisher to make a few remarks upon it. And I do so the more willingly, as a simple, truthful statement from my own pen will perhaps not only be satisfactory for the present, but may put an end to many surmises and rumours when I shall be called away from this earthly scene, and have done for ever with testimonies and testimonials, except such a testimony as may be given me in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

But to accomplish this task at all fully or completely, I must go back very many years, that my whole connection with the "Gospel Standard" may be made clear from the beginning; for a numerous generation of readers has since grown up, who have not even seen its early volumes and know nothing of its origin or progress.

The "Gospel Standard" was started by Mr. John Gadsby, then resident in Manchester, in August, 1835. I had withdrawn myself from the Church of England in the March of the same year, and had, I believe, become known by report to him, through my "Letter to the Provost of Worcester College, Oxford," which had been already somewhat widely circulated. But I was not consulted by him about the new periodical, or asked to write or take any part in it, though, if I remember right, a proof of the opening "Address" was sent me to read, which I returned without doing anything to it beyond suggesting one or two insignificant verbal alterations. At the foot of the Address occur the words "the Editors;" but who they were I never inquired, and do not to this day know. I certainly was not present at the birth, nor did I dress the child, or rock the cradle of the infant now grown into a sturdy man. The first volume is now before me; but on cursorily running through its pages, I cannot trace any mark of my pen as having contributed any communication to them. Looking in the same way over seven-

ral subsequent volumes, those for instance for 1836, 1837, 1838, I find that I must have contributed various pieces, some signed by my name, others by my initials, and some Addresses and Reviews, of course anonymous. But at that time I had nothing whatever to do, as an Editor, with the work.

But the question may be now naturally asked, "How came you to write Addresses and Reviews when you were not an Editor?" I can hardly answer the question, except that it arose mainly from two reasons, partly from what is commonly called "good nature," and partly from my own activity of mind and pen. Mr. J. Gadsby, for instance, would drop me a few lines asking me to write the New Year's Address, or would send me a book requesting my thoughts upon it. At first I complied with his requests chiefly to oblige him, but when my hand was in, on it ran in those days with a zeal which sometimes, I freely acknowledge, outran discretion. But, as my dear friend Tiptaft used to say, "If a man has not zeal when he is young, what will he be when he is old?" Do you, therefore, who remember those days forgive me this wrong which I am not now likely to repeat. But this occasional writing, and I believe I may add the way in which it was received, combined with the really improved pieces in the "Gospel Standard" from the pens of J. K. and J. M'K., Letters of Warburton, Congreve, &c., increasing the circulation and influence of the magazine, my hands became gradually more and more fastened to the plough stilts; for I became an Editor much as many good men become ministers—by degrees, one step leading on to another, till there is no turning back. Still, though thus doing much editorial work, I was not one of the Editors till, I think, about the year 1840, when some circumstances unnecessary to mention convinced M'Kenzie and myself, for both of us had somehow or other got into editorial harness, that it was desirable for us, as we had been for some time the real Editors of it, to assume the name and office and with it the whole control, he taking the part of reading and selecting pieces for insertion, and I for the most part writing the Reviews, Addresses, &c. Thus much for my being installed into office, which I can only say was not of my desiring or seeking, and to take which I should not have consented, but for a desire, I hope, to carry it on profitably for the living family of God.

But I now come to my connection with the pecuniary profits of the magazine, to explain which has been the chief reason of this article. In the year 1841 occurred an unpleasant controversy with the "Spiritual Magazine," in the course of which appeared the following sentences in our pages: "As to the Editors, they have not the least pecuniary interest in the magazine; their work being solely a labour of love, and thus they have no motive to push the sale of the work, except to advance the good of the church and the glory of God." (Vol. VII., p. 88.) "Who our Editors are, we shall not disclose; but this we can say for them, that they derive no profit from our magazine. Can their opponents say as much?" (Vol. VII., p. 143.) This, as we now consider, needless statement was, however, perfectly true, and continued so till the year 1855. But I am



anticipating circumstances, and shall therefore revert to the main current of my statement. M'Kenzie and I continued to be the gratuitous co-editors till his death, though I must say that his failing health threw upon me during the latter part of his life almost the whole burden of the work. In 1849, (Aug. 12th,) poor dear M'Kenzie was taken home; and now the question arose with me, Should I take a partner, speaking commercially, or work alone? The subject was, of course, turned over in my own mind, and the *pros* and *cons* considered; but several decisive reasons concurred to determine me to adopt the latter alternative, and work by myself, rather than with another. In the first place, I well knew that a new Editor can no more be made in a day than the captain of a ship. An apprenticeship must be served to it, mine having been already one of not less than 9 or 10 years; and what old workman would like to sit at the same bench, work at the same piece, and hand it over to be finished by a young apprentice? Besides, let men think or say what they will, editorial work is no ordinary work, especially when some measure at least both of grace and gift, as in the case of the "Gospel Standard," is required. It is not for me to speak of myself or of my qualifications, even were I called upon to magnify my office; but this I think must be plain to most minds, that as all private Christians are not fit to be ministers, so all ministers are not fit to be Editors. There are men in the church of God of deeper and richer experience than myself, and more able ministers of the New Testament, who are no more fit to be Editors than I am fit to drive an express train on the Great Western. Some measure of literary ability and of the use of the pen, which can only be acquired by practice, is necessary; and as some men are good for six sermons who might not be good for six months, so a man might be good for six months' editorship who might not be good for six or 16 years. There must not only be a gift, but, as in the case of the ministry, a living spring to feed the gift, if a man is to go on year after year without drying up. Judgment also and discretion are required, and a willingness and ability to work month after month with undeviating regularity; for the press, like the two daughters of the horseleech, is ever crying, Give, give, and must be fed almost to a day. But I forbear. As no man knows the cares, toils, and anxieties of the ministry but those who are in it, so no one but an Editor knows the cares, toils, and anxieties of editorship.

But could they not be lightened by having some one to share the burden? Certainly, if one could find the right man. There is the difficulty. But if I could find the man, would he be willing to be found? or, if found, could we work together? If he were willing to lighten my labours by taking a share in writing Reviews, &c., there would be required not only a unity of mind and spirit, but a unity of style and expression, that the whole might not be a piece of patchwork; or else he must fall into the place of Sub-editor; and though, as John Bunyan says, "if two men ride on one horse, one must ride behind," few are willing to sit on the crupper when they think themselves fully able to hold the bridle. All these things

considered, I believed it would be the best and safest way to stand alone, though it entailed on me not only more work, but what I much more felt, greater responsibility, and the absence of friendly counsel in seasons of difficulty. For it has been one of my greatest trials in conducting the "Gospel Standard," that since M'Kenzie's death I have not had a single person to whom I could look for counsel when I needed it. Those who, like my dear departed friend William Tiptaft, could, would not; and those who would, their counsel was either, generally speaking, not worth having, or I was, perhaps, too proud or too self-confident to either ask or take it. Besides which, it seemed best to trust a better Counsellor than a fellow-man. Thus I preferred to work in single harness, lest, if a new yoke-fellow and I should not comfortably pull together, we might either fall out or fall down.

None but Editors know what is required to conduct a periodical generally with any degree of success; and none but a spiritual man can know how these difficulties are increased when there is a desire to carry it on for the glory of God and the good of his people. The actual labour of mind is not small. Many may read my Reviews, Addresses, or Meditations, and think, perhaps, that all I have to do is to sit down some evening and knock them off in an hour or two. If I could so knock them off, they would not be worth reading. I do not mean to say that the Lord might not pour in a blessed stream of divine thought and feeling into my soul, and supply me with a similar flow of words to give them utterance. Bless his holy name, I am not an utter stranger to this, and perhaps some of my best pieces have been written in this way and under this influence. But these are rare seasons, and I am not looking for what I may call miracles every month. No. As also of late years my mind has been directed to some of the deepest and most important points of our most holy faith, I have proportionally shrunk from hasty, superficial writing, not only as knowing how easily a slip may be made with the pen unless carefully watched, but as feeling that for the sake of the glory of God and the good of his people I was bound to set before them only such provender as had been winnowed with the shovel and the fan. But apart from this, I am for the most part but a slow composer; and as upon such subjects as have lately occupied my pen want of clearness of thought and expression would be a serious defect, what I write has to be well thought out, and very carefully read and re-read, and revised both in manuscript and proof. I generally give to my work my best hours in the day, that is, when my mind is most clear, my heart most warm, my soul most alive, and my spirit most prayerful. Often and often do I lay down my pen for want of the right thoughts, the right feeling, and the right flow. But, taking one month with another, I generally consider that my editorial work takes up the primest and best hours of the first fortnight. I say nothing about what comes from my pen. Let others judge. But I may say this, that, bad or good, worthless or profitable, it costs me a great deal of labour, care, and anxious revision, with prayer and supplication before and after, that what I write may be made a bless-

ing to the church of God. But when that part of my work is done, other remains almost as difficult. Pieces have to be selected for insertion for a future number, ill-written manuscript to be read, and those only chosen which seem to have some life and power, savour and dew upon them. Then comes reading what is called "proof," that is, printed matter, which has to be most carefully gone over, not only that no printer's errors may escape correction, but that no erroneous, inconsistent, unbecoming expressions may creep in. But it is not worth while to go through all this work, or do more than allude to the anxiety, responsibility, and constant stretch of mind which all this entails. Most of our literary men, and especially editors, die in the prime of life, worn out with what is called "brain work;" and I look upon myself as a miracle that I have gone on for so many years with a very weak body and doing so much work, both ministerial and editorial, and yet retain my mental faculties so far unimpaired.

But now I come to a part of my Editorship which I should be glad to pass by, but which I feel necessary to state as plainly and simply as the foregoing. And this I feel the more imperative, on account of the late Testimonial. There is a good deal of misunderstanding and misapprehension about my connection with the profits of the "Gospel Standard," some thinking I have nothing, some thinking I have a large amount of them. I will then explain the whole history and mystery of this part of the story. Up to the year 1855, I received nothing whatever from the profits of the "Gospel Standard," except an occasional £10 note to give to the poor. But in 1855 a circumstance occurred which entailed on me the permanent loss of £30 a year. At this time my family was getting expensive, as I was giving them a good education, having had one myself; and most parents know what school bills, especially good school bills, are. The thought then struck my mind, that as the "Gospel Standard" was increasing in circulation, and I had worked for it gratuitously for at least 15 years, I should not be doing wrong if I asked the Publisher to make up my loss of £30 a year, by allowing me that same sum out of the profits of the magazine. To this he most cheerfully and willingly acceded. I am almost ashamed to have to name these details, but I feel it to be due to me as well as to him, to have the matter clearly understood. It was not asked nor given as a salary, but as a little acknowledgment of my services. This sum I therefore received up to the year 1860, when, as the circulation of the "Gospel Standard" kept increasing, and its profits advancing in more than an equal ratio, I thought I might have a little more of the spoils. This was met with the same willingness, and that year I had £50. One step leads on to another. In the year 1863 I had £55, and this I have had £60. It is now proposed to take a further step, and I am to have £100. But before I close this unpleasant part of the subject, I think it is but due to the Publisher to clear away some of the clouds which may rest on the office in Bouverie Street. And first, as to the question of profits at all. This is much misunderstood. Undoubtedly, on all *commercial* principles, they belong entirely to the Proprietor of

the work. It is his property. He has to bear all the risks of the undertaking. He has all the care, all the expenses, and everything connected with the commercial part of the work, which requires capital, credit, great business habits, and all that incessant attention without which no periodical can be carried on. People either do not know, or forget these things when they cry out against the profits of the Publisher. But should not the Editor have his share, especially if his editorship contribute much to the sale of the book? Undoubtedly. But how is this usually managed? As few Editors can afford to work gratis, some arrangement is generally made between the two parties, what may in fact be called a bargain. The Editor considers his services worth so much, and the Proprietor of the work gives or refuses it according to his own estimate of their real value. But I am not a man, either naturally or spiritually, for bargains, and I must say there was no bargain made between us. All that was done, was done in a cheerful, friendly spirit.

And now, another word before I close my long-winded explanation. I have very little idea of the profits of the "Gospel Standard," but I believe they are over-rated. Indeed, I doubt much whether the Publisher himself can fully or clearly estimate them. If his business were confined to printing and publishing the "Gospel Standard," it would be easy enough; but how is he to apportion its expenses? and when he has paid wages, rent of offices, gas, rates, taxes, all measured by the London scale, how can he decide what portion of the burden must fall on the "Gospel Standard," and what on the hymn books and all that issues from his press and office?

I am amply satisfied with my share, and therefore I hope this long explanation will put an end to all those surmises and speeches which are abroad. And I hope, as my gratuitous services for more than 15 years may be accepted as an evidence of my sincerity, and that I was not looking after the loaves and the fishes, so I trust my integrity may not now be impeached because, simply following the gospel principle that "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and that "they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar," as I have long sowed spiritual things, I am in my old age and with many bodily infirmities reaping some measure of carnal things.

J. C. PHILPOT.

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HE that is alive to the law always suspects the doctrine of the gospel, as if it were leading him away from holiness. Here is a mark that well may find out a pharisaical generation. They suspect the doctrine of Christ and his righteousness, as if it were a doctrine tending to licentiousness and opposition to the law; a sign they never felt the power of the gospel upon their hearts, otherwise they would feel the revelation of the righteousness of Christ, from faith to faith, to be the power of God to their salvation; they would find that never are they so much disposed to holy duties as when they are under the influences of the spirit of faith, discovering the glory of Christ and his righteousness to them; but an ignorant generation, that knows not the power and virtue of the gospel, still suspects it contrary to the law.—*Ralph Erskine.*

## NOTES OF A SERMON,

PREACHED AT JIREH CHAPEL, LEWES, SUSSEX, ON TUESDAY EVENING,  
APRIL 21ST, 1825,

BY THE LATE MR. VINALL.

“ Help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this great multitude. O Lord, thou art our God; let not man prevail against thee.”—2 CHRON. xiv. 11.

THE character of Asa holds forth to us a great deal of instruction, in his early acquaintance with God and his doing the things that pleased him, as also the tokens of the divine favour he was blessed with. For many years together he had no war, for the Lord gave him rest; and yet in him we perceive, in the close of his life, that man at his best is but man, for then he went for help, not to the Lord, as before, but to the king of Assyria; and when diseased in his feet “ he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.” O what a picture of us poor fallen creatures! A man may, through the goodness of God, be brought early in life to the knowledge of the truth, and to walk before God in faith and love, and yet in how many instances do the latter days of such prove that they were men of like passions with ourselves; and I think the proverb is truly applicable, “ Once a man, and twice a child.” And though the Holy Ghost, in what is written of Enoch, records no one misstep in the whole of his pilgrimage, yet depend upon it he had a feeling and humbling sense of his depravity, and of his need of mercy, for it is said “ he walked with God.” And the prophet Micah saith, “ He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?” A person must know what mercy is to love it. I might also mention Caleb and Joshua, of whom the Holy Ghost has left no account of one misstep in all their history; but depend upon it they also were deeply humbled with a sense of their own depravity. And where we see such lamentable falls in the children of God, it is intended to convince them or us of our weakness, and how altogether lost we are, and that if kept, it is “ by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.”

I now come to the text.

I. Here is the servant of God asking help of the Lord.

II. An account of his relying upon the Lord, and of his going forth in his name against the hosts of enemies, and his telling the Lord, as it were, the battle is his, saying, “ Let not man prevail against thee.”

I. Asa had been collecting a great deal of might, as he conceived, to fortify his kingdom, and had raised an army of 580,000 men; but here comes against him 1,000,000, such an army as you seldom hear of; and thus it is with us. We often think we are very strong; but God sends a trial greater than any we have had before, and we fear we shall be overwhelmed. We then renounce our own confidence, and run to the Lord to save us, like Asa; and I think the reason why the Lord does not deliver us till we renounce our own confidence is, that he may not give his glory to another, and to assure us that if he does not interfere for us we must be lost.

II. Hence, secondly, Asa said, "We rest on thee;" as though he had said, "We do not expect to deliver ourselves; we have no such thought, but rest on thee." Just as you would say to a friend, into whose hand you committed any business, "I trust wholly to you; I rest entirely on you; I depend on you. If you fail me, I am undone at once, for all my confidence is placed in you." And thus it was with Asa; he was brought to look upon all that he had provided for his safety and defence as nothing, and yet to know the Lord had power to deliver him from this huge host. There are two things which can bring such a satisfaction into the soul, namely, faith in God's promise and faith in God's power. How plainly may be seen in David the difference between faith and unbelief. When but a lad, he smote a lion and a bear; and when he went out to meet the giant of Gath, how strong was his faith while he gave glory to God, although the giant cursed him by his gods. And I believe every one of his curses strengthened David's faith and increased his strength; as it was said to Gideon, "Go in this thy might, thou mighty man of valour." O with what disdain did David look upon Saul's armour! Methinks I hear him say, "I do not want this rubbish;" so strong was his faith in God's power. In this instance we discover that faith, even strong faith, is not according to years, nor according to the length of one's standing in grace; for observe, after all this, even when Saul and his army were out of sight, his faith was so weak he cried out, "I shall surely fall one day by the hand of Saul!" And who would have expected the hero to run down to Gath, and to feign himself mad? Indeed, he ought not to have done so, if I may be allowed so to speak; but I cannot vaunt over him, for although the Lord has favoured me with so many conspicuous deliverances, both temporally and spiritually, yet now the first trial that comes, I cannot, of myself, trust in him at all; but, as I said, it ought not to be so; and if you feel as I do, we are agreed. Mr. Huntington has somewhere said, "A miraculous faith is a faith without any doubts; but a true, saving faith is attended with ten thousand doubts and fears;" and only as I have faith in exercise can I get at the marrow of the promises. At other times the word of God itself appears dry, and yields us nothing, although there really is such fulness in it that only a line or two contains so much, in which it differs from any human writings. Not that I wish in the least to disparage the writings of good men; but I say there is more contained even in a word or two of God's precious promises. Do you not find it so? We have in the twentieth chapter of this book an account of Jehoshaphat, when a host came against him. He stood amidst the congregation, and said, "O Lord our God, art not thou in heaven, and rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the earth? and in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee? Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of this land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend, for ever? And they have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If when evil cometh upon us, or the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we

stand before this house and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help. O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great multitude that cometh against us, neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee. And all Judah stood before the Lord with their little ones, their wives, and their children;” which confirms me still more in the propriety, necessity, and benefits of united prayer, wives, children, and all praying, and one a mouth for the whole, as here. Now the Lord made use of the mouth of Jahaziel, one of the congregation, to speak for him, bidding them not to fear nor be dismayed, for that the battle was not theirs but God’s, and that they should not need to fight, but stand still and see the salvation of the Lord with them. Here was a blessing in answer to the prayers of faith. And the king bowed, and they all worshipped the Lord; and the king said, “Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for his mercy endureth for ever;” and the Lord set ambushments, and set their enemies to kill one another until they were all dead bodies, and none escaped. Thus we see that the Lord is a wonder-working God, and we see also that trials find something for the child of God to attend to at home. He does not want to go about trying every one’s weights and measures. They make the spouse of Christ keep at home; there is enough to be done there without gadding about; and literally it is quite unbecoming any godly woman to be fond of gadding about.

I much admire Mr. Hart’s definition of faith in the following verse. Indeed, his hymns are the best commentary on the Scriptures I ever perused.

“ True faith’s the life of God;  
 Deep in the heart it lies;  
 It lives and labours under load;  
 Though damp’d, it never dies.  
 A weak’ning, emptying grace  
 That makes us strong and full;  
 False faith, though stout and full in face,  
 Weakens and starves the soul.”

You may depend upon it, the strength any man boasts of will never hurt you nor me.

It is said of Sarah, “By faith she received strength to conceive seed when she was past age.” Yes, faith in the power and promise of God. But I must not enlarge; I often think I say so much, without keeping to one subject, which prevents your understanding my meaning; but it never fell to my lot to “say much in little.”

III. The application in the text: “Let not man prevail against thee.” God does not suffer his children to come and say to him, “Thou must make good thy promise, or thy honour falls to the ground.” What would be the feelings of an earthly parent, was it myself, for one of my children to come to me and say, “You must fulfil the promise you made to me, or your honour falls at once;” I

certainly should feel quite hurt, and put him into the back-ground. But if he came to me and said, "Father, you promised me so and so, and I never could doubt but that you would perform the same; now do not disappoint me, for I feel more for thy honour than for my own interest;" this I should admire in my child. And thus it is with the children of God. They humbly and submissively put, as it were, the Lord in mind of his promise, for his name's sake, saying, "Lord, thou knowest how they will triumph, and say thou couldst not perform thy promise; and thy honour is dearer to me than my own life. 'O let them not prevail against thee.'" And this is truly grateful in the eyes of our heavenly Father, which his gracious answers and deliverances show.

I add no more. May God command his blessing.

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### A VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

My dear Mary,—We do indeed sympathise with you in this very long and severe trial. May the Lord kindly and sensibly support you under it, and abundantly sanctify it to your soul's profit.

How truly mysterious are the dealings of the Lord in providence to us poor, blind mortals. May we have grace to bow to his will, acknowledge his sovereign right to dispose of us and ours as he may see fit; and may that sweet sense of his love be given which shall enable us, without reserve, to put ourselves into his hands, feeling fully assured he is too wise to err and too good to be unkind. O my dear, he is worthy to be trusted, adored, and loved beyond, far beyond all the powers of all his creatures, even when things are, according to our poor, finite reason, all going wrong. Would they not indeed go wrong if we had the management of them? Should we not make ourselves a nest, and die in it? How infinite the mercy, then, of our heavenly Father, that he will, time after time, follow us, and plant a thorn in the nest we are making, to prevent us settling down in comfort short of himself, giving us the light and teaching of his Holy Spirit, to show us how vile we are, that we may feel our need of the fountain; and, bless his precious name, not only to feel our need, but to enjoy, at times, the soul-cleansing and life-giving streams.

The good Lord enable you, my dear, to take courage, to confide in him, to commit your way unto him, to cast your burdens upon him, to cling to him, and he will appear for your help, temporal and spiritual. None ever trusted in him and were confounded; and though, to our view, clouds and darkness are round about him, yet justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne. He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. This my soul has solemnly proved, again and again, as well as that he is a very present help in every time of need; and you know, my dearest M., he has brought me through many straits. O that I could speak to the honour of his dear name as I feel he is worthy to be spoken of!

Yours, most affectionately,

Glinten.

MARY MARSH.



A LETTER FROM A FRIEND IN AUSTRALIA  
TO A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

Dearly-beloved Friend and Brother in Him who is the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, who dwelleth in the high and holy place, and with him also that is of a contrite heart and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones,—Grace and peace be multiplied unto you and yours abundantly.

Your kind and most welcome letter came duly to hand by the July mail, for which I heartily thank you.

I feel in my heart to thank the Almighty, the God of heaven, for his merciful kindness to you in sufficiently strengthening your body to enable you to enter upon the work of the ministry, by which the dear Lord has graciously fulfilled his promise to you by giving you this new blessing. Indeed, every blessing, whether spiritual or natural, when we are enabled to appreciate it, is new to us. That you are a minister of righteousness to the saints of God I have no doubt; but this I can scarcely consider to be quite new, for, if I am not mistaken, I have been favoured to enjoy your ministrations, or the ministrations of the Spirit by your instrumentality, for nearly 30 years. Say you, "But we have been separated for seven or eight years?" True; but it does not follow that we consequently should be separated in spirit. On the contrary, I can truly say that since we have been here I have been frequently with you in spirit. You know that we were much together at one time, that our friendship was mutual, and that the dear Lord never permitted a single jar between us. We held sweet communion together, we walked to and from the house of God together many times; and I may say your words are still treasured up in my heart; and when at any time they are brought to my remembrance they are as fresh and savoury as when they were first uttered; and not only the words themselves, but the effect they produced at the time, and also the very place where they were uttered; so that the dear Lord has been pleased to afford me much pleasure, at times, in ruminating on the Lord's days that are for ever gone, in which we were favoured to take sweet counsel together.

How many times, in our early days, were you instrumental in causing me to hold on, when I was near sinking into hopeless despair? More than once have you challenged me, when in such a plight, and asked me, "Can you in your conscience, before a heart-searching God, say positively that he never did anything for you? Can you say you never saw any beauty or desirability in the dear Redeemer?" And you not only asked me these serious and important questions, but you expected an answer also. These were perplexing questions, which I feared to answer in the affirmative. Then, for my comfort, you would narrate a parallel case of your own, and how the Lord was pleased to relieve your mind, revive your hope, and lead you again to bless and praise his holy name. It was such things as these that served to cement our hearts in the closest union and harmony.

You remind me of the many hours that I have stood with the door, as it were, in my hand, declaring I must go. I can tell you that, although I rushed out of the house neither naked nor torn, yet I felt many painful misgivings in consequence of what I had been saying, fearing I had been saying more than was experimentally true.

Now, my dear friend, if the Lord the Spirit is pleased to bring them to my remembrance, I will remind you of some things which, perhaps, you may have forgotten. I remember one Lord's day, when friend M. preached, that you told us of some of your exercises, as you walked alone that morning. You were led to bemoan your lean, cold, and carnal state, and felt as if it was useless for you to proceed, for you had no love in exercise, no hungering or thirsting after righteousness; when all at once your captivity was happily turned, and you went on your way rejoicing in God your Saviour. To my mind, the very marrow of vital godliness is a feeling sense of love, joy, and peace, flowing into the soul, under the influence of the Holy Spirit. I have enjoyed much under the preached gospel, reading, praying, &c.; but I esteem those silent visits and meditations which produce holy communion and happy familiarity with the dear Redeemer more than all. I term these visits the preaching of the Holy Ghost to the soul. At such times the Saviour is held in sweet remembrance, while the truth flows in, and love and praise flow out, and all is peace within.

My dear friend, I must make one disclosure to you. I often feel cut up from the reflection that I cannot speak, as many of the Lord's dear saints can, of a clear and pointed deliverance from law, curse, and condemnation. This causes my bitterest fears. A short time before our dear friend Charlwood fell asleep in Jesus, he was led to speak in the most exulting terms of his clear and happy deliverance, and of his rejoicing in the happy prospect of shortly entering into eternal joy. It made me very sad, and I had scarcely recovered, when he was removed from amongst us. I seemed as if I could join in any part of experience but this, the most important; and I know to die short of this, the future must be dreadful; and if it were not for those visits which I have spoken of above, I should be almost without hope; but these I cannot deny. They contain the greatest amount of happiness, peace, and joy I ever knew on earth.

I remember, as we were returning from W., whilst crossing the fields, you repeated a verse of a hymn:

“ When I travel through distress  
Or grief of any kind;”

and when you came to that line:

“ One secret ray of heavenly light  
Breaks through the cloud between;”

O what a sweetness bedewed my spirit for a time! And so it has since been, many times.

I must honestly confess I have my changes; but the grand question is, “ Are they the right changes ?” Allow me to try to explain.

Frequently, when under the sound of the gospel trumpet, I am melted into tears, which I cannot suppress, though I endeavour to do so; for my position in the chapel is directly to face the whole congregation; so I would willingly conceal them. Then, again, I am apt to shed tears on other occasions, even in things of a purely natural character. This tries me, and often causes me to fear that it is nothing but the moving of my passions after all. O my dear friend, how is this great question to be determined? You will say, "By one sweet ray of heavenly light." Of these I hope I have received many; but they have not yet proved to be the one thing needful. They have always left a void not filled up. O that one word, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love!" This, I believe I may say, I have craved more than ever of late; for without it I am a wretch undone. Those happy visits which I have spoken of, which have generally been founded upon a passage of Scripture sealed upon my mind, or which has arrested my attention, always, invariably produce a happy calm, a peace which passeth all understanding, and a sweet serenity of mind. This is truth, my friend. What will you call it? I remember the time when you were bowed down with dread and uncertainty, when your fears predominated, when grief was heavy upon your spirit, and you gave utterance to expressions of despair. This was a time of gloom for both of us; but, for the life of me, I could not fully credit all you said against your state and case, for I had heard you sing, with joy in your soul,

"He hates to put away;"

and I could not help believing for you that he never would put you away. I remember I tried my hand a little at nursing upon the occasion, and quoted the lines of the poet Kent:

"Nè'er had ye felt the guilt of sin,  
Or sweets of pardoning love,  
Unless your worthless names had been  
Enroll'd to life above."

I have just been reading that part of your letter which describes the way in which the Lord was pleased to bring you forward into public, to bear the gospel banner; and truly must repeat, with yourself, "What hath God wrought!" His ways are in the deep. Mysterious indeed it is as to the discipline through which the dear Lord is pleased his students should pass, in order that they may be thoroughly furnished for the work he hath in reserve for them. His gracious Majesty has been exercising you for many years, in order to fit you to fill up the ranks as they have become vacant. "Feed my sheep" is the sacred commission given to those who are appointed to carry the cross; and the crook with which you are furnished is the badge of your authority, and is far more effectual than the gown, cassock, or mitre. How many times have I and thousands of others been thrown down by the shepherd, and the maggoty places discovered to us, and also the festering sores of sin, in order that the healing balm might be poured in. "Show my people their sin." I remember once seeing a young shepherd hand out of a ditch a

sheep which had got the "fly;" and when he found out the affected part he poured in an ingredient, and outrooted the maggots. So it is with the gospel of the blessed God, when it enters the conscience renewed by grace divine. How do our monstrous sins roll out to open view; and we stand aghast and confounded, and dare not so much as lift up our eyes unto heaven, but only smite upon our breast and say, "God be merciful to me, a sinner." And sometimes I hope I know something about this.

"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil," is a passage that was once very precious to me. Under the operation of that word, such effects were wrought in my soul that I shall never forget; for I think I may say in truth that I enjoyed somewhat of the bliss of heaven, and actually began the song, "Not unto us, but to thy name, O Lord, be all the glory." And this is a renewal of it, for I had had a taste of it when on the way to M., where Mr. C. had been preaching from the same words. This visitation I look upon as one of my grand landmarks. It is this and many others which I have been favoured with which serve, under the divine blessing, to hold me as an anchor, when my feet seem to be almost gone, which is frequently the case. I esteem these favours indeed on account of the effects they produce; for at such times the dear Redeemer is most precious to my soul. My affections are flowing out to him. He is then my all and in all. Then my thoughts are pure, my desires pure, and I seem to breathe in pure air. All sin and guilt removed from me for a moment:

"But, ah! When these short visits end,  
I to my own sad place return,  
My wretched state to feel."

O friend, great is the mystery of godliness, and great indeed is the mystery of iniquity. Who can know it? This is the Lord's day evening, and about mid-day with you. I have been to Melbourne. We had one of Mr. P.'s sermons read: "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." In the afternoon, one by Mr. S.: "To die is gain." Upon the whole I may say I have had a savoury day. My mind was somewhat sweetened while on the journey in reflecting upon, "Open thy mouth for the dumb," &c. If the Lord is pleased to direct your mind especially to these words, you will see a great beauty and glory in them. King Lemuel undoubtedly represents the Lord Jesus Christ; and when contemplating him as the great Head of his church, and as the great Advocate in particular, I was led to see a great beauty, and feel a preciousness in the words, "for the dumb." I was instantly carried back to the time when my mouth was stopped, and my poor soul stood naked, and guilty, and helpless before a heart-searching God, with no way to escape the wrath due to sin. It was this strait which made the revelation of Jesus Christ as the sinner's Law-fulfiller, the great Ransomer of his church, and the great Advocate, so precious to me at that time. It was no direct passage of Scripture that was applied, but the substance of the words, "The blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth from all sin." That was a joyful moment to my soul, when in the

darkness of night in the woods; but I can assure you I was not solitary, but quite the contrary. I was deeply meditating upon the subject of blood, for Mr. C. so frequently used the term in his preaching, and I could not comprehend it; but at length it was as if a bright beam shone into my soul, and the bleeding of Jesus as the ransom price for all that are saved was clearly discovered to my then enraptured mind. The way having been made clear, then the prayer of the poor publican was quite in season; for who can pray for mercy till the channel through which mercy can flow has been revealed to him? I remember I felt it to be presumption to think of it, when only an offended God was apprehended. Groan and sigh he must, for he cannot avoid it; but mercy falters on his tongue. I know it was so with myself.

I hinted in a former page that the Lord had been pleased to remove our dear friend and brother Charlwood from among us by death. The loss of him was a heavy stroke to us, as an ardent saint of the Most High. He was highly esteemed by the friends. His end was peace. Poor dear soul! It was his rapturous shouting in holy triumph at the happy prospect before him (for eternity seemed to be almost ever before him; and having had so many removals in his family and round about) which was the means of bringing on my bonds, and from which I have not been fully released; but the Lord was pleased that brother Charlwood should pass under a most gloomy cloud a few days before he fell asleep in Jesus. He was suffered to fear that all was lost, that it was only a delusion after all; but in love and mercy the Lord was pleased to restore to him peace, and enable him to raise one more shout before departing hence, to be no more seen. Many of the tried have missed his helping hand, for he was one of those who give and yet increase. After his removal, we continued to meet at the chapel which he built. It is on leasehold ground, and the lease expires in about another year. Then I suppose we shall have to rent it, or be turned out. One of the friends occupies Mr. Charlwood's place, by prayer and reading a sermon from the "Gospel Pulpit." I must confess I have enjoyed many happy, melting seasons under that system; for after leaving Mr. —'s ministry, which to me ministered death and discontent, it was like receiving life from the dead. It was returning to the days of my youth. All my old love, my happy sensations, and all my old experiences, which seemed to be almost dead and buried, arose anew, as by a resurrection. I think you can scarcely comprehend my meaning, for you have never been brought under such circumstances.

Just now we have Mr. H., a gospel minister, from Western Port, over on a sojourn on the Lord's business. This is his third visit. It is pleasing to see the shaking among the dry bones. The heavenly wind causes them to come out of their hiding-places; and it is here now, as no doubt you find it at each place you visit, the people come in from far and near; so that we now catch, I trust, a goodly number of living fish. What a charming net is the gospel of the blessed God; for it not only entangles, but it attracts also. I think

an effort will be made to retain him here. The subject has been hinted to him, and his reply is that he is in the Lord's hands; let him do as seemeth him good. It cannot be done but through divine interference; but there is nothing too hard for the Lord, that it is his blessed will to accomplish. Although an able minister of truth, he has no congregation at home, except his wife and another or two; so you see he is a shining light, as it were, under a bushel at present; and his remaining with us would not be the means of breaking up a cause of truth. So far the way is clear. I hope the people will be preserved from idolizing him; for, being something new, I can tell you they are very warm. You know something about these things by frequent experience, when you find them almost ready to embrace you in the purest affection for the truth's sake.

I hope I have felt thankful to God for so far restoring your body to its natural strength. This is his work, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

With regard to our own family, I am happy to say, and feel thankful to the God of all grace and goodness, we are all in perfect health. What a great mercy! Yet we are something like the apostle when the impotent man begged; he said, "Silver and gold have I none;" and so say we; but we have been clothed and fed up to the present time, and a house continued over our heads, and all this with sometimes a thankful heart to the God of all our mercies.

My dear friend, I must sum up in haste. I have not space to name all the friends, except our ancient and honoured friend, Mr. C., to whom we beg you will tender our special love, and accept the same yourselves; and believe me, my dear Brother John, to remain,

Sept. 23, 1860.

Yours affectionately,

W. C.

THE manner of Christ's coming into the flesh, and the despicableness of his person, in his life and death, seriously considered, and the ordinances which he blest and left to us, give no encouragement to the wisdom of the flesh. The way of carnal wisdom is to do great things by great means, but the wisdom of God doth great things by small and despicable means.—*Dorney.*

How can one describe the wind to him who has not felt or heard it, or account why it blows to-day high and not to-morrow, or whence it comes, or whither it goes? and yet we know there is such a thing as wind. So one born again, one on whom the Lord has breathed a second time, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," can be assured of this mercy, and thenceforward be a partaker of the kingdom of God, feel in his heart the happy change he works there by his Spirit, rejoice in his salvation, know he is a child of God and partaker of his divine nature as surely as he was flesh of his natural father's flesh, and with all boldness can say, "Abba, Father," having received the Spirit of adoption, and being really born again into the family and household of God; but he cannot reveal or describe it to another. He cannot account for it; nor can he make another, whose eyes the Lord has not opened, see the kingdom and happiness to which he is restored, because it is what no man knows but him that receiveth it.—*Cennick.*

## MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

### I.

#### MEDITATIONS ON THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD UPON THE HEART.

*(Concluded from page 356.)*

THE main point which we endeavoured to establish in our last No. was the way in which the word of God became lord and master of a believer's conscience. Till this supremacy of the word of truth is established, nothing is really done. Long may be the struggle, for sense, nature, and reason die hard; and as in the case of the children of Israel becoming masters of the land of promise, these opposing nations may be driven out only "by little and little," and even then the Canaanite will still dwell in the land. (Exod. xxiii. 30; Josh. xvii. 12.) But as Jesus must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet, so will he by his Spirit and grace put down every enemy to the power and authority of his word upon the heart of his people. As by grace we are delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son; (Col. i. 13;) as this kingdom is within us; (Luke xvii. 21;) and that not in word, but in power; (1 Cor. ix. 20;) seeing that it "is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17,) it necessarily embraces two distinct things: 1. The putting down of all other rule and all other authority and power; (1 Cor. xv. 24;) and, 2, the setting up and enthroning of the Lord Jesus in the conscience, heart, and affections. This double work was beautifully symbolised in the vision of Nebuchadnezzar as interpreted by Daniel: "Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." (Dan. ii. 34, 35.) The stone that fell upon the feet of the image represents the Lord Jesus, the stone laid in Zion for a foundation, (Isa. xxvii. 16,) and its being "cut out without hands" symbolises his pure humanity as made of a woman without the help of man. (Mark xiv. 58; Heb. viii. 2.) The stone thus cut out without hands fell upon the toes of the image; for whilst the image stood upon its feet, the stone could not become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. So in grace. Until the image\* of sin, Satan, and self is broken to pieces, and the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold become like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, Christ in his grace and glory cannot fill the heart.

Hitherto, then, we have been considering the putting down of the rule, authority, and power of darkness, ignorance, and death, under

\* We do not offer this as an interpretation so much as a spiritual application of the prophecy.

the two figures of the stripping of the strong man of his armour, and the entrance of the two-edged sword of the word into the heart. By this effectual operation the word, as we have shown, becomes lord and master of conscience. This is the hardest part of the work, for until submission is produced, mercy is not manifested. "Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee." (Ps. xlv. 5.) Where there is no falling under the power of the word, there is no real submission of heart to Jesus; no meek taking of his yoke upon the neck,—for this is only for the labouring and heavy-laden; (Matt. xi. 28, 29;) no kissing the Son lest he be angry. (Ps. ii. 12.) But when the heart is "brought down with labour so as to fall down, and there is none to help;" (Ps. cvii. 12;) when the Lord seeth of his servants that "their power is gone, and there is none shut up or left;" (Deut. xxxii. 36;) when there is a putting of the mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope; (Lam. iii. 29;) and there is no plea nor cry but, "Lord, save me," "God be merciful to me a sinner," then the scale turns; then it is found that "the Lord is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him, and that it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." (Lam. iii. 25, 26.) Being thus made "poor in spirit," a title is given to, an interest secured in the kingdom of heaven; (Matt. v. 3;) and as this poverty of spirit is attended with the docility and teachability of a little child there is an entrance into it; for "of such is the kingdom of God, and whoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in nowise enter therein." (Luke xviii. 16, 17.)

If our readers have thus far, then, followed our train of thought, they will readily perceive that hitherto we have been directing our attention mainly to that first work of the law upon the conscience, whereby the soul is slain, stripped, and emptied of all its self-strength, self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency, and brought into the dust of death. This is analogous to the falling of the stone upon the toes of the image, and corresponds to the first part of Jeremiah's commission: "See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant." (Jer. i. 10.) There we see that the prophet, as having the words of the Lord put into his mouth, was commissioned "to root out and to pull down, to destroy and to throw down," as well as "to build and to plant." And so the Lord speaks elsewhere: "And it shall come to pass, that like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord." (Jer. xxxi. 28.) Both are equally of God; and he as much watches over the soul to pluck and break down as to build and plant.

But as we have endeavoured to show the one and first part of the work, so shall we now attempt to trace out the other; for of the Lord kill he maketh alive, if he bring down to the grave he bringeth up; and he who maketh poor also raiseth up the poor



out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and make them inherit the throne of glory. (1 Sam. ii. 6-8.) Let us see, then, how this gracious work is accomplished, and the effects that follow.

1. Poverty of spirit springing out of the stripping hand of God, as we have described it, brings the soul within the reach of all the *invitations* of the gospel. "To the poor the gospel is preached," (Luke vii. 22,) and for the poor is the gospel supper provided; (Luke xiv. 21;) to them, therefore, emphatically do the invitations of the gospel belong. The full soul loatheth a honeycomb. What are all the invitations of the gospel to one who is "rich and increased with goods and hath need of nothing?" (Rev. iii. 17.) "Ho, every one that thirsteth;" "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth;" "Call upon me in the day of trouble;" "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, and knock and it shall be opened unto you;" "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden," &c., these and similar invitations are all addressed to the poor and needy sinner. There is now a place in his heart for them, as emptied of self; and, as they come home with some degree of sweetness and savour, power attends them, whereby faith is raised up to believe that God speaks in them. This is more especially felt when in some season of distress the invitation is applied, and is thus embraced and acted upon. How many a poor sinner has hung upon the invitations, embraced them, pleaded them, and acted upon them. "Ask and ye shall receive." What an encouragement to prayer. "Look unto me;" "Come unto me." How many a poor sensible sinner has, upon the strength of these words, looked unto Jesus and been lightened; (Ps. xxxiv. 5;) come to him and met with a kind reception. By the power which attends these invitations the heart is opened, as was the heart of Lydia, to attend unto the things spoken in the gospel. It is not put away as too holy for a poor polluted sinner to touch, nor is the Lord Jesus viewed as an angry Judge; but in these invitations his clemency, tenderness, and compassion are seen and felt, and beams and rays of his mercy and grace both enlighten the understanding and soften and melt the heart. Thence spring confession of sin, self-loathing, renunciation of one's own righteousness, earnest desires and breathings after the Lord, and an embracing of the love of the truth so far as made known. And as all these effects, so different from the old dead Pharisaic religion, are produced by the power of the word upon the heart, the Bible becomes a new book, and is read and studied with attention and delight. The ears too being unstopped, as well as the eyes opened, if there be the opportunity of hearing the preached gospel, with what eagerness is it embraced, and what a sweetness there is found in it. All who have passed through these things will agree with us that there are no such hearing days as what Job calls "the days of our youth, when the secret of God is upon our tabernacle." (Job xxix. 4.)

2. This breaking up of the great image of sin and self by the falling of the stone cut without hands upon its feet prepares a way also for the entrance of the *promises*, as so many earnest and foretaste,

of that kingdom of God which is peace, and righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost. It is upon the promises that the new covenant stands, as the Apostle says: "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." (Heb. viii. 6.) As, then, we are brought within the compass of the promises we are brought within the bonds of the covenant, according to the declaration: "And I will cause you to pass under the rod, and I will bring you into the bond of the covenant." (Ezek. xx. 37.) As, then, the soul is brought within the compass of the promises, and thus put within the manifested bond of the covenant, these promises become, as they are made sweet and precious, so many breasts of consolation, feeding the new-born babe with the sincere milk of the word, that it may grow thereby. (Isa. lxvi. 11; 1 Pet. ii. 2.) Every promise that is made spirit and life to the soul establishes the power of the word in the heart; for by the application of the promises (as Peter unfolds the mystery) "the divine nature," that is, the new man which after God, or after the image of God, (Col. iii. 10,) is created in righteousness and true holiness, is brought forth. (Eph. iv. 24; 2 Pet. i. 4.) This is a partaking of the divine nature, that is, what is communicable of the divine nature, as being a conformity to the image of God's dear Son, Christ in the heart the hope of glory. (Rom. viii. 29; Col. i. 27.) By being brought, then, within the compass of the promises we become children and heirs of them; (Gal. iv. 28; Heb. vi. 17;) and as they are applied with power, they are all found to be "in Christ yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us." (2 Cor. i. 20.) It was by thus believing the promise that our father Abraham was justified, as the apostle declares: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." (Rom. iv. 20-22.) In his steps his children walk, and thus are blessed with him. (Rom. iv. 11; Gal. iii. 9.) The promise comes, faith believes, hope expects, patience waits; and so through faith and patience they inherit the promises. (Rom. xv. 4; Heb. vi. 12, 17-20.)

3. And as the promises are made sweet and precious, as earnest and foretastes of the gospel, and thus establish the power of the word upon the heart, so when the *gospel itself* is made "the power of God unto salvation," it beyond everything seals and ratifies this power and authority of the word. This is what the apostle sets forth so clearly and blessedly in his first epistle to the Thessalonians: "Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God; for our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord; having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost." (1 Thess. i. 4-6.) "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye re-

ceived the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 13.) It is the peculiar province of faith to believe the gospel; but this faith must "stand not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 5,) that it may be a saving faith. When, then, the gospel comes "not in word only," as it does to thousands, "but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance," as it only does to the elect of God, (1 Thess. i. 4,) by this power faith is raised up and drawn forth. By this faith the gospel is received, "not as the word of men," which might be weak and worthless, and is sure to be inoperative and inefficacious, but "as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe." How evidently does this show, not only the power of the word, but that the gospel is that power, and that it is, if we may use the expression, a working power effectually moulding the heart, giving grace to the lips, and producing all holy obedience in the life. But as the gospel is a message from God, a proclamation of mercy and grace—the best news that ever reached a poor sensible sinner's ears, for it proclaims pardon and peace, reconciliation and acceptance, through the blood and righteousness of Christ, so it is but the herald of advance to announce the nearer coming of the Son of God himself. It is, as it were, the chariot in which he rides "paved with love for the daughters of Jerusalem." (Song Sol. iii. 10.) We do not wish to separate, except for the sake of distinctness, the gospel from him who is the sum and substance of it, nor the belief of the gospel from the revelation of Christ in and by the gospel, as these are often made manifest at one and the same moment. But for the sake of obtaining clearer views of the subject, we shall make a distinction between believing the gospel and the personal manifestation of Christ. Thus the disciples evidently believed the gospel and received Christ's words; (John xv. 3; xvi. 30; xvii. 8;) and still they were as yet unacquainted with the special manifestations of Christ, as is evident from the question of Judas, not Iscariot, and the Lord's answer. (John xiv. 22, 23.) So in many cases now, and we may add it was much our own experience, there is a believing the gospel prior to the revelation of the Son of God with power to the soul.

4. When, then, the blessed Lord *reveals himself* to the soul in his glorious Person, finished work, atoning blood, and dying love, then it is with the willing heart almost as it was when the risen and ascended King of Zion entered the courts of heavenly bliss: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in." (Ps. xxiv. 7.) Surely the posts of the doors of the heart are moved at his appearance as of the King in his beauty. (Isa. vi. 4; xxxiii. 17.) His eternal Deity and Sonship on the one hand and his pure spotless humanity on the other, uniting to form his one glorious Person as Immanuel, God with us, are presented to the eye of faith. As he thus appears in his glory, the understanding is divinely illuminated, the conscience purged, the heart melted and broken, and the affections drawn forth to embrace this glorious

Lord as the chiefest among ten thousand and the altogether lovely. And as this revelation of Christ, though necessarily supernatural, has nothing in it visionary or enthusiastic, but is a most sober and substantial reality, so it is always attended with, or followed by the word of truth, either to communicate or confirm it. Sometimes it communicates it; that is, through the word applied and believed the Lord reveals himself to the soul, as very frequently, for instance, under the preached word, and often in private by the applied, without the medium of the preached word. Sometimes the word does not so much communicate it as it follows upon and confirms the inward revelation of the Son of God: "Or ever I was aware my soul made me likethe chariots of Amminadib," or "a willing people;" (Song vi. 12;) that is, the soul is unexpectedly, as it were, ravished with the appearance of the King in his beauty, without any particular word from his lips. But passages flow almost immediately in to explain, confirm, and settle what has been thus transacted between the Lord and the soul without the immediate instrumentality of the word itself. This is like a second feast, a sitting under the shadow of the Beloved with great delight, and finding his fruit sweet to the taste. (Song ii. 3.)

We thus see how the word of God is established in its power and authority in the heart, not only by its strength to pull down, but by its strength to build up; by its mission to heal, as well as by its mission to kill. If we may say of it what the apostle declares of an earthly magistrate, that it "heareth not the sword in vain," we may also add, it "is the minister of God for good." (Rom. xiii. 4.) The word of a king would be spoiled of half of its authority if life as well as death were not in the power of his tongue; (Prov. xviii. 21;) and if he could not, as supreme, (1 Pet. ii. 13,) show mercy as well as judgment, pardon as well as punish. And so, is there not one supreme Law-giver who is able to save and to destroy? (Jas. iv. 12.) When David measured Moab with two lines, the one to put to death and the other to keep alive, (2 Sam. viii. 2,) the line of life was as much the king's line, and as much stretched by his authority as the line of death. The stretching of both these lines over the heart, of law and gospel, of the curse and the blessing, of the killing and the making alive, of the wrath of the king as the messenger of death and the light of his countenance as life and his favour as a cloud of the latter rain, (Prov. xvi. 14, 15,) makes the Lord at once both feared and loved. By the one the soul is preserved from presumption, and by the other from despair; and thus by the combined impressions of judgment and mercy, God is served acceptably with reverence and godly fear. (Heb. xii. 28.)

But this manifestation of Christ to the soul is attended with peculiar blessings which not only are in themselves exceedingly precious, and prove the revelation to be genuine—not "the child of fancy richly dressed," but "the living child," but still more fully confirm the power and authority of the word of the Lord.

1. First, it makes the word itself exceedingly *sweet and precious*. Jeremiah knew this experimentally when he said, "Thy words were

found and I did eat them, and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart;" (Jer. xv. 16;) and so felt the Psalmist: "How sweet are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth." (Ps. cxix. 103.) Nor was Job without an experience of the same sweetness of the word when he said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." (Job xxiii. 12.) Does not, then, this tasting of the sweetness of the word establish its power in the heart in the surest and most convincing way?

2. It *sweeps away the unbelief and infidelity* of the carnal, reasoning mind. Perhaps few of his readers have been more tempted by unbelief and infidelity than the writer of these lines; but he knows from blessed experience how a revelation of the glorious Person of the Son of God to the soul sweeps away as with one stroke, at least for a time, all these hosts of hell. Not a single doubt of the Deity, Sonship, and pure humanity of the Son of God can stand before the revelation of the glorious King of Zion; and if the unworthy author of these Meditations has been enabled in former papers to trace out the Deity and Sonship, and the spotless humanity of the blessed Redeemer with any degree of light and life in his own soul, or with any measure of instruction and edification to his readers, he must thankfully ascribe it to what he has been favoured to see of these divine realities by the eye of faith in the Person of the God-man.

3. It therefore *harmonises the whole word* of God from first to last. As the incarnate Word was "set for the fall" as well as "the rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which should be spoken against," so it is with the written word; it is made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling-block "to those to whom God hath given the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear." (Luke ii. 34; Rom. xi. 9.) This is the reason why men like Colenso and his followers stumble at the word being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed. (1 Pet. ii. 8.) Ever on the watch for difficulties and objections, they easily find or make what they seek; and as quarrelsome people readily pick a quarrel, so do they in a moment quarrel with a straw if it seem to lie awry across their reasoning, counting, calculating path. But by so doing they only fall into their own nets, whilst the godly withal escape. (Ps. cxli. 10.) Truly does Wisdom speak: "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge." (Prov. viii. 8, 9.) But being destitute of a heavenly mind and of that divine anointing which teacheth of all things, and is truth and no lie, (1 John ii. 27,) such men "speak evil of those things which they know not; and even what they know naturally," as arithmetic and logic, "in these things they corrupt themselves," (Jude 10,) abusing their very knowledge to attempt to prove God a liar."

4. A view of Christ by faith also *produces submission* to the will of God, a leaving of all things in his hand, and a laying at his feet a thousand difficult questions in providence and in grace, which at other times, the more they are thought of, the more do they rack

and perplex the mind, both as regards ourselves and others. We cannot enlarge upon this point, but it is surprising to find what hard knots a believing view of Christ unties, what crooked things it makes straight, and what a complete answer it is to the sullen objections of our perverse spirit, bearing the soul, as it were, on a full wave over those sunken rocks on which so many gallant ships founder, into a harbour of peaceful rest.

5. Another effect which we must name as produced by the personal manifestation of Christ to the soul is the *place which it gives the precept* in the heart. All who study with any measure of divine light and life the pages of the New Testament, and pay any attention to such portions of it as the sermon on the mount and the preceptive parts of the Epistles must clearly see and feel what an important place the precept occupies in the inspired word. Take, for instance, the Epistles to the Ephesians, the Philippians, and the Colossians, and it will be found that at least half of each of these Epistles is occupied with the precept, blended it is true with doctrine and experience, but enforcing, in the plainest manner, practical obedience. But these holy, godly, practical precepts are in our day either wholly overlooked, or distorted into legal duties, the reason being that they have not that place in the heart which they have in the word of truth. And yet by this preceptive portion of the gospel are explained and enforced all that practical obedience, all that godliness of life, all that holiness of walk and conversation which mark the followers of the Lamb, and whereby their heavenly Father is glorified. But as this obedience must be spiritual not carnal, evangelical and not legal, of the heart and not of the lip, to the glory of God and not to the exaltation of self, it can only be produced by the Holy Spirit. As, therefore, the Lord Jesus, under the power and unction of the Holy Ghost, reveals himself to the soul, and takes his place as Lord of the heart, obedience to the precept is produced by the same power and influence as the faith, hope, and love by and in which he is received. The precept, therefore, under these divine influences, comes into its right, its scriptural, and spiritual position, occupying that place in the heart which it occupies in the word of truth, and is seen and felt to harmonise in the most gracious and blessed manner with every holy doctrine, every precious promise, and every sweet manifestation. We would willingly enlarge here, and show how productive this is of all practical obedience in attending to the ordinances of God's house, and how it embraces and extends itself to every relationship in life, and is as remote from all Antinomian carelessness and licentiousness as it is from legal service and Pharisaic righteousness. But as it is in our mind, the Lord enabling us, on some future occasion to make this point the subject of our Meditations, as being in our view, though much disregarded, yet full of profitable instruction, we shall content ourselves with thus briefly touching on one of the most important and, we must say, least understood points of our most holy faith.

6. Our limits warn us to close, and yet we cannot bring our subject to a conclusion without naming another point closely connected with

the power and authority of the word of God on the heart as established by a believing view of the Son of God. It is this: A *firm support* is needed amidst all the storms of temptation, seas of affliction, and seasons of desertion and distress which are the appointed lot of the mystical members of Christ, and whereby they are conformed to his suffering image. We see how our gracious Lord was supported and upheld by the word of God from the moment when he said, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart," (Ps. xl. 7, 8,) to his last expiring breath, when, with the word of truth in his mouth, he meekly said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."\* (Ps. xxxi. 5; Luke xxiii. 46.) In a similar way the power of the word is needed to hold up the soul in seasons of trial and temptation. Abraham's case is full to the point. What but the promise that he should have a son by Sarah held him up for five and twenty years, in the very face of carnal reason and unbelief, against hope believing in hope, until after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise? (Rom. iv. 18; Heb. vi. 15.) And what but the word of the Lord strengthened him to offer up Isaac, when grown up, as a sacrifice on Mount Moriah? This hanging of the soul upon the word is beautifully unfolded in Psalm cxix., in such expressions as, "Thy word have I hid in my heart;" (ver. 11;) "I trust in thy word;" (ver. 42;) "I have hoped, or I hope in thy word;" (ver. 74, 81; 114, 147;) "I rejoice at thy word;" (ver. 162;) "Thy word is true from the beginning;" (ver. 160;) "Concerning thy testimonies, I have known of old that thou hast founded them for ever." (Ver. 152.) All these and similar expressions with which the Psalm is filled show how the man of God hung upon the word as the prop of his soul in every trying hour. "When the enemy," we read, "shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him." (Isa. lix. 19.) But how? Not in a visionary way, but by the word applied with power, and thus believed, pleaded, hung upon, and its fulfilment patiently expected.

But we must draw our Meditations to a close; not that the subject is exhausted, but because our limits warn us to restrain our pen.

It is not our intention to pursue the subject, at least not under its present form, but to close it with the closing year. We have not been able, indeed, to carry out our expressed intention, to show the aspect which the word bears to the world as well as to the church, and what it will be in the hands and in the mouth of the

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\* To open and unfold this point is beyond our present scope, and to handle it properly would require much wisdom and grace; but that our blessed Lord was upheld by the power of the word is plain from the history of the temptation in the wilderness, from his words to Peter before his crucifixion, (Matt. xxvii. 53, 54,) to the disciples going to Emmaus, and to the rest of the disciples just before his ascension. (Luke xxiv. 25-27, 44-47.) That the Scriptures should be fulfilled, and the will of God revealed in them be fully accomplished, held him up in his path of suffering obedience.

great Judge to all who have heard it, but disbelieved or disobeyed it. Let it be sufficient for the present to quote the Lord's own words: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John xii. 48.)

And now what remains but for us to commend our Meditations on "The Authority and Power of the Word of God" to his most gracious disposal, in the prayerful hope that he who has magnified his word above all his name (Ps. cxxxviii. 2) will attend with the unction of his grace our feeble attempt to set it forth in the light of Scripture and experience? and should he kindly deign to bless it to any of his dear family, to him writer and reader will gladly unite in ascribing all the praise.

THE EDITOR.

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*THOU SHALT REMEMBER ALL THE WAY THE LORD  
THY GOD LED THEE.*

I REMEMBER the days when in folly I stray'd,

By Satan held fast as his slave,  
'Till Jesus, my Saviour, came forth to my aid,  
And show'd himself mighty to save.

I remember that burden of sin and of guilt  
Which seem'd as if it would sink me into hell;  
I remember also the pangs that I felt,  
Which were more than I ever could tell.

I remember the wrestling, with crying and prayer,  
How I pour'd out my soul unto God;  
Ah! Sure there was feeling and earnestness then,  
As I fell at his feet with my load.

I remember that whisper of pardoning love:  
"Fear not! I've redeem'd thee; thou art mine!"  
O! What could my confidence then shake or move  
When Jesus deign'd on me to shine?

When he told me my pardon for ever was seal'd,  
That my burden of guilt was removed,  
When to me the sweet truth he in mercy reveal'd,  
That I was eternally loved.

When he said, though the mountains remove,  
My love shall for ever remain.

I remember these tokens of love,  
But I want them repeated again.

A. H.

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THE more familiar acquaintance we have with God, the more do we partake of him. He that passes by the fire may have some gleams of heat; but he that stands by it hath his colour changed. It is not possible a man should have any long conference with God and be no whit affected. We are strangers from God—it is no wonder if our faces be earthly; but if we are set apart to God we shall find a kind of majesty and awful respect put upon him in the minds of others.—*Bishop Hall.*