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THE
EARTHEN VESSEL :

CONTAINING :

THE GOSPEL MINISTRY ;
ITS MYSTERY ; ITS MATTER ; ITS MEN ;

THE

TESTIMONY OF LIVING WITNESSES,

CONCERNING THE REALITY OF AN

INWROUGHT CONVICTION OF SIN ;
INWARD SENTENCE OF DEATH ; A SAVING FAITH IN
CHRIST ; AND A GOOD HOPE
THROUGH GRACE OF ETERNAL GLORY.

BY C. W. BANKS.

MINISTER OF THE WORD, CROSBY ROW, KING STREET, BOROUGH.

“ Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt
make me to know wisdom.”—Psalm li. 6.

VOL. I.

JAMES PAU

ST. PAUL'S,

AND PATERNOSTER ROW.

1845.

LONDON:— PRINTED BY
C. W. BANKS,
PAGODA TERRACE,
Bermondsey New Road.
SOUTHWARK.

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ERRATA

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Page 362 line 29, for *because*, read *became*.  
 " " " 37, " *ever* " *never*,

# THE EARTHEN VESSEL.

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To the Deacons and Members, constituting a part of the visible and professing Church of Christ—and to many beloved friends in the congregation, meeting for Divine worship in Crosby Row, Southwark, I presume to dedicate this first part of the “EARTHEN VESSEL.”

DEARLY BELOVED,

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Forasmuch as it hath pleased the God of all grace to put it into your hearts, and to constrain and enable you to open an effectual door for the preaching of the everlasting Gospel by me—and, moreover, because, after nearly twelve months' labour amongst you—(although powerful and justly-merited has been the opposition against me, and manifold and peculiar my infirmities and afflictions—yet) seeing, evidently, that “goodness and mercy have followed us, from the very first day of our coming together until now,” I am moved with a desire to open the publication of this little work by addressing a few lines to you, in the hope that I may thereby be instrumental in stirring up within you a grateful remembrance of the many blessings which have been conferred upon us, and also to call up your souls to a more spiritual, courageous, and united, cleaving unto God—that you may more clearly see your calling to be of God, more highly value the privileges with which you are favoured—be enabled to identify your present position as unalterably connected with the spread of the Gospel, the exaltation of Christ, the glory of God, and the final salvation of your own souls—that so, while men and ministers stand in doubt of us—while the priest and the Levite pass us by—Oh, may there be seen with us the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night—may there be a walking as becometh the Gospel, and a holy contention for the faith once delivered unto the saints, whereby shall be verified in us that heart cheering declaration—“He setteth the poor on high from affliction, the righteous shall see it and rejoice, and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.”

Rest assured, dearly beloved, that this is very peculiarly a battle in which ye have no need to fight! If the hand of the Lord has been in this matter at all—there has been a voice in every movement of that hand, which has to me aloud proclaimed that solemn word—“**BE STILL**—and know that **I AM GOD**—I will be exalted among the heathen.” Hitherto, the Lord himself has been our Pilot; He has conducted us thus far on our voyage; and through rocks and quicksands, winds and waves, He has brought us hitherto—

And shall the wonders He has wrought,  
Be lost in silence and forgot?

I find they cannot. The same Spirit that brings Christ into the

heart will tell out the glories of Christ through the door of the lips. And if the Holy Spirit hath revealed Christ in my heart—if the Holy Spirit hath testified of Christ through me—you may rely on it that word will not return unto him void—it will prosper in the thing whereunto He sends it. Ananias may question the reality of Saul's conversion—but Saul of Tarsus is a chosen vessel—and therefore nothing shall stop him in the work unto which of God he was ordained. This, beloved is the only support my faith can rest upon—the sovereign decree of God concerning me; the sovereign work of grace within me. As these things come from God entirely and eternally independent of creatures or circumstances, so do they tend to carry the soul (which is possessed of them) away from earthly props up to the immutable and independent Jehovah—who alone is our rock, and whose work is perfect.

Under these circumstances, I have found the words of Moses to be sweet unto my soul—"Oh, Lord God, thou hast begun to shew thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan." From these words, as briefly as possible, I shall notice—1, in what particular way and manner the Lord has begun to shew me his greatness, and his mighty hand: and, 2, the state of my mind, the desires of my heart as regards the ministry, and the church over whom the Lord hath placed me.

In shewing wherein the greatness and mighty hand of God has, I trust, been seen, I notice—

(1.) It has appeared in the raising me up out of that horrible pit into which I had fallen, and where I lay in my blood and in my sin, like one "cast out in the open field," without an eye to pity or an arm to save. God forbid that I should seem to glory in my shame—or make a boast of my sin; nevertheless, as Paul declared that though he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, yet he obtained mercy—as out of the very belly of hell Jonah cried, and was delivered—so, I affirm, when I lay almost in black despair, and sometimes with such a heavy load of secret sorrow on my soul—such dreadful guilt on my conscience, and such continual violent uprisings of wickedness in my heart—that I have stanped with my feet, been ready to curse myself, and have stood amazed with horror at my condition—which state of mind was so manifest in my countenance that a fellow-workman—a stranger to my character and circumstances—once asked me if I had ever committed murder?—or what made me so unhappy a wretch?—I say it was often while laying in this condition that God did visit me with power in my soul by the application of such words as the following:—"BUT-IF FROM THENCE THOU SHALT SEEK THE LORD THY GOD, THOU SHALT FIND HIM:" and again: "There is Hope of a tree if it be cut down, that it shall sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof shall not die:" and further, "HE WILL TURN AGAIN: HE WILL HAVE COMPASSION." The application of these words, and the secret preservation of my soul in darkness, having been followed by an open

and positive lifting up, enlightening, enlargement, and deliverance,—I must believe that “God did thereby shew unto me something of His greatness, and the mightiness of His hand:” of which I have much to say in the subsequent portions of this work, if I am permitted to continue its issue.

(2.) In that after the Lord had manifested pardoning mercy to my soul, He secretly wrought in your hearts—and brought some of you into such circumstances as that—(without knowing scarcely what you were doing—nor by whom you were employed—) you did open a door for me; and did, (instrumentally,) lay a necessity on me to come and speak to you of what God had done for my soul. *You* are witnesses of the fact, that I did not—either directly or indirectly seek to open the door—but while living at a distance from you—and in a measure ignorant of your circumstances and designs—I was, from time to time, pressed to come before you in the name of the Lord;—and I can call that God, whom I desire to serve in the Gospel, as my witness, that in my coming in and out amongst you, I did not handle the word of God deceitfully—I did not labour to get up messages of my own manufacture, but, in an overwhelming way and manner, the Lord did lay the word on my heart; and so filled, fortified, and strengthened me, that I went forth with much joy and peace in the administration of the same.

(3.) I believe that I have seen something of the greatness of God’s mighty power towards me—in the reception of the word—in the blessing which has accompanied it—and in the consequent increase of many precious souls to our number. I cannot forget that when I first came amongst you, a determined outcry was made against me and my ministry; and the enemy did threaten to shut my mouth.—But the Lord assured me that “*you should know*, that He had sent me unto you.” Therefore the enemy did not prevail. I cannot forget that when I first came amongst you, many preachers of the word stood ready, willing and anxious to serve you;—*they* were men of some esteem in the professing world. I was not—*they* were your neighbours, I was a stranger—they were fully satisfied of their ability to serve you,—but I had no such confidence. Nevertheless, YE TOOK ME IN—and in the face of all opposing and adverse powers—while envy, jealousy, falsehood, and truth exaggerated, were doing their utmost to cast us down—and even while many of you were sorely exercised in your minds—the word went forth—the hand of the Lord was seen—His power was felt—prejudice was removed—a spirit of union prevailed, and you became a united band. Hasty, presumptuous, and bold as I have been considered by some, in this matter, I felt I dared not—I could not refuse—though it was with fear and trembling, I became your pastor. Further I cannot forget that when I first came amongst you, there were no less than three Gospel churches in your immediate neighbourhood, destitute of pastors, in an unsettled and wandering condition. Very soon, these churches were favoured with talented and acceptable ministers, and I fully expected, that my poverty—my trials—my sins—and my seeming disqualifications for the pastoral office, would have



driven you to take shelter under some of the more respectable and esteemed pastors to whom I have referred. Instead of this, however, you have abode faithful, and honourable to your poor despised preacher of the word, and while a series of troubles have, in the Providence of God tended to throw me more entirely upon you for support, your kindness and charity have increased—friends have been raised up—our wants have been supplied—and our hearts made to rejoice. It is true, many crooked things remain to be made straight; towards which I am using all lawful means, in the hope that the God of all grace will crown my labours with success. And as I have had both the promise and the earnest that all which is lacking shall be supplied, I must not despair. May we be preserved faithful and united in the bonds of peace, advancing in prosperity of soul and in the fear of God.

In many other instances, has the greatness and the hand of God been seen:—but as, in future numbers of this book, I desire more fully to trace the hand of God towards us as a church, I close for the present, praying that your loins may be girt about with truth—your lamps bright and trimmed, and yourselves like unto men who wait for their Lord.

C. W. BANKS.

☞ Respected reader—as you have condescended to take this little book into your hands, and to read thus far, will you allow me to ask you one question—Do you stand in doubt of me?—Do you consider my ministry, and the message herein contained, of a dangerous, and of a deceitful character?—If so, *burn the book*—and warn all you know against the man by whom the book was penned.—But, if, on the other hand, it should please the Lord to give me and my “Vessel,” favour in your sight—if you believe the things I have here laid before you to be of God—if you think the perusal of them calculated to be useful to poor afflicted souls—then of you I wish to ask one favour; that is—give an order to your bookseller for as many copies of this work as you can dispose of among your friends; which favour I am compelled to ask, because it is at a great expense that I have commenced the publication of these letters—and unless a goodly number is disposed of I shall be unable to proceed.—With these few words I desire to commit the whole into the hands of Him who holds the winds in His fists—and the waters in the hollow of His hands—and who

*Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill,  
Doth treasure up his wise designs, and works his sovereign will.*

[It is my desire to continue the publication of *THE EARTHEN VESSEL* in weekly numbers at one penny each, and in monthly parts at fourpence, but this must depend upon what may appear to be the will of the Lord concerning me. To such friends as feel an interest in the work—as they will be but few—I say again, give an order to your bookseller for as many copies as you can circulate. I ask this favour for three reasons; first, because I desire the fullest explanation of the way by which I have come; 2dly, because I believe this work will be useful to many souls; 3rdly, because I know ministers and professors in general will despise both me and my Vessel—and I do not blame them. They have no right to countenance me until they know the work to be of God. I would not do it myself, neither do I expect it of them. My beloved brethren the deacons of our church will gladly satisfy any real friend that circumstances have loudly called for the publication of these letters. Their names and residence are as follow: Mr. Elijah Packer, Free-school Street Horselydown, Mr. James Gawkrödger, Parish Street, Mr. W. Smith, Star Corner, Bermondsey, Mr. Wm. Blackall, New Church Street, Dockhead, and Mr. Hezekiah Constant, Newington Butts. Copies of the work may be had of either of the Deacons, or of any bookseller in the kingdom.]

## Letters written in the Valley of Achor.

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### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

In my little work entitled "A Warning Voice to all who think they stand as Ministers to, or Members of the Mystical Body of Christ,"\* I have given some account of the manner of my youth up—of the grace bestowed upon me in conversion—and of my being put into the ministry. "The Tree Cut Down, but the Root Preserved," (another little tract,) simply relates some unhappy circumstances connected with my departure from the work of the ministry, and of the Lord's most wonderful dispensation of mercy toward me, in restoring my soul, and again constraining me to speak in His great and holy name. Between these two events there lay a period of two years and a half, and because I have not accounted for these two years and a half, some unpleasant inferences have been drawn. Therefore, in connection with the publication of the following letters, I purpose to give a short statement of the real facts of the case. And if any God-fearing man or minister—(having the best interests of Zion at heart)—requireth more than herein he findeth, let him send for me, to whom the fullest explanation shall be given.

It was then in the early part of the year 1840, that I found myself involved in such unhappy circumstances that I resolved at once to abandon every connection (both of a spiritual and of a temporal kind), and, with my children only, to take refuge in some distant part of the land. To this end I declared unto my dear friends, who stood in church communion with me, that I could no longer sustain the pastoral office, and that until a man was raised up to succeed me, supplies must be procured. This was like a thunderbolt to them. It was a thousand times worse than would have been my death, be-

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\* The Warning Voice—it behoveth me to state—was composed and printed during the time that I was hardening myself against God, being under the soul-withering delusion that I was abhorred of God, and that He had justly given me over to a reprobate mind. Therefore it is that I did in that work treat of my experience as a mysterious something that I could not then explain; but certainly I dared not to hope it was from God; yet under all this heavy load of hardness, black despair, and guilt, there was a living principle within which sighed for God, for pardon, purity, and peace. I have heard, and am still obliged to hear, from many quarters, that the Warning Voice has been made a blessing. If so, the Lord's name be praised.

cause the whole was involved in the deepest mystery. We had only been a few months in our new chapel, and while all things appeared to be most promising around us, this disaster occurred. I cannot now withhold the firm conviction of my mind that this was a deadly thrust at me from the great adversary of souls; but wherefore so successfully made, is not for me to define. In my determination to leave, I was frustrated again and again; so that in a state of mind defying all description, and under circumstances of the most painful character, I remained until the end of January, in 1841, when, with only two of my children, I set out for Bolton, in Lancashire. I will here make no mention of the scenes of misery and woe through which I had to pass; some slight conception of that sorrow which is inseparably connected with sin, as well as some traces of the good hand of my God which (faith and gratitude constrain me to acknowledge) was upon me through the whole, may, perhaps, be discovered by the discerning mind, in the letters and explanatory notes which will be found in the present and future numbers of this little work.

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#### LETTER I.

*“ I will say to the north, give up, and to the south, keep not back ;  
Bring my sons from afar, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.*

Neither the northern blasts of Mount Sinai, of fierce temptation, of poverty, of persecution on the one hand, nor the southern breezes of worldly prosperity or lukewarmness on the other, shall ever be able to hold back the people of God, when he shall speak.

Bolton, Monday.

My dear Brother—Believe me when I say, I thank you for the kindness you have manifested. My silence has not arisen from any backwardness to confess my guilt.\* All is known to the Lord: all, or the principal part, must be known to man. But I know no one can sympathise with me in this overwhelming trouble and disgrace; for no one can know the power of temptation, the weakness of the flesh, the strivings of spirit

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\* When I left Canterbury, it was with the determination that I would never more be seen by, or correspond with any of my friends. This feeling did not arise from a desire to hide up my transgression; but from a deep conviction of the incalculable injury they had sustained by me. There are two things which in my very soul I do desire for them; first, that the Lord would be pleased to assure them, in their own consciences, that my restoration is the fruit and effect of his own grace in the heart: and secondly, that He would enable me to repair every breach, and abundantly to recompense every loss, whether of a spiritual or of a temporal kind.

and conscience through which I have passed. Ah, my poor brother, learn from this my fall two things. First, the necessity of close self-examination, watchfulness, and prayer: secondly, if you are a partaker of grace, and feel that it is grace alone that preserves you, oh, may you highly prize and value it. You and your's, I trust, are happy in the Lord. May you abound in grace and communion.

In haste and sorrow, your degraded and debased brother,

C. W. B.

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LETTER II.

*“ And they shall come which were ready to perish.”*

Bolton, March 21, 1841.

My dear brother Robert—As you have been constrained again to write to me, I feel it incumbent on me to reply; otherwise I should be only intruding myself into notice where the sooner I am forgotten the better.\*

In my last, I stated if you desired it I would explain what in my first letter you could not understand; but as I received no request nor notice to that effect, I believed you did not wish to hear from me again. I am thankful, however, for your last. I have written to Mr. H., and suppose, alas, my once comfortable abode is before this become desolate.

There is a portion of your letter, my dear brother, to which

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\* This expression savours much of that hardness of heart, rebellion, and callous condition of mind which I rather invited than shunned. I felt indeed that I had destroyed myself: that my ruin was so deep that nothing could recover me: I felt that I was abhorred of the Lord, and hated by men. So black and heavy was guilt and condemnation upon my conscience that it appeared as though every one who looked upon me, or spoke unto me, could clearly read my character, even the whole face of nature appeared to frown upon me. Under these dreadful apprehensions, I would if possible have divested myself of all godly fear, I would have seared my conscience against all convictions, and so have plunged myself into the world, but this I could not do; I could not see a single thing in the world that could give me a moment's rest or gratification; I could not cease from bowing my knees in prayer, although the heavens were to me as brass, and sometimes I felt certain that God would strike me dead for my mockery; I could no more keep from going regularly to hear the word preached than I could abstain from food, although the word was a terror to my soul. O! what a deliverance is mine! What rich preserving grace! What manifested mercy! Oh, for a heart to feel, and a tongue to tell, the wonders of that great salvation which is wholly in the Lord Jesus Christ for all the election of grace: a salvation that washes away the blackest crimes, and will ultimately bring up the redeemed family to the throne of God and the Lamb: Let no really contrite soul despair.

I must not venture to reply. Happily for you, you know not the conquering power which sin has over the soul when once permitted to ascend the throne in the conscience. If there never was before, a man in whom that solemn scripture was fulfilled, which says, "Many shall be snared, and taken, and broken, and destroyed," it has been in me." The crafty snare—the awful delusion—the blindness—the bonds—the fightings and strugglings, (and withall, the utter inability to resist the foe) of which I have been the subject, no soul can describe. Down into a most awful, most horrible pit have I fallen. It is an easy matter for friends to stand around the mouth of that pit, and bitterly reproach; and I can look back, and with deep compunction of soul review the spot and period wherein I ought to have acted, and wherein I can declare I did desire to act, as Joseph did when he said, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" Ah! my brother, it is a solemn truth, that after having seen the danger to which I was exposed, and having gone and cried out with violence to God to deliver me, and having buckled on all the armour of determinate resolution which I could muster—after all this, I have been so overcome, carried away, and cast down, as thoroughly to convince me that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.\* This I will say,—and I would not now boast of any thing beyond my own line, but this I feel in my own soul to be truth—no man could hate sin more than I did—I declare as in the presence of God that I had an inward abhorrence of the very appearance of evil. I have thought no one could desire holiness, rectitude and justice more than I did—Wisdom's ways to me were pleasantness, and her paths were paths of peace.† Separation from the world I coveted;

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\* Let not any man think that by the application of this text to myself, I would insinuate that my sin was the result of a decree concerning me, over which I could have no control. Oh no; I dare not thus to presume; although it is still a mystery to me wherefore it was permitted, yet, speaking after the manner of men, I must say there were many ways whereby so great an evil might have been avoided. I only now more fully desire to see, and to be enabled to say that God hath taken advantage of these dreadful events most wonderfully to unfold the exceeding greatness and reality of that blessed declaration, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." The aboundings of grace my soul desires.

† A subsequent part of this letter will shew that this is not intended as descriptive of the state of my mind for some time before my fall. After my first deliverance, which is set forth at large in my little work entitled "A Warning Voice to all who think they stand as Ministers to, or Members of, the Mystical Body,"—although I was scarcely ever exempt from heavy trials of a peculiar kind, in spiritual things I realized and en-

retirement and study I sincerely loved ; the word of God, his house, his saints, and his throne of grace—these were the objects of my soul's delight. No man perhaps ever felt more secure against, or less suspicious of the dangerous sin into which I have fallen than I did. But oh, my brother, my brother, my heart bleeds at the fact, that, after all the spiritual deliverances and discoveries with which I have been favoured, yet most basely, wickedly, openly, have I sinned.\*

It may be, you will scoff at the idea, but I cannot now that I am writing, withhold it. I do firmly believe that the great adversary of souls made a most determined, unbroken attack upon me for nearly two years before my ruin was effected. It is said, when God left Abraham, a dark cloud overshadowed him. There was a time when my soul richly fed upon the smiles of Jesus : when I could say, "I have none in heaven nor on the earth beside thee." But the Bridegroom withdrew ; the cloud came ; darkness and soul conflicts commenced ; I felt alarmed ; I knew not whose I was, nor where I was ; and this so powerfully distressed my heart on the one hand, and excited my natural feelings on the other, that I was tempted to destroy myself.†

Through all this, however, I never dreamed of such painful

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joyed much happiness, and apparent prosperity in my own soul. But after this, I found clouds and darkness were around the throne. No particular temptation beset me, but a general barrenness in my mind—a secret fear that all was not right—a solemn conviction that my religion was getting to be more external than internal ; it appeared to have more of the approbation of men than it had of the life of God.

\* It is not very improbable, but that this tract may fall into the hands of one who is now standing as I once stood ; so clear in doctrine, so attached to ordinances, so free from temptation, so desirous of living to God, that I felt strong *in myself*—strong in my experience—strong in the light, the zeal, the supposed devotion that was in me. My reader, even in this state of things there is danger—if, with them there is not a feeling sense of thy weakness—of thy exposure to temptation—and a consequent looking to, leaning upon, and a prayerful watching for the arm of the Lord to uphold you. Stop—my reader—one moment, and ask this one question—"Is my fruit found in God?—Is my strength derived from a waiting upon Him? Or, has my supposed high standing given me an independence and a confidence that is both dangerous and deceitful?" It is not enough for Peter that God's elect shall have faith merely ; no ; he will have them to be diligent (through the power of the Holy Ghost,) to add to their faith virtue (or decision)—knowledge—temperance, patience, godliness, and so on. It may be well for some of you who are living in the high enjoyment of light and liberty in the truth, to ponder over these things by the way.

† I am now persuaded that the horror and distress of these seasons was much augmented from a want of resignation and bowing down of the mind

circumstances : but there was a certain morning on which I went to look at the new chapel which they were then building for me ; I stood alone, gazing at the exterior ; I was powerfully impressed with the fact that ever such a commodious place of worship should be erected for so insignificant a creature as I felt myself to be. I was absorbed in the contemplation ; when some one appeared to speak loudly and decidedly in my ear these very words—“ *This is not for you : but here I will lift*

to God. I had long been accustomed to spend hours in meditation on the word. And on many such occasions I have realized such a glory and power within, that my soul has seemed to stretch forth herself unto God in holy ecstasy and joy. I will only mention one instance. I had risen early one Lord's-day morning, and had spent some hours in meditation without “ the light of his countenance,” when suddenly the words of Jonah came to me with light, life, and power—“ Take me up, and cast me forth into the sea ; so shall the sea be calm unto you : for I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you.” In the light and glory of this scripture I saw as in a figure, the standing forth—the voluntary undertaking—and consequent suffering of Christ for the church's sake. Some man will say,—Jonah had here ran away from his place, and God was visiting him for his disobedience. I know that the type is imperfect, and falls infinitely short of the glorious position of our spiritual Jonah ; but I also know that it was prophesied of Him—“ He shall grow up out of His place.” His place was His Father's bosom—His Father's kingdom—His Father's hidden and eternal glory. From this He came forth ; took the place of the sinner, exposed Himself to the wrath of offended Justice, in the angry waves of which he was baptised,—swallowing up death, and putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. But this solemn scripture out of Jonah's mouth was exactly descriptive of my position in connection with the church meeting for worship in St. John's. Like the ship which Jonah found going to Tarshish, our little vessel was scarcely afloat, before a storm began to arise—the enemy set in upon me—“ an east wind came up from the wilderness”—and instead of my arising, calling together the crew, and unitedly supplicating the Majesty of Heaven for help and deliverance, I wrapped myself up in a carnal persuasion that no storm, no sin, no temptation could possibly hurt me. Oh ! awful delusion ; under the influence of which I lay myself down in the sides of the ship, until the storm set in upon me with such force, that “ all hope of being saved was taken away.” In this perilous condition, my natural conscience (like the shipmaster) came to me, with a “ *What meanest thou, O sleeper ?*” Upon this I arose, and would at the first most basely have palmed the cause of the storm upon the lukewarmness and indifference of the people. But this only recoiled upon my own head. Driven therefore almost to desperation, like Jonah, I said—“ The fault is mine—cast me forth into the sea—and you shall have a calm.” But *what the fault was*—was hidden ; whereupon the dear distressed souls, like “ the men, rowed hard to bring the ship to land ;” but all was in vain. Oh ! ye ministers and servants of the living God, be ye faithful unto death ; in much prayer, watchfulness, and holy jealousy, take heed to yourselves, and to the solemn charge committed to thee—“ let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment ;” and if peradventure the vessel should spring a leak, oh !

*you up as high as you can go, and then I will dash you down."* This I mentioned to a friend at the time; and this has come to pass. What the end will be I cannot tell.

There is one thing I wish briefly to notice. I have received two most cutting letters from ———. I am there indirectly charged with saying, or holding the idea, that although this has come to pass, still, being an elect vessel, my heaven is secure. I know not from what this is taken, but I solemnly declare that the doctrine of election—though I believe it as firmly as ever;—(of the reality of the distinguishing doctrines of grace I have no doubt.)\* But I have both a painful and a powerful conviction that the doctrine of election neither gives a license to sin, nor a hope of heaven. My state is awful in the extreme; but I cannot imagine how any person can live in a course of wilful sin, and yet entertain a hope of heaven. I can understand how sin may so harden the conscience as to be reckless of heaven; so as practically to set the Almighty at defiance; but with the casting away of the fear of God, there must be also a giving up all hope and expectation of pardon and peace with God.

Oh! my dear brother, let me, in conclusion, intreat you very highly to prize the "good hope through grace" which

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never attempt to conceal it; be not deluded with the idea either that of thyself thou canst stop the leak, or that God, by a secret miracle, will stop it for thee; let "all hands to the pump," therefore, be your cry. Rally around the throne of grace—confess your faults one to another, and forsake them—let the heart be laid open before God—let the conscience be kept clean and tender—let "the watchman of Israel be much with his God"—let there be neither a lording it over God's heritage on the one hand, nor a preaching to please the creature on the other—be deeply concerned to hear the word at God's mouth—to fetch thy every message from Him—and should He seem to withhold the light and the dew, should the heavens be shut up that they give no rain, and the word be sealed so that you can get no entrance, even then in patience possess ye your souls: and thou shalt most happily know in every time of need that faithful is he who hath called you, who also will do it. I have many things to say on this head, but not here.

\* I cannot say that my persuasion of the reality of the great truths I had so dearly held and contended for, was ever entirely thrown away; but when I saw and felt the dreadful circumstances into which I were cast, I was powerfully tempted to believe that truth was a delusion, and that all my religion was a false, self-deceiving light which I had only borrowed from others. Under these impressions, I felt I would gladly have embraced the doctrine that every sinner has power to turn to God, to repent of his sins, and to believe in Christ. But all my attempts to turn, to repent, to hope, and believe, were vain. My conscience was loaded with guilt, my heart harder than iron (for I proved the fire of affliction could not bend it,) and dark despair hung over my soul.



the blessed Spirit has wrought within you. Mark me, my brother, if the enemy ever sets powerfully at thee to cast thee down, he will pave the way for his approach by disputing the reality of thy faith and interest in God's salvation. There is nothing so fortifies the soul against the powers of darkness as confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ; it hath "great recompense of reward." The Lord help thee to take heed that ye be not moved away from the hope of the gospel! May you wash in his precious blood, it alone can purge your conscience—may you cling to his righteousness, it will strengthen and comfort your spirit—may you fully realize the power of his advocacy, it will encourage and embolden you at the throne of grace. This comes from an impure source, from a vile and fallen sinner; but it comes in sincerity. Could I have acted out, what I saw and knew within, I had not been where I now am. \* \* \* \*

C. W. B.

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### LETTER III.

*"God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not. In a dream, in a vision of the night,—then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction; that he may withdraw man from his purpose."*

Sunday, March 12, 1843.

My beloved brother Robert—As another of Mr. Smart's sermons have this week been published, I feel a desire to accompany it with a few lines, first, because I fear my last letter was misunderstood; and secondly, because I wish to put on record, what last night passed in my mind.

It appears that my hastily written effusion respecting the exaltation of the flesh under a pretence of godliness, was taken by you to apply to yourself. Believe me, when I solemnly declare that it had no reference whatever to you. I have seen in myself, and in some others, the most awful ambition in the carnal mind seeking to be gratified by some eminently religious position—(though I do not believe that I ever intentionally or designedly sought thus to lift myself up)—and the reading of Mr. P——'s sermon brought these things to my mind so forcibly that I wrote simply as I felt, without the least design of wounding a brother. \* \* \*

I will now endeavour to give you a brief outline of what I last night experienced, although the life and savour of it has completely departed from me.

The past has been an awful week with me: I have had such rebellion secretly working within, that one day I thought it would have broken out into open blasphemy against God;

and such heavy clouds have hung over my soul, that I have felt an awful persuasion, and have said to myself—"It is no use to hope or to pray for mercy any more; the Lord has cast you off, and given you over; and soon will your end come." These things produce a secret anguish, which (together with most painful temporal trials,) gnaw upon my vitals, and appear to drink up my spirit, so that I know not how to pursue my labours. This was so much the case yesterday, that I left the office, came home, and retired to bed. The shattered state of my mind and body appeared to be sanctified, and once more I cried out in secret unto God, to have mercy upon me. I did not go to sleep, but appeared to drop into a swoon, in which I immediately found myself standing in a pulpit, and had before me a numerous company of people. The words from which I commenced to speak were those uttered by Job—"I HAVE SINNED: WHAT SHALL I DO?" And with much power upon my soul, and with a sweet opening up of many precious portions of the word, I went on to speak for a great length of time. One or two parts of the discourse are still fresh in my mind. First, I spoke of the confession, "I HAVE SINNED," as embodying the whole experience of a poor soul who has a clear knowledge of divine truth; but can realize no interest in, can discover no evidences of, a spiritual partaking of that truth. Such a sinner most solemnly confesses that he has sinned, because the awful consequences of sin are then heavy upon him. He says, "Heaven is closed against me; hell is waiting for me—the fact that I have sinned, is a swift witness against me, proving that all the attributes and purposes of Deity are against me.\* If I look at the election of God the

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\* Let not the reader forget the state of my mind when these things occurred. The conviction of my mind then was, that if I had been a partaker of grace, I should not have sinned wilfully against light, conviction, and conscience. I would not now say "all the attributes and purposes of Deity are against me, because I have sinned." No! I would not presumptuously and wickedly boast of anything which I had not experienced. But when I consider how wonderfully and blessedly I have been raised up from that dismal pit in which I lay—when I reflect upon (yea, further, when I REALIZE) the absolute power, the overwhelming love, and the interposing mercy, which has been exercised on my behalf, I am then bold to cry out, "I have more dreadfully deserved the heavy wrath of God than any sinner I could ever yet hear of; 'BUT—GOD—WHO IS RICH IN MERCY—FOR HIS GREAT LOVE wherewith He loved me,—not only when DEAD IN SIN, but also when ALIVE IN SIN—hath quickened, and I trust, restored me.'" And when I have sometimes lost the sight of myself and of my sins, in the rich enjoyment of these mercies, I have vainly imagined that all who heard of the wondrous grace bestowed upon me, would gladly unite with me in blessing and praising the Lord. Instead of this, however, some of them very plainly

Father, I see the elect are chosen to be a holy people; of whom the apostle speaks when he asks, "How can we who are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Implying an impossibility that regenerate souls can wilfully commit sin." I had scarcely, (as I supposed, in my dream,) given utterance to those words of Paul, than they were opened up to me as I never saw them before. I saw that the bodies—the natural powers—the animal passions of the most eminent saints that ever lived, were never yet found to be dead to sin. It is the hidden man, God's new creation, the regenerated soul, that cannot live in sin. This new creation throws a holy light into, and exercises a solemn power over, the natural frame and constitution of the man; but the frame, the constitution, the mind, the temper, the passions—all are natural still; all are tainted and corrupted by sin—all are exposed to temptation, and sometimes the hidden uncleanness of these corrupt powers has burst into open manifestation. But God's new creation, the regenerated soul, will never give its assent to sin; it will struggle against it, it will raise its voice in bitter lamentation, it will make use of all its weapons in defiance of the flesh; so that though sin may appear to obtain a victory, yet that victory shall be incomplete, and but of short duration. You may have seen the faithful and the affectionate wife expostulating with, and intreating a reprobate husband (to whom she is united,) to turn away from his wicked pursuits—you may have listened to her kind, but urgent and persevering prayers to him to abide at home; you may have seen the base

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bid me to stand by myself, lest they should be polluted; others feel justified in more secretly wounding and attempting to stop my mouth; and a few stand afar off, and "hope it is the work of God." These things did at the first distress me, but when I came to hear how the cause of God and Divine truth (in London) has been stabbed to the very heart again and again by ungodly men in the ministry—when I came to understand what very monsters of iniquity have thrust themselves into the work—when I see how by covetousness, hypocrisy, and apostacy too, the hearts of the dear disciples have been made to bleed—my only marvel is, that any of the real blood-washed family should be found to stand with me at all. In the midst of all these discouragements from without—much darkness, leanness, bondage and fear within—and frequently encompassed with trials of no ordinary kind—I have been helped to hold on; and though I may not have "escaped the edge of the sword"—(neither can I expect to escape it)—yet, I trust, in a spiritual sense, "out of weakness I have been made strong," and at times have "waxed valiant in fight." My reader, who and what art thou?—Hast thou "TRUTH in the inward parts? and in the hidden part hath the dear Lord made thee to know wisdom?" If so, thou wilt glorify God with me; and O! may we find mercy of Him in THAT DAY when the secrets of all hearts will be opened.

and hardened wretch thrust her from him, trample her under his feet, and so thrust himself into degradation and ruin. It is even so, between grace in the quickened soul, and sin in the Adam-nature. Grace in the soul is chaste, affectionate, and sincere; it will weep and wrestle against, but never consent to, the motions of the flesh: but the old Adam is a barbarous wretch; so hardened, so determined, that nothing but "the mighty power of God" can humble, and lay the monster low.

If, in my review of the dreadful past, I could see that there was an entire consent to, and real enjoyment in, a practise of sin, I should look upon it as a positive proof of the non-existence of grace in the soul; but, instead of this, I affirm, as in the sight of the living God, that although in the transgression there was an attracting, yea, a tyrannising power, under the influence of which every right and proper feeling, every conviction, every particle of godly fear, as well as all concern for the awful consequences, appeared to be daringly cast away, yet the inward pangs of horror, darkness, and despair which followed, can only, I think, be exceeded by the torments of those unhappy spirits who have sunk for ever into that pit where hope can never come.

Now the confession and exclamation of Job—"I have sinned; what shall I do?" is not expressive of the feeling of the soul while under temptation but it is after the power of it has passed away. When the adversary tempted our Lord he set him, it is said, on a pinnacle of the temple, saying, "if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down." I would not draw presumptuous comparisons, but, depend upon it, when the enemy has obtained a limited power over a sinner who has the principle of godly fear in the heart, the very next step he takes with him is to set him on the pinnacle of daring, yet desponding presumption. "Now!" (saith the wicked one—and the fallen sinner believes the report,) "there can be no hope now, no mercy, no pardon, no Christ, no heaven now: therefore dash thyself onward; for nothing now can save." For me to hope that the grace of God alone has preserved me from plunging headlong into irretrievable destruction, may be thought delusive, still, I dare affirm that as from the very belly of hell itself my soul has been helped to cry for mercy, so I yet live to hope that cry was not in vain.

In this my dream, I thought I had spoken with so much liberty, power, and realization of the divine presence, that I was suddenly stopped with this impression—Some one will be ready, it may be, to say, 'if a man who has so manifestly

transgressed against God, can be raised up to such life, joy, and consolation, surely it holds out an encouragement to sin.' In answer to such a supposed idea, I thought I immediately said, with much feeling, "However, for the time, I may appear to be raised up, yet, be assured of this, there are secret wounds which lie festering within, heavy burdens which press heavily from without; a pervading darkness and sorrow of soul, a gnawing anguish, a hidden self abasement, self abhorrence and indignation, which I am persuaded will be more or less my inward portion even down to the grave itself. In these two things then, lays the mighty difference between a dead professor and a living child. Let the dead professor fall, and having lost all he had in the church, which was an outward standing, he will, either precipitately or more gradually, plunge into whatever course of iniquity may be open to him; but let the child of grace sink down ever so basely, let all his outward circumstances be dashed to atoms, let his friends forsake him, let him be cast out as the blackest spot in society; yet even there will the living soul sigh and cry for health and healing from the eternal God. Not with a feigned, formal, pharisaical wailing, but with an inward, a necessitous groaning—the sighing of a broken spirit.\*

Your's in bonds,

C. W. B

\* Under the influence of these inward groanings I have thrown myself prostrate on the floor, or have hidden myself in secret corners to wrestle with God; and many times in going I have felt my heart so hard, so wicked, so foul and filled with sin, that if I could, I would have torn it out, and cast it away; frequently on such occasions my soul by faith hath had a mighty and a prevailing power with God, and a solemn glory has rested upon me. But quickly after these seasons has the enemy attacked me again, and shut up my spirit either in hardness and indifference, or in deep distress.

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[The Letters and Narrative will be continued in No. 3, if I am spared, and enabled to publish it. I know there are friends who very properly think that silence would be the wisest course: and most cordially do I receive the suggestion of a beloved brother in the ministry, that "nothing but a patient continuance in well doing will restore confidence." Nevertheless the circumstances of the church over which I am placed—the cruel attacks which are repeatedly being made upon them as the espousers of my cause—as well as the promises I have made—these things demand of me such a statement and such a testimony as the facts of the case will admit of. I do rejoice in these four things:—1. I have had no hand, either directly or indirectly, in opening any door into which I have yet gone: 2. I have no ambition or desire to preach the word unless the hand of God can be realised in it: 3. I have the solemn conviction in my own soul that the Lord has in an especial way been with me: and, 4, very many souls have witnessed a good confession that God is honouring the word. Certain it is, that the enemy is striving hard to destroy our peace; but, O, Lord, let grace reign in my heart, let Christ be exalted in the ministry, and the glory shall be given unto Thyself.]

# Truth in the Inward Parts.

BY C. W. BANKS,

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“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom.”—Psalm li. 6.

IT is most generally the conviction of poor souls who are really in trouble about eternal things, that the God whom they seek, is far off, and hard to be found. Although they can assuredly believe that thousands have proved Him to be a God hearing and a God answering prayer, yet they cannot believe that He will be found of them. This conviction, however, is altogether contrary to truth. Elihu says that “He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, He (the Lord) will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.”\* If there be brokenness of heart, contrition of spirit, and a crying and cleaving to God with an honest sincerity, depend on it pardon and peace are near at hand. It was this that brought out the soul of David in holy triumph—“O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears—(for He) is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” In that prophetic Psalm, the 22nd, we have our spiritual David crying out for an absent God with bitter complaints, but he gathers comfort and confidence from the fact that the “fathers trusted in the Lord, and He did deliver them; they cried, and were not confounded.”

I infer, therefore, that there is no character more acceptable—no position on earth more safe, than that of a really penitent sinner. The poor publican who smote upon his breast, was declared to be justified—the returning prodigal was embraced—Magdalen had much forgiven—and Saul of Tarsus, though the chief of sinners, and as he thought, “less than the least of all saints,” yet he obtained mercy.

The grand point for enquiry then is this—What is it that must be found in a sinner which, (whether he can believe it or not) will certainly secure unto him the favour and eternal salvation of God? This is a solemn question—but solemn and comprehensive as it is, you have an answer as large as the question itself, in the words of the text—“Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts.” This is a part of that solemn appeal which David made unto God, after Nathan had both convicted him of his sin and assured him that the Lord had forgiven him. There is something so plain, so powerful, so urgent, in the appeal, that it betrays a state of mind which, I believe none but the Holy Ghost can give. David stops not to parley with peradventures, but he plunges at once into the very bowels of sovereign mercy, crying out, “Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my

transgressions.”\* He urges his prayer upon the ground of the multitude of God’s tender mercies ; because He had so wonderfully forgiven sin, therefore he cries out for the pardon of his sin, for the purification of his soul, that so he might offer the sacrifices of righteousness, shew forth the praises of God, and teach transgressors JEHOVAH’S ways.

Hypocrites, false professors, and self-deceivers may abound—one part even of the redeemed family may be suspicious of the other—ministers may snarl at, be jealous of, and condemn one another—and many precious souls may have to walk in darkness and in a feeling state of uncertainty—but withal, the marks that distinguish God’s living family are as certain and as immutable as God himself: these marks are prominently set forth in the Psalm before us ; and that quickened sinner who is the subject of them—let him be who or where he may—is saved with an everlasting salvation, and cannot perish.

What are these marks?—They are,

First—A broken heart ; that is a heart disabled any longer to pursue, and really to take pleasure in a course of sin—“ How can we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein ?” It is a heart

\* This urgent appeal of the psalmist, brings to my mind two facts which I here subjoin :—“ I was sitting one Saturday evening (said a friend to me, a short time since.) all alone in my shop, when suddenly I heard over my head, a most tremendous noise, as though something very heavy had fallen from a great distance on to the floor. Very shortly after this I was called up stairs, and was told that my landlady had fallen down(?)—Whether this was true or not, I cannot say ; but the poor creature was in bed, and so had that I could hear her say nothing but—‘ Lord, have mercy upon me.—Lord, have mercy upon me.’—In a short time she was a corpse. This poor woman had been a hearer of the word, but whether a partaker of grace or not is a question, but being suddenly plunged into the arms of death,—[by what means is a mystery to all but ——— ] she was enabled to cry mightily to God for mercy.” Contrast this with the following. Among the many to whom the Lord has blessed my ministry, there is a venerable old mother in Israel, who has been for some years a sort of head nurse in an hospital. She is now almost daily expecting the Lord to fetch her home ; and as I sat the other morning beside her bed, listening to the happy testimony which she had to bear, she referred, among other things, to the death of a man whose words, just before his departure, were to the following effect :—“ Nurse,” said he, “ I am a changed man—already I am in hell.” Nurse said, “ Do not say such awful things ! Cannot you cry unto God, to have mercy upon you ?” “ Oh ! no !” he said, (putting forth his hand, as though to ward off something) “ *I cannot pray—I am in hell—Oh ! give me some water to cool my tongue.*” “ I went,” said Nurse, “ to get him some water, but in a few minutes he was a corpse. These are things, (continued the dear old saint) that ought to be spoken of, as a warning, and therefore (said she) when he was thus speaking, I called out in the ward, and said, ‘ Patients ! do you hear these terrible things that ——— is saying ?’ And they answered, ‘ Yes, Nurse, we heard him.’” My reader ! Is there in thy heart, a living, feeling sense of thy sinful and helpless condition, so as to cause thee to cry—“ Have mercy upon me, O God ?” Then despise not the day of small things. If some poor wretches are so bound by Satan as that they cannot even cry to God for mercy, Oh, how thankful should we be for those secret groans and spiritual desires which we have not power to utter ! In that day, when the final account shall be made up, may you and I *be found IN HIM !*

deeply impressed with a feeling sense of the awful nature, guilt, and consequences of sin, and it is therefore a heart which cries out unto God for pardon and deliverance.

Secondly—A clean heart, a purged conscience, and a right (or constant, faithful, loving) spirit within, are things greatly desired by a really converted sinner. He longs to feel assured of the efficacy of atoning blood from the application of it to his own conscience, the sin-conquering, the flesh-crucifying power of it in his own soul.

Thirdly—A sweet inward realization of the presence of the Holy Ghost, and of "the joys of salvation," will alone satisfy this living soul. He wants not only the foundation and the furniture of grace, but also the fire of heavenly love drawing his soul into a hidden fellowship with that God to whom Jacob said, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

Fourthly—A zeal for God's glory and Zion's good, will certainly spring out of an inwrought development and manifestation of pardoning love and sanctifying grace.

The words of the text appear to look deeply into three things : 1st, into the deceitful and desolate condition of the natural mind. 2dly, into what it is that God requireth before He can look upon the sinner with approbation—"Truth in the inward parts." And 3rdly, it looks into the infinite and boundless stores of heavenly wisdom and glory which the soul anticipates and desires to be led into. To come a little more minutely into these things, look

I. At the feeling state of mind which the text seems to express.

II. At what is implied in the terms herein employed.

III. At the confidence expressed and the blessing anticipated.

I. The feeling state of mind which the words of the text seem to set out, and which, more or less, will be found in every sinner who is really turned in his heart unto God. And

(1.) It is an expression of grief and amazement at the discovery of inbred depravity, and the absence of all spiritual uprightness and sincerity in the soul. "Behold, my soul!" (saith this living sinner) "the eternal God looketh not at the outward appearance. No forms of worship—no eloquence of speech—no lofty pretensions—no long standings, nor costly sacrifices, tell for anything with God. Oh! no, there must be the new creation—Christ must be in the heart as the only hope of glory."\* But, oh, what pangs

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\* It is in the hearts of the chosen seed that God the Holy Ghost "settleth a tabernacle for the Sun." And in the light of this glorious Sun "they have such views of the sinfulness and depravity of their nature, that none upon earth can appear worse than they do to themselves." And no rash declarations that "sin is a non-entity"—or that they have no right to look for "a new creature in themselves,"—can ever give them true peace. No.—"let God be true, and every man a liar,"—where God hath set a tabernacle for the Sun—there will be large and capacious desires which nothing short of a laying hold on eternal life can satisfy. I had frequently observed a dear old saint at our meetings for prayer, and on one or two occasions had asked him to pray for us, but he refused, and seemed much distressed in his soul. I therefore took an early opportunity of enquiring into the cause of his depression. He looked at me earnestly, and after a moment's pause, he said, "The Lord has spoken many sweet words to me, but there are a few things



does it inflict in the soul of the believer to find that after all he has experienced, still so much deadness, deceit and hypocrisy remains; and sin, in all its ugly forms, is found living and crawling within: like a serpent, it entwines itself around his feet—it hisses and throws its poisonous venom into his every vein; so truly doth he cry out with Paul—"Oh! wretched man that I am—who shall deliver me?" Here is a throwing open of the heart before God, and exclaiming—"Behold, Lord! thou desirest Truth in the inward parts! but I am vile—I am treacherous—I am ungrateful and inconstant. Oh! come and purge me; wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin."\*

(2.) I read in my text—An open avowal that nothing short of inward sincerity, and a real change of heart, can ever be approved of God. There may be the confession of sin with the lips, and an awful crying out against it, while it is really being nursed and followed. There may be strong expressions of faith in Christ, while in the heart there is nothing but a daring presumption. "Presumption (says Erskine,) is lame in one hand—it has a hand to receive pardon, deliverance from hell, and admission into heaven—it has a hand to receive Christ as a Saviour from the consequences of sin—but it has no hand to fling away sin, to deny self, and to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." Oh! what awful instances of hypocrisy and infidelity, practical sin and blasphemy (under a cloak of religion) have been discovered! But let not men be deceived—God is not to be mocked—what a man soweth that shall he also reap God will have the heart. And in order to secure this, He first gives them a heart to know and fear him. Therefore, David seems to plead for the fulfilment of that new covenant promise which secures to the people of God a new heart. He looks down into the darkness and deceitfulness of his own heart—he looks at the provision and promise which the Lord has made—and then he cries out—"Behold—Lord—thou desirest Truth in the inward parts." Oh! it is a mercy indeed, when God searches the heart—baptises the sinner with the Holy Ghost and with fire—and thereby makes him really honest and upright in his worship and seeking of a triune Jehovah. Such a poor soul may be long plagued and chastened—tried, tempted, buffeted, and almost broken down with heavy trials—nevertheless, if the

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which I want him to do for me. I want him to take me by the hand, and lead me into Gethsemane's garden—I want him to take me by the hand and lead me to Pilate's bar—I want him to take me by the hand, and to lead me to Calvary, and there by faith to shew me that His precious blood was shed for me." This was the testimony of an honest, humble, consistent, follower of the Lamb.

\* "The blotting out of iniquity, the quickened soul pants for, and how transgressions are covered, and sin put away, is the all important matter which engrosses the thoughts by night and day. And when the Holy Ghost brings the poor leprous creature, sin stung—law bound—self condemned and despairing, to look to the great sacrifice for sin, as his only refuge,—then Jesus, the Almighty Saviour, looks in upon the mind of the sinking sinner—and in his grace, truth, power, and tenderness, looks all his guilt and tears away. Forgiveness flows in—the song of Redemption through the blood of Christ, is sung in unearthly strains."—*Joseph Burnett.*

Lord has begun to work humility and fervency in the heart, it is that good work which has the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.\*

(3.) The first sentence of the text seems expressive of the soul's utter helplessness, and of a consequent casting itself into the arms of Omnipotence for those essential mercies referred to in the words—"Truth in the inward parts."—"Behold, Lord, thou desirest truth—instead of this I am black,—I am inwardly deceitful—and find no uprightness, in me. Oh! come; reveal and work thine own truth in me, that so, my faith, and hope, my love and zeal may be the fruits of the exceeding greatness of thy power in and towards me.

(4.) The text comes out of a soul earnestly longing for an increase and growth of spiritual acquaintance with and holy nearness to God—which longing, mind you, is produced and supported by divine faith—hence he says, "And in the hidden part, thou shalt make me to know wisdom."

There can be no question but that there is progression, a going forward, in the divine or spiritual life. The psalmist, speaking of "the men whose strength is—(not in themselves, not in the law,

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\* "As to those persons who pretend to lay hold on the word of God, when the word has never laid hold on them,—who never felt the want of power to believe it—nor felt the overcoming grace by which poor convinced sinners are brought into believing—such, I say, who have never been cut down by the law, nor healed and raised by the gospel, such persons have not a just claim to that divine evidence adduced by Paul, 1 Thess. i. 5; but that need not weaken the well grounded confidence of those, who have been brought to prove the firmness of supernatural support, from the word of God's grace, in those seasons, when reason, sense and feelings have all appeared against them—through which support there hath been a nourishing of the same faith (if not in the same high degree) as Abraham, who, 'against hope, believed in hope, because he judged him faithful who had promised.' That Holy man was taught from above, to behold infinite love, as the cause and source of the promise—he considered the perfection of the promiser—he saw that divine faithfulness was engaged in the word promised, and, which faithfulness insured the performance, and he knew that every obstacle, however formidable, must be weakness itself, before the invincible power of the accomplisher.—Lord Jesus grant me faith of this kind in every trying hour; though hell may rage, and earth upon me frown, A pilgrim should live above the slights and contempt of men in the cause of God and truth—their frowns cannot kill, nor are their smiles to make alive, those, whom God hath made his witnesses. Well, we are hastening on with more than railway speed to our terminus of all things here. A very little while and it will be said, 'the master is come and calleth for thee,' then farewell sin, world and devil; and welcome, welcome, holy and eternal joy and glory 'be that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God,'—whose sovereign grace, proceeding from his own immutable bosom, reigns triumphant in the dear son of his love, and efficaciously operates by the Holy Ghost, in all and every one of his own dear elect—whose word prevails in them, above all the calumnies and reproaches—above all the fallacies and seductions of men, unto that state, where we shall breathe in the pure air of divine love: and in the perpetual glories of everlasting light, be filled with the uninterrupted streams of immortality: and glory redound to the eternal Three-in-One."

not in doctrines, not in ministers, nor in ordinances, but whose strength,—hope, confidence or dependence, is) **IN THE LORD,**”—says “**THEY GO** from strength to strength,”—(or as you have it in the margin, *from company to company.*) He does not say that they are driven, but “**they GO!**” The word seems to embody two features of a living vital experience; first, decision. “**I will go in unto the king,**” said Esther, “**and if I perish, I perish.**” Christ is revealed as the only way of access and acceptance; and he is so revealed in the heart of a quickened sinner, as to create a secret approbation of Him; a secret desire towards Him, and an inward thirsting for that pardon, peace, and perfection, which is wholly in Christ; therefore it is that this precious soul comes to feel and to cry out as did the church, “**Tell ME**—(how personal, and how earnest appears the request of a living, seeking soul.) “**Tell ME, O thou whom my soul loveth, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon.**” But, secondly—“**They go,**” is not only expressive of decision, but also of that willingness, freedom, and spontaneous earnestness which sweetly constrains the regenerated soul “**to follow on to know the Lord.**” As descriptive of the real character and complex nature of this spiritual progression, there is perhaps no figure so apt, no scripture more rich and full to the point, than is the testimony of the Holy Ghost by Solomon—“**The path of the just IS AS THE SHINING LIGHT, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.**” The path of the just, (like the natural sun which rules the day,) is entirely of God’s creation, and appointment.\* The path of the just (by which I understand not only the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ, but also the way and work of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the elect,) had its rise in the heart, the eternal mind of God himself—“**in whose heart are the ways of them.**” (Psalm lxxxiv. 5.) Like “**the pure river of water of life, it proceeds out of the throne of God and the Lamb.**” It is a new and living way. And hence all who are in it, being made new creatures in Christ Jesus, and having eternal life in Him, and eternal union to Him, “**they can never never perish, neither can any pluck them out of His hands.**” “**Every one of them in Zion—APPEARETH BEFORE GOD.**”

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\* Christ is that Sun of Righteousness which is promised unto all that fear the name of the Lord. What is said of the natural sun, in the 19th Psalm is much more true of the dear Son of God, who “**is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run his race.**” A more glorious setting forth of the Person and work of Christ can scarcely be found. He comes forth out of his chamber—which may be applicable either to his eternal, secret, and incomprehensible dwelling in and with the Father before all worlds, or to his coming forth from, and in the strictest accordance with, all the settlements of the covenant of grace. Both in his coming forth in person, and in the spiritual manifestation of Himself in the hearts of the elect, He comes in all the hidden glory, majesty, and omnipotent power of his eternal Godhead, and for the express purpose of dispensing those special and essential blessings which, in the covenant of grace, were secured unto those whose names are in the book of life. You will find our Master speaking to this very point—“**I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world:—I have given unto them THE WORDS which thou gavest me, and they have received**

them." The "sure mercies" which the chosen family receive from their dear Lord, are all bestowed so strictly in accordance with the arrangements and provisions of God's immutable purpose, that He calls it "giving unto them" the words—the decrees, the commandments, the promises—which, as the Covenant Head, the Father had first given unto Him; and to shew you that these gifts are all identified with the good pleasure of the Father on the one hand, and salvation of his people on the other, He says, "THE GLORY WHICH THOU GAVEST ME I have given them; that they may be one even as we are one." Precious soul, if thou art truly a branch of the living vine, be assured of this, thou never didst receive one spiritual blessing from the Lord Jesus but what was connected with, and leadeth on to thy perfect glorification in the upper and the better world. But, secondly, He cometh "as a Bridegroom." His whole heart and soul was set upon the Church. ("He loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.") The "bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments," and cometh forth arrayed in costly apparel: but the Bridegroom of the Church not only came forth with love in his heart toward the Church, but He actually possessed the Church herself, in his own bosom. "In his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and HE BARE THEM, and CARRIED THEM all the days of old." So said John, "He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom." Surely the soul that is brought to trust in Him must be safe! How can there possibly be any failure in an administration of mercy designed and directed by the Eternal God himself—who saith, "*My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure?*" Why, millions of sinners should be left to follow the devices of their own hearts—to fill up the measure of their iniquity, and at the last to be condemned and cast out of the presence of God, while "a multitude which NO MAN can number," *are sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called* unto eternal glory, is a mystery which a worm like myself, desireth not to divine. That God the Father hath chosen a people for himself—that God the Son did shed his precious blood for them—and that God the Holy Ghost stands engaged to call in and to sanctify them,—are solemn truths written in God's Bible—are truths which have been very powerful and precious to my soul,—and THEREFORE I have boldly proclaimed them whenever necessity has been laid upon me. But on this account I am opposed, and the enemy has threatened to upset our little cause altogether, unless I will preach universal redemption. But this I cannot do. Wherefore a young man—once a member of the church over whom I have been placed—and upon whom I once looked as Samuel did upon Eliab, when he said, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before me,"—this young man, (who was at the first so zealous for God's truth, and so humble in the church,) has recently embraced the hypothesis that the atonement was universal,—that the blood of Christ was shed for the whole human family, although none but those ordained unto life can be saved. And so warmly has he espoused this view of the atonement, that he has taken the pains to write and to send long epistles to many of the members, explanatory of his views, and warning them of the danerous consequences of upholding the doctrine of particular redemption. In this, and in other things, I perceive the adversary is determined, if possible, to scatter the flock. But IF GOD BE FOR US—(I say, IF GOD be for us, because we "are a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and a derision to them that are round about us," and there is "a shaking of the head among the people,"—but our God is in the heavens; and while professors turn aside—and sorrows abound—He goes on "working all things after the counsel of His own will;") our only real concernment therefore is, to be "FOUND IN HIM,"—and from the very bottom of my soul would I cry out—

Rock of Ages shelter me,  
Let me hide myself in thee.

Knowing that there is a satisfactory fulness, and an eternal safety in

Him—knowing that the salvation of my soul is not in the ministry, nor in church communion—I would be deeply concerned for a spiritual abidance in Him—because then—) it matters not who shall be against us. *Come, my people, (saith the Lord,) enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment.*—I must return however to the character which the Master sustains in His comings forth—“*Which is as a Bridegroom.*” And a royal Bridegroom too; it is the King’s Son—*whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds.* The natural sun is itself a body of light, and the one great source both of light and of heat. In its communication of these two great blessings, there are three distinguishing features: 1st, sovereignty; no power under the heavens can bring up the light, the heat and the glory of the natural sun *before its appointed time*; neither can the extent of its power be increased: nor can its going down be either hastened or retarded—“*the sun knoweth his going down. Thou makest darkness, AND IT IS NIGHT.*” There are parts of the globe where the heat and power of the sun is almost more than the constitution of man can live under, while other parts are frozen up for the want of it. In all this the sovereignty of his reign is demonstrated: and all this is applicable to the reign of Jesus Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. It was “*in the fulness of time God sent forth his Son.*” Can Saul of Tarsus be stopped before Jesus, the light from heaven, shines personally and powerfully upon him? Can any sinner really have and walk in the true light *except it be given him from Heaven?* Can we increase the glory and power of this light either in individuals or in nations? [I am not against the use of means; but I believe the instrumentality which God honours, is the instrumentality which He himself brings into existence.] And the light and glory which emanates from this glorious Orb of day, is as omnipotent and as irresistible in His communications, as He is sovereign in His first rising in the soul. The second feature is that of *sufficiency*. The sun is the crowning glory of God’s natural creation. What would the earth be without it? But with it, the majesty and power of God is revealed, the wants of His creatures are supplied. What is man without Christ? Is he not so dead in, so defiled with, and so bound by sin, that he cannot possibly recover himself? But

He that hath CHRIST by precious faith,  
Hath life for evermore.

As the Bridegroom of the Church, Christ hath “*builded the house, hewn out the seven pillars, killed the beasts, mingled the wine, and furnished the table.*” The house being built and furnished, and the table being spread, he comes forth—both to meet and to meeten the bride; he knows her poverty, He never set his heart upon her because she was rich in herself, but because he determined to make her so; therefore with all the love of his heart He says—*bring forth the best robe, and put it on.* Oh, how full and complete is the righteousness of Christ!—It saves to the uttermost—ALL WHO COME UNTO GOD BY HIM! My reader—Art thou Coming?—Art thou Coming to God?—Art thou Coming to God only by Christ? If so, look for one moment at the third feature—*faithfulness*. How confidently, and without suspicion, do we depend upon the rising of the sun! how much are our arrangements regulated by it! Did ever the sun disappoint or fail us? Neither will Jesus! He is the faithful and true Witness. Therefore, Coming soul, *trust in Him at all times*; and know assuredly, that unto THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM—(ah! there is much in those five words) will He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

“*Truth in the inward parts*” will be continued in future numbers.

# THE EARTHEN VESSEL.

## GOD'S TEST OF THE GOSPEL MINISTRY, AND OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

*To the Church and Congregation meeting for the worship of a Triune Jehovah in Crosby Row.*

LONDON, NOVEMBER 18, 1844.

Christian Friends and Fellow Travellers to an eternal world. In addressing a few words to you, in the second part of the Earthen Vessel, I desire to magnify the holy and righteous name of the ever blessed and eternal God, who hath been pleased so to preserve and to prosper my soul, as to enable me, with much apparent success, to speak unto you the words of eternal life, for now exactly twelve months.

I have seen too much of the vanity and mutable nature of creatures, and created things, to be much elated by the passing clouds of external circumstances; nevertheless, it would be ingratitude of the basest kind, not to notice and to acknowledge the hand of the Lord, which has been wonderfully stretched out for our comfort and furtherance in the faith.

Twelve months ago, about twenty of us met together for the first time to worship in a small room. Since that period, many, many, have been the solemn and powerful evidences which we have had that God has been in the word, and that He is making it an eternal blessing to many never-dying souls.

My beloved brethren, you have been reproached for enlisting yourselves under the banner of one so justly despised and set at nought by men; you have been told that the Babel building would quickly fall to the ground—and your own hearts have often been filled with fears, lest the desires of those who have waited for our halting, should be gratified. I have myself been subjected to trials the most painful and severe. Times without number, since I have spoken to you in the name of the Lord, have I feared that my mouth would be closed, through the hardness of my heart, the barrenness of my mind, and the too frequent apparent withdrawal of the life, unction, dew and power of the divine presence. Seasons of a most solemn character have been experienced by me. God is my witness, that most frequently in coming up as His mouth unto His people, I have spent hours in the greatest agony of soul-wrestling prayer, in endeavouring to get from the

Fountain of Eternal Life itself the word which I should deliver. Oh, the sorrow, shutting up, darkness, despondency, and distress, which my soul has suffered in its struggles to lay hold on the teaching, illuminating, and quickening powers of the Holy Ghost—until, many times, I have come before you trembling with the fear that the Lord had forsaken me—that my candle was put out—and that the end of my ministry was come. But millions of blessings on His name, He has only done this to shew me and you that the work was *not mine, but His*. He has only thus emptied me of all fleshly gatherings, that He might fill me with the Spirit's power! Never, in one single instance, has His promise failed! Never have I been forsaken; but “in the self-same hour hath it been given me what I should say.” Your bonds have been broken—your hearts have been enlarged—your souls have been strengthened—your prayers have been answered—you have drank of the brook by the way, and you have lifted up the head.

Some of you have been filled with large desires to act directly opposite to the Master's will. What is His word?—“When ye make a feast”—says the Lord himself—call not the rich and the mighty—but the poor, the blind, the maimed, the halt, and the lame. You have had your eyes, and your hearts fixed upon men whom you have longed to see amongst us. You have been guilty of covetousness; you have coveted the countenance, and, it may be, something more than the countenance—for it seems to require a large measure of grace to enable us to love, and look as much after the poor as we do after the rich. Both are useful according as the Lord makes use of them. Let us then be still. If the feast be of God's providing, He will go on, as He hath begun—to gather in the poor, the blind, the halt, and the maimed—that so His house may be full—and the glory redown to himself.

I pass by for the present, many things, to notice for a moment, the thoughts of my heart, respecting our anniversary day.

The subjects to which your minds were then directed, may safely be viewed, as descriptive of the nature and effects of my ministry among you, on the one hand; and as descriptive of that courage, unity, consistency, Gospel hope, walk, and faith, incumbent on, and necessary for yourselves, on the other.

Let this suffice, by the way—I did not seek thus to adapt the subjects to the day. No—they came from no broken cistern—they came from no laboured and diligent research—they came from no crafty design—but they did come (as my

soul believes), from the secret treasury of the covenant of grace.

Further, let me premise. These things are not addressed—are not applicable to *you only*. Oh no! By the help of God I will, through the instrumentality of this little book, call upon ministers of Christ, and the churches of God throughout the kingdom, to look for one moment at the following “*Test of the Gospel Ministry, and of Christian Character.*”

I know the veteran watchmen, the disjointed, jealous, high minded, and talented band of warders, who stand high on the walls of our Zion, will cast away my message with all the scorn and contempt of which they are capable. But what is that to me? By it, God the Holy Ghost will lay hold of the consciences of many an honest, humble soul, and they shall be made to know that it is a testimony from God.

Beloved in the bonds of Christian love! you will remember the word from which God’s test of the Gospel ministry was gathered. “*The Lord said unto Gideon, the people are yet too many; bring them down to the water; and I will try them for thee there.*”

In the everlasting covenant, and in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Father has sown nothing but the good seed of the election of grace. In the true ministry of the word, God the Holy Ghost sows nothing but the seed of eternal life—He quickens none, He regenerates none, He delivers none, He pardons none, He sanctifies and preserves none, He builds up and meetens none, but the vessels of mercy afore prepared unto glory.

The *sheep* hear his voice—“Whom He did predestinate, them He also called”—“sanctified by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” Let ten thousand times ten thousand foreign missionaries, and home missionaries, and city missionaries, go forth—(and I will say nothing against them. God forbid I should. He permits them. Aye, and in spite of all that you crazy, bigotted, and self-willed ministers and men can say, these missionaries are doing, at least a moral good, are carrying with them, at any rate, the word of the living God, and, doubtless, are in some measure beating the bushes of heathenism, of idolatry, of priestcraft, of infidelity, of ignorance, of prostitution, of poverty, degradation and shame; and out of these bushes, beaten by these—(in some respects) questionable missionaries, *some of God’s elect* have been brought to light. But before they can convert and evangelise the world, they must prevail upon the Eternal God to destroy the covenant of grace, to cast away the Lamb’s Book of Life, and to make another revelation of His will.



“He is a rock, His work is perfect.” He is immutable, He changes not; therefore let thousands of men conspire, as they do, to overthrow the kingdom—still, His counsel shall stand, and He will do all His pleasure.

If no other agency was at work in the professing Church of Christ, than what God employs, there would spring up and come in, none but the good seed of the Father's choice.

“Master, did not thou sow good seed in thy field—from whence then hath it tares?”

“AN ENEMY HATH DONE THIS.” The devil has for a long time been sowing his tares faster than God has sown His wheat. “Many are called, but few are chosen.” Therefore that church could never yet be found, concerning whom it might not be said—“*the people are too many.*”

I am deceived; or this has been manifest in our own little company of professing souls—and will be more manifest still. We are not alone. There is a certain amount of novelty and attraction about every new man in the ministry of the word. His flesh gathers in flesh. But, if his ministry be in the Spirit, with demonstration and power—bye and bye, he drives them out more fast than they ever came in; albeit there shall be seals given to his ministry, and souls for his hire, who shall be his joy and his crown of rejoicing in that day, when every man's work shall be made manifest of what sort it is.

But what is this test of the faithful ministry of the Gospel of God? What—among the mixed and multifarious groups of pastors, preachers, and professed expounders of the word—(a class of men so numerous in our days, that many of them are moved by ambition and pride, to advertise for pulpits to preach in, and for people to speak to)—What, I ask, shall be brought as a test whereby the divinity of a man's commission—and the divinity of his message, shall be proved?

It is simply in the separation of “the precious from the vile”—“if thou take forth the precious from the vile,” saith the Eternal God to the prophet, “thou shalt be as my mouth.” “And the Lord said unto Gideon, thou shalt bring them down unto the water, and I will try them for thee there.”

Beloved, I cannot here enter into the many particulars to which from this portion of the word, your attention has been recently called. I come at once to the test—“*thou shalt bring them down to the water.*” The water is an emblem of LIFE and of PURITY. The great object of the Christian ministry is, to bring the people down unto the water, or, in other words (in the power of the Holy Ghost) to reveal and

make manifest the real condition, and to lay hold on the consciences of men, by a bold, consistent, spiritual and scriptural opening up of the essential existence and unity of these heaven-born twins in the heart and life of the heirs of immortal glory.

The water is, first, an emblem of LIFE. As many and mighty are the fruits produced by this life in the soul—so many are the names which are given unto it. “The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life to depart from the snares of death.” It is called “the law of the Spirit of life,” and “a well of water,” which the Master declared should be IN the elect, “springing up into everlasting life.” For the indwelling, life-giving, life-preserving, fructifying powers of this water in the souls of believers, ministers must contend. They must be partakers of it—living in the possession, and under the influence of it themselves. They must have a deep, an abiding, an increasing, experimental knowledge of its origin, its power, its qualities, its virtues, its movements, its evidences—that it comes from the throne of God and the Lamb—that it is a pure river of water of life—that by the omnipotent energy of the Holy Ghost acting directly on the heart, the heart is broken, a reservoir is made, the mighty spring is opened—the soul is put into life---it lives *in* God---it lives *with* God---it lives *to* God. The glories of Christ, as the mighty God-Man, Mediator, Ransomer and Refuge, are discovered---the holiness of God’s law---the sovereignty of His will---the immutability of his purpose---the boundless stores of His covenant---the sevenfold perfection of His righteousness---the exceeding riches of His grace---the spirituality of His worship---these are eternal realities---heavenly principles, laid in the soul with such almighty power as to give a new creation, a new existence, a new bias---a new movement, yea, it *springs up into everlasting life*. Christ himself is that everlasting life. This well of water is faith, a divine, a holy, a living, a faithful, a sin-conquering, a world-despising, a God-glorifying, a Christ-exalting, a heaven-attracting faith, it centres in God, it leads to God, it takes fast hold of the conscience, and moulds it in everlasting love, washes it in atoning blood, makes it a partaker of the divine nature, sets its affections on high, and renders it dissatisfied with every thing short of the entire salvation of the never-dying soul.

“Bring them down to the water.”—Men and ministers of God! Indwelling corruptions, temptations, snares, and falls into sin, will, in a measure exist in this time-state, but be it

yours, be it mine, to come down to the water ourselves—and so powerfully and preciously to live in the holy elements thereof, that we may be enabled by God the Holy Ghost, in all our ministrations—in all our walking and working—to bring the people down unto the water, in the fullest persuasion, that thereby the Eternal God will make manifest, by purity of heart, purity of doctrine, purity of desire, and, in its measure, purity of action, those whom He has chosen unto eternal life.

My simple, humble, testimony, I leave, for the Holy Spirit to deal with as seemeth Him good, while in love and faithfulness,

I remain,

Yours to serve, with all the grace that is given,

C. W. B.

(*To be continued.*)

## The Valley of Achor.

### INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS.

(*Continued from Part I.*)

IN the first part of this work I have merely referred to the circumstances which drove me to take refuge in the dismal town of Bolton, in Lancashire. In looking back upon the past, I am sometimes struck with horror at the gradual hardness of heart, seariness of conscience, and mad presumption, which evidently bound me as in the very chains of hell itself. While I am wounded and grieved in spirit, I cannot be surprised at the following expression of a dear brother in the faith, who says in a faithful letter to me “With regard to yourself, although the Lord knows I forgive in my soul, *I cannot forget*. No; I cannot forget the nights of sorrow, the days, weeks, and months of sorrow. No, I have them in remembrance still. And why not forget? I answer first, because a glorious and precious Christ has been crucified afresh, and put to open shame amongst us. Why not forget?—Because the Church of Christ, and the Gospel of Christ is branded with Antinomianism; and all manner of evil and reviling is charged upon a few who form the Church here, and who cannot lay claim to the blessing, inasmuch, as a body, all that is said, has been found amongst them, for a great evil was in her.” Why, say some, do you quote such a painful sentence as this? I do it that you may know how bitterly, how sorrowfully, the dear children of God feel the heavy stroke which fell upon them—I do it, that others may sympathise with them, and that it may act as a warning to any disposed to think or make lightly of sin. Neither, my brother, can I forget. The remembrance of the past oftentimes makes me to fear, and what seems most surprising is, the fact that silent and sorrowful as I could rather have desired to have walked the remainder of my days, yet a mighty power—yes—I say, a mighty

power has lifted me up—and compelled me to stand forward before many, many witnesses, to testify of the superabounding of that sovereign grace which, in my soul, I am constrained to believe

“Would not let me go.”

It is the secret conviction of some that I am triumphing over the ruins of my fall—while the triumph is but as the crackling of thorns under the pot—a kind of false fire, kindled upon the altar of a presumption most awfully deceived. I will not strive to remove this impression. Why should I? *A deliverance has been wrought!* Many, many most striking testimonies—(unsought for by me)—have been borne by real believing souls to the fact that God has spoken in and by me to the great comfort of their hearts. Why should I strive to remove convictions which are “*written in the earth?*” If this work be of God, it will stand—it will brave the storms of anger, envy, jealousy and fear—and though the rains may descend, and the winds blow, and beat upon it, yet, if built upon the rock of God’s sovereign decree, it will remain. But, O, if there be rottenness at its core—if it be not the fruit and effect of Almighty power, I do pray that both the deceiver and the deceived may come forth to the light.

It behoveth me, however, for the satisfaction of those who have received me as one raised from the dead, to state that there are three things which give me hope that the work is of God. And, first, I say surely nothing short of an unseen, mysterious Divine power could have held me up in the face of all the dreadful and deadly temptations which for upwards of two years have afflicted me. Yet, God is my witness,—upheld I have been—a purged conscience is the girdle of my loins. Secondly—an inward sorrow for the past—a heavy cross—secret shame, much jealousy, fear, and a fervent desire for the power and presence of God; these hidden features of the soul, give me strength at times to believe that the Lord has not given me over to a reprobate mind, nor left me altogether without chastisement. Thirdly, I sometimes secretly ask—“Is it possible that all the dear and highly favoured saints of the most High God can be deceived?—They come from all quarters, and boldly declare, “*the work is the Lord’s!*” Oh! may His kingdom come—His glory be revealed—and His everlasting mercy, in all its rich aboundings, be opened up in our hearts; for I have found “in his (spiritual) presence there is a fulness of joy, and at His right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Some have thought that a kind of license, or encouragement to sin might be gathered up from the publication of this work. None but hearts most awfully deceived will ever herefrom take a license to sin. But if there should be one so disposed, let him know assuredly that a wreck of temporal ruin—scenes of misery, disappointment, poverty and woe, have accompanied me ever since my fall. And even now—blessed as I seem to be in the ministry of the word, it often appears as though my only real peace and consolation of soul was *for*, and *in*, that work. Apart from it, it is in much dejection of spirit that I pass my days.

My departure from Canterbury was a mad, daring, awful rushing into the very heights of presumption. Having made the necessary arrangements, I arose early on Lord's-day morning, Jan. 30th, 1841, left my home, took coach for London, and from thence by railway to Bolton, where I soon clearly saw the hand of God was gone out against me, and that I was a ruined man.

Being in a few weeks after my arrival in Bolton, spurned from the presence and employment of the gentleman who had engaged me to fill a permanent and responsible situation—having a heavy family to maintain, and not a friend on earth to whom I could fly for succour—I resolved, in the frenzy of my distress to make purchase of some newly published engravings and to travel the country as a wanderer and as a vagabond, if possible, by their disposal, to earn for my family a mouthful of bread. Accordingly, with two of my boys, I sat out on my pilgrimage, vainly imagining that all to whom I showed my engravings would quickly become purchasers. I was doomed to disappointment and disgrace. Every door was slammed with anger in my face; every dog appeared mad with rage against me; my sin called aloud for punishment—awful forebodings took possession of my heart. I fainted in the way, and relinquished my task.

With the little money yet left, we made our way to Liverpool; where, from one printing office to another, I sought for, and obtained a few days' work at my trade. This being uncertain and insufficient, I determined, as my last expedient, to betake myself back to London; whose streets I travelled for many days without the least prospect of success, and I verily believed that beggary and starvation must shortly bring about my end.

Tracing the Strand as early one morning as five o'clock (not being able to rest in my bed), a gentleman came up to me, and expressing his surprise at seeing me in town, asked me how it came to pass that I had left Canterbury, saying—"I thought you was settled there for life." I could not tell him the truth as regards my leaving, but was compelled to tell the truth as regards my distress. He was the instrument in the hands of the Lord in catching me up as it were from absolute beggary, or something worse, directing me to a gentleman who found me employment until the Lord sent me again into his vineyard to work.

Before I further proceed with my narrative, I shall here subjoin a few of the letters written previous to the period that hope sprung up in my soul.

I am not careful in the selection of these letters as regards dates; but rather take those first that seem to my own mind to be most likely to be read with profit.

## LETTER IV.

36, *Cursitor-street, Chancery-lane, May 11, 1812.*

My Dear Brother Robert,

You say in your letter, received to day, that your inclination towards writing is dormant. It is the reverse with me, my dear Brother, for your epistle has so stirred up my spirit—my poor polluted and broken spirit—and has so enlarged my heart towards you, that, had I time, I feel I could fill many sheets with what I wish to say. But I must be brief.

In the first place, you say you had almost “come to the conclusion that I had forgotten you---that I might think I had no need of your prayers.” My dear Brother, my state of mind is most dreadful indeed; an iron case has, as it were, grown over my heart. Many times, as I walk the streets, or as I attempt to draw near to God, or as I sit pensive and sorrowfully reflecting on the dreadful past, I am compelled to say in the anguish of my spirit---“Surely out of hell such another monster does not exist.” Oh, could you have seen me the other night, it was as though the enemy was making his final struggle to finish me. I was that wrought upon, that I took the poker, as it were determined to inflict some deadly blow; and so horrible were my feelings that I cried out “I shall be damned, and I shall sink into the very lowest hell.” But, my Brother, awful---yea exceedingly awful---as my fall, my sin and my misery has been---(and none but God himself knoweth how dreadful it has been), still, there has been a power that has kept me in, and has said, “thus *far shalt thou go, but no further.*” But for this power, Robert, thy poor brother had, ere this, been either hung for murder, or himself a suicide. Yes, yes, 'tis well for *professing* Christians to chatter about temptation, and sore conflicts, but perhaps few know what *fiery* trials are. Temptation to sin, my brother, is one thing, but for sin to deceive, to deluge, to overwhelm the soul, as it has mine, is *another* thing. There are two things, however, I can and I will say. 1st, I have never forgotten you nor your beloved wife---your's and her love to me have been manifested often. Ah, poor S--- has seen my trouble; she saw something of my distress long before it was known, or I am much mistaken, and before I can cease to love her and you, I must become what as yet I am not. 2nd I have never, neither yet totally been left without a strong sense of my wretched condition—a feeling sense of my weakness—and some breathings after a revelation of that Blessed Saviour, whom in my soul I do desire to know and love.

\* \* \* \* \*

By reason of the strongest temptations working on my naturally weak and wicked flesh, *I fell*—and I cannot—I dare not charge a soul with any blame. *I fell*, and I must suffer. There *was* a preparation for it. Oh, yes, I know there was—and though I am

the only *guilty* party, yet, I believe I could as soon stop the sun from shining as stop myself from falling. Oh, my poor soul did cry for help—but, like a fly in a spider's web, I was caught, and down I fell.

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## LETTER V.

My beloved and affectionate Brother,

Many times since the receipt of your last kind epistle, I have been talking with you—and have purposed to put some of my reflections on paper—but so confused—so dark—so dismal—so unhappy is the state of my mind—so powerful are the corruptions of the flesh—so determined the assaults of the great adversary—and so few my opportunities—that hitherto I have been let and hindered. But this evening—being just returned from the house of God—being yet out of hell—and feeling, notwithstanding all the dreadful, the awful—the soul-destroying sins of which I have been guilty—feeling, I say, I have a love to them that love the Lord—and a strong desire to be pardoned—purged—and accepted in, by, and through the rich bloodshedding of the Lamb of God—I sit down to write a few lines to you—and I *can* say—and therefore will say, that I am thankful that I am privileged to have one to whom I may open my mind—with whom I may correspond—and in whom, I hope, I still exists some small degree of sympathy towards the very chief of sinners.

I felt hurt, on reading your last, to find that what I had formerly written, should appear as an excuse for not more fully and honestly describing my views concerning your state. The Lord forbid that I should be found attempting to set myself up as a judge over any man's conscience—or as presuming to know the condition of any. But your letters, my brother, have breathed a spirit of heaviness—of darkness—of bondage;—your letters have described an experience through which I passed—of which I was the subject—Ah! and from which I believed in measure I was delivered. An experience, which many declare to be an *evidence of grace in the soul*. An experience to which I *have* looked with hope—but to which I dare no longer look. Oh! no—the only way in which I can now attempt to approach the mercy seat is by confessing and acknowledging *all* my guilt and iniquities—and feeling and seeing that I have nothing to look to—nothing to hope in—but the sovereign mercy—the atoning sacrifice—the sin-pardoning blood of a triune God in Christ Jesus. I do strive to cast myself at his feet, and to seek for his mercy—resolving if I must perish to perish there.

It was, therefore, my Brother, a cheering spot—a stirring sentence, in your letter, wherein you say, “Nothing short of a *revealed Christ* will do for my *soul*.” Oh yes, I felt more power—more solid truth, more soul-humbling sensations in that one sentence, than all the rest beside. It is not only deeply interest-

ing, but to the quickened soul who is brought to *this spot* (where *now* you stand) it must be a comfort to find that is the very spot in which the most eminent of the Lord's servants have stood. Was it not *here*—in this very position—that Moses stood, when he cried out to the Lord—“If now I have found favour in thy sight, **SHOW ME** thy glory.” As I stand silently, my brother, in this day of my casting down and bondage—I say, as I stand silently listening to the report which the many watchmen bring of the sure and certain evidences of a soul's interest in Christ, I can but be astonished at the disparity existing among them. There is an uncertain sound in the land—and that poor soul who is left to go to broken cisterns for water, will find itself in great perplexity. But when the Lord the Spirit brings the soul home to itself—and then enables it to travel through the records of the Scripture—it shall find that *its own* feelings, views, and desires, corruptions, conflicts and confusions, are the same in nature, if not in degree, as was experienced by the saints of old.

Not to be tedious, I would but just refer you to *three*, which occur to my mind at this moment. If the Lord will, may he greatly bless them to your precious soul's eternal welfare. Mark well, my brother, the expressions which I quote. I quote them not from the word, but as they are now brought into my mind, and I believe they are correct.

First, Moses says, “*If now* I have found grace in thy sight, *show me NOW* (not only hereafter, not only in the heavenly world, but *now*), **THY** glory,” Why this was saying the same as my Brother, only in another form, “Nothing but a *revealed* Christ will do, will satisfy my soul.” There is Christ in the word, in the written word, and Christ in the Gospel; *will neither do?* Oh, no, (says the poor living, seeking soul), I must touch the hem of his garment. But I must not allow myself to enlarge—come then next to Gideon. Why, the man's history and experience has been recorded to comfort those who are like him exercised. Look at him—listen to him—examine his words—“If I have found favour in thy sight **WHY** have these things come upon us?” A wet fleece and a dry fleece—a token for good in days gone by—would not do for Gideon, he must have a soul satisfying revelation, in the room of which he has many dark and contrary providences, out of which he says. “*why* have these things come?”

But go now to him of whom it is said—It was revealed to him by the Spirit that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. I think between the period of the promise and its fulfilment, there were many such ways, as my dear brother has to travel through. The revelation of Christ to Paul going to Damascus—to John in the island of Patmos—to Huntington in the summer house—to Hart—and to many other great saints, seems to assure me that the Lord Jesus will not only constitute the believer's happiness, in heaven, but even on earth. The cry, the feeling desire, the strong breathing of the living soul is that with which the canon of Scripture closes; and depend on it that



*closing* sentence of the Word of God, is descriptive of the church's position and the believer's experience, the Psalmist's and the prophets' the apostles' and the Evangelists' writings, are all of them most blessed testimonies; but *where*, ah, where can you find a sentence which embodies so great a prayer—so rich a fund of experience—so exact a portraiture of the features, feelings, living breathings and desires, of the new-born soul as that to which I am referring, wherein the church cries out in ANSWER—in *expectation*—and in strong desire, “COME, LORD JESUS, COME QUICKLY.” Every one of these five words would fill a volume. Many times do my poor lips adopt them, for they suit me better than all the prayers I hear or read. Oh, that an answer might be given. My dear Brother, there were some things connected with my own mysterious voyage which I had intended to note down, especially last Sunday's experience—but for the present I forbear.

Allow me to add (and were I on my death-bed I feel I could—I would do it with confidence), be assured of this—*every man's ministry*, every circumstance in life, every feature of experience that tends to gratify the flesh instead of deeply humbling and debasing it, that tends to lead and unite us to the creature, to *any creature* instead of to *Christ*, that tends to give us some resting place on earth, instead of making us feel it to be a wilderness polluted, wherein we desire not rest—that ministry, that circumstance, that experience is dangerous. Watts truly says,

“ We should suspect some danger nigh,  
Where we possess delight.”

Mark, my dear brother, the Bible is not only the church's chart, but her copy-book, her school-book, her lesson-book. Now, when God called Abraham, Moses, Isaac, Jeremiah, Matthew, Saul and others, where did he call them from? From their own country, their father's house, and *all their kindred*. The Lord help thee to view this *uniformity* of call in a *spiritual* sense, for as he began he goes on. His holy mandate is, “*Get thee out, &c.*” Oh, how full, how rich, how pure, how precious is God's word, when opened by the Holy Spirit.

My beloved Brother, cease from man, crave for—cleave to Christ, and “Let HIS Word DWELL IN thee richly.”

Pardon, and pray for yours, affectionately,  
C. W. BANKS.

## LETTER VI.

*London, March 26, 1843.*

My Dear Brother,

I was very glad to find that my remarks on the ambition of the flesh were received by you in affection. I believe that every true believer has such an acquaintance with the depravity and deceitfulness of his heart, that he can never be searched and sifted too much. Among the many things which he dreads, that of

being left to the will and workings of a depraved nature, he most of all fears—because he has learnt two things—1. That when the Lord withholds or withdraws his presence and power, there is nothing that can at all preserve him, humble him, or cause him to overcome. 2. He has found the Lord's reproofs, searchings, siftings and chastenings, to be among the most precious privileges his soul can be favoured with—because, though grievous and painful to the old nature, yet they *produce*, or result in bringing into the soul, the peaceful fruits of righteousness.—I have said to myself, within these few days, “How is it that you really do love *experimental* preaching and are sometimes favoured with apparent clear views of many branches of deep Christian experience, *seeing* that you are yourself destitute of grace?”—This question, my brother, has puzzled me—because while there are seasons when my poor spirit strives to cry unto God, and would fain wrestle with, and so by faith take hold of Him as to make peace with Him; although I can solemnly declare, that I have not an atom of comfort in anything that is connected with this lower world, yet I cannot find a spiritual, scriptural warrant to believe that I shall obtain deliverance—it is therefore a mystery that I have not run into open rebellion—and a greater mystery that now and then a vein of godly experience appears to be opened up in my mind. How is this?—The secret answer I received, was this—it is possible not only to have a clear and consistent creed, but also, a *theoretical* understanding of the way and work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of a vessel of mercy. I cannot here fully define, and distinguish between an experience in theory, and an experience that proceeds from the personal, powerful and positive presence of the blessed Spirit in the soul. But there are two very simple things which I believe would be found to separate the genuine from the counterfeit experience. 1. *Genuine* experience simply says this—The smallest discovery and application of the love of God to my soul seems to me to unfit me for the duties and relations of this life—that is, so long as I am under the influence of such *manifested love*; but *sanctified* tribulation, sanctified corrections and reproofs bring me down to resignation, and submission; so that I feel and exclaim with the defeated persecuting Saul, “Lord, *what wilt thou have me to do?*” And instead of murmuring, when grace reigns, I feel a little what that great man expressed, when he said, I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content, &c. A counterfeit experience, great as may be its light, never brings about *secret* communion and friendship, fellowship and holy familiarity with God—it only puffeth up the flesh, and desires to be seen of men; but a vital experience raises the soul up to cry unto God—to thirst for the application of atoning and purifying blood. I love the description Paul gives of it—Every word seems exceedingly sweet, and wonderfully to fit in with the experience of a deeply exercised soul. He says—charity—or the love of Christ, the humbling Spirit of

Christ—a sanctified possession of divine truth in the believer's soul—this blessed compound, called—(and rightly called—for I believe the good translators had this comprehensive view of it) Charity, suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not, vaunteth not itself—is not puffed up—nor easily provoked: *beareth* all things—believeth all things (which the Holy Ghost teacheth) hopeth (*in and under*) all things; endureth all things—and never faileth.—And that *sanctified tribulation*, best fits the believer for *this* life, its trials and difficulties: and that it is the most profitable school and course of training, is evident from Paul's most wonderful declaration, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather *glory in my infirmities*, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Sometimes would I believe, that there is "hope of this tree cut down." But then, again, such a flood of corruption, such barrenness, such an apparent destitution of all spiritual life appears—that I sink. Oh! my Brother—do you know the awfulness of that state—when a man finds that he has a greater enemy—a more deadly foe—a most awfully wicked antagonist within, and which he cannot get at to soften it—to humble it—to purge it or controul it? It seems to sit on the throne within, and to exercise a dreadful dominion over every faculty and principle belonging to human nature.

Talk of the devil—of fallen spirits—of the world—and of false professors and teachers!—Why, I must confess, that not *one*, nor all of these put together, appear one quarter so fearful, and so fatal an enemy, as that which I carry within! Depend on it, I have no hope in the free-will agency of man, to do spiritual works acceptable to God.

But, my brother, there is one most mysterious feature in vital experience, to which, for one moment, I wish to speak to you. Mark well, what I write—I write here no pre-conceived or studied theory, but, simply what I feel a great, mysterious truth. Perhaps I shall not be able to convey my mind in words—but I try. Look at them—think on them—and if you have a conviction, that what I now write flows from an Antinomian spirit, and is a *perversion* of truth, I think you will honestly declare the same. The feature of experience to which I refer has been discovered through dreadful temptations. Now for upwards of twelve months, I have been the subject of two secret but most powerful principles; one appears to prepare every member of the carnal system to the temptations from without—so that it has sometimes appeared as though nothing could prevent my falling a victim to them. Under the influence of these, I have sat down and concluded that all was over with me—that I was given over to a reprobate mind, and that all prayer or reading, or hearing was useless. Well, it certainly has appeared wonderful, that instead of this, I have been compelled to go on my knees, and there, of an awful necessity, I have cried to the Lord Jesus, for the stretching out of his holy arm to rescue and recover—to cleanse—to cure and to save such a guilty wretch. And Oh!

how precious in such seasons, (when the very filth and film of sin threatened to swamp and swallow up the soul)—appears that blood which cleanses from all sin. I call this a mystery, because when one would think that the flesh and sin, if they have not broke out in open acts, have so united in temptation and determination, as to leave no hope, then, a secret power has drawn out the soul and enabled her faintly to cry, “yet will I look again towards thy holy temple.” *What that is*, that longs for God and a revelation of his dear Son in my soul, that loves truth and hates every appearance of evil, I do not know. If it be nothing more than a natural and enlightened judgment approving things that are excellent, I would that it should cease. But if it be grace—Oh! Lord, let grace *reign*—subdue iniquity—crucify the flesh—and destroy me to every thing but thy blessed self. Oh! Holy—Holy—Saviour, by thy precious blood, enter into this flinty rock, this wicked heart—smite, break, convert and cleanse it. If the flesh must remain unholy—let it be in *entire* subjection to the sovereign reign and rule and power of the Holy Ghost!

I know not how far my brother can sympathise with me in such things—but it is to me wonderful that the Apostle Paul speaks of *himself* as I feel under, and in the seasons to which I have referred.

I am perfectly satisfied, that the great Apostle never was brought into such a dreadful degraded state by *open* sin as I am—Oh no—happy Paul could say—did say--“I have kept *the faith*,” (because, by the power of the Holy Ghost, the faith had kept him)--but it is clear that the two powers of sin and grace were both very mighty in his experience—and I cannot but believe, that he found a daily discovery of his vileness by nature, a great means, *under God*, of endearing most exceedingly the precious salvation that is in Christ Jesus. Else, how can you understand him when he says—(2 Cor. xi. 30) “If I must needs glory—(that is in any thing connected with myself) I will glory of the things which concern (or flow out of) *mine infirmities*?”

Does not this appear strange—to glory in the things concerning his infirmities?—Why, is not this Antinomianism indeed? But surely the solution of that mystery lays in the fact that the Lord made his infirmities—his weaknesses, and imperfections “to work together for his good”—by them, he was kept humble—watchful—and dependent on the Lord, who sanctified them to his soul’s eternal good. His distinct and positive *division of himself* (No—it was the Holy Ghost that divided him, I mean his acknowledgment of the existence of *two creatures in one*—this) is also a wonderful thing—he says (2 Cor. xii. 5) “Of such an one (the man that was caught up to the third heaven) will I glory: yet of *myself*, I will not glory, *but in mine infirmities*.”

Lest I should err, I will not enlarge upon these things—your own experience will be the best comment—but these two things appear plain—1. That the Lord will let his people know that

they are sinners, vile and helpless. 2. He will take such an advantage of their sins as to turn them to good—as gourds in their sides urging them to flee from the wrath to come. The Lord confirm and comfort thee in an increasing acquaintance with the rich treasures of his grace, prays your afflicted brother,

C. W. B.

*(The Letters to be continued.)*

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### ONE WORD TO THE FAITHFUL BUT AFFLICTED MINISTER OF CHRIST.

I believe the following short epistle fell hot from the heart of the dear friend who, in a moment of warm desire for the glory of God, and the good of souls, hastily flung his breathings on to paper, and forwarded them to me.

They came with sweetness and with power—and although their appearance in the Earthen Vessel may excite a little surprise, if not momentary anger on the part of him who wrote them, yet I feel persuaded they will be read with the deepest interest by many who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. They breathe the very spirit of holy zeal, godly jealousy, and fervent love, which my poor soul desires more habitually to be under the influence of. He says:—

“I merely drop a passage before you, for one minute’s consideration, in the foresight of Wednesday Evening Lecture.

“I am determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ,” &c.—A suitable determination of mind for a man of God, sick, thoroughly sick of sin, of himself, of the professing church, and of false brethren; lift up the standard, my dear brother—let Jesus continue to be the theme of your ministry—and you will never want souls to listen to your poor rent heart. It is out of the rent heart, said dear Mr. — that the Spirit speaks, breathes, testifies, bears witness in, and to the Church of the living God. But expect, man of God, tribulation, and let me say too, that all the sympathy that real friends can throw around you, cannot stop the trial.

“But rejoice in this one consideration, the deeper the soul is led in the sufferings of Christ here, the nearer shall be the exaltation to the throne in the coming kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, the deeper the baptism, the nearer the throne.

“The Lord bless, keep and preserve thy soul: testify, testify, unto death: the clouds and shadows of a dark day are hanging over the church, the elements of this world have a fearful hold of my soul, and hold of the people of God, generally.

“See you the danger, my brother? Gird up the loins of your mind—‘arise, arise, and anoint the shield of your faith,’ and shortly, the blisful welcome, shall be spoken to thy poor trembling, tempest, tossed soul, ‘Come in! come in! thou blessed of the Lord.’ Amen, and amen.”

## DELIVERANCE FROM DEATH !

OR,

IS NOT THIS A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE ?

A few fragments gathered up from a Funeral Sermon for Mrs. Brooks,  
St. John's, Southwark.

BY C. W. BANKS, AT CROSBY ROW.

I HAVE purposed this evening to speak a little by way of (what is called,) improving the death of Mrs. Brooks. Some apology for this may be necessary inasmuch as she was in no wise connected with us as a church.—She had formerly stood a member with a neighbouring church, but for some years prior to her decease she was separated therefrom. I knew nothing of her until she was laid upon her death-bed, when she expressed a desire to see me. I was sent for. What I then saw, heard, and felt concerning her, I shall refer to at the end of this discourse. Last Lord's day afternoon, her husband's father called upon me, requesting that I would spend a few moments with the mourning relatives, previous to their conveying her remains to the ground. I did so, and felt it to be a most solemn time in prayer. In the course of some conversation which then occurred, I was induced to promise that I would notice her death this evening. I trust that the hand of God is in this for good, for yesterday morning while I was waiting before the Lord in secret prayer, the words which I shall read for my text were softly laid upon my mind, and I was immediately impressed with the conviction that I was to preach from them to night, which conviction has not been shaken. I dare to affirm—much as men may stand in doubt of me, that my message is from God. You may read the text in the 116th Psalm, and the 8th verse.

“ For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”

As these words have laid before me, they appear to contain four things closely identified with the life of God in the soul.

My reader, art thou seeking to know whether thou hast the marks of the true Israel? They are written in the text; the Lord help you to find them deeply engraven in the fleshy tables of thy heart, and then eternal life is thine,

In the text you have, I. Assurance toward God, “ THOU HAST.”

II. The deliverance of the soul, it is from death.

III. The tribulation of the soul in its passage from the grave of sin.

IV. The restoration and lifting up of the soul from all its fears and fallings, its wanderings and its woes.

I. Here is the assurance of the quickened soul toward God. A stronger expression could not possibly fall from the lips of a poor sinner than this. *Thou hast delivered my soul from death.* The Psalmist stands with his feet upon a rock—behind him is the horrible pit out of which he has been taken—behind him lays the valley of conflict, strife and sorrow through which he has passed—behind him the determined, the deadly enemies of his soul. Before him, and gloriously opened up unto the eye of faith, lays the everlasting decree of God concerning him—God's sovereign choice of him—Jehovah's immutable love toward him—the salvation provided, and the kingdom prepared for him. This holy assurance toward God is the fruit, the result, not only of an absolute and eternal interest in the covenant

of grace—but also of an inward developement of that covenant in the soul. God is willing, to shew—to lay open—unto the heirs of promise, the immutability of his counsel, that therein they might have strong consolation. Surely it was in the light, life, and power of this that enabled Habakkuk to anticipate the drying up of all earthly comforts, and to exclaim—Yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation. God will have the soul stayed upon himself. He says though all is darkness, and there be no light, yet let him that teareth the Lord trust in the mighty God of Jacob. The unstable man, the unbelieving professor, takes offence at the hour of trial—he, having no root, only believes for a while, and in the hour of temptation falls away. To this end, it is good that the church should be afflicted, because by the furnace both her secret foes and her sincere friends are made manifest.

The doctrine of Assurance appears by many believers to be much misunderstood. It is generally thought to lay in a high state of triumphant, uninterrupted peace of soul, and a rich and fruitful earnest of interest in Christ. Some evidently think that Assurance is a state of mind raised above sin and Satan, darkness and unbelief; but surely that is something more than the assurance of faith, it is what Erskine calls “the assurance of sense, between which and the assurance of faith, there is a great difference indeed.” The assurance of faith has its object and foundation from without, that is in the covenant characters and covenant transactions of a Triune Jehovah; but the assurance of sense derives its strength from that which is absolutely revealed and applied to the heart by the Holy Ghost. The assurance of faith says, 1st, “I am just such a sinner as Jesus Christ came to save;” secondly, it says, “Through the power given unto him by the Father, and through the sacrifice which he has made for sin, He is able even to save me.” “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,” and, thirdly, the assurance of faith says, “if I can but go to Him with the faith which I have in Him, I shall be saved, for He saith, *Him that cometh unto me, I will IN NO WISE CAST OUT.*” But the assurance of sense says, “*I LOVE THE LORD—He has heard my cry—He has delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.*” That soul which has the assurance of faith is safe—that soul which has the assurance of sense is happy. “The assurance of faith will stand its ground when the assurance of sense is gone. This assurance of faith will venture the soul’s eternal safety upon the strong plank of Christ’s precious blood and neverfailing promise, even when sensible consolations are dashed to pieces by the angry billows of outward and inward trouble, like two seas meeting upon the believer,” when the deep from without calleth unto, and finds an echo in the deep from within. *I had fainted unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.*

I think I never saw a more striking instance of the strength of this assurance of faith than in the case of Mrs. Brooks.

Poor soul, she lay for some weeks in a state of mind like unto a man who had been thrown into a river, but on coming up had been enabled to catch hold of the craig of a rock, and though unable to pull himself out, yet from the firmness of his grasp, his life was preserved. She had been cast aside, as it were, by the church to which she had belonged, on account of some evil snare into which she had fallen. It may be that there was a necessity for this. But was it right to abandon her—to leave her to the power of the adversary? Paul tells me that I am (where circumstances require it) to exhort and to reprove, and to rebuke, *with all long-suffering and patience.* And the Master himself tells an interesting story about a certain man who had ten sheep, and one of them ran away. It was ungrateful, wicked and foolish to

run away. But how did the man act? Did he sit down unconcerned about this wanderer? No. Our Lord says he went after him, searched until he found him, laid him upon his shoulders, brought him home, and shouted aloud for joy. Ah! and I think he was more pleased with this runaway but restored sleep, than with all the rest put together.

It is true—I am only a poor gospel scavenger,—nearly all the watchmen, workmen, and inhabitants of Zion say that I have no right even to sweep the streets, nor ever again to open my mouth in the matter—and I have said so too, and when some of the elder brethren (who always staid at home) have passed by, frowned upon, and made hard speeches about me, my very heart has trembled, and I have wished I could hide myself out of sight. But I cannot. I have had messages given me to deliver, and I have been compelled to go, and many poor souls have declared I was sent expressly to them; but of that I will say nothing, because under all the circumstances I desire to leave myself, and all things connected with the ministry, in the hands of Him who cannot be deceived—*whose counsel shall stand, and He will do all his pleasure.*

But, my reader art thou a watchman in Israel?—Don't be angry with me, —art thou really in heart and soul seeking for, and searching out the poor sheep, who, in this cloudy and dark day, have lost themselves? or, art thou hardened in thy heart against the poor of the flock? I return, to notice

That this assurance toward God arises, moreover, from a real sense of pardoning love, and from an experimental acquaintance with the sin-conquering and heaven attracting power of the grace of God in the soul. *I love the Lord because he hath heard my cry, and the voice of my supplication.* The quickened sinner is made sensible of his awful condition as a sinner—he is also enlightened, and led to discover the ability that there is in God, through Christ, to pardon and be gracious unto him—the blessed Spirit having given him some painful knowledge of himself, and some looking into the freeness, fulness, and rich aboundings of God's mercy unto returning sinners, stirs up the soul to a fervent crying unto the Majesty of Heaven—and though sometimes the vision seems to tarry, yet will God avenge his own elect, he will come down to deliver them, and they are thereby brought to delight in the Lord their God, and with the church of old to exclaim "Thou hast wrought all our works in us."

Whatever diversity there may be in the family of God, these two features are deeply engraven in them all—First, that none but God can deliver the soul from death. No angel, no minister, no human instrumentality can do it; no reading, no prayers, no repentance, nor any measure of faith can do it. Apart from the Father's love and purpose, even Christ cannot do it—as Mediator, He says, *It is not mine to give, but it shall be given to those for whom it was prepared of my Father,* so that eternal predestination to life and effectual calling are inseparable. Whom He did predestinate, them He also called. This word "THOU" includes then not only the Three Glorious Persons in the Ever-blessed Trinity, but also all the wondrous works of each in redemption's scheme. Oh, what a capacious organ is the eye of faith! at one glance, it takes in the Father as distinct from the Son, in a holy acknowledgment of the mystery of His eternally glorious independent self-existence and hidden indwelling, and in His everlasting love to, and choice of the whole election of grace; it takes in the Son as co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His Person, as the Covenant Head of a covenant people, set up from everlasting, and as in the fulness of time taking hold of the seed of Abraham, as being made flesh, and dwelling amongst us, and by His one offering perfecting for ever them that are sanctified; it



takes in also not only the deity and distinct Personality of the Holy Ghost, but it looks to Him, waits for Him, leans upon Him as the alone revealer of Christ, the essential quickener of the soul, without whose indwelling presence and power nothing can be effectually and savingly known or received. The second feature to which I have referred, is that of nearness, access, and fellowship. Be assured of this, that when God delivers and raises up a soul, He does it in such a way as to bring the sinner near unto Him. There is no deliverance wrought by God apart from nearness, attachment, and devotion to God. See the Saviour's own testimony respecting the origin, nature, and effect, of a sinner's conversion—"All thy children shall be taught of thee—Every one, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, COMETH UNTO ME." Let no man deceive himself in a matter of such vital importance as this. Where the heart is not right with God, neither living nor longing to live near to Him, there is no evidence of divine relationship. In the text, the Psalmist seems to stand with his eye fixed upon God, in a close and holy familiarity with Him, when he says, "THOU hast delivered my soul from death."

II. The Deliverance of the soul from death.

Under this head I observe, (1st.) There are two distinct powers, under one or the other of which every soul is living. Some under sin, others under grace.

(2.) By nature all are alike. In the term *death*, you have a comprehensive and just account of man by nature. Corrupt and impotent to the last degree.

(3.) All are not delivered from this spiritual death. Thousands go out of time into eternity without repentance toward God or faith in Christ, of whom we can have no hope. For ever lost! Oh, awful state!

(4.) Nothing short of the omnipotent power of God the Holy Ghost can bring the sinner up. Like Lazarus, he is in the grave. Like Peter, he is in the common prison, and there he must lay until the Angel of the covenant cometh down to bring him up. But

How is this deliverance secured? In the eternal purpose of the Father, He passeth by, He looks upon, and He says unto the elect sinner "Live," even while in a natural state. "I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I said unto thee, Live." All this is before the life of God is manifest in the soul. The Lord's passing by and looking upon the sinner, shews two things—His secret care and watchful regard over this vessel of mercy even when dead in trespasses and sins—and also that there is no inward dwelling of God in the sinner until the appointed hour arrives. Still, God's "Live," "holdeth the soul in life."

There appear to me, both from the word of God and my own experience, to be some three or four certain marks of this spiritual deliverance. I will but mention them.

First, a being cast out in the open field, in a state of nakedness, or exposure to wrath, condemnation, and eternal death. Having no refuge from the storm, no covert from the tempest. Men and ministers may attempt to compromise this part of a living experience; but can a real crying to God for mercy come out of anything short of it? Who will fly to the Gospel refuge, when no danger is felt? It cannot be. Look at the Gospel invitation—"Ho! every one that thirsteth." What can create a thirst for God, His grace and His glory, but a feeling sense of the danger the soul is in without it?

Secondly, a loathing of sin and self, as in Ezekiel xvi. 5. No man ever yet hated his own flesh, in his natural, unconverted state. But who that has seen the holiness, justice, and immutability of God, and in that light has discovered his own vileness, and painfully learned his inability to cleanse

himself, has not like Job, abhorred himself in dust and ashes? Without the holiness of God revealed in the soul men may be religious; but their religion is either rank hypocrisy or self-righteousness. The holiness of God is that purifying flame which not only enlightens the mind, but also consumes the self-righteousness and fleshly confidence of the creature, which certainly was the experience of Paul, who says, "what things were gain to me those I counted loss for Christ." An inward abhorrence of sinful self, and a spiritual longing for the sanctified indwelling of Christ by the Spirit, are certain evidences of this deliverance from death. But

Thirdly, as this spiritual deliverance is a pledge of a deliverance from eternal death, so our Lord identifies therewith four distinct things wherein consisteth the present and ultimate separation of the church from that world which lieth in the arms of the wicked one.

My reader, I will not ask you whether you preach or hear the word,—whether night and morning you bow your knees in prayer—nor whether you stand in connection with the visible church or not. No. But I will ask—Are you concerned to be satisfied of your interest in Christ? None, I know, but the Holy Spirit can really give that satisfaction,—still, He sets up His waymarks in the word—He sets up His waymarks in the soul—of these for a moment I speak, and ask,—Has He revealed and set them in thee?

Come to the 6th of John—to the words of Christ himself. "This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." Deliverance from the grave of sin has its origin in the Father's gift of the soul to Christ; and is a pledge of a glorious resurrection both of soul and body at the last day. Again, "This is the will of Him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day." Christ is the hidden wisdom of God—the Secret of the Covenant, which none but the Holy Ghost can open up in the soul. Christ is the good seed sown in the heart, from whence cometh spiritual life, faith, love, hope, and every grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Christ is thus formed in the heart, and the soul thus created anew, grows up into him; whatever brawls may disturb the house—I mean the fleshly house—this regenerated soul goes to seek, to think of, and to delight in Him to whom she is espoused—whom alone she loves, and in whose power and presence alone she can have peace. Do you thus see, and with the heart do you believe on the Son of God? Then, surely, thou hast deliverance from death. Beside these, you have in the 6th of John (44th and 54th verses) two most essential, most profitable, yea, soul comforting, and conclusive evidences of this deliverance from death. You will first read them in the word itself, and if that shall prove as a mirror in which your own soul's experience is revealed, happy, thrice happy art thou, precious soul.

Passing over the succeeding features of the text, I must come to the practical illustration of the subject which I have in the death of Mrs. Brooks.

I had been a long distance from home, and returned about six o'clock on the Saturday evening, thinking immediately to shut myself up in meditation and prayer, when I was told Mrs. Brooks was thought to be dying. I went without delay to her house—she was gasping hard for breath, and in a few moments nothing but a cold, lifeless corpse lay before me,

Are we certain, thought I, that the soul is gone to exist in another world? Yes, the spirit (the immortal soul) returns to God who gave it, and by Him to be received into glory, or reserved in darkness unto the judgment of the great day. But is it possible to come to any conclusion as regards the state of the soul, or to whom, and to what place it is gone, from any of the circumstances connected with its departure? Yes. If the testimony of the Lord is sure—and sure I know it is—then there is a possibility of ascertaining the final position of the departed spirit.

But I turn at once to notice what I saw and heard in the dying experience of Mrs. Brooks, which solemnly convinced me that she was a monument of mercy—a brand plucked out of the fire—a striking instance of the power of sin on the one hand, and of the superabounding mercy of God on the other. There are living witnesses of the facts which I here adduce.

There were five things in her dying moments which led me to the above conclusions. They are as follow :—

First—Her frank, candid, sorrowful confession of sin. If I know anything of an honest, tender conscience, it has one certain mark in it, even that of a full but painful acknowledgment of its guilt. The first time I was called to her bed side, she looked at me, and said,—I am a poor, backsliding, sinful worm. She related some few particulars connected with her conversion to God. She had evidently been blessed with a spiritual knowledge of divine things : but she had been betrayed ; through her own weakness, and the base treachery of a vile professing woman, she had been ensnared in sin—had been set aside by the church—wounded in her conscience and character—and was left almost totally to neglect the means of grace. She said, “ for these things the Lord has laid upon me his chastising rod.” Her eye was fixed upon the cross of Christ—she knew that He was able to save her—but she had no hope—heavy darkness lay upon the mind—and a deep concern was felt about her state. In attempting to speak to her, my mouth was all but closed ; I was enabled, however, to wrestle with God in prayer, beseeching Him most especially to speak home forgiveness to her heart. And I must believe that prayer was answered to the great comfort of her soul.

Secondly—Another feature was that of deep penitence. She was rather an intelligent woman, and could converse freely—but her’s was not a talking religion. Her sentences were short but expressive of her unworthiness and sinful condition. She told me “ the Lord had justly visited her for her sins, but she hoped he would appear for her.”

The second time I visited her, her countenance appeared to be lighted up with joy. She said a friend had been to see her—a deacon of the church to which she formerly belonged. He had been speaking to her of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves. She rehearsed what he had said to her on the subject. It was evident the Lord had blessed that man’s message to her soul ; for from that period her faith appeared to take a firmer grasp of the cross ; and though exceedingly humble in all her expressions, and a fearful uncertainty in the soul, still there was a reliance upon the atoning blood of the Lamb.

On the Tuesday as she died on Saturday, she was much blessed with a view of divine glory. She looked at the sky, and expressed her willingness to depart, saying, “ I wish I could enter into heaven without dying. Before this day week,” said she, “ I shall be a glorified spirit before the throne of God.”—“ I long to be gone—to be with Christ.”

A perfect surrender of earthly things, and a calm, but growing desire for heaven—with confidence—appeared greatly to increase as her hour of departure arrived.

On the Friday preceding her death, she was most happy in her soul. A friend said to her—“ You are a dying woman.” “ Yes,” she said, “ I believe it.” “ Can you,” said this friend, “ Can you venture your helpless soul on Jesus Christ alone ?” She said, “ Yes—on Jesus Christ alone.—He is precious to my soul.” Pointing to the Bible, she said, “ From it flows living waters for a thirsty soul.” In this happy state she desired the friends to sing

“ There is a fountain filled with blood.”

But this we could not accomplish. As I saw her end was near, I felt constrained to ask her a few serious questions. I think the friends thought I

should alarm her, for two of them came close up to her, saying, "Oh, poor soul, she is safe." Upon this, she exclaimed with much decision and firmness, "Don't flatter me. I am a poor ignorant, worthless, creature."

Shortly before her death, the adversary evidently made an attack upon her. She was troubled in soul, and said, "Oh, these fiends, how they harass me." A friend said, "I'll drive them away." She said, "They have harassed me greatly, but they have not been permitted to hurt me, for the Lord is on my side." Her end was peace.

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### THE EARTHEN VESSEL.

It is thought by some that there is in the publication of this little work, a design and a desire to "make merchandise of God's truth," and of his gracious dealings with my soul. I can only say that the publication of my works have been at a most serious discount. I have laboured hard, by day and night, and have spent many hard earned pounds in the printing of them, which I have not much hope of ever seeing again. I was pressed into the publication of this little work by many dear friends, and as I am not worth a penny myself, two of my brethren advanced me a few pounds with which to pay the printer. We have reason to know that its perusal has been blessed. Both oral and written testimonies come in in proof of this. Among the letters I subjoin the following extract from a beloved Brother in the faith. He says:—

"I have seen your 'Vessel,' and must say I admire it much, and most heartily do I wish it God speed. I do trust you will be enabled to continue its publication and that it may be blessed by God unto the souls of some of His distressed family.

"I believe it savours of solid truth, which is rarely seen nowadays. God Almighty make you a faithful witness for him in this day of sloth, in which many of Zion's watchmen are sleeping together with the flocks committed to their charge. I cannot help thinking that a day of trial is at hand when the Church must be sifted, when the true wheat will be tried, and much that is chaff driven away. Oh, for faithful dealing. Oh, for faithful prophets, not to delude, but to speak plainly and honestly the whole word of God. Ah, whether the people hear or forbear, it matters not, the great work of the ministry is (and that it is a great work you know full well), to preach the word in season or out of season. The cry of the faithful witness for Christ may often be, Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? But my brother, the Lord knows who believes and who disbelieves. He knows to whom that word is a stumbling stone and rock of offence, and to whom it shall be a savour of life unto life.

"If God, therefore, has raised you up (which I believe he has) to preach that Word which was from the beginning, and which shall be for ever and ever; you will have great need of grace to support you under the many buffetings you will have to experience under the hands of Satan's messengers in human form; and patience to possess your soul under the many trials you will

have to labour under for the Gospel's sake; but greater is He that is for you than all they that can possibly be against you. He hath promised, and will most assuredly perform, that good thing concerning his chosen, the lot of His inheritance. As God has made you overseer over a part of his vineyard, or under shepherd over a portion of his flock, may He be pleased to make you an experienced dresser of the vine, and a faithful and an affectionate shepherd to watch over the flock and tenderly nurse the little lambs. Ah, you doubtless say at times, who is sufficient for these things? God is, my brother, who worketh in you both to *will* and to *do* according to His good will and pleasure, for I believe you have not entered the field of conflict at your own charges, but at His, who is able, who has done it, and will continue to provide every weapon for the warfare, and sustain you unto the end. Your 'Vessel' carries the standard of truth, and manned, I believe, with honesty, and her timbers appear well put together, and thus has she sailed upon the boisterous billows of the public mind, where she will meet with many a storm, and have to endure many a hard rub, both from pretended friends and open and inveterate foes; 'tis impossible it can be otherwise, but truth shall shine, when error shall have mouldered in the dust, and shall have arrived at its final destiny, whence there is no return. She may be looked upon (and doubtless will), by some with disdain and utter contempt, by others with ridicule, and some with open and determined malice, still, I believe she will ride above it all, and be looked upon by some few of the Lord's hidden and distressed ones with pleasure and delight, to whom I humbly trust she may prove (as an instrument), a lasting blessing."

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The blessing of the Lord having in some measure attended the publication of the first part of the Earthen Vessel, several Christian men have formed themselves into a committee for the purpose of assisting and encouraging the author in its progress; the committee solicit the co-operation of all who can conscientiously sympathise with them. A printed circular, and every information may be had by addressing "The Committee, care of Mr. James Gawkroger, 16, Parish Street, St. John's, Horselydown."

In the next number will be published a Sermon—"Who then can be saved?"

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The "Letters by the late J. W. Brooks," Minister of Christ's Gospel at Brighton, are an acceptable present; and in the forthcoming numbers of the "Earthen Vessel," some of the richest of them will be given.

In connexion with this work interesting notices of such Earthen Vessels as have been the bearers and messengers of the most holy Gospel treasure, will be published, if the Lord shall be pleased to go on to help and to honour me in its continuance. I am unmoved by the ridicule and contempt of any man in this matter. It is known in the hearts and consciences of many—it is known in the church to whom the Lord has united me—that a blessing has attended its perusal—so long therefore as life is spared, and grace and means are given, I shall persevere.

## GOD HOLDING BACK THE FACE OF HIS THRONE; AND SPREADING HIS CLOUD UPON IT.

WHO CAN TELL THE FINAL END OF A MAN?

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“He holdeth back the face of His throne and spreadeth His cloud upon it.”—JOB XXVI. 9.

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THE substance of what is given under this head was delivered by myself in a discourse at Red Cross-street Chapel, in the city of London, a short time since. My mind had been peculiarly arrested by, and my soul had been refreshed and comforted in, the meditation of the words from which I spoke: and they have so followed me ever since, and I have been so closely pressed to fling into the **EARTHEN VESSEL** a few of the fragments, that although I had no liberty nor enlargement in speaking from the words at the time, yet I do believe a blessing will accompany the perusal of these few thoughts to some of those dear souls who are walking in darkness and much humility of heart. I can affirm that what I have hereafter written on these words was neither learned nor borrowed from men; it is simply the result of the breaking up of the word in my own soul. I have no desire to exalt self—to feed ambition—nor to attract attention—but whatever the dear Lord is pleased to enable me to find to do, I will (by His grace helping me) “do it with all my might,” beseeching Him ever to give me to “hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,” and to esteem it a wondrous mercy indeed that He should ever have conferred so great an honour upon so great a sinner. “Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.”

There is a three-fold knowledge of God—the effects produced being as widely different as are the states of mind wherein that knowledge lays.

1. There is a knowledge of God which engenders presumption, and ultimately works out rebellion against the Most High. This kind of knowledge certainly prevailed among the angels who fell, “who left their first estate.” Lucifer was a bright day-star—an angel of great light—an angel fired with ambition—“in his heart he said he would have a throne above the stars of God;” wherefore on account of the pride of his heart—the rebellion and jealousy of his mind, he fell, as the dear Lord tells us, “as lightning from heaven.”

How often has this been seen in ministers and members of the professing church of Christ! The light of truth has filled the mind with pride; ambition has stretched forth her neck for things which she could never obtain; and when thwarted and cast down, blasphemy, apostacy, and rebellion against a Holy God has been the result.

2. There is a knowledge of the glory of God; of His sovereign love, mercy, and goodness, which, by the Spirit, worketh repentance, faith, confidence, peace, and joy in His righteous name. They that thus "know the Lord will put their trust in Him."

3. There is a knowledge of God, which strikes terror into the soul: it is when I know something of the dark side of truth—when the cloud (God's everlasting purpose), which I know is a source of light, life, and protection to the people of God, appears to be darkness unto me: when the purpose of God toward me—the eternal condition of my soul before Him, is all hidden in mystery; when I stand in uncertainty—heaven is above me, hell is beneath me, sin and darkness, desolation and misery, are within me; it is, then, my knowledge of God—of His immutable decrees; and of the utter impossibility of my delivering my own soul;—these things sink me low, while I cry out (when strength is given) "Have mercy upon me, O God!"

Such appears to have been the state of Job's mind. A solemn review and consideration of the glories and sovereign creations and actings of the eternal God, without any soul-felt realisation of interest in them.

This is a solemn spot, where many a child of God is often placed. When the soul comes in and comes home from all exciting objects—in the heavy judgments of God, when the thunder of his power cannot be understood—in the trying dispensations of his providence, when heavy clouds and darkness are round about the throne—under the powerful preaching of the word, when the solemn majesty of God is revealed; and even in the discovery of manifested mercy as seen to be realised in the experience of another with whom we may converse—in and under any of these circumstances; how often does the soul sink into the most profound meditation, and feels the truth here uttered by Job—"He holdeth back the face of His throne, and spreadeth His cloud upon it."

From these words, I would notice,—

- I. The throne here referred to.
- II. The face of that throne.
- III. Endeavour to shew who it is that holds back the face, from whom, and to what end.
- IV. The cloud which is said to be spread over it.

Oh, Lord, the eternal Spirit, it is thyself alone that can open, lead into, and give a sweet experimental knowledge of thine own truth. Of these "*things of God, knoweth no man, but Thee, the Spirit of God.*" Preserve, O Lord, both writer and reader, from any presumptuous handling or wicked perversion of thy word! Amen.

I. Of the throne itself.

It is God's throne—the glorious seat and residence of the eternal, the Almighty God! "Heaven is His throne; the earth is His footstool." He dwelleth in the high and in the lofty place, and inhabiteth eternity. God's throne implies His majesty, His sovereignty; He is over all, and works in and by all, according to His holy will. It implies His manifestation, or coming forth for salvation.

God's throne is three-fold. 1. His throne of glory; 2. His throne of justice; 3. His throne of grace.

1. The throne of His glory; that is, the hidden, uncreated, and immortal glory of the infinite, self-existent, and independent Lord God of heaven and earth, "who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, *nor can see.*" This is called "the excellent glory," out of which Jehovah spake, saying of Christ, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This "excellent glory," is a term employed, I apprehend, to denote those hidden, unsearchable, immortal, and infinitely holy attributes which belong unto that God who is excellent in counsel, fearful in praises, doing wonders.

As the almighty, self-existent, and independent God, He holds back the face of the throne of His glory: a cloud of holy and impenetrable mystery hangs around the hidden eternal indwelling of the great I AM! None but the Son of God, in His eternal deity, ever had access to, or a knowledge of, this "excellent glory."

What a thought it is! There is a Holy God, whose eye discovers our every step! penetrates to the very bottom of our every motive; by whose sovereign decree we live, and move, and have an appointed being; and from whom we shall receive an irrevocable, because a just and an eternal sentence



either of life in Himself, or of black despair and torment for ever arising from our guilt and sin.

2. There is God's throne of justice, from which that final sentence will be pronounced, "depart ye cursed," or, a glorious invitation given, of "*come, ye blessed.*" The face of this throne of justice is as yet held back. The fallen angels are reserved in chains unto the judgment of the great day. The Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust to be punished. God's power holds the wicked from annihilation—they cannot find a shelter to hide them from his presence—they may call for rocks and hills to cover them, but all created things, the sea, and all the secret parts of the earth, will "give up their dead" at the great Eternal's call.

There is yet a solemn holding back of the face of this throne! The righteous and holy attributes of God are hushed in silence, while He says, "*Let both grow together until the harvest.*" Oh! my reader! what a harvest will that be, when the whole amount of our sins, and God's wrath, as the wages thereof, will be heaped upon our heads; or, the whole amount of Christ's righteousness shall encompass and glorify our risen and again united bodies! When the measure of iniquity shall be filled up; and every vessel—the vessel of wrath appointed unto destruction, and the vessel of mercy afore prepared unto glory—shall each receive their just recompence of reward. Oh! what are all the concerns of this life compared with that eternal weight of solemnity which will then surround, and either shut in or shut out our never-dying souls! The eternal purpose of God is as a cloud hung over this throne of justice. You cannot penetrate it; you cannot pass through it; it is a secret hidden. The solemn proclamations of this eternal purpose are made; "Thus saith the Lord, such as for death, to death; and such as for the sword to the sword; and such as for the famine, to the famine; and such as for the captivity, to the captivity." But unto Israel, God saith, "Verily, it shall be well with thy remnant." "Happy art thou, O Israel! *a people saved by the Lord.*"

*But who are they?* Where shall that people be found "who are Israelites indeed—to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the service of God, and the promises?" Ah! where are they? Even among them who hold the truth fast enough, what presumption, what fleshly pride and confidence, what an amount of spiritual wickedness, is to be seen! Sometimes we hope well of ourselves; and of those who walk with

us in our line of things; but, *who can tell the final end of a man?*

You will say, "There is the new birth; the soul created anew in Christ Jesus; it is an evidence and an earnest too of eternal life." And so it is; when God creates a soul anew in Christ, *that soul shall live for ever!* No power on earth, in hell, nor in the flesh; no sin, no temptation, no circumstance, neither in life or in death, shall ever separate that soul from God. You will say—"There is the application of atoning blood unto the conscience; is it not an evidence, and an earnest of eternal life?" Yes, it is; it cleanses from all sin, and secures unto the soul the perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. You will say, "There is the shedding abroad of Divine love in the heart—the reception of God's truth into the soul—the spirit of prayer and of supplication—the possession and the exercise of that faith which sees God in Christ—believes in God through Christ—rejoices in God by Jesus Christ! Surely," you will say, "these are the spots of God's children; and in all these things is the life of the soul." Truly; but, alas! how many have there been who seemed to taste, to handle, to love, and to live in these things; have spoken boldly respecting the essential nature, and the absolute possession of these things, who have afterwards turned away; and some of them now stand, either in open infidelity, in lukewarmness, or in a licentious holding of the solemn truths of God! And even among them who are in some repute in the churches, how little of vital life and savour—how little crying for, and cleaving to, the Lord!—how little of that charity which suffereth long, and is kind; envieth not; vaunteth not; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth! Wherefore, we cry out with Daniel—"O Lord, what shall the end of these things be?"

3. There is God's throne of grace. This is in the Person, and in the mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ, in connection with this throne, is called "God." "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever." It is a throne set up by God himself, for the revelation and dispensation of His own sovereign and superabounding grace and mercy unto poor sinners. Well do I remember once hearing that beloved and much honoured servant of God, Isaac Beeman (of Cranbrook), from those words in Jeremiah, the 17th—"A glorious high throne from the beginning, is the place of our sanctuary." Most blessedly did he open up the glories of the Lord Jesus

Christ as God's throne of grace ; as a *high* throne—lifted up above all the dark, the deceitful, the soul-destroying powers of sin and the devil, as a *glorious* high throne—having in it all the attributes and glorious perfections of God himself ; as a glorious high throne *from the beginning* ; set up from everlasting, before man was created, before the dreadful ravages of sin commenced ! but set up, with a perfect knowledge of all that the church in her fallen state would need ; hence this glorious high throne from the beginning is the place of her sanctuary. My reader—is Christ this unto thee ? The place, the only place, whither thou canst fly—wherein thou canst safely hide ?

This throne of grace is largely declared in the 16th of Isaiah—" *In mercy shall the throne be established ; and HE (the Lord Christ) shall sit upon it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment, and hasting righteousness.*" This throne is based in God's eternal, sovereign decree to save the whole election of grace ; it is set up in the tabernacle of David, by which I understand both the Person of Christ, and the hearts of God's chosen family—Christ is Himself that Throne of Grace, *in whom*, and through whom, we have "*boldness*," that is, as the learned tell us, we have in Christ a glorious representative before God, who, for the church, has accomplished the Father's will ; has magnified his law ; has brought in an everlasting righteousness ; has purified unto himself a peculiar people, whose names he bears—whose cause he pleads—whose salvation he secures. In Him they have boldness ; and when this throne of grace is experimentally set up in their hearts, they have "access with confidence ;" and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Christ, as the Mediator, sits upon this throne ; he rests in the sovereign will of the Father ; he sits to carry out and ultimately to accomplish the will of his Father in the entire and eternal glorification of all that the Father hath given unto Him.

Christ is God's throne of manifestative grace ; God's throne, or depository of grace ; God's throne, or, dispenser of grace ! Bless the Lord ! it is done ! it is done ! What is done ? The throne is established in mercy ; it is set up in the Person, work, doing, dying, rising, and intercedings of the Lord Jesus. He sits on it in truth ; He judges between the sheep and the goats ; and hastens to bring forth the righteousness of God in the rich experience of every redeemed soul. Unto this throne, says the Apostle, "let us come boldly, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

II. Job says, this throne has a face; and he further says, God holdeth it back, and even spreadeth a cloud upon it.

In that manifold blessing which the Lord commanded Moses to deliver unto Aaron, and with which he and his sons were to "bless the children of Israel," you have these two sentences—"The LORD make his face to shine upon thee;" and "The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." From this, three things are evident: 1. Nothing of God's reconciled face in the person of His Son—nothing of his loving, electing, quickening, cheering, comforting face can be seen by an Israelite, until He himself causes it to shine in and upon the soul. 2. It is his good pleasure to do this, or Aaron would not have been commanded thus to speak unto them. And 3, it is evident when the Lord doth thus lift up his countenance upon the soul, the soul has peace in Him, and peace with him—even a peace which much establishes and comforts the heart.

The glory of God can only be seen in the face of Jesus Christ—the love and mercy of God can only be realised by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—access unto God can only be found by the sinner finding himself in Christ.

By the "face of his throne," I understand the spiritual opening up, and making manifest of the secret, and otherwise hidden glories of God in Christ.

In the courts of law, utterance is given to the verdict from the throne. There is no certainty in the cause until the judge has pronounced the sentence. So, in the court of an awakened conscience, men may preach, and counsellors may plead; but the enquiring sinner can get no satisfaction until from the throne itself his sentence has come forth.

In the face of Jesus Christ, God looks upon, and manifests himself unto the sinner; and thereby speaks life, light, and pardon in his soul. It is then we hear "his voice out of the midst of the fire:" election has then an eye, it looks upon me; it has a tongue, it speaks unto me; and we say as they did of old, but in a much more glorious sense, "we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth."

III. Who is it that holds back the face of this throne? It is God the Father. All the communicable glory of God—all the fulness of grace, all the meetness of the church, is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Oh! what an inexhaustible, what an inexpressible treasure is Jesus Christ unto a really penitent, and truly believing soul!

Yes, yes; Christ is that *straight way* (Jer. xxxi. 9.) wherein the Lord causes his people to walk; in which are the rivers of waters; the bedewing and refreshing operations of the Holy Ghost; and wherein they shall not stumble. Oh! how safely, how securely walks a sinner, when by faith in, and fellowship with Christ, he travels from this city of destruction to the new Jerusalem that is above!

But the glorious fulness that is in Christ, is not in Him as in a common storehouse, or market place, into which any man may go or not, as he pleases. Oh, no; God the Father hath not set the sufferings and the sacrifice of Christ at so low a rate as this. There is a fulness in Christ; no poor, wounded, sin-sick, and tempest-tossed creature can ever want anything but he shall ultimately find it in him. God hath, however, reserved unto himself the sole and sovereign right of dispensing this grace unto whom He will. This fundamental doctrine Christ set before the people—"It is written in the prophets; (said the Master,) all thy children shall be taught of thee; every one, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me." Before a sinner can really come unto Christ, he must be drawn, instructed, quickened, and led of the Father. But I come to shew

IV. *From whom, and to what end, the face of his throne is hidden.*

I. The face of God's throne is held back, totally and eternally, from all who stand not in a living, vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ. I know that this is considered to be an awful doctrine by many who profess to believe the Gospel: and even many of the Lord's dear people shudder at so solemn a truth; the hypocritical charity of some, who would be thought to be real believers, doth also inwardly kick and rebel against the bold and open declaration of God's sovereignty in loving Jacob and in hating Esau. But the great God hath revealed and proclaimed this truth, which we see illustrated and confirmed in thousands and thousands who live and die around us, totally destitute of that faith without which no soul can see the kingdom of God.

If the original ground work of the church's salvation lays in her election of God, it follows that some are not elected; the church being chosen *out of* the common mass. The church being not "*appointed to wrath,*" but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. If the church be redeemed from among men, it follows some are not redeemed. If, out of the many

that are called, but *few are chosen*, it follows some are not even called at all.

Surely, this solemn truth was wondrously proclaimed in the Red Sea; the pillar of cloud gave light and help to Israel; but darkness and destruction to the Egyptians. Even so, while the Gospel is a savour of life unto life to some, it is a savour of death unto death to others.

The strongest proof of this solemn doctrine is to be seen, more or less, in the genuine experience of all truly contrite souls. Find the man where you may, who opposes the sovereignty of God in choosing some to life eternal, while others are left to perish, and you find a man who has either carelessly sunk into a dead profession, or, one who is presumptuously taking to himself what God has never given him. But a poor soul who really loves God, and his truth, is exercised with a thousand fears lest he should be found out of Christ, verily believing that as a fallen sinner he deserveth nothing but the indignation of a holy God; and knowing by a sorrowful experience that he can by no means work out of himself any repentance, that can render him acceptable unto God.

On a subject so solemn, what more can be said than is written by Divine inspiration—"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" "Who art thou that repliest against God?"

I cannot withhold the following distressing testimony borne by that wicked apostate, Francis Spira, just before he died:

"My sin," said he, "is greater than the mercy of God." "Nay," answered they, "the mercy of God is above all sin; God would have all men to be saved;" "it is true," quoth he, "he would have all that he hath elected to be saved; he would not have damned reprobates to be saved. I am one of that number. I know it, for I willingly, and against my knowledge, denied Christ, and I feel that he hardens, and will not suffer me to hope." After some silence, one asked him, "Whether he did not believe that doctrine to be true, for which he was accused before the Legate?" He answered, "I did believe it, when I denied it; but now I neither believe that, nor the doctrine of the Roman Church; I believe nothing; I have no faith, no trust, no hope. I am a reprobate, like Cain, or Judas, who casting away all hope of mercy, fell into despair; and my friends do me great wrong, that they suffer me not to go to the place of unbelievers, as I justly deserve." Here they began sharply to rebuke him; requiring and charging him, that in any wise he did not violate the mercy of God. To which he answered, the mercy of God is exceeding large, and extends to all the elect, but not to me, or any like to me, who are sealed up to wrath; I tell you, I deserve it; my own conscience condemns me; what needeth any other judge? Christ

(came say they) to take away sin, Rom. ii. 15 ; and calling for a book, they read unto him the Passion of Christ, and coming to his nailing to the cross, Spira said, 'This indeed is comfortable to such as are elected, but as for me, wretch, they are nothing but grief and torment, because I contemned them.' Thus roaring for grief, and tossing himself up and down the bed as he lay, he entreated them to read no more."

Further to illustrate and to declare the great and momentous truths under this head, was my principal design ; but as the pages for this number are already occupied, I am under the necessity of deferring the conclusion of this subject to the next part. I do the more regret this, because I am already much in arrear ; for instance, "*Truth in the Inward Parts,*" which was begun in the first part of this work, and "*God's Test of the Gospel Ministry,*" is yet unfinished : but I hope shortly to be enabled to finish up all that is begun. Of Francis Spira, John Child, and others, I shall take some notice, if the Lord will, in my next.

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## EZEKIEL'S LIVING CREATURES.

### A FOUR-FOLD VIEW OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

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"And every one had four faces : the first face was the face of a cherub, and the second face was the face of a man, and the third the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle."—EZEKIEL x. 14.

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I CAN conceive of no question so filled with the deepest interest as the one which, more or less, is ever upon my mind ; and, again and again, is being answered in my soul's experience—it is this—"What is that life of God in the soul which emanates from the everlasting love of the Father—is secured by the atoning sacrifice of the Son—and is created and preserved by the secret operations of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of the elect?"

I am told by an anonymous correspondent, that "hitherto I have not given the smallest particle of proof that I am in Christ." How awfully, then, must I be deceived ! How fearful will be the hour of death—the day of judgment ; and, above all, that place of annihilation from God ! Yea, how inexpressibly dreadful to one who has professed to be so highly favored by Heaven, will be my sentence and my eternal condition, should this man's testimony be true !

I can, however, no more put confidence in the testimony of a man who is against me, than I can rely upon the confidential and oft-repeated expressions of those kind friends who are for me.

Whatever other men may feel, I know my soul's eternal peace is so weighty a matter, that I can get peace in nothing short of

the testimony of the Holy Ghost in my soul ; the blood of Christ on my conscience ; the love of God in my heart. And, therefore, as " Wisdom is not to be found in the land of the living ; seeing it is hidden from the eyes of all flesh, and kept close from the fowls of the heaven"—(the high-towering birds of prey in the professing church,)—I turn, as much as in me lieth, from all the tongues and the testimonies of men, unto the unerring testimony of the eternal God.

In my appeal to the word and Spirit of God, my mind has been arrested by the description which Ezekiel gives of the " four living creatures," which he saw when the heavens were opened unto him as he sat by the river Chebar. What does he mean ? In the first chapter he tells us that, " out of the midst of the whirlwind (a great cloud), came the likeness of four living creatures, and they each had the likeness of a man." I am led to believe that the whirlwind denotes the manifestation or opening up of the eternal purpose, the sovereign and immutable decree of a Triune God, which, like " a mighty rushing wind," is irresistible ; carrying out and accomplishing its own counsel, and doing its own pleasure, without the least molestation or resistance. Truly, indeed, " the Lord hath His way in the whirlwind," for " who can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou ?" Infidels may scoff ; devils may rave ; professors may despise ; the living children themselves may tremble at the solemn and eternal decrees of God ; but " every purpose of the Lord standeth sure." According to this purpose the elect are called in ; it is the Almighty " hand " in which they are held ; it is the power by which they are preserved ; the secret womb of sovereign love from whence their every blessing flows. How independent is God's salvation of all created things !

If God is mine, then, present things  
And things to come are mine ;  
All things are working for my good ;  
I shall in glory shine.

This whirlwind is called " a great cloud," which may, perhaps, denote the solemn mystery in which the great purposes of God are enveloped, and for the present hidden from the eyes of finite man.

A fire was, however, seen infolding itself, which, with reverence, I believe signifies that perfect, that eternal life and glory which originates in, and springeth out of, those eternal purposes of love and mercy revealed from faith to faith in the Gospel of the grace of God.

In the first chapter of this prophecy by Ezekiel, there is a wonderful description of these living creatures, as full of mystery, as, (to an enlightened mind,) it is of glory. But here the prophet speaks of it in the singular ; he says, " *This is THE LIVING CREATURE that I saw by the river of Chebar.*"

The question, then, is—" Who are these living creatures ?" And, why, in one place are they said to appear as *four*, and in another place as *one* ?



Some of the learned divines, whose names are of considerable weight in the church, confine the application of these "living creatures" to ministers only; but in my soul I believe it is the whole election of grace that is here intended. The family—the chosen, the redeemed, the sanctified, the glorified family of the living God, first, in its four-fold aspect; and, secondly, the family of God in its one complete, compact, and eternally united body—many members—many dispensations—many providences—many wheels; but all working in one direction—to one end—the final gathering together of all things in Christ, whether they be things in heaven or things on the earth.

If there be any truth in these premises, then the 14th verse of the 10th chapter contains a four-fold character of the church of the living God.

(1.) Notice the universality of the application—"every one."  
(2.) The four-fold variety; and (3.) The ultimate oneness of character and condition into which they shall be brought.

1. The universality of the application—"And every one." There may be a vast variety in the ages, sizes, mental gifts and attainments of the family as it appears *in itself*—there may be babes and children; there may be young men and fathers; there may be Jew and Gentile; there may be bond and free; there may be Josephs and Jonahs—Samuels and Sauls of Tarsus—Samsons and Stephens—Manassehs and Timothies—an elder son who always stays at home, and a prodigal who wastes his substance in riotous living; the disparity in character, in circumstances, and in a temporary, and even in a spiritual condition, may be wide as the poles asunder; but in God's everlasting love and choice of them, *they are one*; in Christ's redemption of them, *they are one*; in the Holy Ghost's new creation and sanctification of them, *they are one*; and in their ultimate standing in the finished and all-sufficient righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, they must be for ever *one*.

Every one of them must be found in the covenant as the groundwork of all their future blessedness—be found in Christ, experimentally washed and justified; found in the sanctifying, leading, and teaching powers of the Holy Ghost; and at length found at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. Notice the *fourfold variety*—"Every one had four faces."

The variety, as well as the unanimity, belongs to the whole. No one member of the mystical body of Christ is complete in any *one* of the departments of God's salvation; nor in any one of the different branches of the Holy Ghost's work. No sinner can be saved in and by the abstract purpose of God—election alone—covenant standing, covenant security, covenant fulness alone, (as abstract doctrines) will not save a sinner. There is a fountain opened for the sin and uncleanness of the house of David, and in that fountain must every saved sinner wash—so that he may not only be saved, but cleansed too; not only delivered from hell's tremendous woes, but meetened for heaven's

triumphant glories. No sinner can be saved by Christ without the Father's predestinating purpose and the Holy Spirit's power. Predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, God hath joined together, and hath put them all in Christ for the church, out of whose fulness shall every vessel of mercy receive and grace for grace. But is there not a spiritual meaning, an experimental application in the figures here employed? I believe there is.

The first face was the face of a cherub; which in the first chapter is called an ox: the meaning of the word appears to be "*plowing*," implying something *deep*, something *clean* or *divided*, and something *laborious*—which terms are all exceedingly applicable to the whole election of grace.

What so deep as God's choice of them from before all worlds? How solemnly impressed appears the mind of the Apostle on this great subject, when he cries out—"Oh, the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." How deep a mystery is the union existing between Christ and the church! How deep the wonders of atoning blood!—the work of the Holy Ghost! and the unsullied glories of that righteousness in which the ransomed of the Lord shall safely stand "when thousands sink to hell!"

It is "out of the depths" of sin, of soul trouble, of continued tribulations, that these "living creatures" cry unto God. It is into the depths of His love, His mercy, His blood, and power, that they are experimentally led; whereby beholding "as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

The term "*plowing*" carries the idea, not only of a deep incision, but also of *separation*. The people of God are declared to be a separated flock. Although a wicked prophet made the proclamation, yet is it the truth of God—"The people shall dwell *alone*; they shall not be reckoned among the nations." Every member of this family is hidden in the glorious mystical body of Christ—there shall Israel "dwell in safety *alone*." This word "*alone*" hath a two-fold aspect; first, in an experimental sense; a real, quickened, repenting, believing soul, can find safety in none, in nothing, but in a realized union to the Lord Jesus Christ. Into this the soul has to travel alone; no created power can give efficient aid in this onward and inward march to God. It mourns alone; it cries alone; it draws near to God alone; it believes on Christ, draws near to Christ, hath fellowship with Christ, rejoices in Christ, finds satisfaction and safety—sanctification and salvation in Christ—but all this spiritual intercourse is directly between God and the soul—"The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy." It is true, Nathan is sent to David, and Ananias is sent to Saul; but the life and value of their mission laid in this, that God sent them—sent through and by them, that grace, mercy, love, and delivering power, without which neither Nathan nor Ananias could have

benefited the soul. In a more exalted and glorious sense, shall "Israel dwell in safety alone," when "death is swallowed up in victory," when they awake up in his likeness—when, like Job, they "shall see God for themselves, and not for another." Then shall they be "alone," or eternally separate from sin and every hurtful snare.

The figure of the ox, or the term "*plowing*," also implies the labour and industry of these "living creatures." This labour is not to *merit*, but to obtain the purchased possession, as Paul beautifully connects it with, and sets it forth as the result of, a holy confidence—"Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him." In the experience of these "living creatures," God's unalterable election of the people—Christ's eternal redemption of his sheep—the certainty that the Holy Ghost will quicken and meeten the saints for glory—and that *they* shall overcome, persevere, and lay hold on eternal life—doth by no means give a laxity and laziness to the weary and heavy laden. *Diligence*, not so much outward as inward, is a prominent feature in the character of the living soul. He labours to enter into rest—to run with patience the race set before him.

*What is the labour?* An inward sighing for God: an inward suffering from the flesh: an inward struggle, in the strength of God, to put off the old man with his deeds, and to put on Christ—to walk in Him—with Him—for Him. Alas! alas! how sterile, how full of stones, how beaten down by the corruptions of the flesh, is the ground in which we aim to strike our furrow! How oft our strength appears to fail—our spirits sink—our hearts grow cold! and we think our labour is vain. But, onward! onward! onward! is the voice and the result of the inward working of the Spirit of God within. If, my reader, there be any labour at all, that shall unto thy precious soul bring the harvest of immortal glory, it must be of the kind and character described by Paul—"His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all; *yet not I*, but the grace of God that was with me."

The first face of these "living creatures" teaches that the living family of God are the produce of a mighty, deep, and eternal purpose. A deep work is wrought in them—deep desires experienced by them—deep mercies revealed unto them—deep glories laid up for them—wherefore they labour in prayer and patience to possess the promised rest.

The second face or feature in the character of these living creatures, is the face of a man; which when viewed in connexion with other portions of God's word appears full of signification relative to the very peculiar condition of the people of God.

And, first, they are entirely the workmanship of God. "And God said, Let us make man in our own image; after our likeness." How downright ignorant, or desperately wicked must be those clamorous priests who declare that a piece of clay has power to form and fashion, cleanse and quicken, and turn itself unto God! "LORD, WHAT IS MAN?" Ah, what is man, indeed. God tells

you, and let God be true, and every man a liar. Man! man, in his natural state, is, as a human and intelligent creature, a very wonderful and mysterious part of God's creation. There is, however, even among natural men, an almost indescribable variety of character. Some are black, and base, and bad to the very last degree, fearing neither God nor any of the vice-regents or agents which He employs in the management of the world. Oh! what an awful creature is man; when that legion of devils which every one by nature carries within him, is permitted to break out! From whence cometh all the misery, woe, and wretchedness with which this world abounds, but from the very hearts and hands of man himself? There are others, among the fallen sons of Adam, who stand in a much higher scale; they are wise and wealthy in the things of this lower world; many of whom are like so many bright stars in the firmament of the commercial, the political, or the religious world. I have, however, only to do with man in the new creation of the soul; which is, absolutely, sovereignly, and entirely, the workmanship of God. Many and mighty have been the strides which the genius and ingenuity of man has made, and is making in the world. But the creation of life—the preservation of life—the sanctification of life—God has reserved unto Himself.

Hence God's dear people are called "*living creatures.*" They are not only *creatures*, having a natural existence; but *living creatures*. They live in God—they live in Christ, and God in Christ, by the revealing and regenerating power of the Holy Ghost, liveth in them.

I believe the words *man* and *men*, in many parts of the word, are exclusively applicable to the chosen family. "Ye, my flock, the flock of my pasture,"—most emphatically saith the Lord himself—"ARE MEN." As living men in Christ they are *immortal*—immortal in the decrees of God—immortal in the blood of Christ—immortal in the regeneration of the Holy Ghost—immortal in their souls. Created in the image and likeness of that God who changeth not—therefore cannot the sons of Jacob be consumed. Of these living creatures, speaks the Holy Ghost, when he says—"The grace of God which bringeth salvation, hath appeared unto all men." "God will have all men to be saved"—for Christ tasted, yea, vanquished death for all those men whom the Father hath given to Christ out of the world.

But they are *men*; they are not holy angels, neither are they apostate devils; they are men; denoting, on the one hand, their wisdom and understanding, and, on the other hand, their failings, their infirmities, their fallen condition. Is this all? Nay, it is the face of "A MAN." What man? Methinks there never was but one man that really sustained the character, and maintained the position in which God placed him. And that was THE GOD-MAN—the Mediator; our glorious High Priest, our Prophet, and our King. Oh! what a man—what a glorious man was this! How the soul leaps for joy at the very thought—at the very

mention of His name—JESUS—the Man of sorrows—the Man of Calvary—the Man at God's right hand.

The Holy Ghost, by the spirit of prophecy, makes a special exhibition of Him under this character, and calls up the attention of the whole church to "Behold **THE MAN** whose name is **THE BRANCH**; He shall grow up out of His place; He shall build the temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory." This is the Man in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; the brightness of His Father's glory, and the express image of His person. Even Pilate, when he brought forth the Son of God, was constrained to cry out—"BEHOLD **THE MAN**." What a mighty contrast between the prophetic declaration of Zechariah (just quoted) and the literal exhibition which Pilate made of Him! Zechariah said—"He shall build the Temple of the Lord, and He shall bear the glory." But here the vilest reprobates that ever disgraced the name and character of man appear to have Him in their power, to deal with and by Him as they please. They scourge Him; they crown Him with thorns; they smite Him with their hands; they mock Him; and they bear Him away to death. Oh, my soul, what meaneth this awful scene? Is this building the Temple? Is this bearing the glory? Yes—yes—by all this Jesus is laying the very foundation of His own mediatorial glory and His church's peace! It was here that "destruction and death heard of Wisdom's fame:" like Samson of old, the mighty God-man is hereby taking hold of the two pillars, (sin and death), which bear up the kingdom of Satan. He "*bows Himself with all His might,*" and in His own body bears away to the land of forgetfulness all that heavy load of wrath and misery which otherwise must have sunk in endless woe the whole of the chosen seed.

These living creatures are predestinated to be conformed unto the image of "the one Mediator between God and men, **THE MAN** Christ Jesus." (1 Tim. ii. 5.)

The Holy Ghost says, that they "all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord are *changed into the same image.*" There is a transforming power in the grace and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, which, although it does not in this time state, entirely root out and destroy the principle of sin in the flesh, yet does it work an internal oneness, likeness, and union to Him, who is "the true vine," on which groweth, and from whence proceedeth all the living branches which the Father hath given unto Him. As this part of the subject will be more fully treated of under the head of "The Source, the Residence, the holy Properties, and the hidden Nature of that grace of God which bringeth salvation," in the next part of this work, I now pass on, briefly, to

"The third, the face of a lion." This, to me, is a most striking face or feature in the life of a living child of God. A lion—majestic, noble, determined, and full of strength as he is, is withal a beast of savage prey. And, Oh, man of God! what is

the truth? Almighty, purifying, dignifying, strengthening, and consoling as the grace of God has been in and toward us, yet what inwardly-depraved beasts—what sin-thirsty and sin-determined savages do we sometimes painfully feel ourselves to be! And as the lion wandereth in the dark in search of prey, even so, alas! too frequently do we seem to resemble him in our dark, dreary, defiled seasons of inward carnality, worldly mindedness, and sin, whereby we come to such a state of mind as, if left to ourselves, we should sacrifice the dearest mercies of our souls at the shrine of our lusts. Thanks be to God! ten thousand times ten thousand praises to our God, who hath espoused us unto himself in faithfulness—a faithfulness that reacheth even unto the dark clouds of our iniquities—so that although he corrects us in measure, his loving-kindness He never takes away, nor causes His faithfulness to fail.

But the face of a lion prefigures the boldness, the courage, the fortitude, the inward strength which the Spirit of God implants in the regenerated soul. "The righteous are bold as a lion." But from whence comes this boldness? and unto what is it directed? It comes from a solemn testimony in the soul, that through atoning blood sprinkled upon the conscience, sin is pardoned—the power of sin is subdued—God is reconciled—the curse removed—hell conquered—heaven secured.

The priests who bore the ark, "stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan." What did that dry ground typify? Over it the dark waters of Jordan had rolled; but now they were parted, and the priests stood firm, while Israel passed over. Christ is the foundation which God has laid down in Zion. Over that foundation the dark waters of wrath, of death, and of sorrow rolled with a threatening power! But, by His meritorious sufferings and sacrifice, He has opened a new and living way to glory; and when, by sovereign grace, He brings a sinner to stand on this holy ground, he stands firm; and although the high towering, tempestuous waters of Jordan still appear in view, yet, being kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, being built upon the rock against which the gates of hell shall not prevail; having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, he is enabled to "take hold of the strength of God," and to know assuredly that greater is he that is for us, than all that can be against us. It is an inward, spiritual boldness, arising from divine love, mercy, and delivering, preserving, and upholding power wrought in the soul.

There is much that is exceedingly significant of these living creatures in the fourth and last place, namely, *the eagle*. Solomon says, "The eagle flies away toward heaven;" and what is the one grand result of all the operations and teachings of God the Holy Ghost in the soul? What is the general tendency of the real believer's heart, but an upward looking, an upward longing, and an upward bearing toward the eternal source of every good and every perfect gift, the Lord of life and glory.—One of the richest

promises made by God unto the upright man is, that "He shall dwell on high (or in high places,) his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks;" and when, by sovereign grace, the soul is brought to live in God, nothing short of His power, His salvation, and His glory will suffice, albeit, many and mighty are the weights of corruption, temptation, and worldly-mindedness which more or less bind him to the earth.

An eagle has a powerful, piercing, penetrating, correct eye: but what is the eagle's eye compared to that eye in the regenerated soul which in the light of God passes through the thick clouds of unbelief, and fastens itself upon the (otherwise hidden, but) glorious perfections, righteousness, and kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ? Of the eagle's face, I have more to say than in this number can be given. I hope to enter upon it in the forthcoming number of the **EARTHEN VESSEL**.

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## The Valley of Achor.

(Continued from Part II.)

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"Lord, I have heard of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints."—ACTS ix. 13.

"Away with such a fellow from the earth; for it is not fit that he should live."—ACTS xxii. 22.

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"THE very fact," says a friend, "that men, professing and profane, are loud and bitter in their spirit and speeches against you, is an evidence that the Lord has sent you to declare his truth." Nay: not in the least; for it is not so much the truths spoken by me, as it is the *circumstances* in which sin had placed me, that gives strength to their bitterness, and a justification for their rage. While, however, I am anxious to give an answer to every one of the reason of the hope that is in me, and an explanation of every step that has been taken, I shall not stop to notice any man's insults or queries who is either ashamed or afraid to give me his name.

I purpose in future numbers retracing every step of my way from the moment of my coming into London, down to the period of my deliverance: what led me to commence the "**SILENT PREACHER**," the state of mind and circumstances under and through which I carried it on; the cause of its downfall, and other particulars; but this month my time has been so fully occupied that I could not attempt it. The letters, which will be continued, will, in some measure, speak for themselves.

## LETTER VI.

36, *Cursitor Street, Chancery Lane, September 11, 1842.*

My dear and much-esteemed Friend,

I do not think it would be profitable to detail the various exercises of mind which I have been the subject of since I last addressed you. Let this suffice—that until within this last week or ten days, the general state of my mind has been decidedly bad, and I have, therefore, felt it utterly useless for me to write to any one; for, my friend, there is sin enough—darkness enough—bondage enough—misery enough, both in the church and the world, without my recording or spreading more. This I may say—this I will say—for in the sight of a heart-searching God with truth I can say—that, if mercy is vouchsafed unto me—if my poor polluted soul shall at last stand perfect in the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ—and through Him accepted—all heaven might well and truly point at me, and say—“Is not *this* a brand plucked out of the fire?” Satan has resolved that down into the very lowest hell he will pull me if it be in his power.

But, my beloved friend, if his victory over me—if his attacks upon me had *not been more* complete and successful before I left Canterbury than they have been *since*, I believe I should *now* have been standing on the walls of Zion, opposing sin and Satan, and declaring the glorious and eternal truths of the everlasting Gospel. And the fact, for in spite of the powerful and overwhelming darts of the enemy, *it is a fact*, that my face is Zionward—my soul is Godward—in the midst of all the floods of temptation which the Devil has poured into my soul—*narrow*, exceedingly narrow, as have been my escapes from *outward* infidelity, and every cursed sin, still, there is—*ab!* to the glory of God’s free and sovereign grace would I proclaim it, even to the ends of the earth—I say, there is a *secret power* at work *within me*—a power which preserves me from the will of Satan—a power which sometimes doth so wonderfully draw out my soul after a manifestation of Divine love and mercy; that all other things, all other concerns, relations, connections, and troubles are swallowed up in this one fervent soul-agonizing desire. Ah, my friend, professing men, Christian men, and profane men, to look at my case, as *outwardly* it appears, would unite in saying what of myself I have said—“There is no hope of *such* a man.” But I am brought to see, to feel, and know, that the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus *can* cleanse and justify a soul polluted as mine. I have sometimes, or, at least, on one occasion, I said, “Well, if it should ever please God to set before me my sins in the light of HIS countenance, I could never stand under the sight.” (I feel it is *this* which will silence and condemn the wicked in the judgment day. The glorious holiness and majesty of a triune God will shine into the secret recesses of every guilty, every unregenerated conscience, and such an awful discovery of rebellion and sin against God will be discovered, that silently each will be condemned, and *own* the condemnation *just*. To prove, however, that God will not hide up the *original cause* and *source* of His people’s salvation, some shall be permitted to carry their rebellion even to the very judgment seat itself; and then and there finding out their unpardoned and unsanctified standing, without the Lord Jesus or His righteousness, having no other refuge to fly to but their own filthy works, will cry out—“Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name done many wondrous works.” To whom the Lord will then unfold the secret and eternal choice and security of His



family, by exclaiming, "Depart from me, ye cursed! I never KNEW you." Oh, solemn thought! Oh, awful state!

But as regards my ability to stand under a sight of my guilt, I find the Lord is a good and a skillful workman; he knows how to prepare the soul for, and to support it through, all that it is called to pass.

The truth is, there is *nothing* will lead the soul to God, but God himself. 'Tis an error; yea, I say, it is a reproach on the Lord to say, as is said, that tribulations, temptations, and afflictions lead the soul to God. No such thing. Let a sinner have ten thousand times more sorrows than Job had; if God was not in those troubles, he would never savingly go to God. No, my friend, it is "the *goodness* of God that leadeth to repentance." In proof whereof, look at Nathan's visit to David—look at the Saviour's "looking" on Peter—look at Christ's discovery of himself to Saul of Tarsus.

But I must commence what I purposed to lay before you in this letter. I feel I am writing to one who has my spiritual interest at heart; yea, I go farther, I feel I am writing to one whom the Lord has constrained to pray for that blessing which He will bestow, and, therefore, every little brain of hope will be interesting to you. I cannot here describe all, but will attempt an outline of what I have received for good.

For some time I lay on the very brink of falling into the unpardonable sin: I saw, felt, and was ready to say—"It is impossible for God to save me; for when all the world should appear before His bar, they would point at me, and my awful sins, and my salvation would reflect dishonour on God." From this I was delivered, by being given to see that every saved sinner will stand *dressed* in the royal robes of Jesus' righteousness; so that no spot, either great or small, shall be seen. They will stand—even the vilest sinner that ever the Holy Ghost shall quicken—in the spotless garment of salvation.

Since that I have been secretly tempted to open infidelity, and an entire disbelief of God's existence, truth, and word. From this I was delivered by a most soul-transporting and extensive application of Paul's words, "That He might make known the riches of His glory, on the vessels of mercy whom He hath afore prepared unto glory." By this glorious Scripture my mind was led up at once to the very first *sovereign* display of the glory of God, which was in the permissive fall of the non-elect angels. All the infernals in the world can never deny the existence of wicked spirits in the world. From whence came they? From the bottomless pit. But how came they *there*? The first open display of Jehovah's glory was in their permissive fall. So far from man being able to keep himself, the Lord resolved to show that no *created* being could ever maintain itself of itself—God alone is self-existent. Look at the situation and privilege of these angels. They had no sinful flesh—no sinful devil—no sinful world to tempt them. They were filled with light and glory; but, being left to themselves, all their nearness to and mercies from God, only led them to rebellion—yea, from His very throne would they have hurled Jehovah himself, for which he banished them from his presence. But I must not enlarge.

I have merely referred to these in proof that, by His word, I hope the Lord is still visiting my poor guilty spirit.

Last Sunday evening, I went to hear Mr. W——. He took his text from the 66th Psalm, 9th verse—"Who *holdeth* our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."

I felt nothing particular in the sermon; but, as I walked home, the text followed me—"Who *holdeth* our soul in life." I had a sight of a poor vessel of mercy tossed up and down on the boisterous ocean of temptation,

sin, and sorrow. But being a vessel of mercy, bound for the glorious city of God, God holds the vessel in life. Howling storms may beat upon it—the winds and the waves may dash it to and fro—it may mount up to heaven; be cast down again to the deep—be tossed and torn, and threatened with wreck and ruin. Spectators may say, it is impossible to save her; but, being a vessel of mercy—(Ah! there it is)—God “*holdeth it in life!*”

This softened my heart, and though I could not say with Paul—“Which hope *we* (the almost shipwrecked vessels of mercy) *have* as an anchor;” yet it led me to deep reflection, and meditation, and prayer.

On reference to my Bible, I found that in the margin it reads—“Who *putteth* our souls in life and suffereth not,” &c.

This wrought powerfully in me. I saw it applied at once to two, yea, to three most wonderful dispensations. 1. To the putting off the elect soul into Christ (eternal life). 2. The dreadful passage of that soul through the wilderness. 3. To the preserving, sovereign, upholding power of God in holding the vessel in Christ—not suffering our *feet* (our eternal standing in Christ) to be moved. Every thing else may be moved. Our hearts, affections, wills, desires, thoughts, &c., but the eternal standing of the vessel of mercy can never be moved, because *underneath* and round about are the everlasting arms.

As regards the effect this had upon my mind, I will say but little. Frequently has my soul been drawn out most powerfully to cry unto God. I have said from my very soul, “Lord, crucify every power, disposition, and faculty of my soul. Put thy Spirit, thy grace, thy law, thy love, into my soul, and let the remnant of my days be unreservedly devoted to thyself. Ah, my friend, on these occasions, when hope has sprung up in my soul, Oh, how I have desired that the sovereign grace and rich mercy of God might be displayed in permitting me to be instrumental in bringing out of darkness, bondage, and confusion, those dear souls who lay near my heart.

I pray you, read the 66th Psalm, from the 8th verse to the end—every word and sentence is full of matter deeply interesting to the believer. There you have the secret standing of the soul in Christ. The Lord’s discipline of the soul, its trials and sore falls and troubles, its resurrection and liberty, and spiritual results.

There is one most remarkable feeling arising from any real spiritual manifestation of God’s mercy to the soul; be sure of it, my friend, because all the elect of God have ever found it, as that which distinguished *spiritual* from *fleshly* liftings-up. I mean that which the church notices so many times in Solomon’s Songs. Look at them—Song ii. verse 7, Song iii. verse 5, Song viii. verse iv. What is all this descriptive of? That deep humility of soul, and that *fear* of his *departure* which attends the visits of divine love. If ever a man knew the hardness, and deceitfulness, and dreadful depravity, bondage, barrenness, and blackness of the human heart, I am sure I have. Ah, even so that I could have torn it from me, if it were possible, and cast it away. When, therefore, I was favoured with a little softness, humbleness, drawing out and drawing near—when sin and Satan appeared to have lost their hold, and the power and presence of God was felt—I feared every moment, every step, lest something should cause Him to depart. In this state, and with a mind and soul beating for a *perfect restoration*. I turned to my Bible, when that most blessed portion, the 13th and 14th verses of the 9th Psalm, seemed as though written expressly for me, comprehending the very utmost and largest desires of my soul, and so sweet is it to me that I turn to it again and again.

Yours, unworthily,  
C. W. BANKS.

## A VESSEL OF MERCY.

**SURROUNDED** by formality and infidelity, and filled with unbelief and the seeds of apostacy, as we are in this time state, it is no small mercy now and then to meet with one in whom the soul-quickening, Christ-revealing, sin-pardoning power of God the Holy Ghost doth most evidently abide.

In the course of conversation with a friend, a few days since, I was informed that something in the last number of the Earthen Vessel had much perplexed a poor afflicted believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. My friend said, he wished me to go with him and see her. I did so. I found a woman whose every word convinced me that her body was a temple for the Holy Ghost; and that she was a living witness of the sovereign, discriminating, heaven-transforming grace of the Eternal God.

After some conversation on that part of the Earthen Vessel which she could not understand, I was led to ask her how it was she came to know the Lord; or something to that effect. Upon this, she took up a letter, which she said she had written to her brother, and began at once to read it to us. I was deeply affected by the honest and unquestionable testimony which she was enabled to bear of the Lord's goodness to her. I left her truly thankful to the Lord for having permitted me to witness, and for a few moments to hold communion with one, of whose eternal and vital union to Christ I was as much assured as of my own existence.

The contents of the letter which I had heard read, and the power and savour with which it was accompanied to my soul, continued for some days; I could not forget it; and believing it much calculated, under God, to prove a great blessing to many of the living family, I obtained the loan of the copy, and here transcribe it, in the hope that its perusal may be as sweet and profitable to others, as it was to myself.

My Dear Brother,

November 19, 1844.

As you told me you wanted to hear more of what I told you when at Lime-house; now, my dear brother, I am not going to set up a standard for God to work by: God forbid; for the Lord makes use of many ways to bring his banished ones home; so I will endeavour, by the help of God, to show you the way He hath brought me. In February, 1834, not being used to go to a place of worship, the Sundays were tiresome, so I says to my dear husband, "Let us go to chapel." He says, "No: he could not bear such places." I pressed him, and we went; the minister took his text from the 7th chapter of Matthew, the 24, 25, 26, and 27th verses. The discourse was all over, except these words: (he says) "Is there any among this congregation that have builded their foundation on this Rock? if so, all will be well." I was as one woke out of a sound sleep; I said within myself, I never once thought of such a thing as where to build my foundation; I began to think what it could mean, and how I could build upon a rock; I was led to see that it was Christ. I thought I would be good, and be a Christian; so at it I went as hard as I could for five or six months, and I thought I was all right, I thought I was building the right way. But alas! the dear Lord shewed me it was a

sandy foundation, so he knocks it all down. The minister took his text from the Psalms (viii. v. 4), "What is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou visitest him." Now, he takes man in all his best performances, and shows him that they are filthy rags in the sight of God. I cried out in my soul, How can I be saved? Now my troubles began; I began to think it was all over with me. I could not tell how I was to be saved, if my goodness was as filthy rags in the sight of God. I thought that, die when I would, I should go to Hell. I now used to wish I had never been born, or that I was a beast that had not a soul to be saved. I used to cry all day, thinking I would give a thousand worlds if I had not sin. I used to read the Bible, and cry till I could not see: it seemed to me nothing but a man-of-war's book, so I could not get any comfort from it. My trouble seemed more than I could bear. One morning, I was waiting for the clock to strike five, on purpose to call my husband up, to get rid of him, to give vent to my feelings. I said, "Come, William, it has gone five a long while. These words came with power to my mind; so much so, that I said them out loud, and wondered how they could come in my mind, as I never knew them before. My dear brother take notice of every word of this verse, how it is to the purpose:—

Was it for crimes that I had done,  
He groaned upon the tree?  
Amazing pity, grace unknown,  
And love beyond degree.

I said to my husband, "Dear me, I wonder how it should come into my mind; I do not think I ever heard them before did you?" He said, "No." I repeated them over and over again, and I thought, if God could ever take such pity on me as to groan and suffer for my sins, it must be "love beyond degree." Instead of crying all day, I kept repeating that verse.

Not many weeks before I heard that God had an elect people, and how did I know that I was one? Then my troubles came on again: I could not think I was one; neither did I think any one could tell me. So I went groaning and crying for some time, hoping I was one, and fearing I was not. Still keeping strict to my chapel, and one Sunday, sacrament Sunday, being first in chapel, the minister came to our pew, and said to my husband, "Why do you not come to the table?" My husband said it was not for him. The minister turned to me, and said, "Why don't you come?" I said, "Not this time, sir; next time I will, if it please God."

Now, my dear brother, I have not got tongue to express to you what I went through this month. I thought I was now to seal again my damnation, and die whenever I will, I shall go to Hell, for I was going to take that precious body and blood of Jesus Christ, that never was spilt for me. What to do I did not know, or where to go I could not tell. When night came, I used to think there was one more day nearer hell. So I went on from day to day till I was all but out of my mind. Now it came to the last Thursday in the month, and in the afternoon. It came into my head, that there was an old shoe-maker, in Thornton-street. I wondered what he knew about religion. I knew that he was very wise in the things of this world, so I put on my bonnet and shawl, and away I went. I had a very good excuse, for he had got a pair of my husband's shoes to mend: so I said, "Mr. A., are my husband's shoes done?" He said, "They will be in ten minutes. Perhaps you can wait for them!" I said I would; so I sat down, and he said, "Will you have some news to look at, while you stop? I have a paper only a day or two old." I replied, "All about this world. I have enough of that, without looking into the paper after it."

"Well," said he, "will you have a tract?" "That's more like it?" So he gave me one, and said, "See what you think of that." So I looked at it, and said, "What do you think of it?" He said, "I would hang the man that penned it." I said, "Dear me, dear me, what for? Why it is all taken out of the Bible." "Well," says he, "the man that printed the Bible I would have hanged, for three parts of it ought not to be there." I said, "Dear me, what part don't you like of it?" He said, "The Book of Canticles, or Solomon's Songs; they are most diabolical, and not fit to be read." "Dear me, you take them in a carnal light. Do pray come to Dockhead Chapel, and hear the minister explain them in a spiritual way. You would say they are most beautiful, for they are all about Jesus Christ. Do come: never mind about your clothes." "One Tony M—," said he, "wanted me to go and hear that man, but I don't believe him, nor any other, can tell me better than I know, for I have been to chapels and churches, and its all a pack of stuff. Do you think God ever made this beautiful world, and ordained man to hate it; and created man in the likeness of his own image, for man to hate himself? Don't tell me, it's all nonsense; I don't believe such things." "Well," said I, "I shan't wait for the shoes." So I went home.

Now, I went along thinking what a dreadful state of unbelief this poor man is in. I began to see what a dangerous state he was in to die, for he was full of unbelief, and it came to me so disgusting, that I have not tongue to express it; and, like a dart, something says, "That is thy state." Now all of a minute,—whether in the body or out, I cannot tell; whether I stood still, or went on, I do not know; but this I know, that I was taken up into heaven, and I saw a very large ball, and it was all love. And it spake to me, and said these words, "I never was, nor never will be angry with thee."

My dear brother, it was such a season to my soul; it was unspeakable, and full of glory. I thought if there were a thousand deaths, I could pass through them all, if I could but stop there; but these words came to my mind.

"Love, says he, will sweeten labour,  
Thou hast something yet to do,  
Go and tell thy friends and neighbours  
What my love hath done for you.

"Live to manifest my glory,  
Wait for Heaven a little space,  
Sinners, when they hear thy story,  
Will repent and seek my face."

Now I went on the Sabbath and cast my lot in with the children of God, and went to the table without a doubt or a shadow of fear. Believing that he died for me, I can say with the poet,—

"Amazing grace, how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me,  
I once was lost, but now am found,—  
Was blind, but now can see.

"'Twas grace that caused my heart to fear,  
'Twas grace my fears relieved,  
How precious did that grace appear,  
The hour I first believed!

"Through many a danger, toil, and care,  
I have already come,  
'Twas grace that brought me safe thus far,  
And grace will take me home."

# THE "TWO LIONS OF GOD"

SLAIN BY BENAIAH.

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*A brief outline of two Sermons preached in Crosby Row, March 30th  
1845, by C. W. BANKS.*

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IT has been laid upon my mind to make some attempt to accede to the wishes of those friends who heard the two sermons preached by myself on the above subject, and who have desired that they should be printed. To print what was preached would be impossible, but I feel constrained to give a brief outline of the subject, as also of the way by which I was led to enter upon it. I do this the more readily because there are some dear souls who are anxious to know whether or not the God of all grace—the Lord Jesus Christ—the Holy Ghost—yea, whether or not, a triune God, upon new covenant principles, is dealing with me or not, and what foundation there is for really believing that I am IN CHRIST—that I am a regenerated and anointed servant of the living God—and that He will welcome me, at the last, into that kingdom where neither sin nor sorrow can ever find a place.

The instance to which I am about to refer, is not a singular one, it is like most of the way by which I am led.

I arose rather early on Lord's day morning, March 30th. On the previous evening the floods of indwelling sin had burst forth in evil thoughts and corrupt desires, and although these mighty troublers of my soul are chained down under the higher dominion of grace, still they blacken and distress my mind, fill me with many fears, and oftentimes seem to shut my mouth at the throne of grace. Certainly I find there are two things to be done every day: first, to take up the cross: and what is that but a denial of self—a crucifying of the flesh? for I do really find that there is a law in my members which seems to take it hard, and cries out bitterly and rebels awfully because it cannot run to the same excess of riot: and then secondly, there is not only the denial of self, the putting off the old man with his deeds, (which, without the Spirit, no man can ever accomplish,) but the living soul desires not only to lay aside these heavy weights, but truly to forget the things which are behind, by a reaching forth after those things which are before.

I laid down in my bed under the heavy, unhappy feeling that I could neither—in my own strength—deny self nor follow the Saviour. I awoke with a heavy sigh, great darkness, and a degree of regret that so solemn a work laid upon me as that of publicly speaking in the name of the Lord.

I was brooding over these things, when in a moment, the following words sunk with a delivering and a bedewing power into my soul—"The Lord is good; A STRONG-HOLD IN THE

DAY OF TROUBLE." This brought me into some degree of soul-humility, and contrition. I searched the Concordance, and found the words in the prophet Nahum, with this addition—"and he knoweth them that trust in him." I was led into a very happy contemplation,

1. Of the great and glorious truth therein declared—"THE LORD IS GOOD." I saw this mighty word standing like a beacon at sea, like a standard in the midst of much desolation. Sin has entered into the world, its awful consequences deluge the earth and defile the sons of men; tribulation, like a boisterous sea, beats upon and dashes its fury against the battlements of the church. The devil roars, sin rages, death prevails, nevertheless, the Lord is eternally and infinitely good. He is full of virtue, full of beauty, and perfectly upright. It is the manifestation and dispensation of this goodness that leads to repentance; that leads to God—that leads to glory.

The expression "THE LORD IS GOOD," appeared to savour of that sweetness, secret joy, and confidence, which is sometimes felt in a living soul, when its eternal interest in Christ, its vital union to Christ; and its saving knowledge of Christ, is realized by precious faith. "Truly," (Asaph said,) "Truly God is good to Israel, even to such as are of a clean heart." What infinite goodness, mercy, love, and power, appears in every part of that salvation which plucks us as brands from the burning! Shall we think for a moment, of the root and fountain of that salvation, the everlasting, the electing, the predestinating LOVE OF GOD? What indescribable goodness is there! There are heights and depths, there are lengths and breadths, which eternity alone can fully give us to understand and to enjoy. Shall we look at the procuring cause of this salvation, God manifest in the flesh, the Lord God Almighty taking up our nature into union with His eternal Godhead, and therein stooping to the very earth itself—bearing our sins in his own body on the tree? What mysterious, what astonishing goodness was here! Solomon certainly saw something of it; and although it was revealed unto him by the Lord Himself, Solomon cries out, "*Will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth?*" Yes; here are the two wonders, which will open up streams of gratitude and praise in heaven for ever. God decrees that man shall dwell with Him in glory, and therefore it behoved God to dwell with man on the earth, because reconciliation could in no other way be effected. I can say no more than that "without controversy, great indeed is the mystery of godliness." What a mercy! What goodness! Sin put away by THE BLOOD of the GOD MAN, and salvation irrevocably secured unto the whole election of grace. Come, for one moment to the revealing power by which the grace of God bringeth salvation unto the saved. What goodness is displayed in every part of the Holy Ghost's work! What was there in me, when first he stopped me in my mad career? I was in my blood and in

sin, and twenty years of my life had run out in darkness, ignorance infamy and shame.

I was at Rye, in Sussex; I had been for some time secretly crying out "Who will shew me any good, where is happiness, where can solid peace be found? I had run long and deep in sin, I had separated from all relations and friends, and determined, if possible, to find and to have my fill of worldly pleasure, and of pride. I was ambitious; wanted to be something great; but knew not how. I joined the band of Odd Fellows, thinking to find pleasure there: but there was a thorn in every place, death in every pot, a guilty conscience at every turn, and where to go I knew not. It was in this state of flying from God—of determining to do without God—of seeking yet further and further for gratification in the world, that I was laying, when, one Sunday evening, I carelessly stole into the Wesleyan Chapel at Rye, and having obtained a back seat in the gallery, sat myself down. The Lord, through the preacher, broke my heart all to pieces: what was the matter I could not tell—but, presently, overpowered with grief, and shame, and sorrow, I crept out of the place; went home to my lodging; threw myself on my knees; and cried to God for mercy on my soul. I stop not now to speak of the subsequent path—you have it briefly in the "*Warning Voice*." But I say, what infinite goodness was here!

"The Lord is good;" the expression declares that whatever sin or sorrow; destruction or death; tribulation or trial, comes upon the sons of men—the Lord is the same—in all His designs; in all his doings; in His dealings with the people of His power, He is GOOD.

2. I had looked at the day of trouble, which Nahum refers to.  
3. At what God is said to be unto His Israel in this day of trouble, "A strong hold."  
4. At the position to which this people are brought—they "trust in him." And, finally, at the silent, the soul-comforting declaration—"He knoweth them, that trust in Him."

I was about to arise from my meditations, and to go up to the house of God, believing I had a message to deliver from the words I have mentioned, when on turning for a moment to my Bible, the 22d verse of the 23d chapter of the second Book of Samuel arrested my mind—"These things did Benaiah, the son of Jehoida, and had the name among three mighty men."

I was secretly constrained to inquire into the character and exploits of Benaiah; and so richly and blessedly was the threefold mystery wrapped up in these words and their connexion, opened up to me, that I was led to speak from them both morning and evening. I can but gather up a few fragments of what was said in the course of the two sermons. May the dear Lord bedew the word by his own Spirit; open and apply it with his own power; then shall good be derived, and the glory redown to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, whom to know aright, is life eternal to the soul.



In the character and mighty acts of Benaiah, three most solemn mysteries are concealed.

First, here is the great mystery of redemption by the work of our spiritual Benaiah, the LORD CHRIST.

Second, here is the mystery and triumphs of that gospel which is of God.

Thirdly, here is the holy warfare and victory, of that faith which is of the operation of the Holy Spirit.

A word or two first, on the origin, the name, and the mighty acts of Benaiah.

His origin. He was the son of Jehoida, which signifies, "*the knowledge of the Lord.*" This is peculiarly applicable to the Person, work, suffering, sacrifice, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ: as also, to the eternal standing and justification of every elect sinner in him. The setting up and sending forth of Christ was neither a matter of speculation nor of universality: it was all according to the eternal purpose and foreknowledge of God the Father. The Lord Jesus Christ was the wisdom of God, or the knowledge of God, in a fourfold manner. First he was the hidden wisdom of God—"the wisdom of God in a mystery:" "in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Secondly, He was the manifester of the wisdom of God: all that He did, all that He is doing, was and is, a practical opening up, and working out the infinite wisdom of the Eternal God. Thirdly, He was the mediatory wisdom. Moses spoke prophetically when he said, "I stood between the Lord and you at the time, TO SHEW YOU THE WORD OF THE LORD." (Deut. v. 5.) This is to me, a most blessed summary of the whole work of Christ; in the covenant, on the cross, and in the conscience of a sinner by the power of the Holy Ghost: the Lord Jesus stands between a holy and a righteous God and poor fallen worms: to shew unto them the word, the council, the grace, the glory of His Father. Lastly, He is the reconciliatory wisdom of God. He not only stands between—but in Him, and through Him we have access with confidence into the holiest of all.

Benaiah—is a most significant name: it comprehends three great leading features in the glorious Person of Christ—it points out the three essential parts of that divine relationship which elect sinners have unto God; and, it is also, typically descriptive of that great work of God the Holy Ghost whereby He "makes ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Benaiah signifies, first, "the son of the Lord"—secondly "the understanding of the Lord,"—and thirdly, the Lord's building."

1. *The son of the Lord.* Divine relationship issuing out of the everlasting and electing love of God the Father, is the immutable rock, by which the salvation and the safety of the church are secured. The bond woman and her son must be cast out; but the heirs of promise; God's Isaacs; shall not only be born, but

they shall abide in the house for ever. "BECAUSE YE ARE SONS," is the mighty ocean, the mysterious womb, out of which every spiritual blessing flows. "BECAUSE YE ARE SONS, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." Every true believer is a "Benaiah," a son of the Lord. And therefore every true believer has in his soul, a spiritual knowledge of God; and a holy, but mysterious, fellowship with God, which others have not. Yes, there are divine powers brought into the soul of a sinner by the Holy Ghost, the nature and tendency of which can never be conceived of by others. A quickened sinner has an inwrought zeal for God, an affection for God, a familiarity with God; a dependence upon the promise and power of God which nothing can root out or destroy.

It is true; he may have but very little real assurance and enjoyment of these things in his own soul: he may appear to be all uncleanness, the subject of much unbelief; many fiery darts, wicked thoughts, sinful desires, and unholy movements of the natural passions: but what principle is it that feels, that groans under, that sighs for deliverance from these fallen and inbred sinful powers? I answer, it is that life—that holy nature which God has implanted—this loves its own, and longs to be freed from all opposing powers.

2. Benaiah signifies "the understanding of the Lord:" the house (the church of God,) was built by Wisdom, but is established by understanding. Of this understanding you have two very plain and positive descriptions. The son of Barachel, the Buzite, (whose name was Elihu,) tells you from whence this understanding comes—"the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding:" and Solomon declares "it is a well spring of life to him that hath it." All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, was a new covenant promise; it is one that is absolutely fulfilled in the whole family of God. They have that unction of the Holy One which teacheth them of all things, and leadeth to a saving knowledge of, an eternal abidance in the things of God.

Benaiah signifies "the Lord's Building." God's building up of sinners for eternal glory lays in his digging them out of the quarry of nature; in stripping them of all fleshly confidences and creature helps; and in rooting and grounding them in the love power, and manifested grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

In Benaiah then, there are three features of a living soul: a divine relationship; a divine illumination; and a divine establishment in those imperishable truths and heaven-born verities which the Holy Ghost can alone reveal—God's favoured Israel alone receive.

It is secondly, of the mystery of redemption, as typically set forth in the mighty acts of Benaiah, that I have to speak.

"THESE THINGS did Benaiah." I will not much enlarge; to give the matter as delivered, I cannot: nevertheless, the opening up of the word still appears engraven upon, and deeply laid in my soul; a faint outline of which is all I here transcribe.

I look at Benaiah as typical, first, of the Lord Jesus Christ; secondly, of a real gospel minister; thirdly, of that faith which is of the operation of God the Holy Ghost.

First, it is said Benaiah had done, or was "a man of many great acts; and what mighty acts the Lord Jesus Christ has accomplished; is now accomplishing, and, down to the end of time, will continue to accomplish, I have no powers of mind to declare, they are better known in the living soul than ever the pen or the tongue even of the learned can pourtray, much less so weak a worm as myself: nevertheless a little of the glories of that victory which He has achieved; as also of the place, the manner, and the time of his conflict with the potent powers which came against Him, is here set down.

The first and greatest act of all is, *the slaying of "two lion-like men of Moab."* What could be here intended I could not conceive. I felt however quite at ease about the matter, secretly believing that as the Lord had so laid this subject on my soul, He would direct me aright, lead me into truth, and enable me to speak out his mind to the comfort of his family.

The whole of the morning's discourse had been occupied in speaking of the three-fold character of Benaiah: his mighty acts were left for the evening. My heart was lifted up to God to open the mystery in such a way as that I might speak with boldness and with power. I thought the two lion-like men of Moab were SIN and DEATH; but when I read in the margin that they were "two lions of God," I paused; and was brought like David "to be silent to Jehovah." (Psalm lxii. 5. as the original reads.) I was walking down to hear Mr. Wyard's sermon, who was that afternoon announced to preach at Jamaica Row, when, in a moment, some one seemed to speak in my soul, and said "these two lions of God, are, first, the curse of God pronounced against all the violaters of His most holy law—and secondly, that eternal wrath, fiery indignation and terror which all who die in their sins must for ever endure. Oh, what solemn powers! TWO LIONS OF GOD; whose desolating, life destroying pursuit, can only be stayed by the blood of the great Mediator and Redeemer of immortal souls!

A friend has since asked the question; "Is not the curse of a broken law, and the wrath of God, one and the same thing? I answer, No. The curse is THE DECREE\* which shuts the gates of glory against ungodly sinners, and opens the gates of hell to receive them; it says "the soul that sinneth IT SHALL DIE:" but the wrath of God—"the terror of the Almighty," is that

\* In reading this sentence, remember, there is an absolute and an eternal union between the infinite holiness, righteousness, and justice of God, and his solemn decree that "the wicked shall be turned into hell." It is the perfect, the unspotted, the unchanging holiness of God, on the one hand, and the total depravity of man by nature and by practice, on the other, that give birth and power to that curse which God has denounced and inflicted upon all who die without a saving interest in Jesus Christ. Oh, to be found in Him!

which makes the hell into which the sons of perdition are plunged "For the elect's sake," both these lions of God were slain: by Christ the law was magnified, the wrath of God endured; and all its awful consequences for ever removed—the whole of them having fallen upon, and swallowed up by the Church's propitiation: this was at once the bitter cup of the Saviour's suffering, and the Church's most glorious salvation.

These are called lions of God, because as God is immutably and eternally holy, just, and righteous—as His law is holy, just and good: so is there in the curse which He has pronounced against ungodly sinners, an irresistible power that nothing can overcome. It falls upon sin, and upon the transgressors of the law, with a consuming and destructive terror that nothing can evade.

The lion-like majesty and irresistible power of God against transgressors was first seen in the hurling of the fallen angels out of heaven. How terrible is the account which the Holy Ghost has given of this solemn transaction! "God spared not." God, spared not! God has proclaimed, and manifested himself to be a merciful, a long-suffering, a sin-pardoning God: but the mercy of God can only come down through the Person, work and worthiness of the Lord Jesus Christ: apart from that covenant made with Him—apart from that righteousness wrought out and brought in by Him, God is "a consuming fire." Therefore these angels which sinned; which "kept not their first estate," were "cast down to hell; delivered into chains of darkness; reserved unto judgment." Here are the two lions. First, the power, which casts them down: secondly, "the everlasting chains," the eternal darkness, the wrath of God which abideth on all unbroken, unrepenting, unsanctified sinners. (John iii. 36.)

What! do you call this a fanciful straining of the word? Be it so. If it be only the fruit of a mind perverted, deluded and presumptuous, God will not honour it nor bless it to the souls of His saints: but if it be the fruit of his own divine illumination, His own divine power, He will make it like unto a handful of corn upon the top of the mountains; like bread cast upon the waters, which shall be found by some precious living souls, though it be after many days.

It is then, secondly, in the experience of God's elect, that these lions are slain. "Israel, (saith God,) is a scattered sheep: the lions have driven him away: (Jer. l. 17) the devil and sin are here called the lions; because such is the force and power of sin in the sinner, and the temptations of the wicked one which come against him, that no poor fallen creature can ever stand against them: full proof of which is to be seen in the horrible murders, and abominable cruelties, practised by fallen, and depraved man. But what a glorious mercy is recorded in the text to which I have referred: "*the lions have driven him away.*" Have they not destroyed Israel, as they have done thousands of fallen sinners? No: the more terrible lions—the impending curse

and the dreadful wrath of a justly angry God—have, for Israel, been slain. Reader! art thou a pardoned sinner, a believer with the heart unto righteousness? To you, the Lord says, “**THERE SHALL BE NO MORE CURSE:**” no condemnation: Jesus Christ was made a curse for you—the vials of divine wrath were poured out upon him instead of being poured out upon you. And do you ask the reason why? I believe no answer can be given but that which the Holy Ghost has written—“*Because God hath—FROM THE BEGINNING—chosen you to salvation.*”

Again: the mystery of redemption is still further set before you here. Benaiah not only slew two lion-like men of Moab, but “he also went down and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow.” There is one event that happeneth unto all: the righteous as well as the wicked must die: there is no discharge in that war. But “the sting of death,”—that lion in the midst of a pit—our great Benaiah hath taken away. So that whatever fears may trouble the believer respecting the pit—when there he comes he shall exultingly exclaim, “O death! where is thy sting?” Many precious souls have triumphed gloriously in the very arms of that foe—which all their life long they have anticipated with dread. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.

The completeness of the mystery of redemption is still further declared in the slaying of an Egyptian: called in the 1 Chron. 11, 23, “a man of great stature.” What does this Egyptian represent; if it be not that body of sin and death; that fallen, that depraved nature, which every vessel of mercy wears? This Egyptian had a spear in his hand. Sin is the dagger that mortally wounds every sinner out of Christ. Sin is the dagger that also wounds every sinner in Christ: but how gloriously is the work and worthiness of Christ here revealed! He “**WENT DOWN TO THE EGYPTIAN WITH A STAFF.**” By what power did he go down? His own eternal Godhead. Had He not been God, He could not have humbled Himself; nor have taken upon him the form of a servant. What was the staff? The divine authority with which His Father had invested Him: “I have put my Spirit upon Him.” How was the work accomplished? He plucked the spear out of the Egyptian’s hand, and slew him with his own spear.” He took the whole load of sin and guilt found upon the election of grace and carried it down to the land of forgetfulness, so that though it be sought for it shall never be found. But you ask—how can it be said, that *he slew the Egyptian with his own spear?*” I can give—I desire to give, no other answer than that given by the ever blessed Spirit himself. (Oh! how precious are the explanations and openings of divine mysteries when God the Holy Ghost lays them experimentally in a living soul! He says, “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, (or as the margin gives it “by a sacrifice for sin,) **CONDEMNED SIN IN THE FLESH.**” Thus the Egyptian was slain with his own spear. And the soul conflicts and grace conquers, in a vessel of mercy teach him that although with reference to the slaying of these lions we do as yet only see and know but in part; still, faith triumphs in the certainty that “when that which is perfect is come, then, that which is in part shall be done away.” We shall be **LIKE HIM**, and see Him as He is.

# THE GOSPEL MINISTRY:

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

## PART I.

*I was led to write the following letter to a brother, who was somewhat exercised in his mind respecting the Ministry: and I am constrained to insert it in this place as the first of a series upon a subject of vital importance to the Church of Christ. Coming, as it does, from an individual so contemptible in the eyes of men in general, I do not expect that it will meet with any further reception than the Lord shall himself absolutely give unto it. I can with confidence leave it with Him to do with it as He may have ordained.*

My dear Brother,

2, Bell Yard, Temple Bar, June 12, 1843.

THERE were two points in your last letter which laid hold upon my mind, which stamped that letter with importance, and excited within me a desire to say a word or two to you in the present eventful position in which you appear to be placed.

The first point to which I allude, was the excessive anguish and trouble which you experienced respecting the ministry. The second point is, the statement, that you feel you dare not attempt to touch the work of the ministry until a *powerful* and remarkable demonstration is vouchsafed unto you.

I feel persuaded many good and gracious men would treat with contempt any testimony which I might bear on so solemn a subject, and you may well peruse this epistle with caution, suspicion and jealousy, after all that I have been the subject of. Nevertheless, if the Lord will in mercy enable me, I shall endeavour to write freely and faithfully; and, O, Lord, the Eternal Spirit, whose it is to take of the things of Christ and shew them to poor sinners; Oh, thou Holy Ghost, the spiritual baptizer and leader of the redeemed; come thou; anoint the soul of him that writes; give grace and wisdom to him that reads, let God be glorified, the Saviour exalted and made precious, let our rocky hearts be melted and circumcised, our souls sanctified and saved; and to a triune Jehovah, we will ascribe the glory.

If I have understood your letter aright, I gather out its substance to this effect: there has been both within and without you a movement towards the ministry. You have been invited to preach; and you have preached; those to whom you have preached have received you and your testimony with kindness; and they have bidden you God-speed, but all this is not sufficient to allay your fears; and you appear to be standing in the position of one who said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

Now, my brother, if this be indeed and in truth the position of thy soul, it is a good one; it is a safe one; and let the result thereof be what it may, it is a position of which thou shalt never be ashamed.

Stand, my dear fellow traveller, upon thy watch tower; though the vision tarry, wait for it. If the Lord has brought thy soul to feel that no testimony but His own will satisfy, sealed home upon thy conscience by the secret power of the blessed Spirit; He will never disappoint, but far exceed, the utmost desires of thy soul. Oh, be careful, be watchful, let thine heart and thine eyes be up unto that God who alone can lead aright, and thus thou shalt escape the snares of the wicked and deceitful spirits whose aim it is to delude and decoy those whom they cannot destroy.

But, my brother, whether the desire for a powerful demonstration may not have too great an influence on the mind is a question. I see unbelief

can assume the presumptive as well as the desponding mood, it can demand more of heaven than heaven has designed to give, as well as it can require more from the sinner than ever the sinner can produce; unbelief can make that (apparently) impossible which God has made plain; and it therefore behoves us not unduly to listen to any but the unerring counsel of the Lord himself. Oh, my dear friend, it is a mercy indeed, to feel one's self no more than a piece of clay laying in the hands of the Lord to be by him moulded and employed as seemeth him good.

There is one remark which strikes me here, and which I venture to make before I proceed; and it is this: that both the *internal* and the *external* preparation for the work, and call to the work, is in some measure commensurate with the work itself; I think no man of God on earth nor saint of God in heaven, can for a moment doubt this one solemn fact, "all things are of God; all things were created by him, and for him." I believe in my very soul, that the creation of the world, the entrance of sin into it, the redemption of the elect; and all the intermediate steps which lead up to the great consummation, the solemn climax, the glorification of the church and the eternal damnation of the wicked; all were designed and permitted to shew forth the glorious majesty, sovereignty, almightiness, love, power, and mercy of him who is God over all, blessed for evermore; and, consequently, every link in the one great chain is formed upon *this* principle, and to *this* end, that *God* in all things may be glorified. The call of Moses, (among the patriarchs,) the call of Jeremiah, (among the prophets,) and the call of Saul of Tarsus, (for the Gentiles,) were distinguished by the most wonderful condescension in the coming down of the Second Person in the Trinity, and audibly speaking to and anointing them for their work; but then, unto these men were appointed great and mighty achievements indeed. In each of these cases, Jehovah Jesus came down to shew them how *great* things they must suffer for him, what *great* things they must accomplish for him, and to fortify them with great grace in the carrying out their divine commission.

The very shallow acquaintance which I have of the subsequent history of the church confirms my mind in this one great truth, that where and when the Lord designs a man to be *His* instrument in working out some great purpose, the Lord invariably takes care the soul experience of that man, as well as his authority for his appointed work, shall be of such a nature as cannot be mistaken—God's work is sure, certain, and complete.

But all are not Moses, nor Elijahs, nor Isaiahhs, nor Jeremiahhs, nor Pauls. Oh, no, the body of Christ is not made up of all heads, nor all eyes, nor all arms; the ministers of Christ are not all taken up to heaven as was Paul—not all suffered to fall as was Peter—not all so divinely caressed as was John—not all so severe as was Jude—not all so powerful as was Barnabas—not all so successful as Whitfield or Huntington—or a thousand others that might be named— but *all* the *true* ministers of Christ are made to feel their guilt, their bondage, their weakness, their pollution, their infirmity, and their exposure to Divine wrath, and dependance on sovereign mercy. All the *true* ministers of Christ are made sensible of the necessity and the efficacy of atoning blood—of justifying righteousness—of invincible power—of quickening, recovering and preserving grace, from which things they learn experimentally *what truth* is, and how to set it forth.

Having made these few hasty remarks, I desire to speak a word or two to you concerning what appears to be the Lord's more general way of commissioning, qualifying, and sending out his servants.

Four things appear to co-operate.

1. The word of God—2. The Spirit of God—3. The testimony and witness of a purged conscience—and 4. The providential dealings of God in outward circumstances. I think these are unerring testimonies, let us look at them for a moment in reference to a man's call to the ministry.

Perhaps you will think me presumptive or extravagant when I say, that it appears to me, that in nothing is the sovereignty of God more manifest than it is in His choice of His ministers, nor in nothing is the sovereignty of God more set at nought than in the choice of ministers which the generality of professors usually make.

There are two questions which arise in the mind in coming to the word on this subject: first, what description of men does the Lord generally take: secondly, how does he deal with, and qualify them for their work?

As regards the first question, the whole Bible seems to bear testimony to this one great truth, that when the Lord would take a man to be his messenger to His people, He invariably takes one (according to *their own* estimation) of the most weak, foolish, and helpless instruments the world has produced. In this matter, as well as in all His glorious works, the great God practically declares that "His thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor His ways as our ways." I might go through the whole Bible in proof of this; but this you need not—the Lord's answer to Ananias, concerning Paul, is full to the point. Ananias was staggered. He said within himself—Is it possible this vile persecutor and blasphemer, and murderer of the saints, is to preach the Gospel? I say he was so completely staggered, that he even dares to question the propriety of Jehovah's message concerning this mad persecutor. Why, my brother, there is nothing but the profoundest wisdom, the strictest propriety, the richest mercy, and the most rigid justice in all the attributes, works, ways, and dealings of the church's covenant God. He is too wise to err—too good to be unkind; but, mark ye, when it pleaseth the Sovereign Lord of all to make an *open display* of the exceeding riches of His grace—when, *practically*, He says He *will* have mercy on whom He will—when He speaks forth the *freeness* of His grace, by picking up some beggar from off the dunghill—plucking some fire-brand from the burning, or welcoming home, and rejoicing over some poor wretched, but returning prodigal, oh! how the "elder brothers" and the devout Ananias's begin to cavil, and to suspect that all is not right. But the Lord is in the heavens, He hath done, and he will do, what seemeth him good. He says, "My covenant shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." And hence you find the Lord's answer to Ananias is abrupt, conclusive, and sufficient. He says, "*Go thy way.*" I know, if you love the sovereignty of God, you love those three words—*I do*—they speak forth the dignity and majesty of the great God—"Go thy way, for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name unto the Gentiles."

Oh, my brother, how safely may you rest in the *purpose* of God, and in His power to accomplish that purpose. It is the conviction of my mind that every one of the Lord's ministers and people are led in such a path as to *feel* the necessity for the exercise of an almighty power on their behalf; so that *experimentally* they learn the meaning of that solemn and mysterious, but delightful promise: "I will make *all my mountains a way for the ransomed to pass over.*" John, depend on *this* (and I feel that in a few words I am going to say all that need be said on the subject,) if ever the Lord makes thee a minister of the true circumcision, you will have, (and you will love) to learn the word of God *experimentally*.



But if it be not too tedious, I wish you just to look for a moment at Paul's own estimate of the gospel ministry; speaking of it—(oh, his language is and often has been sweet to me) he says, "whereof I *was made* a minister, according to the *gift* of the grace of God, *given unto me*, by the *effectual* working of his power." See, he views it as a precious, gracious gift—a treasure given to him—a treasure wrought *within* him, and that by no ordinary power: but even by the *effectual*, all-conquering power of the great God. Oh, what a humbling effect it had upon the apostle—"Unto *me*, says he, who am less than the least of all saints, is *this* grace given. Putting a man into the ministry is a most *peculiar*, a most heavenly, a most exalted gift. Now do not think me bitter, I speak against no man, but I know that some men would have us believe that the ministry is a most heavy yoke—a most laborious and tiring employ. And where a man goes into the ministry without God's call and commission and qualification, depend on it, it is laborious; except *such* a man have a large stock of natural talent, and inventive genius, he will either soon wear himself out altogether, or wear out his hearers, and be compelled to move off to new quarters; for instead of having heavenly truth poured into his soul by the Holy Ghost, and brought out of him as free as the air he breathes; the natural man has ever to be fetching the materials for his ministry from broken cisterns, which never did nor never can hold living waters. But who can describe the sweetness, the liberty, the exalted joy, the holy bliss which fills and fires the soul of God's chosen vessels when he pours into them, and causes to flow out of their bellies, rivers of living waters? No tongue can tell the immortal glory of such a soul.

Here let me pause, and beg of you to be prayerful that your ministry be the ministry of the Holy Ghost *in* and *by* you. Do not insult the Holy Ghost; do not mock the Lord by ever going to the caverns of the dead for thy matter. Stick close to God's word, and to God's throne of grace, and though the flesh may kick, as kick it will—though the devil may tempt, as tempt he will—though the rotten hypocrisy of thy heart may often suggest a thousand crafty inventions; yet, be assured of this, that one little morsel fetched into thy soul by the revealing and intercessory work of the Holy Ghost within thee, will be a million times sweeter to thyself, and a million times more profitable to such living souls as hear thee, than all the fine harangues which flesh and blood, and dead men's bones may help thee to get together. My brother, I am copying from no man's book, but my own sad history—I am not writing a *theory*—nor speculatively—but that which I know to be faithful advice; the giving of which I shall never repent; the acting out of which will never give you pain. If I might add another word here, I would say: let good old Micaiah's words be thy rule in the Lord's strength—"As the Lord liveth, *what the Lord saith* unto me, *that* will I speak."

I do not wish to make any particular reference to myself, else I could say much here from what I may call severe experience.

Both the work of the ministry, and the preparation for it, was a labour most precious to my soul; in short, the only days to which I can look with any pleasure—the only days that were ever worth living for were those eight years in which I was an itinerant scatterer of the word of truth. The privileges of the Sabbath spurred me on through the days and heavy labours of the week; and much secret soul enjoyment was I favoured with for a long time.

But, my brother, there was a sinful worm at the root of my gourd. I mean, faith was wanting in it all. I could but seldom; yea, I must con-

fess, I could never trust the Lord for the supplying me with matter, until I was compelled to do so. After the awful conclusion to which my ministry was brought, I do not feel warranted in speaking of it as being from the Lord. Nevertheless, there was much about it that might serve as a solemn warning to others. I do not wish to deter you from reading the writings of good men; neither would I say a word against private study. I have enjoyed more in the private study of the word than ever I enjoyed in any other exercise. I can say, when the glorious mysteries of the cross, person, love and power of the Saviour have been opened to me in secret, my study has been a Bethel indeed, and if I was called upon to give a word of advice to a young man called of God to minister in holy things I would desire nothing more than the word of Paul to Timothy when he wrote "Neglect not the gift that is in thee. Meditate upon those things; continue in them—for the husbandman that laboureth must first be a partaker of the fruits." Study to know what is in thine own mind. The mind of man is a secret spring, the matter from which must be drawn out by searching and exercise, and above all study to know the mind and meaning of the Holy Ghost in the word, not from what others say it means, but what the Holy Spirit shall himself make known to thee.

Depend on it there is no person knows so much of the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, as does the spiritual and faithful minister of the Gospel—the spiritual and faithful minister—I repeat. But, say you, how is such an one to be distinguished from others? Ah, the distinguishing feature lies deep; but this is it, the faithful minister of Christ cannot go with any other message than that which is derived from the work of the Holy Ghost within him, and the spiritual revelation of divine truth made by the Blessed Spirit unto him; such a man knows much of and is deeply exercised by, the sovereign dispensations of the Holy Ghost. Mark you, it is by these sovereign dispensations of the Holy Ghost that the divinity or divine authority of a man's ministry is often tested. You are ready to ask for a more definite description of the assertion I have made.

By the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost, then I mean this: when a man is called stately to labour among a people, his mind will be exercised about the message which he is to deliver. And although I never heard or read any ministers experience or testimony on this point; yet I do believe, (the Lord, in mercy forgive me, if I presume, or am in error,) but I do believe that there is something very, very peculiar in the Holy Ghost's giving a minister a text from, and out of which, his message is to be derived; I believe the gentle power, with which the Holy Spirit lays such texts on the mind; the confidence with which the mind lays hold of such texts, the enlightening, quickening and expanding influence which they have upon the soul, in these and in many other particulars, there is a secret, a special, a soul humbling—soul comforting power accompanying the teaching of the Holy Spirit, the nature of which "none but him that feels it knows." Now, then, it is for such a peculiar application and opening up of a text or portion of Scripture that the true servant of Christ waits for. He can have no rest in his soul, (if he has to preach) until the blessed Spirit brings him his message. And it is in this matter that the sovereignty of the Spirit is so clearly to be seen. Sometimes the blessed Spirit brings a precious portion of the word with much softness, sweetness, and sanctifying power into the soul for days before the message has to be delivered, and the soul of the faithful minister goes on drinking deeper and deeper into the sweet mystery of divine truth until he becomes like a bottle ready to burst, and longs for the time to come when he can

empty out, set forth, and deliver the communications which have been made unto him. At other times he goes on searching the word, crying to God at the throne of grace; but no answer, no message, no deliverance can he obtain; the Bible is full of precious words, but none of them lay hold of him, neither can he lay hold of them; and the trial, to a living, watchful, careful minister now becomes exceedingly severe. Now it is that the enemy will harass him, tempt him, lay plots to ensnare and deceive his soul, and if grace prevent not, there will be an insulting of the Holy Ghost by turning and seeking to refuges which God and a tender conscience strictly prohibit. Ah, methinks many a dear soul could tell us of the agony, the conflict, the bitter sorrow of which, in their closets, they have been the subjects, and which no eye but the eye of God has witnessed. I must defer until my next, any further remarks: and am your's truly, C. W. B.

## THE TESTIMONY OF LIVING WITNESSES

CONCERNING THE REALITY OF AN

INWROUGHT CONVICTION OF SIN—INWARD SENTENCE OF DEATH—  
A SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST—AND A GOOD HOPE THROUGH  
GRACE OF ETERNAL GLORY.

THE following letter the Lord was pleased to bless unto my soul in a very special manner. And I believe there is that vital truth—and such features of a living experience in it, as will also be of some comfort to others. Therefore I have no hesitation in giving it nearly verbatim as it came to me. Under the above heading I purpose, if spared and permitted, to give many others, which I am constantly receiving; and which, I believe, bespeak the feelings of hearts and consciences purged, pardoned, and accepted in Christ.

Dear Brother Banks,

Your's of Saturday I received this morning, on my return from Chapel, where, through the Lord's tender mercy, surely I may say, I received a real token for good; my soul was humbled in the dust under a feeling sense of the Lord's goodness to me, as a poor helpless, lost, ruined, and loathsome sinner. Your discourse He was pleased to own to the confirming of my soul, that its experience was the result of His mighty power yea, I felt inclined to believe, that (after all,) my name was certainly written in heaven. Oh, beloved, we well know that if our names are not there, Christ is not on our side, and if He is not on my side, oh what an awful state I am in, I shall be as sure to be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone as that God is God. Is it any wonder then that I should be jealous of my experience? Oh! no; I want the dear Lord to tell me plainly, that my sins were the cause of His sweating, as it were, great drops of blood in Gethsemany's garden; that He groaned on Calvary's precious cross for my abominable conduct; yea, that He was smitten on His blessed mouth for my filthy conversation. Oh, my soul seems to feel, at times, that if he tell me not this, every thing else is unsatisfactory, and therefore feels as if it must pine away and die; but surely underneath me

are His everlasting arms of love and mercy, for at times I am favoured to peep my head above the waters, and then all is well; and then I can say, bless the Lord, oh my soul, which I was favoured to do this morning, in which I arose, after a mighty conflict with unbelief and satanic suggestion, with (as Bunyan has it) a wound in my head, hand, and foot. Oh! those enemies are not satisfied with tormenting me in the day-time, but they must come to me in the night, when deep sleep is upon my tabernacle:—they, last night, presented to my view a man walking on the seas, with whom I had a little converse, and when I had, as I thought, discovered him only a mere man, then the enemy said, “Now don’t you see that Jesus might have walked on the waters, and yet not be God; for this man, who is a sinner, can do so? You have seen him not only walk on them, but run and jump on them also. Is not this a proof that your religion is a delusion?—depend upon it you are deceived; and observe another proof of it. You have, as you know, a very weak mind. Now if there was any power in religion, that would keep you faithful; but instead thereof, you are like a mad-man,—now look at that act of your’s, what did it produce? nothing, you know, except proving that you are a maniac, and some day you will certainly go to a mad-house. Religion is a mere notion, which if a man get it into his head, it will be subject to the powers of his natural mind; if he should have a strong mind, like Paul’s, he will be confident, and act accordingly; but in a weak mind like your’s, or Ruben’s, the effect will be otherwise.”

Thus, as near as I can tell, have I quoted the words and spoken out the substance of another dream, by which I was driven to my wits-end, even after waking therefrom. Oh! I felt myself bereft of every savory thought, and half inclined to believe I was going mad; but the words of Micah vii. 8, came into my mind, and brought me upon my knees, and I was enabled to lay the whole before the Lord, and I certainly obtained a little help, and my soul was comforted a little; but when you read that portion of scripture, “Fear not, nor be dismayed: for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the Lord:” then I had joy and peace. Having therefore obtained help of the Lord, join with me to bless His dear name, for I believe He will yet deliver me from the terror by night, from the arrow that flyeth by day, from the pestilence that walketh in darkness, and from the destroyer that wasteth at noon-day, and to His name shall be all the glory, for I cannot get out of the whale’s belly myself, therefore do not afflict my soul any more, speaking, as you do sometimes, as if it was my fault that I was so soon shaken. Would I not gladly come forth into the field of battle if I could? Oh, yes; but I want the dear Lord to equip me for the war, then I shall have a good conscience, a willing mind, the sword of the Spirit, the shield of faith, and for an helmet the hope of salvation. C. C.

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“WHAT ARE THE THINGS WHICH DISTINGUISH THE REAL  
CONFIDENCE OF FAITH FROM THE VAIN CONFIDENCE  
OF PRESUMPTION?”

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THE above important query will be found at the close of the following letter. My faithful and esteemed friend who wrote the letter has, no doubt, concluded that I am careless of his friendship and his corres-

pondence too, seeing I have never, up to the present moment, returned him any answer. It is not so; but my labours, in providing for a heavy family—in speaking five or six times a-week—and above all, the too-frequent darkness of my mind—and the inward sadness of my spirit, seem to prevent me from writing as I could wish.

I insert the letter itself—for three reasons. Because

1. It shews the kindness of our heavenly Father in providing for the spiritual wants of His scattered sheep. “I will,” He says, “give them pastors after my own heart.” And this promise he is faithfully fulfilling. Let the present destitute churches who “hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” take courage—let them look up to the dear Lord for direction—and let them use the proper means for making known their lack of service in the administration of truth, and they may hope to be heard and answered too. There is no lack of Gospel preachers. London abounds with them: and some of them—(I mean men who do really preach the *doctrines* of the Gospel and say something about a living experience; some of these) are so zealous for—ah! I do not know *what* they are zealous for, and therefore will not say—God knoweth—“the Judge standeth at the door,”—but at any rate, their hearts are so set upon the ministry, that because no “necessity is laid upon them,” they will fain lay a necessity on themselves, by hiring places to preach in and inviting people to come to hear. Well, if their eye be single—if God’s glory be sought—God’s truth proclaimed—God’s dear Son exalted—His people comforted—and sinners converted—I will therein rejoice. And by the help of my God will gladly give place to any man on whom such honour shall be conferred. But besides the many zealous ones who will gladly run, whether the people will hear them or not, there are a few good old souls whose mouths the Lord hath opened; whose labours the Lord hath blessed; and who count it their greatest joy to tell out what He reveals and works within when an effectual door is opened to them by the hand of God.

2. I have inserted the letter because of the deeply important distinction made between “the ministration of the word,” and the “effectual ministration of the Spirit;” and

3. In the hope that its perusal might be profitable to some part of the family; and as also that there might be among them one or more who, being instructed in these heavenly mysteries, might be moved to give an answer to the query herewith connected.

“Esteemed Christian Friend,

“I would endeavour, in some brief manner, to reply to your enquiries at the close of your note, as to “How we fare in the ministry of the word, &c.” If you mean the outward preaching of the Word by God’s sent servants, it is somewhat as follows:—The Lord has been graciously pleased to establish the ministration of the Gospel at Zion Chapel, Bra-bourne, by means of Brother Skelton having taken the ‘oversight’ of the little flock, and we have cause to conclude that his God has been, is now, and still will be with him, in dispensing the ‘truth as it is in Jesus’ amongst us as a church and people: we have been thus favoured ever since September, 1844: how long it may remain so, is a matter known only to God; for my own part I do heartily wish and desire it may be the will of our covenant God to continue his ministration amongst us, and that because I do feel firmly persuaded in my own mind that the truths which he is enabled to declare and maintain are the only things

which make for the glory of God, and the spiritual edification and welfare of His church and people. But the question 'How do you fare in the ministration of the Word,' seems to admit of a closer definition, or more positive and personal reply; for instance, I am wont to call that the 'ministration of the Word' which is effectually and immediately accomplished by the almighty and irresistible agency of the Holy Ghost. But, taking the question in this peculiar sense, I feel far less disposed to reply, than in the other; for I sometimes think, that were I immediately under the overshadowing of the Comforter as the only *efficient* minister, things would be very far different with me than they really are at present. But, however, this I feel assured of, that all the outward means of grace, even the preaching of the Gospel itself, will prove ineffectual, unless the Spirit takes of the things which are of Christ and opens them up to my soul, and this, I trust, He has done for me, a sinful worm, in days past, and caused my soul to rejoice in a precious Christ.

"Still further, it appears by the latter part of your question, you are determined to put matters into close quarters with me, for you ask if 'the good will of God is to be seen;' and I suppose I must take this in a two-fold sense, as well as the other. First, then, taking it to mean thus much, 'Is it evidently made manifest that God is blessing or prospering the cause of truth at Brabourne?' In answering this question, it appears necessary to refer to some particulars relative to Brother Skelton's appearing amongst us as a minister sent of God, and leave you to form some idea as to whether 'the good will of God is seen' in the event. I take it for granted you are aware that Brother J. has been removed from Brabourne for a considerable time,—that the little flock was left as without an under shepherd: in consequence of this, various means were resorted to by the church, and one, among the rest, was to publish the case on the wrapper of the Gospel Standard, which it does appear was the means of bringing our present pastor amongst us, although the many difficulties which appeared to present themselves did, for a time, seem insurmountable.

"However, these difficulties being removed, an invitation was sent to Brother Skelton, which he accepted, and preached at Brabourne the first time on the 1st of September, 1844, and his message being approved by the church, after one month's trial, a further invitation was given him to take the pastoral office, which has been continued from that time: how far the 'good will of God' may be seen in this remarkable event of providence, I must leave to your consideration. Now I desire to reply to this enquiry in a sense more particular, namely, 'is the good will of God seen with you?' Oh, my soul, here is a close question indeed to answer: and what must I understand, or rather what must I not understand, by this extensive term, 'good will of God'—surely it must imply every thing that is blessed in earth or heaven: and here methinks is a searching enquiry: Am I in possession of this good thing which cannot be taken away? Is Christ formed in my heart the hope of glory? Is Jesus visiting my soul with the visits of His everlasting love, and causing my soul to go out after Him in holy and heavenly affection, as the only object of my eternal delight? Oh that this was the case,—then, indeed, could I answer this question in the affirmative, and say with one, 'good is the Word of the Lord,' even the uncreated 'Word that was made flesh,' inasmuch as he is all my salvation and all my desire; I would know no other name but Jesus and him crucified.

"Following your example, I conclude this epistle by proposing a question which presented itself to my mind a few days since:—'What are the

things that distinguish the *real* confidence of faith in the believer, from the *vain* confidence of presumption ?

“Your’s for the truth’s sake, J. M.”

#### THE LIVING SOUL CASTING FORTH ITS ANCHORS.

ST. PAUL, in his account of the voyage in the 27th of the Acts, says:—“When they had gone a little further, they sounded again, and found it fifteen fathoms. Then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks, they cast four anchors out of the stern, and wished for the day.” There are four sweet features of Divine life in the soul in these words:—

1. *Progression*—“they went a little further”—and instead of finding a greater depth of water, they found it more shallow: instead of finding a greater depth of inward holiness, deeper abounding of heavenly comfort, and a feeling meetness for glory—experience seems more shallow—love seems more cold—zeal seems more weak—and faith almost expiring: nevertheless, the righteous shall hold on his way: the just shall live by faith: and though the messenger of Satan shall be permitted to buffet, the thorn in the flesh permitted to plague the living soul, GRACE SHALL BE SUFFICIENT, and Jehovah’s strength made perfect in the believer’s weakness.

2. The shallowness of the water gave rise to fear: “then fearing lest we should have fallen upon rocks.” It is impossible but that a feeling sense of *inward leanness*—inward barrenness, and a lack of spiritual nourishment and joy in the soul, will give rise to fear. Solomon says—“When wisdom entereth *into* thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul,”—then “discretion shall preserve thee; understanding shall keep thee.” “My son,” says he, “eat thou honey, because it is good: and the honeycomb, which is sweet to thy taste: so shall the knowledge of wisdom be unto thy soul: *when thou hast found it*, then there shall be a reward, and thy expectation shall not be cut off.” These words most beautifully prove two things: first, that a living soul labours to realize and to possess an inward enjoyment of Christ, as the Honey of the Gospel; and also pants for a faith’s view of its eternal interest and abidance in the covenant of grace, the honeycomb of God’s everlasting purpose: secondly, where these things are obtained there is a rich reward; where they are wanting there is poverty and distress.

3. The shallowness of the water, not only gave rise to fear, but led to the casting forth of four anchors out of the stern. The labours of a living soul are called forth in proportion to the dangers to which it seems to be exposed. Godly fear and spiritual jealousy is the first anchor which the soul (by a divine power) sends forth: soul-wrestling prayer unto God for grace, for pardon, for power and for salvation, is a second anchor which the believer throws out: simple faith in the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ, is a third: and resignation to the sovereign will of God, is the fourth.

These divine powers—godly fear; vital prayer; genuine faith; and resignation, are wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit himself; “In their affliction,” saith the Lord, “*they will seek me early.*”

4. It is said—“*and they wished for the day.*” When Balaam saw that it pleased the Lord to bless Israel, he set his face toward the wilderness—the reprobate and dead professor will fall away in time of trouble. But Paul tells you the godly feeling of a living soul: “None of these things move me: neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might FINISH MY COURSE WITH JOY, and the ministry which I received of the Lord Jesus.” Hail, thou mighty man of God—thanks to the Spirit of all truth for having left this testimony upon record; and, again, I say, thanks to the Blessed Spirit, for having given us to desire above all things—that his exhortation to the Corinthian church might be fulfilled in us—“be ye steadfast, unmoveable, ALWAYS ABOUNDING in the work of the Lord.” Holding forth the word of life—“forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.”

The following letter seems to breath these various feelings and actings of a living soul. The writer must forgive me for inserting it here.

“ Dear Sir,

“ I received your kind and welcome letter on Sunday morning, and it being unexpected made it appear all the sweeter. It is true that I had been watching to see if you said anything about it, but when I found you did not, the conclusion I came to was, that you thought it was not worth your while to trouble yourself about it, and I thought that I surely must be an hypocrite; but when I began to read your letter, and saw that you styled me christian friend, I was astonished; and then that hated enemy, pride, began to come in—oh, how I hate it; but, for all that, it seems my constant companion; and I think I never felt its power more than I have this week. I would be humble, and I wish it from my heart; but that detested pride is with me in every place, and I really think that I see more and more of the sin and corruption that dwell in me daily. I could not have thought that such wickedness was in the heart of any one as there is in mine. For some years previous to the time which I mentioned, when I was brought to feel such a hungering after Christ, I used to feel that it was no good my saying over a lot of formal prayers, and I used to pray to God to make me feel that I was a sinner, and that He would have mercy upon me, and that I might pray to Him in sincerity and truth; but these feelings, though never entirely banished, used to wear away. Until the time that I was brought to see that there was no one on earth in whom confidence could be put: my whole affections had been entirely placed on an idol, but I proved that mortal’s words are as the wind; but though I found it, as yet it did not alter my affection, until the Lord saw fit, by death to take the object from me, and who, I believe, is landed safe in glory. I thought when this idol was gone, that I should have nothing to take my attention from the Lord, and that I could seek Him with my whole heart; but, alas! alas! I have lived to prove that it is not only one idol, but an abundance of them, of various kinds, and drive them out I cannot,—I am well assured it is none but the Lord can do it. I have



often thought I would not care how wretched I felt, or how my sins stared me in the face, if it did but bring me near to Christ, so as to feel a love and a union to Him. I think, if I could but feel this, I should be more satisfied as to my standing in Him; but, instead of this, at times I feel myself altogether the other way; and if I attempt to utter a few words, I can express myself in no other way, than it is like being in a fog—there seems such a thickness and a mist between me and that which I wish to obtain, that, I assure you, I often have approached with a sigh—for it seems to me as if I never should get near to Him. I used to think when I first felt an hungering after Him, that it seemed very hard that what I wished for so earnestly, which was for the Lord to reveal himself to me, I could not obtain. I thought, at that time, I never could be in a worse state than I was then; but I have since found, that to feel as I did then, is a treat; for I have since then felt as much coldness, worldly mindedness, and indifference to anything of a spiritual nature, that I really prize those times when I felt spiritual hunger, and when the least crumb came sweet. I have felt it once more, and that has been since I have sat under your ministry. All last Summer I was like an outcast, wandering about, having no settled place to go to. \* \* \* I used to go from place to place, and seldom was it that I got any comfort. I heard you spoken of by a relative, who knows the truth, and I thought that I would go and hear you, which I did, but got nothing. I went again and again, but returned sorrowing, without it was a word now and then, until that Sunday when you spoke from “*Say unto them that are of a fearful heart be strong.*” You then brought forward all my feelings, that I could not help shedding tears of joy and thankfulness; but, after that, I thought I was an hypocrite, and had taken hold of it when it was not for me, and it only suited my case by chance;—but this I can say, I would rather have one day of the Lord’s presence than an hundred with worldly companions—it is a treat, I assure you, to feel the least softening of heart; and I can say with sincerity, that I dread the thought of returning to my old state: when I feel it in the least, I fear being left alone without having the fear of the Lord in my heart. There is another thing that troubles me, and that is, instead of the Bible being a book of delight unto me, it is quite the reverse; and I often feel that I would rather take up any other than that; and to my shame, I confess it, that I at times feel vexed when I see another person take it up; but how I hate myself for the thought; and such evil thoughts I feel working within, that I often wish I could fly from them, and feel ready to smite myself on the account.”

E. B.

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#### HE WILL REGARD THE PRAYER OF THE DESTITUTE.

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“ My dear Brother in Jesus,

“ About four hours have elapsed since I put down my pen, and I had nearly concluded that this was not to be the epistle you were to have; but, in my grief, I have been looking over John Bunyan’s experience and he says, in his ‘*Grace abounding to the chief of Sinners,*’ that he was much exercised in his mind as to whether religion altogether was not something that any man might learn of another, and whether it was not a course of feelings peculiar to those people who lived in his day, so the thought that if he could find any man of God that was exercised like him ‘*in some particular respects,*’ some centuries before he lived, it would be a

source of comfort to him, and he happened to lay hold of one of Luther's works, and there he found his own portrait. Now just so it was with me this day: I was looking into John Bunyan for a corresponding feature of my experience, and found that his wants exactly corresponded with mine; so that Luther, Bunyan, and unworthy I, all shook hands together. But methinks I hear my brother say, it would have been better for you to have resorted to your Bible, than to go searching after dead men's brains; be that as it may, I can assure you I have had much reason to bless God for those who being dead, yet speak. But as I am come to my last side of paper, and not said half of what I wanted, I must hasten:—I have a course of experience belonging to me, which none but God himself can satisfy; and I cry and groan, but can get no answer; and am feelingly brought to say, that (though in the depths,) my soul waiteth for the Lord. Oh, my dear brother, who can tell the heart-rendings that the soul feels when it is brought into that place with the prophet, '*I cry and shout, but he shutteth out my prayer,*' and '*when the heavens are as brass;*' but, at this moment, I feel the tear of contrition starting into my eye, and I feel that I *desire* to count all things but dung and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus. My dear brother, you will, doubtless, think this a confused jargon of words, but the Lord will do all His pleasure; and if the Lord chooses to make use of clay to restore sight, or His own voice to raise the dead, or his finger to fasten on the high priest's servant's ear, it mattereth not to you and I, so long as he gives us sight, or raises us from the dead—for this is the point I am brought to, viz., that religion is a personal thing,—your experience is of no use to me only so far as it corresponds with mine, and then two can walk together; but the time must come when union and communion with the saints must cease, and neither will do in each other's stead, and then we shall want to realize, what we desire now to feel:—

' Bold shall I stand in that great day,  
For who ought to my charge shall lay;  
Fully through thee absolved I am,  
From sin and guilt, from fear and shame.'

" May the dear Lord lead your mind to ask Him to support me in the furnace of affliction, and to make himself known to me in ties of *love and blood*; and enable me to groan for you in that manner that words cannot utter. And now, with commending you to the care of Him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his Father with exceeding great joy, your unworthy brother concludes, leaving himself and all that he has in His dear care, who is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind, and thus he desires to remain

" Your's to serve for Jesus' sake, till time shall be  
no more with him. J. W."

#### THE CROSS AND THE CROWN.

" Dear Banks,

" Your note yesterday burdened me in measure, *for your sake*. The servant of God *must not* strive, '*save for the mastery.*' Be patient, my brother, '*for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*' Oh! the deliverance that shall be given to the children who now groan! Groan on, press on, and if not able to see thy way to the kingdom, feel thy way. He that is to come will come—the dark and mysterious path through which thou art called to tread, shall only make the peaceful haven of a Saviour's breast more to be desired—longed after. Pharaoh *must* pursue—Shimei *must*

curse—Judas *must* plot—and, as a member of thy Saviour's body, rest assured, once for all, every stroke shall draw thee more out of self, and make Christ's strength more precious to thy never-dying soul.

“Your's affectionately, W.”

“THE EARTH HELPED THE WOMAN.”

April 3, 1845.

“My dear Brother,

\* \* \* \* \* “While thinking of your trials, both last evening and this morning, many things have been passing through my mind in connection with our heavenly Father's dealings with his favourites in ages past; and believing that you are better acquainted with some of these things than myself, I should not have taken upon myself to have written to you, but for a pressure on my mind, which led me to hope that the Lord may intend to bless some one word or more towards supporting you in fighting the good fight of faith: the Lord grant this.

Oft' have we seen the tempest rise,  
The world and Satan, hell and sin,  
Like mountains, seem'd to reach the skies,  
With scarce a gleam of hope between.

But

We are travelling home to God,  
In the way *the fathers* trod;

And

Jesus Christ, the Father's Son,  
Bids you undismayed go on.

Two things (with many others) were presented to my mind while thinking of you: the first, Elijah under the juniper tree, and Gideon's expression—“Oh, my Lord, if the Lord be with us, why then has all this befallen us?” &c. The contemplation of the dealings of God towards his favourite servant Elijah, has often proved a comfort to me in time of trouble. The humiliating circumstances of being fed, and by unclean birds, and the trial of faith in the drying up of the brook when he had the promise that he should drink of it,—then the relief from this trying state,—a command to travel across the sandy desert,—to be sustained amongst idolaters by a poor widow woman,—these were strange leadings towards one, whose privilege it was to look around on all things, and say, my Father made them all; but, under the juniper tree, his faith was sunk down,—he was under a cloud,—he had really feared he should be killed,—and was, doubtless, so disappointed, that the Lord had not blessed his message to the conversion of the people, that he was much like Jonah, who did well to be angry, and wished to die, being dissatisfied with God's ways, which were not his ways. The Lord said to Job, “should it be according to thy mind?” Well, Elijah wisely went into the wilderness, and laid himself under a juniper tree. And there is a tree, my brother,—I mean that tree on Calvary, which we do well to sit at the foot of, when we are tried and burdened,—no place like it to get rid of our burden; for while we are helped to look at His sorrows, we forget our own, which are not to be compared with His. May the Lord give you a fresh view of that mighty transaction by which the curse, and, indeed, our sins, were rolled away for ever and ever. I shall conclude with this sweet promise: “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.”

“Believe me, your affectionate brother,

J. B.”

## THE VALLEY OF ACHOR.

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NOT long since, I received an anonymous letter from a friend, who expressed himself somewhat surprised that there should be so much mystery—so much hiding up, of THE CAUSE of all my sorrow, degradation, and apparent ruin. I would simply ask, “wherein is anything like mystery to be found?” In the “Warning Voice,” and in “The Tree Cut Down,” I have fully told out the nature of the sin under the dreadful power of which I fell. In the first and second parts of this work, I have briefly reviewed the painful consequences: my departure from Canterbury: my misery at Bolton: and my subsequent return to London. And while, on the one hand, I have no delight in, nor any desire to dwell upon these things; on the other hand, I do not think it right that my enemies should have the opportunity tauntingly to say—“he has told you all that he considers to be favourable, but the black spots in the history are craftily hidden.” No, no, the truth, the whole truth, and, I trust, nothing but the truth, shall be exhibited. If the testimony of an aged servant of God be correct—who hesitates not to declare that I am still deceived, still under the power of sin, and consequently only beguiling those who receive me as a pardoned vessel of mercy; if, I say, there be any ground for such an assertion as his, let us again, more carefully, and I would add, more prayerfully, more jealously, retrace the steps: search out, as far as in us lay, the dreadful workings of sin, and then, by the help of God, inquire—“where, in the midst of all this death, are the evidences of life, and of God’s delivering power?” Certainly it was an horrible pit; and the more I reflect upon the determined wickedness of my heart—the more I am constrained to believe that through the whole, the secret, protecting power of God was with me. I have nowhere said, that in the course of a very few days after my arrival at Bolton, a dear brother in the faith followed me, bringing with him my poor wife, and the two dear boys I had left behind. Some exceedingly erroneous statements connected with this part of my career, have been circulated; I shall not, however, stop to notice them. The event to which I have just referred, filled me with many rebellious feelings, inasmuch as it was directly opposed to the purpose of my mind, I having resolved to spend the remainder of my days in a solitary and secluded state: but in that one step taken by my dear friends, I now clearly see the good hand of a kind, a faithful, a merciful God. So sunken, however, was I in hardness and rebellion notwithstanding all the remorse, condemnation, and sorrow which I was the subject of, I was secretly and sorely tempted to poison the partner of my life. Oh, what a dreadful monster is man when left to the power of that great ad-

versary of our souls ! In being preserved from this—and from a thousand other evils which might then have befallen me, I do desire to acknowledge the boundless mercy of the eternal God.

And when I now look around, and see the sparing hand of God, in preserving us ; in raising us up, and, above all, in pardoning, and making use of me in his Church, I am really ashamed of the ingratitude and too frequent hardness of my stony heart.

Having, in a former part of my narrative, noticed my return to London, I need not go over that ground again. It is laid upon my conscience, however, to say a word or two with reference to an assertion which a minister of the gospel has taken upon himself to make. He declares, that if it had been possible, I should have continued in my sin ; and, that it was not until the death of the party rendered it impossible, that I made any pretensions to a return. Had not this assertion been made by an acknowledged servant of God, and by him carried round to some who are among my dearest friends, it would have received no notice here : but as I can, I feel I must give it a flat denial. In doing so, I must mention two circumstances ; both of which are painful, but they are facts which will prove the falseness of the above mentioned assertion. Soon after the arrival of my family in Bolton, I received a letter from the party who was the cause of all our misery, urging upon me the necessity of an immediate interview in London ; my circumstances, however, compelled me to abandon any such idea ; but, another request, more urgent than the first, accompanied with sufficient to bear my expenses, and appealing most powerfully to my natural feelings, prevailed ; and I left Bolton with all its external miseries, carrying with me those inward horrors which threw a mantel of blackness and sorrow over all I passed through. I arrived in London ; the interview took place ; every argument and inducement that could be advanced, was employed ; and, but for a fire kept up in my conscience, I should have acceded ; I should have cast away every natural tie ; and have given myself over to utter ruin. It was an hour of awful trial ; to return, was to return to a scene of misery and woe ; and, it might be, the scene of murder and self-destruction ; to abide where I then stood—or, in any way to accede to the terms proposed, was to strengthen the flame of horror already burning within me. I dare not, I could not pray, but strength was given ; I rejected every other prospect, and returned to my family, my business, and to my secret distress of mind. I have other circumstances to adduce in proof of my position in the next part of this work. The whole should have been given here, but I could get no heart to enter upon this dismal part of my story until the sheet was nearly filled—and the whole ready to go to press.

THE AWFUL CONSEQUENCES OF EMBRACING THE  
FAITH OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH,  
AS SEEN IN THE DREADFUL APOSTACY AND DEATH OF  
FRANCIS SPIRA.

BEING THE CONCLUSION OF  
GOD HOLDING BACK THE FACE OF HIS THRONE,  
AND SPREADING HIS CLOUD UPON IT.

“He holdeth back the face of His throne and spreadeth His cloud upon it.”—JOB xxvi. 9.

WHAT the face of his throne is, and that it is eternally held back from all who stand not in a living, vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ, I have already shewn: but as I did purpose to say a word about that awful man Francis Spira, in proof of the position then laid down, namely, that the face of God's throne is solemnly held back from finally impenitent men; so I do herewith give a faithful record from a well authenticated edition of his sorrowful life and awful death which I have in my possession. The biographer of this Francis Spira tells us that he lived in the 16th century; that he was a civil lawyer, an advocate of great rank and esteem: a man of great experience; of carriage grave and circumspect: a countenance sharp and austere; every way befitting that authority whereunto he was advanced. At about forty years of age he became enamoured with the great doctrines of the reformation as preached by Luther: and at length a preacher of them; the leading features of his ministry, which lasted about six years, were “the free, unchangeable love of God, in the death of Christ, as the only sure way to salvation.” Spira's religion, however, was of an outward kind and character. He was never quickened in his soul; the blood of atonement never purged his conscience: the grace of God never brought salvation unto him; wherefore in time of temptation he fell away, and denied the faith.

Ah, my reader, the thing to be feared is this, that the zeal, the faith, the religion, of thousands in this Gospel preaching day, is based upon no better foundation, is grounded in no greater power, springs from no more holy root than did the faith, the zeal, the eloquence, and the preachments of even Spira himself.

It appears that Spira's oratory, influence, and zeal exasperated the Romish clergy against him; who, finding their trade of pardons to decay, assailed him first, with grievous accusations, and secondly, with bribes, promises of great emolument, and craft, devices, whereby, after much floating to and fro in his own mind, he began to consult with flesh and blood, upon which in came Satan to advise with him upon so great a matter. “Dost thou not consider,” said the enemy of his soul, “that by thy rashness, and zeal against the Romish church, thou wilt lose all thy substance; will have to un-

dergo exquisite torments ; he cast into the loathsome dungeon, and ultimately burnt by fire and faggot?— Thus did the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, choke him : he yields to the allurements presented to him, and being blinded and hardened by sin, and driven by the wicked one, he goes to the legatee, and publicly announces his renunciation of the Protestant faith in the following terms :—

“ Having for these divers years entertained an opinion concerning some articles of faith, contrary to the orthodox, and received judgment of the church, and uttered many things against the authority of the church of Rome, and the universal Bishop, I humbly acknowledge my fault and error, and my folly in misleading others ; I therefore yield myself in all obedience to the supreme Bishop, into the bosom of the church of Rome, never to depart from the tradition and decrees of the holy sec. I am heartily sorry for what is past, and humbly beg pardon for so great an offence.”

This confession of Spira's was drawn in writing, and made public, declaring that the Lutherean and Protestant doctrines which he had held and preached were false and heretical. Upon this, his conscience quickly called him to account : no sooner had he in the midst of about two thousand persons openly declared his infamous recantation, and paid down the fine of thirty pieces of gold, which the Romish church demanded of him—no sooner, I say, had he done this, and departed from the assembly, than a voice spoke to him, saying “ Thou wicked wretch ; thou hast denied me ; thou hast renounced the covenant of thy obedience ; hence apostate, bear with thee, the sentence of thy eternal damnation.” Spira now declared that he was under the revenging hand of God ; that he heard continually the fearful sentence of Christ ; that he knew he was utterly undone, and that he could never hope for grace, nor the intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, how close an assimilarity in appearance, there may be between the natural convictions and confessions of an unregenerate man, and that of a real child of God, may be seen in the following account of Spira's state of mind, after his recantation.

Spira being filled with melancholy a near approach to madness itself, all his friends agreed to use both the wholesome help of physicians, and the pious advice of the Divines ; and therefore thought it meet to convey him to Padua, an university of note, where plenty of all manner of means was to be had : this they accordingly did, with his wife, and children and whole family ; others also of his friends accompanying him, and being arrived at the house of one James Ardin, in St. Leonard's parish, they sent for three eminent Physicians, who upon due observation of the effects, and of other symptoms of his disease, and some private conference one with another, amongst themselves, returned their verdict in this manner, namoly : That they could not discern that his body was afflicted with any danger or distemper originally from itself, by reason of the over-ruling of any humour ; but that this malady of his did arise from some grief or passion of his mind ; which being over burthened, did so oppress the spirits ; as they

wanted free passage, stirred up many ill humours, whereof the body of the man is full; and these ascending up into the brain, troubled the fancy, shadowed the seat of the judgment, and so corrupted it. This was the state of his disease, and that outward part that was visible to the eye of nature; this they endeavoured to reform by purgation, either to consume, or at least to divert the course of those humours from the brain; but all their skill effected nothing, upon which Spira said, "Alas poor man! how far wide are you! do you think this disease is to be cured by potions? Believe me, there must be another manner of medicine; it is neither plaister nor drugs that can help a fainting soul cast down with the sense of sin, and wrath of God;" 'tis only Christ that must be the Physician, and the Gospel the soul's antidote.

The Physicians easily believed him, after they had understood the whole truth of the matter, and therefore they wished him to seek some spiritual comfort. By this time the fame of this man was spread over all Padua, and the neighbouring country, partly for that he was a man of esteem; because as the disease, so the occasion was especially remarkable; for this was not done in a corner; so as daily there came multitudes of all sorts to see him; some out of curiosity, only to see and discourse; some out of a pious desire to try all means that might reduce him to comfort again: or at least to benefit themselves by a spectacle of misery, and of the justice of God. Among these Paulus Vergerius, bishop of Justinopolis, and Mattheus Gribauidus, deserve especially to be named as the most principal labourers for this man's comfort. They find him now about fifty years of age, neither affected with the dotage of old age, nor with the unconstant head strong passion of youth, but in the strength of his experience and judgment; in a heat, calling excessively for drink, yet his understanding active, quick of apprehension, witty in discourse, above his ordinary manner, and judiciously apposite; his friends laboured with him by all fair means to receive nourishment, which he obstinately gain-saying, they forcibly infused some liquid sustenance into his mouth, most of which he spit out again, exceedingly chafing; and in this fretting mood of his, said, "as it is true all things work for the best to those that love God, so to the wicked all are contrary: for whereas a plentiful offspring is the blessing of God, and his reward, being a stay to the weak estate of their aged parents, to me they are a cause of bitterness and vexation, they do strive to make me tire out this life: I would fain be at an end; I deserve not this dealing at their hands; Oh! that I were gone from hence, that some body would let out this weary soul.

Among the many most astounding proofs on record of the dreadful tortures of conscience which this Spira endured, I quote the following:—A friend said to Spira, Dear sir, here is Dr. Gribauidus, a godly and faithful friend of yours, come to see you. He is welcome, said he, but he shall find me ill. Gribauidus replied, Sir, this is but an illusion of the devil, who doth what he can to vex you; but turn you to God with your whole heart, and he is ready to show you mercy, the Lord you know, is full of mercy, it is he



that hath said, that as often as a sinner shall repent of his sin, he will remember his sin no more. Consider this in the example of Peter, that was Christ's familiar, and apostle, denied him thrice, and for all that did not God graciously respect him in the last minute of his life? Is the Lord's hand now shortened, that it cannot save? To this Spira answered "If Peter grieved and repented, it was because Christ beheld him with a merciful eye, and in that he was pardoned, it was not because he wept, but because God was gracious to him. But God respects not me, and therefore I am a reprobate, I feel no comfort can enter into my heart; there's place there only for torments and vexings of Spirit; I tell you my case is properly mine own; man was never in the like condition, and therefore my state is fearful." Then roaring out in the bitterness of his spirit, said "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. The violence of his passion and action suitable, did amaze many of the beholders: insomuch, as some of them said with whispering voices, that he was possessed; he over-hearing it, said, do you doubt it? I have a whole legion of devils which take up their dwelling in me, and possess me as their own; and justly too, for I have denied Christ. Did you it willingly, or not? (said they,) that's nothing to the purpose, said Spira; Christ saith, whosoever denies me before men him will I deny before my Father which is in heaven. Christ will not be denied, no not in a word; and therefore it is enough though in heart I never denied him.

They observing that distemper arise from the sense and horror of the pains of hell; asked him, if he thought there were worse pains than he endured at the present; he said, "that he knew there were for worse pains than those that he had suffered, for the wicked shall rise to their Judgment, but they shall not stand in Judgment, Psalm 1. This I tremble to think of; yet I do desire nothing more, than that I might come to that place where I may be sure to feel the worst, and to be freed from fear of worse to come.

Ay, but you are to consider, (said one) that those opinions, for which you were accused before the Legate, were impious, therefore you are not to think you denied Christ, but rather, that you confessed him, acknowledging the infallible truth of the Catholick church. "Truly (said he) when I did deny those opinions, I did think them to be true, and yet I did deny them."

Go now then, (said others) and believe that they are true. Now I cannot (said he) God will not suffer me to believe them, nor trust in his mercy; what would you have me to do? I would fain attain to this power, but cannot, though I should presently be burnt for it. But, why do you (said another) esteem this so great a sin, when as the learned Legate constrained you to it; which surely he would not have done, if your former opinions be not erroneous? No, good Francis, the devil besets thee; let not the grievousness of thy sin (if any such thing be) amaze thee. "You say right (replied he) the devil hath possess me, and God has left me to his power; for I find I can neither believe the Gospel, nor trust in God's mercy; I have sinned against the Holy Ghost, and God by his immutable decree hath bound me over to perpetual punishment, without any

hope of pardon. Its true, that the greatness of sins, not the multitude of them, bind not God's mercy; all those sins, that in the former part of my life I have committed, then did not so much trouble me; for I trusted God would not lay them to my charge: Now having sinned against the Holy Ghost, God hath taken away from me all power of repentance, and brings all my sins to remembrance; and guilty of one, guilty of all. And therefore it is no matter whether my sins be great or small, few or many; they be such as Christ's blood, nor God's mercy belongs not to me: God will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. This is it that gnaws my heart, he hath hardened me; and I find that he daily more and more doth harden me, and therefore I am out of hope; I feel it, therefore cannot but despair: I tell you there never was such a monster as I am; never was any man alive, such a spectacle of exceeding misery. I know justification is to be expected by Christ, and I denied and adjured it, to the end I might keep this frail life from adversity, and my children from poverty; and behold how bitter this life is to me; and God only knows what shall become of this my family; but sure no good is like to betide it; but worse and worse; and such a ruin at length, as one stone shall not be left upon another." But why should you (said Gribauldus) conceit so deeply of your sin, seeing you cannot but know, that many have denied Christ, yet never fell into despair?

"Well I can see no ground of comfort for such, neither can I warrant them from God's revenging hand yet to suffer such to be in peace; and besides there will a time of danger come, and they shall be thoroughly tried; and if it were not so, yet God is just in making me an example to others; and I cannot justly complain; there is no punishment so great but I have deserved it, for this so heinous offence; I assure you it is no small matter to deny Christ; and yet it is more ordinary than commonly men do conceive of; it is not a denial made before a magistrate, as it is with me; for as oft as a Christian doth dissemble the known truth, as often as he approves of false worship by presenting himself at it, so often as he doth not things worthy of his calling, or doth such things as are unworthy of his calling, so often he denies Christ; thus did I, and therefore am justly punished for it."

Your estate (quoth Gribauldus) is not so strange as you make it: Job was so far gone, that he complained God had set him as a mark against him; and David that was a man after God's own heart, complained often that God had forsaken him, and was become his enemy; yet both receive comfort again. Comfort yourself therefore, God will come at length, though he seem far off.

"O Brother, (answered Spira) I believe all this; the Devils believe and tremble; but David was ever elected and dearly beloved of God. And though he fell, yet God took not utterly away his Holy Spirit, and therefore was heard when he prayed, Lord take not thy Holy Spirit from me. But I am in another case, being ever accursed from the presence of God; neither can I pray as he did, because his Holy Spirit is quite gone and cannot be recalled, and therefore I know I shall live in continued hardness so long as I live. Oh! that I might feel but the least sense of the Love of God to me, though but for one small moment, as I now feel his heavy wrath, that burns like torments of Hell within me, and afflict my conscience with pangs unutterable: verily desperation is hell itself."

Here Gribauidus said, I do verily believe, Spira, that God having so severely chastised you in this life, correcteth you in mercy here, that he may spare you hereafter, and that he hath mercy sealed up for you in time to come.

"Nay (said Spira) hence do I know that I am a Reprobate, because he afflicted me with hardness of heart; O that my body had suffered all my life long, so that he would be pleased to release my soul; and ease my conscience, this burdened conscience.

Gribauidus being desirous to ease his mind from the continual meditation of his sins, as also to sound how for the present he stood affected to the Romish Church; asked him what he thought became of the souls of men, so soon as they depart out of the body? To which he answered: "

"Although this be not so fully revealed in Scripture, yet I verily believe, that the souls of the elect go perfectly to the Kingdom of glory, and not that they sleep in the body, as some do imagine."

Very well, said one of the spectators; who do the scriptures then say, (1. Sam. 5. 9.) that God brings down to hell, and raiseth up, seeing it cannot be meant of the state of the soul after death, which, as thou sayest, either goeth to heaven without change, or to hell without redemption, it must be understood of the state of the soul in this life, like that wherein thou art at this present; and often times we see that God suffers man to fall into the jaws of despair, and yet raiseth them up again; and therefore despair not, but hope, it shall be even thus with thee in his good time.

"This is the work, (quoth Spira) this is the labour; for I tell you, when at Venice did first abjure my profession, and so as it were, drew an indenture, the Spirit of God often admonished me; and when at Cittadela I did, as it were, set my seal, the Spirit of God often suggested to me, do not write; Spira, do not seal; yet resisted I the Holy Ghost, and did both; and at the very present, I did evidently feel a wound inflicted in my very will; so although I can say, I would believe, yet I cannot say I will believe. God hath denied me the power of will, and it befalls me in this my state, as with one that is fast in irons, and his friends coming to see him, do pity his state, and do persuade him to shake off his fetters, and to come out of his bonds, which God knows he would fain do, but cannot; this is my very case, you persuade me to believe, how fain would I do it, but cannot, O no, I cannot. Then violently grasping his hands together, and raising himself up, 'behold (saith he) I am strong, yet by little and little I decay and consume, and my servants would fain preserve this weary life, but at length the will of God must be done and I shall perish miserably, as I deserve: rejoice ye righteous in the Lord; blessed are you whose hearts the Lord hath mollified.'

Then after some pause, 'it is wonderful; I earnestly desire to pray to God with my heart, yet I cannot; I see my damnation, and I know my remedy is only in Christ, yet I cannot set myself to take hold on it: such are the punishments of the damned; They repent of their loss of heaven; they cannot mend their ways.'

As he was thus speaking, he observed divers flies that came about him, and some lighted on him, behold (said he) now also Beelzebub comes to his banquet; you shall shortly see my end; and in me an example to many, of the justice and judgment of God.

About this time came in two Bishops, with divers scholars of the university, one of them, being Paulus Vergerius, having observed Spira more than any other, being continually conversant with him, told him, his state was such as rather stood in need of prayer than advice : and therefore desired him to pray with him in the Lord's Prayer : Spira consented, and he began.

[Our Father which art in Heaven] then breaking forth into tears, he stopped ; but they said? It is well, your grief is a good sign. " I bewail (said he) my misery, for I perceive I am forsaken of God, and cannot call to him from my heart, as I was wont to do : yet let us go on, said Vergerius.

[Thy Kingdom come] " O Lord (said Spira) bring me also into this kingdom, I beseech thee shut me not out.

[Give us this day our daily bread] 'he added,' O Lord I have enough, and abundance to feed this carcase of mine ; but there is another bread ; I humbly beg the bread of thy grace, without which, I know I am but a dead man.

[Lead us not into temptation] " Seeing, Lord, that I am brought into temptation, help me, Lord, that I may escape ; the enemy hath overcome ; help me I beseech thee, to overcome this cruel tyrant.

These things he spake with a mournful voice, the tears trickling down abundantly ; and expressing such affections and passion, as turned the bowels of those present with grief and compunction : they then turning to Spira, said, you know, that none can call Christ Jesus, the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost ; you must therefore think of yourself, according to that soft affection, which you expressed in your prayers ; inferring thereby, that God hath not wholly, cast you off or bereaved you of his Spirit utterly.

" I perceive, said Spira, that I call to him to my eternal damnation, for I tell you again, it is a new and unheard of example, that you find in me."

Cast away these fancies, (said Gribauldus) these are but illusions humble yourself in the presence of God, and praise him. " The dead praise not the Lord, (answered he) nor they that go down into the pit, We that are drowned in despair, are dead, and already gone down into the pit : What hell can there be worse than desperation, or what greater punishment ? The gnawing worm, unquenchable fire, horror, confusion, and (which is worse than all) desperation itself, continually tortures me, and now I count my present state worse than if my soul separated from my body, were with Judas, and the rest of the damned, and therefore now desire rather to be there, than to live in the body.

One being present, repeated certain words of the Psalms ; " If thy children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments ; I will visit their transgressions with rods, and their iniquity with stripes ; nevertheless my loving kindness I will not utterly take from them, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. Mark this, O Spira, My covenant I will not break."

" These promises (said Spira) belong only to the elect, which if tempted, may fall, into sin, but are again lifted up and recovered out : so the prophet saith, though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him ; therefore Peter could rise, for he was elected ; but the reprobates when they fall, cannot rise again, as appears in Cain, Saul,

and Judas. God deals one way with the elect and another with the reprobates.

The next day he prayed with them in the Latin tongue, and that with excellent affection, as outwardly appeared. Blessed be God, said Virgerius, these are no signs of eternal reprobation, you must not, O Spira, seek out the secret counsels of God's election and reprobation; for no man can know, so long as he lives, whether by his good or bad deeds, he be worthy of God's love or anger. Do you not know, that the prophet David complained, that God had cast off his soul?

"I know all this, quoth Spira, I know the mercies of God are infinite, and do surpass the sins of the whole world, and that they are effectual to all that believe; but this faith, and this hope is the gift of God: O that he would give it me! but it is as impossible, as to drink up the sea at a draught: as for that of Solomon, if he had ever tasted that which I feel by woful experience, he would never have spoken as he did; but the truth is, never had mortal man such an evident experience of God's anger and hatred against him as I have. You that are in a good state, think repentance and faith to be a work of great facility: and therefore you think it an easy matter to persuade men to believe; the whole need not the Physician; and he that is well can soon give counsel to such as are ill; but this is the hell to me; my heart is hardened; I cannot believe; many are called, but few are chosen."

Upon what ground (said they) do you conceive so ill an opinion of yourself?

"I once did know God to be my Father, not only by creation, but by regeneration; I knew him by his beloved Son, the author and finisher of our salvation; I could pray to him; and hope for pardon of sin from him; I had a taste of his sweetness, peace and comfort; now contrarily, I know God not as a Father, but as an enemy: what more? my heart hates God, and seeks to get above him. I have nothing else to fly to, but terror and despair."

May be you think, then (said they) that those that have the earnest and first fruits of God's Spirit may, notwithstanding, fall away.

"The judgments of God are a deep abyss, said he, we are soon drowned if we enter into them he that thinketh he standeth, let him take heed lest he fall; as for myself, I know I am fallen back, and that I once did know the truth, though it may not be so thoroughly; I know not what to say, but that I am one of them which God hath threatened to tear in pieces."

Say not so, answered they, for God may come, though at the last hour; keep hold therefore at the last by hope.

"This, quoth he, is my case; I cannot, God hath deprived me of hope; this brings terror to my mind, and pines this body which now is so weak as it cannot perform the several offices thereof: For as the elect have the Spirit testifying that they are the sons of God; so the reprobates, even while they do live, do often feel a worm in their conscience, whereby they are condemned already; and therefore as I perceived this wound inflicted on my mind and will, I knew that I wanted the gifts of saving grace, and that I was utterly undone. God chasteneth his children without tempo-

rary afflictions, that they may come as gold out of the fire ; but punisheth the wicked with blindness in their understandings, and hardness of heart, and woe be to such, from whom God takes his Holy Spirit."

Here one rebuked him, and told him he gave too much credit to sense, that he was not to believe himself, but rather him that was in good estate, and I testify unto you (said he) that God will be merciful unto you.

"Nay answered he again, because I am in this ill state, therefore can I believe nothing but what is contrary to my salvation and comfort ; but you that are so confident of your good estate, look that it be true, for it is no such small matter to be assured of sincerity. A man had need be exceeding strongly grounded in the truth, before he can be able to affirm such a matter as ye now do ; it is not the performance of a few formal duties, but a mighty constant labour, with all intention of heart and affection with full desire and endeavour continually, to set forth God's glory ; there must be neither fear of legators, inquisitors, prisons, or any death whatever : many think themselves happy, that are not ; it is not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall go to heaven."

They came another day, and found him with his eyes shut, as if he was drowzy, and loath to discourse, at which time there came in also a grave man from Cittadella, who demanded of Spira, if he knew him or not ? he lifting up his eyelids, and not suddenly remembering him, the man said to him, I am Presbyter Antonio Fontausie ; I was with you at Venice, some eight weeks since.

"O cursed day, (said Spira ! O cursed day ! Oh that I had never gone thither ! would to God I had then died !

Afterwards came in a priest called Barnardius Sardonius, bringing with him a book of exorcisms, to conjure this devil ; whom when Spira saw, shaking his head, said ;

"I am verily persuaded, indeed, that God hath left me to the power of the devils : but such they are, as are not to be found in your Litany ; neither will they be cast out by spells."

The Priest proceeding in his intended purpose, with a strange and uncooth gesture, and a loud voice, adjured the Spirit to come into Spira's tongue, and to answer ; Spira deriding his fruitless labour, with a sigh, turned from him. A Bishop being there present, said to Spira, Brother, God hath put virtue into the Word and Sacraments, and we have used the one means, and find not that effect which we desire ; shall we try the efficacy of the Sacraments ? surely if you take it as a true Christian ought to receive the body and blood of Christ, it will prove a sovereign medicine for your sick soul.

"This I cannot do (answered he) for those that have no right to the promises, have no right to the seals : the Eucharist was appointed only for believers ; if we have no faith, we eat and drink judgment to ourselves. I received it about a month since ; but I did not well in so doing, for I took it by constraint ; and so I took it to my deeper condemnation."

Here Vergerius began to importune him earnestly to beware that he did not wilfully resist grace, and put himself out of heaven, charging him vehemently, by all the love that was between them, by

the love that he bare to his children, yea, to his own soul, that he would set himself seriously to return to that faith and hope which once he had in the death of Christ, with many such like words. Spira having heard much of the like matter formerly, and being somewhat moved, said, you do but repeat Virgerius. What should I believe? God hath taken faith from me, shew me then whither I shall go; shew me a heaven whereto I shall retire. You tell me of God's mercy, whereas God hath cast me off; you tell me of Christ's intercession, I have denied him; you command me to believe, I say I cannot; you bring me no comfort; your command is as impossible for me to obey, as to keep the moral law: if you should persuade one to love God with all his heart, soul and strength, and God gives him no power, can he perform your desire? doth not the Church teach us to sing, direct us, O Lord, to keep thy commandments? hypocrites say, they love God with all their hearts, but they lie; for my part I will not lie; but tell you plainly such is my case, that though you should never so much importune me to hope or believe, though I desire it, yet I cannot. For God, as a punishment of my wickedness, hath taken away from me all his saving grace, faith, hope and all. I am not the man therefore that you take me for. Belike you think I delight in this state; if I could conceive but the least spark of hope of a better state hereafter, I would not refuse to endure the most heavy weight of the wrath of that great God, yea for twenty thousand years, so that I might at length attain to the end of that misery, which I now know will be eternal; but, I tell you, my will is wounded. Who longs more to believe than I do? but all the ground work of hope is gone, for if the testimonies of the Holy Scripture be true (as they are certainly true) is not this a truth? whosoever denies me before men, him (saith Christ) will I deny before my Father which is in heaven? is not this justly my case, as if it had been intended against this very person of mine? and, I pray you, what shall become of such as Christ denieth, seeing there is no other name under heaven whereby you look to be saved? what saith St. Paul to the Hebrews? it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, if they fall away, to be renewed to repentance. What can be more plain against me? is not that Scripture also, "If we sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a looking for judgment. The scriptures speak of me; St. Paul means me; St. Peter tells me, it had been better I had never known, the way of righteousness, than after I had known it, to turn from the holy commandment; it had been better I had not known, and yet then my condemnation had been most certain: do you not see evidently that I have wilfully denied the known truth? I may justly expect not only damnation, but worse, if worse may be imagined. God will have me undergo the just punishment of my sin, and make me an example of his wrath for your sakes.

The company present admired his discourse, so grievously accusing himself of his fore-past life; so gravely and wisely debating, concerning the judgments of God; that they were convinced, that

it was not frenzy or madness that had possessed him ; and being as it were in admiration of his state, Spira proceeding again in this Manner.

“ Take heed to yourselves, it is no light or easy matter to be a christian, it is not baptism, or reading, of the Scriptures, or boasting of faith in Christ (though even these are good) that can prove one to be an absolute Christian : you know what I said before, there must be a conformity in life. A Christian must be strong, unconquerable, not carrying an obscure profession, but resolute, expressing the image of Christ, and holding out against all oppositions, to the last breath ; he must give all dilligence, by righteousness and holiness, to make his calling and election sure. Many they are that snatch at the promises in the gospel, as if they undoubtedly did belong to them, and yet remain sluggish and careless, and being flattered by the things of this present world, they pass on their course in quietness and security, as if they were the only happy men ; whom nevertheless the Lord in his providence hath ordained to eternal wrath, as you may see in St. Luke's rich man. Thus it was with me, therefore take heed.”

Then came one of his nephews, and offered him some sustenance, which he disdainfully refusing, so moved the man's choler, so that he charged him with hypocrisy and mad dissimulation or frenzy, to whom Spira gravely answered, and said :

“ You may interpret the matter as you will, but, I am sure, I am not only the actor, but the argument and matter of the tragedy. I would it were frenzy, either feigned or true ; for if it were feigned I could put it off at pleasure ; if it were a real frenzy, yet there was some hope left of God's mercy, whereas now there is none. For I know God has pronounced me an enemy, and guilty of high treason against his majesty : I am cast away, as a vessel of his wrath : yet dare you call it dissembling and frenzy ? And can you inock at the formidable example of the heavy wrath of God, that should teach you fear and terror ? but it is natural for the flesh, either out of malice or ignorance, to speak perversely of the works of God. The natural man discerneth not the things that be of God because they are spiritually discerned.”

How can it be, (said Gribauidus) that you can thus excellently discourse of the judgment of God, and of the graces of his holy Spirit ? what, you find the want of them, and earnestly desire them ; and yet you think you are utterly deprived of them ?

“ Take this for certain (said he) I want the main grace of all, and that which is absolutely necessary ; and God doth many times extort most true and strange testimonies of His Majesty's justice and mercy ; yea out of the mouths of mere reprobates ; for even Judas after he had betrayed his master, was constrained to confess his sin, and to justify the innocency of Christ ; and therefore if I do the like, it is no new or strange matter ; God hath taken faith from me, and left other common gifts, for my deeper condemnation : by how much the more I remember what I had, and heard others discourse of what they have, by so much the more is my torment, in that I know what I want, and there is no way to be relieved.”

Thus spake he, the tears all the while trickling down ; professing, that his pangs were such, as that the damned wights in hell endure not the like misery ; that his state was worse than that of Cain or Judas, and therefore he desired to die. Yet behold (said he) the scriptures are accomplished in me, “ they shall desire to die,



and death shall fly from them. And verily he seemed exceedingly to fear lest his life should be drawn out yet longer, finding no <sup>ease</sup> nor rest, ever and anon crying out, O miserable wretch! O miserable wretch! then turning to the company, he besought them in this manner:

“O Brethren! take a diligent heed to your life; make more account of the gift of God’s Spirit than I have done: learn to bewail my misery; think not you are assured Christians, because you understand something of the Gospel; take heed you grow not secure on that ground; be constant and immovable in the maintenance of your profession: confess even until death, if you be called thereto; he that loveth father and mother, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, kindreds, houses, lands, more than Christ, is not worthy of him.”

These words (said they) do not sound like the words of the wicked reprobate.

“I do but here imitate (said Spira) the rich glutton in the Gospel, who, though in hell, was careful that his brethren should not come to that place of torment: and I say to you, brethren, take heed of this miserable estate wherein I am.”

Then turning himself to certain young men that were present, he desired them to conceive of him aright.

“I do not speak this to derogate from the certainty of saving faith, and the promises of the Gospel, for they are most sure; but take heed of relying on that faith that works not a holy and unblameable life, worthy of a believer. credit me, it will fail; I have tried; I presumed I had gotten the right faith; I preached it to others; I had all places in Scripture in memory, that might support it; I thought myself sure, and in the mean time living impiously, carelessly: behold now the judgment of God hath overtaken me, not to correction, but to condemnation: and now you would have me to believe, but it will not be; for I feel too late that good things belong only to such as are good, whose sins are covered with Christ’s death and blood, as with a veil, and guarded with his righteous merits from the blood of God’s wrath, even as with a mighty wall, lest miserable mortals should be swallowed up with the greatness of their sins. But as for me, I have, as it were, wilfully with my hands pulled down the ramparts, behind which I might have rested in safety: and now are the swelling waters come even to my soul, and I am cast away!

One of his familiar friends chanced to say, that certainly he was overcome with melancholy; which being overheard, Spira answered

“Well, be it so, seeing you will needs have it so; thus also is God’s wrath manifested against me, in that he hath taken from me the use of my understanding and reason, so as I can neither rightly esteem and judge of my distemper, nor hope of remedy, see, brethren, what a dangerous thing it is stop or stay, in things that concern God’s glory: especially to dissemble upon any terms. What a fearful thing it is to be near, and almost a Christian? never was the like example to this of mine; and therefore if you be wise, you will seriously consider thereof: O that God would let loose his hand from me, that it were with me now, as in time past, I would scorn all threats of the most cruel tyrants, bear torments with invincible resolution, glory in the outward profession of Christ, till I were choaked in the flames, and my body consumed to ashes.”

You say you are desperate, O Spira, (said they) why then do you not strive with some weapon or other, violently to make an end of your life, as desperate men use to do? let me have a sword, (said Spira). Why what would you do with it? (quoth they) I cannot tell you (said he) what this mind would move me to, upon occasion, nor what I would do.

They perceiving small effects of all their labour, but rather that he grew worse; for the avoiding of a concourse of people; for every day seldom fewer than twenty continued with him; and to stop the course of fame, which was continually blown about of him, they consulted to carry him back to his own country; and those his friends that came to comfort him, began to take their leaves of him. Virgerus, among the rest required, that at their parting they might pray together with him, Spira hardly consented, and as unwillingly performed.

For he said my heart is estranged from God; I cannot call him father from my heart; all good motions are quite gone: my heart is full of malediction, hatred and blasphemy against God; I find I grow more and more hardened in heart, and cannot stop nor hold myself: your prayers for me shall turn to your own profit, they cannot do me any good.

Virgerius came to take his leave of him.

"Whom Spira embracing, said, although I know that nothing can bring any benefit to me a reprobate; but that every thing shall tend to my deeper condemnation; yet I give you most hearty thanks for your kind offices of love and good will; and the Lord return it unto you, with a plentiful increase of all good."

The next day being brought down to his intended journey, by the way, looking round about him, with a ghastly look, he saw a knife lying on a table, to which he running hastily, snatched hold of it as intending to mischief himself; but his friends laying hold of him, stopped him in the purpose: whereupon with indignation he said, I would I were above God, for I know he will have no mercy on me.

Thus went he homewards, often saying, that he envied the condition of Cain and Judas: he lay about eight weeks in this case, in a continual burning, neither desiring, nor receiving anything but by force, and that without digestion, so spent, that he appeared perfect anatomy, expressing to the view nothing but sinews and bones; vehemently raging for drink; ever pining, yet fearful to live long; dreadful of hell, coveting death; in a continual torment, yet his own tormentor.

And thus consuming himself with grief and horror, impatience and despair, like a living man in hell, he represented an extraordinary example of the justice and power of God.

And thus (as far as appeareth) within a few days after his arrival at his own home, he departed this present life. Yet an occasion to make us remember, that secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but charity to man: who cannot dive into the deep things of God.

I have been moved thus to introduce the case of Francis Spira—a man of great natural parts; of considerable civil, moral, and

social influence, taking up, professing, and ardently preaching the greatest and most glorious doctrines of the Gospel, until the hour of trial and temptation came; and then deliberately and wilfully casting off his cloak—turning again to the beggarly elements of popery and superstition: and thereby bringing upon himself swift destruction. That hour of trial, and of temptation is fast coming upon thousands who stand as angels of light in our British Zion: as in 1683, (when a new edition of Spira's life and death was sent into the world,) so in 1845, we may say, as his biographer says, "my object is to stem as much as in me lay, that torrent of apostacy which is now flowing in upon the nation like a mighty deluge, ready to overflow and to bear down all before it." For true it is, that while the uplifting and preserving power of God was seen in Luther and God's holy approbation of the Protestant faith was in Luther's zeal and success most graciously displayed and confirmed; so was there also a most solemn display of the vengeance of God against the deadly errors of the Mother of Harlots, in the black despair, sinking horrors, and eternal death of Francis Spira. Seeing these things it behoves us all to beware—to stand our guard, and to take heed of the very beginnings of apostacy which too frequently creep on by insensible degrees.

Oh! that this past example of God's just judgment may be instrumental in causing many to take heed lest they also fall into the snare and condemnation of the devil.

Returning then to the subject in hand, notice—

2. That the face of God's throne is held back from his own elect and beloved children in Christ during their natural state. There is a time to be born. The Lord Jesus Christ, comes forth in the fulness of time: that is, at the appointed time; bringing divine life into the soul, in the special and sovereign work of God the Holy Ghost; and he is a God of order! therefore Pauls says "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me,"—then it was, and not till then, that persecuting Saul of Tarsus could be brought to lay down and say "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" But

3. The face of the throne is held back from the saints when God is pleased to try the faith, and to draw out the desires, of those whom he designs to save. There are many who hear and receive the word with gladness; but they are never sorely tried about their own soul's interest in those eternal truths which they hear—they have a natural presumptuous faith which either takes it for granted that they shall be saved; or else it drives off the evil day of reckoning with an inward procrastinating spirit that though they are not fit to die at present they shall be at some future time. But every man's work shall be tried of what sort it is: and by a variety of trials the Lord will make way for the manifest display of his own almighty power on the behalf of his Israel. The promises of God speak to, and provide for, an afflicted people—a tried, a broken, a despised people: into those tribulatory paths they must come, before the promise can be fully

realised : it is to them said—" ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might inherit the promises."

4. The face of the throne is held back, when, through the power of temptation, the weakness and wickedness of the flesh, sin and Satan entangle the feet, and cast down the soul of the disciple of Christ. It is experimentally evident to every tried follower of the Lamb, that so powerful are outward temptations, and so depraved are the desires and dispositions of our fallen nature that nothing short of a secret omnipotent arm can effectually hold us up. The everlasting love of God never ceases in its flowings towards an elect vessel of mercy : the hidden life of God which is implanted in their souls at regeneration, is never withdrawn : the Holy Ghost never leaves go his hold of that sinner to whom Jesus Christ has been made known : but, Oh, listen to the tale of our old men in Zion, and you almost invariably find that since the time of their espousals they have found those dreary and desolating days of which the Saviour spake when he said - " but the days come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away ; and then shall the children fast."

Finally. The face of the throne, in its full refulgent glory, is held back from the Church of the living God during her passage through the wilderness state. There were two distinct branches in that glorious prayer of our Lord for his people which very clearly mark out the distinction between their present and their future state. First, he said—" I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil." The bounds of their habitation are fixed in this time state : and their days are numbered : and although tribulation attends the path they take, yet certainly—

" God is their sun, he makes their day :  
God is their shield, he guards their way ;  
From all th' assaults of hell and sin,  
From foes without and foes within."

Yes, Yes, many, indeed, are the afflictions of the righteous ; many their sorrows ; mighty and powerful their sins ; and dark and dreary are many of the days of their earthly pilgrimage : but they are kept from the evil : they go from strength to strength : every one appeareth before God in Zion. The second part of the Master's prayer, (and upon which more emphasis appeared to be laid, inasmuch as it was the great end and object of all his sufferings) was, " 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."

It may then truly be said that that full blaze of divine glory which will emanate from the Person and face of the Lord Jesus Christ, and which will constitute the eternal happiness of the redeemed, is held back from them while in the body, because they could not bear it. Three things belong to the vessels of mercy in this time state : three things await them, and shall be enjoyed by them in a future state. First : three things characterise them

in the present state: we that are in this tabernacle do groan being burdened :” that is the first: they are burdened with sin, with unbelief, with many temptations, and many infirmities; and these things make them to groan. Again: “we walk by faith, not by sight: that is the second thing. The morning of deliverance; that is, when the soul, by a sense of pardoning love and through the power of the Holy Ghost in his revelations of the Lord Jesus Christ, is brought into the sweet and holy liberty of the gospel; that may be, in a measure; “a morning without clouds;” but the day of conflict which succeeds it, is lowry and dull. Nevertheless; although a cloud is yet spread upon the throne; and at best we can only say, whom having not seen we love: still, we walk; we believe what with the natural eye we cannot see, that this corruptible shall put on incorruption: this mortal shall put on immortality: and that then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory. Thirdly: “Wherefore we labour, that whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.” The labour of the soul is two-fold: it is to obtain deliverance from its foes: it also struggles for nearness and likeness to its friends—reconciliation to God—cleansing and clothing by Christ—guidance and meetness, through the power of the Holy Ghost: he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off; but he that is a partaker of them shall never fall.

I said, there are three things which await the disciples of Christ in a future state. First: they shall be with Him; this shews the absolute necessity of a radical and spiritual change of heart: for every living soul knows full well that when death is in the soul, guilt on the conscience, and hardness in the heart, we do then rather shun than desire even the company of good men, much less the presence of the Fountain of life and holiness itself. but when a little of the divine glory is in the soul: guilt is purged away; and condemnation gone, then we look and long for that kingdom where no distress, iniquity, or uncertainty can ever come. This, then, will be the first thing—WE SHALL BE WITH HIM. Secondly: we shall behold his glory. “My interpretation,” (says Samuel Byles Pierce,) of the glory which Christ wills for his people, is, that the glory of his person as God-man may appear, and the glories of his mediatorship be discovered, and he be possessed of it, also that his people may behold him in his personal and mediatorial glories in which he shines within the veil.”

“And I apprehend it, and therefore speak it, that Christ will be the sole medium in heaven by whom we shall enjoy God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to the uttermost perfection of bliss and happiness, and therefore our beholding the personal glories of Christ, our seeing and beholding him face to face; in this will consist the beatific vision. In him God will be to us all in all; and what higher felicity can be thought of? What greater blessedness can we partake of, than to behold, gaze upon, and enjoy God in Christ? To see all the glories of the Deity shining forth in the person of God man!

The third part of the church's glory will lay in her being “made

like" unto the Lord. She shall be brought unto the King: and instead of being plagued and chastened with a deceitful heart, corrupt desires, and unholy thoughts—she shall be "*all glorious within.*" With what emphasis, and astonishment does the inspired writer break out upon the prophetic discovery of this mystery! "The king's daughter" says he, "is all glorious,—not only glorious, but ALL GLORIOUS—not only all-glorious—but "*all glorious WITHIN.*" And this is not all." *Her clothing is of wrought gold:*" that is the glorious imputed righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"O glorious 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."

A word or two upon the last sentence—"and spreadeth his cloud upon it"—must close up this imperfect attempt.

This spreading of his cloud upon the throne, is applicable to many of the most trying dispensations through which the Israel of God have to pass. I can now only view it as holding out a word of caution; and administering a word of consolation to the real church of the living God, in anticipation of that day of trial which is evidently fast approaching.

A cloud of mystery now hovers over our heads: in a variety of ways, the glory of God is eclipsed: truth is fallen—and real vital godliness is but rarely to be found; while Romish popery—Wesleyan popery—Independent popery—Puseyism popery—Church of England popery, and a thousand other popes, and a variety of popish forms and delusions inundate the British isle, and her mighty dependencies.

"What shall be the *end of these things*? And what shall be the line of conduct pursued by those who have been brought savingly to know the Lord, and the power of his resurrection?"

The end of these things are briefly declared—"Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried."

I know right well that by the great majority of Gospel priests and professors it will be considered the very height of presumption and spiritual wickedness in me to speak as I do: but I do declare that my soul is so fully assured of the fact, that in the afflictions which yet await the redeemed church, the eternal purpose of God, and the essential purification or separation of the precious from the vile are so identified, that I have no power at all to petition king, lords, and commons, to stop the rolling out into open manifestation of that unalterable decree which will ultimately gather out and glorify the whole election of grace.

But, men will cry out—"Can you clearly see evil coming down upon the cause of God and truth—can you behold the enemies of Christ slowly and surely advancing upon us, and yet use no means to stay their progress?"—The only answer I can give in this—When the Lord Jesus Christ knew that his hour was come, that he must depart out of this world:—when he knew that Judas had betrayed him—that the glorious manifest presence of the eternal Godhead

was withdrawn from him—and when heavy wrath and anguish lay upon his precious and holy soul, he did not run to the reigning powers to seek their aid—but—glorious Lamb of God, as He was—He lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.” In some humble measure; and by the secret power of God the holy Ghost, have I thus, I hope, been helped to look to that arm which alone can save. And the only answer which I seem to get—or, at any rate, the only state of soul, and steadfast faith upon the point to which I am brought, is recorded in the 12th of Daniel. Our glorious High Priest is there represented as standing upon the waters of the river: all the turbulent and boisterous waves which ever have afflicted the church of the living God, are under his feet; their direction, use, and design, are with him: and to shew the ultimate safety of his redeemed—as also the absolute necessity of the existence of these dark clouds and fiery trials whereby the great and solemn purposes of God shall be finished, “he held up his right hand and left hand unto heaven and swore by Him that liveth for ever and ever [mark, my reader, the majesty and solemnity of the scene] that IT SHALL BE for a time, times, and an half; and when—(Oh, glorious climax!—though dark and fearful the conflict which brings us to it!) when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people”—(If your eyes my reader, are anointed with God’s golden ointment, mark you well every word) then, “all these things shall be finished.” The dear old prophet, like many a precious vessel of mercy under a cloud, says, “I heard, but I understood not: then, said I, O, MY LORD, what shall be the end of these things?” This—even this—and only this—is the proper position—of the holy people—of the true heaven-born citizens of Zion in the coming days of their calamity. Treat my testimony with all the contempt you please: it moves me not at all. I witness against the late carnal proceedings of men professing godliness. I only ask them to read the word I have been compelled to read: I only ask them whether like Daniel, they have cried out—“O, MY LORD; what shall the end of these things be?” If so, the answer is before them. “Go thy way—many shall be purified and tried—but thou shalt stand in thy lot at the end of the days.”

“He spreadeth His cloud upon it.” It is but a cloud. This shall pass away, and the glorious Sun of Righteousness for ever shine. Amen and Amen. Praise ye the Lord.

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### THE VALLEY OF ACHOR.

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(Concluded from page 94.)

MANY dear friends, who feel at rest in their minds, as regards the reality of my restoration, call to, and usefulness in the ministry, have been pained at the brief recital of events given in the last part of the Earthen Vessel; and have urged upon me the necessity of discontinuing the narrative. Most gladly would I act upon their advice; and leave the adversary,

and his zealous instruments, to make such use thereof as they may be permitted. But I have pledged myself to finish it—and I cannot in my conscience feel justified in forfeiting the promise I have made. Far be it from me to wound the minds of any: but still farther be it from me to give my accusers an opportunity to charge me with a want of faithfulness in withholding what I have declared should be given, be the consequences what they may.

I will not dwell longer in the preface; my object is to sum up this dark part of the history in as few words as may be, and then (so far as writing or preaching about it is concerned,) to have done with it for ever.

I said in my last, there were two circumstances which proved the very reverse of what is so cruelly proclaimed by men who think it their duty, if possible, to silence me in the ministry of the word. One of these circumstances I have noticed: I now come at once to the other. A few weeks after my arrival in London, I was unexpectedly—I say unexpectedly—brought in contact with the cause of my misery and shame. I was at this time employed by a gentleman in Chancery Lane, who expressed himself disposed to render me any assistance in his power in the way of employment: and in fact made me an offer of a permanent situation. Finding myself, however, placed in circumstances, where nothing but guilt, condemnation, and an inward horror of soul awaited me, I flung up my employment, and without delay, left London, and fled to Birmingham, where I believed a door was opened for me; where I might once more make provision for mine own house, and be delivered from the snare of the devil. But here I soon found that the hand of God was gone out against me: I was deemed incompetent for the work on which I was engaged; and the government of the house being conducted on principles opposed to the rules of the trade, I felt myself compelled to leave; and again to return to London. The following letter was written by me to a dear brother in the truth at Canterbury soon after my return from Birmingham, and is in some measure descriptive of my state of mind.

Dear Friend,

I am completely at a loss to know how to address you. This is the second time I have taken my pen to write to you, and at each time I have felt so lost in astonishment, distress and despair; that I am almost ready to relinquish the task. But your unparalleled kindness demands a reply, and I will again attempt to express what I feel. Oh, my dear friends, little did I think when first I became acquainted with you that I should ever have brought such distress and disgrace upon you. Little did I think that ever satan could have achieved such a victory over me. But it is done—and what to say—what to do—where to look I know not.

In writing these few lines I do not desire to make you think any different of me from what I really am. Depend on it, my friend, the cause at C——, never originated with the Lord,\* and therefore I was left to fall

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\* For the note on this, see end of the article.



into that pit digged for me—and out of which I have scarcely any hope that I can ever come. A more wretched, wandering, unhappy outcast can scarcely exist. Ever since I left Canterbury I have been tossed about from one place to the other, finding no rest. Indeed my greatest wonder is that I am out of hell. I have expected some awful judgement to visit and to cut me down long since, and in fact I do often feel so completely shattered in mind and body that I think it cannot be long before my end comes. And, Oh, Mr. H——, what an awful state is mine! If I look backward, there I behold the great things which were done for me—and the dreadful; damnable, deceitful, snare by which all was dashed in pieces. If I look around all is to me desolation—I do not know that I have one friend in all the earth; such are my feelings that if any one would see or speak to me, I could never face them. And before me an unknown chasm of eternal woe.

I little thought that you had been enquiring for me—I thought it must have been Mr. W. C——. I do thank you dear sir, for your kind feelings and wishes towards me; but I fear God has utterly left me—my hope is perished—and already—but I forbear. The driving me from Bolton was cruel to my family—it has been nearly, if not quite, the death of my wife. When I left Bolton, I travelled with pictures, trying to sell them, but could do nothing. I then went to Liverpool, where I remained several weeks, but getting nothing permanent, I came to London; here I remained several weeks, and then went to Birmingham in the hope of getting a good situation; but there I could not stop—and so a few weeks since, I was compelled to return to London.

Pray thank your dear partner for her many kindnesses to me. Oh how have I abused them all—Oh wretched man that I am—Oh how doubly, trebly precious, would be the blood of Christ to me, could I hope it would ever be applied to my guilty conscience. Oh, my friend, are you *really* in Christ? Do you know him for yourself? Do you find he loves you, by constraining you to love him? Is this *indeed* thy happy lot? Then fear nought but sin and the devil. Oh, be watchful and prayerful against these. Intreat thy Saviour never for one moment to forsake you, or down you go.

If there be one man on the earth who has experienced the great power of sin when once it gets into the conscience it is myself. Ah sin, WHAT IS IT? It is the practical outbreaking of our fallen nature; WHERE IS IT? In every thing but in Christ, and in his kingdom—God is in Christ—the Holy Spirit in Christ—glory and grace are in Christ—elect men and elect angels are in Christ—all fulness, all happiness, all holiness, all perfection, is in Christ—all safety and protection, and all preparation for glory in Christ. But no sin there—oh happy souls, that are in Christ. Oh my friend, let this be thy every day business—thy every day concern to *know*, you are in Christ: and so sure as he once lets you know this is the case you will be often wanting him to repeat the assurance. Oh Mr. H—— it is sin that destroys our peace. But the dear Lord Jesus is the peace of his people. Ah, my friend, Jesus has got his sheep, and none but them are safe or happy.

Therefore be you deeply concerned to know this one thing—and all will be well in the end.     •     •     •     •

C. W. BANKS.

Having now obtained some partial employment in a Printing Office in Holborn—having much time for painful reflection—and being inwardly persuaded that all my religion had been delusion, and that all my ministry had been in the flesh, and not in the

Spirit, nor by the power of God, it was secretly laid in my mind to print a small tract descriptive of the deadly and awful delusion under which I then believed I had been laying : and thereby to warn men and ministers—and to lead them to examine closely the motives and powers by which they were actuated. I was sitting one evening reflecting upon these things with my Bible in my hand, when the words of Jeremiah, (the 19th verse of the eleventh chapter,) met my eye, and in some measure entered into my soul: he says—“ I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter; and I knew not that they had devised devices against me, saying, Let us destroy the tree, with the fruit thereof, and let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name may be no more remembered.”

These solemn words were indeed most wonderfully descriptive of the whole of the way by which I had been thrown down. I was brought to look back and to remember how I walked for twelve years in a profession, and, as I had believed, in the love of the truth, free from temptation, or any outward wilful sin: neither had I ever thought it to be possible that any power on earth, could ever cast me down. Surely I had trusted to my own heart, and proved myself to be a fool indeed. Under this word from Jeremiah, so secretly and softly laid in my soul; and on again reviewing the mighty stratagems and mysterious workings of sin, as also the cryings out of my poor soul, (which was just like unto a bird caught in a trap or a snare,) I did really believe that it was utterly impossible for me to have avoided the dreadful pit into which I had fallen. Men who are ignorant of the reigning power of sin, must be no judges in this matter: I do repeat, that so mightily did I wrestle, and cry for deliverance from that evil, and so irresistibly was I plunged into it, that it was like bringing “a lamb or an ox to the slaughter.”

Well, but to the slaughter I had been brought! Down into destruction I had been hurled. I saw clear enough that the first part of Jeremiah's words were true concerning me—“ they had devised devices against me”—in a ministerial point of view, the tree, with the fruit thereof, was destroyed; and I now believed that a literal and an eternal destruction would quickly overtake me. After a few moments I turned again to my Bible, when the 16th verse of the 13th chapter of Jeremiah appeared to be spoken to me—“ Give glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness.” This word did not appear to give me any hope—but it did appear to confirm me in the purpose of my mind to print and to publish the little work which I was led to call “A Warning Voice, addressed to all who think they stand as ministers to, or members of, the mystical body of Christ;” and in which I desired to “give glory unto the Lord God,” by a full and open confession of my transgression; and by a solemn warning of men against the devices of the wicked one, and the hidden depravity of the heart. To say that the Lord did secretly

direct me in this matter, may appear to some nothing short of a wicked presumption; many souls, however, have declared that a blessing has attended the perusal of the *Warning Voice*: and so mysteriously was I led through the bringing out of that work that I will say, it seemed as though I was compelled to do it. I did not set down to write it out; but at intervals while in the printing office, I appeared to be compelled to take the composing stick, and to set it in type by little bits as it was brought into my mind. It was entirely in this way that that mysterious book the "*Warning Voice*" was brought out.

The *Silent Preacher* was afterwards commenced under similar circumstances: to give its history, would be very greatly to lengthen this paper, and perhaps be neither of interest or profit to my reader.

Now then, I repeat that so far from my wilfully desiring to continue in a course of transgression, I shall only here say that I did, deliberately and determinedly, (at a great sacrifice of temporal advantage, and when I had no friend but my own conscience to guide me,) fly from the path of the destroyer, with an earnest desire to be turned in heart, mind, and strength, unto the living God; and although I had a long stumbling upon the dark mountains, and often expected a sudden precipitation into an endless pit of woe, yet in a most merciful way did the Lord work an entire deliverance for me; first, from the cause of all my unhappiness; secondly, from the guilt and terror arising therefrom; and finally, from many of the distressing circumstances into which I was for a long time thrown.

In closing up this narrative, I feel it to be my duty very briefly to advert to the base misrepresentations which professing men are pleased to deal out against me: they still declare that there is a hiding up, and mystery about the matter which gives room for suspicion. I will only say—let such individuals read the "*Warning Voice*," and "*Tree Cut Down*," wherein the fullest explanation of all the circumstances connected both with my rise and fall, are faithfully detailed: and if their unholy cravings are not then satisfied, let them but come to me, before they harden themselves in lies; and I will deal with them as God and my conscience shall direct.

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• When I look back upon the dreary past—and behold how many of those dear souls have clung to the truth, and, in a measure, to each other: how, under the very worst of circumstances, while, like Joseph—at one time in a pit—at another time sold by false brethren—falsely accused, and falsely imprisoned—shot at, hated, and sorely grieved by the archers: yet, that their bow has abode in strength, and the arms of their hands are now being made strong again; I trust by the mighty hands of the God of Jacob, I must believe that some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel, was in the poor tempest tossed cause of God and truth at Canterbury. Oh that it may yet be like a tree planted by the water-side, bringing forth fruit to the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls.

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In the future numbers of the "*Earthen Vessel*," the series of Letters will be continued: it will be published on the first of every month.

# THE MYSTERY OF FAITH.

*Fragments gathered up from two Sermons, preached at Cove  
Adullam, Stepney, MAY 25, 1845,*

BY C. W. BANKS.

“FOR if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.”—2 Peter i. 8, 9.

THERE have been some peculiar seasons, since I have been called to the ministry of the word, wherein the Lord has appeared to speak into my soul with reference to a particular time, place, and message there to be delivered. You may call this delusion, presumption, or what you please: but such is the firm persuasion of my soul at this moment. “The word of the Lord came *expressly* unto Ezekiel:” And “the word of the Lord came unto Jonah saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.”

I do not say I am Ezekiel, or Jonah, but I say there have been special words given unto me for especial places, and an especial blessing has accompanied those words.

It was on Thursday evening that these words fell into my soul with such certainty: and such a solemn impression was made upon my mind that I was to come to Stepney with these words, that I said aloud in the midst of my family, “I have got a text for Stepney both morning and evening.”

I had scarcely uttered these words, when my conscience seemed to rebuke me for making so freely with the secret dealings of God with my soul. I feared, perhaps, I had presumed; and therefore held my peace. The words did not altogether leave me; though I thought but little of them. On Saturday evening another portion of the word took hold of me, and I seemed so greatly to love it, that I went to bed believing that would be my text instead of Peter's words. No sooner, however, was I awake in the morning than I

found my Stepney text ready waiting for me: so I arose, and having sought for Divine teaching, presence, and power, I began to endeavour to put up a few thoughts, so that I might not go out altogether bare. I found, what I have learned before, that I have no power to get into the mind of the blessed Spirit myself. With some little hope, help, and happiness in my soul, I left my home, and safely reached the scene of my labours for that day: and in coming to the words of Peter as above, purposed to notice,

- I. The things there referred to.
- II. Their essential residence—"if these things be IN YOU."
- III. The abounding of these things.
- IV. The fruitfulness and value of them.
- V. The spiritual desolation of the soul that is destitute of these things.

There are three things in the context most blessedly descriptive of the character, the condition, and the experience of the Lord's people.

First, of their character, Peter addresses himself "to them that have obtained *like precious faith.*"

The possession of a living faith is essential to every thing pertaining to the spiritual well-being of the soul. Faith, as the first, and most essential grace, appears wonderfully set out to view in the case of that certain man of Lystra, (Acts xiv. 8. 9.) who was "impotent in his feet, being a cripple from his mother's womb; *who never had walked.*"

What a true figure of a sinner really quickened in his soul; and made sensible of his fallen, helpless state. Such a sinner is brought to know that as regards the great things of God, and the salvation of his own soul, he has been a cripple from his mother's womb, and has never yet set one step towards the kingdom: neither can he.

Oh, ye free-will boasters! Look at the poor cripple; and, while ye are running in a way that seems right to yourselves, listen, for a moment, to that solemn word—"The first shall be last, and the last shall be first."

It is said of the poor cripple that he "heard Paul speak." Lazarus heard Jesus speak, though asleep in his grave. "My sheep *hear my voice.*" The attention, and the sympathy of Paul was by the Holy Ghost, especially directed to the impotent man. Paul looked steadfastly upon him. What was the first thing he beheld? Paul "perceiving that he had faith to be healed:"—Paul knowing full well

that it mattered nothing how long he had been a cripple : nor how bad his impotency was ; “ perceiving he had faith to be healed,” the very soul of the apostle was fired with love and desire toward him : faith in the soul of the cripple took fast hold of faith in the soul of Paul, and he cried out with a loud voice, “ Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.”

Here is the essential nature and omnipotence of faith. Paul might have passed by a thousand cripples, and have taken no notice of them : but here was faith : that was enough. God, through the mouth of Paul, spoke to that faith, and health, and healing, in an instant, came. This poor cripple was one of those precious mystical bones, of whom, in prophetic language, Jesus spake, when he said, All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto thee, which deliverest the poor from him that is too strong for him, yea the poor and the needy from him that spoileth him.”

If such be the value of faith, *What is it ? What is Faith ?*

Volumes have been written—thousands of sermons have been preached, to define, and make it plain. But it is one of the things of God which the natural eye has never seen : the natural ear never heard ; the human tongue can never describe.

I have had some little sweet openings of it from the word of God. How far I can make this clear, I do not know ; but to say a word or two of the essential nature and God-glorifying operations of this cardinal grace, is the desire of my heart : and that the blessed Spirit may comfort some poor soul hereby is my most fervent prayer.

Before there can be genuine faith in exercise, there must be two things :—first, the life of God in the soul ; and, secondly, the glories of a triune Jehovah, revealed by the Holy Ghost unto that soul. This, to me, appears clear, first, from Jeremiah, and, secondly, from the words of the dear Lord himself.

Look, poor soul, first, at the 33d chapter of Jeremiah. What city is it, that God is there speaking of ? It is the city of the living God—the whole election of grace. “ Behold,” saith the Lord unto Jeremiah, “ I will bring unto these true Israelites, health and cure, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.” This is God’s determined way of dealing with poor captive sinners. He finds them in their sin and in their blood. He breathes into them the breath of life ; he creates them new creatures in Christ, and reveals unto them the eternal glories and complete salvation of

the Lord Jesus Christ. The Saviour spoke the same precious truth as regards the origin of faith—"every one that *seeth the son*, and believeth on him, hath everlasting life." A living, spiritual soul must first be given: unto that precious immortal soul a revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ is made; and as the natural sun draws up from the earth the dew and moisture which has previously fallen upon it, so a revealed Christ will draw out in a believing and loving exercise, that divine life which has been by God the Spirit previously created in it.

Beloved, there is a glorious mystery contained in the words—"them that have obtained *like* precious faith." I know the first literal meaning of the word "like" here used, is, "the same kind of faith: but I understand more than this: when Peter says "like precious faith;" he speaks of its transforming power, as Paul also does both to the Corinthian and to the Ephesian churches. This great mystery of the transforming power of divine faith is set before you first in the 18th verse of the third chapter of the second epistle to the Corinthians—"We all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed *into the same image*, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

What rich and heavenly words are these! First, the glory of this mystery of faith is given to all the family: "we all." Secondly here is the life of God in the soul expressed by the "open face." This is descriptive of life in the soul; and of the sincerity, the fervency, and deep anxiety which this living soul is the subject of, God-ward. Thirdly: here is the medium both of discovery and communication: it is the glass of faith: at present our discoveries through the glass of faith are imperfect, ("through a glass darkly;") but still, it is a "beholding of the glory of the Lord."

What do they mean, asks the fearful soul, by having the love of God shed abroad in the heart—and by having the blood of Christ sprinkled upon the conscience? The answer is here. The everlasting love of God the Father—the atoning blood of God the Son—and the life-creating and soul-sanctifying power of God the Holy Ghost—these constitute the manifest and declarative glory of the Lord: these are revealed unto the eye of faith in a living soul: this faith's view of this glory is transforming, so that it is here declared, by it "we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

“What do you mean by all this?” says a poor soul. The Holy Ghost tells you that unto a living faith in a living soul, the glories of the eternal God are so revealed that the soul is thereby “made a partaker of the divine nature,” For instance, is God immutable? Even so shall be the life and glory of a redeemed soul. It is true, as Mr. Love declares in the following extract, which I make from a sermon of his preached in London near two hundred years ago; it is true, I say,—

“Many of God’s dear children may be so long plunged under desertion, and under the want of assurance, that they may refuse and withstand comfort, when God offers it to them in the Gospel, and yet may have grace still. As a man in a fever, or distracted by some violent disease, though you bring him a cordial, that may abate his disease, the man in a fit will throw the glass against the wall, though it be the only means of his remedy. It is so with godly men; many times they are so accustomed to sadness in the want of assurance, that they may refuse comforts when God offers them. Psalm lxxvii. 2. It is the speech of Asaph, ‘my soul refuseth to be comforted;’ a strange speech: though he was offered comfort yet his soul refuseth it. • • But rather than God will let his people live and die without assurance he will work assurance in you by a miracle, or by some unusual or extraordinary way. A famous instance you have for this, of a gentlewoman that once lived in this city, (it’s Mr. Bolton that relates the story,) one Mrs. Honeywood, who was a famous professor of religion, and a woman that for many years was much troubled in her mind for the want of her assurance. At length there came a minister to her, who endeavoured to settle her hopes and comforts in Jesus Christ; and he urging promises to her, she took it with a kind of indignation and anger, that he should offer to present any promise to her, to whom she thought it did not belong; and having a Venice glass in her hand, she holds up the glass and said, speak no more to me of salvation, for I shall as surely be damned, as this poor Venice glass shall be broken against the wall, throwing it with all her force to break it. But it pleased God, by a miraculous providence to preserve the glass whole. The minister seeing this, took up the glass, and said, behold, God must by a miracle work faith in you before you will believe. And from that day, the story saith, she was a woman very strong in the assurance of God’s love. Here you see how God did indulge the infirmity of his poor servant. Rather than thou shalt live and die without assurance, God will bring it about even by a miracle; this woman, it may be, had died unassured, if God had not confirmed her by some unusual way. I have read likewise in the Book of Martyrs, of Mr. Glover, that all the while he was in prison, he was under a state of desertion, and very much clouded in his comforts



and could not have any apprehension of God's love to his soul. Yet when he came to Smithfield, and saw the stake, and the fire in which he was to be burnt, he cried out 'I have found him, I have found him;' and profess of himself, he was as full of joy as his heart could hold. The Lord made the very sight of the stake to be an inlet to present joy. One would have thought that the sight of the stake should have daunted him; whereas he then grew most confident,"

The grace of God, the life of God in the soul are unchangeable; while the feeling sense, clear conception, and real enjoyment of that grace and faith, may shift and change with every fleeting breath that soul shall draw.

The faith of God's elect, then, is a "like precious faith:" a living, transforming, God-beholding, God-loving, God-fearing, God-embracing principle.

But of this living faith, the Holy Ghost, by Peter's mouth, gives you, first, seven internal, experimental fruits and evidences: and then, he gives you seven external, manifest products, or living branches, which this living tree in the soul sends forth into the life and conversation of the believer.

It was while I was secretly waiting before God for my evening's message, that these fourteen features of a genuine faith, were silently opened up to me. I give them here, as near as I possibly can, in the words with which I spoke of them on the evening above referred to. Of the inward, spiritual features or divine productions of a genuine faith, you will find the Holy Ghost, by Peter gives the following seven:

I. It carries the quickened soul, in its power and exercise, over unto the obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

I cannot hesitate to say, that there is in the preaching and faith of some men—aye, and good men too—more reference made to a deep law work in the conscience—to a long and painful travail of soul, and to the hard and cruel conflicts which a poor sinner is the subject of in the first workings of grace, than there is to the perfect obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Do not say, I am speaking lightly or contemptuously of a deep law work, nor of deep soul travail. No; the Lord forbid I should. I have read, and in some measure have felt the weight and importance of that word so emphatically spoken by Christ himself—"verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into

the ground and die, it abideth alone ; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." This corn of wheat was certainly the Son of Man himself : but it is equally applicable to every vessel of mercy : who are baptised into the likeness of his death, as an earnest that they shall also be baptised into the likeness of his resurrection. The sinner must be killed, or he cannot live to God : the *broken heart* ; the *contrite spirit*, are declared to be " the sacrifices of God." (Psalm li. 17.) They are his own production. No sinner can break his own heart ; nor bring contrition into his own spirit : God alone can do it : and these sacrifices he will not despise. All other sacrifices are a stink in his nostrils. God will have a broken heart, a clean heart, and a decided heart ; therefore he says, I will give them one heart ; a heart to know me ; yea, such a decided heart that they shall not forsake me. Whatever terror or horror of soul there may be : this, of itself, cannot be taken for a fruit of that faith without which it is impossible to please God. The most glorious evidence of a living faith, is, that by it, the Holy Ghost takes the sinner away from his own self righteousness, on the one hand, and from his dreadful condition as a guilty sinner, on the other, and carries him to the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ : and thereby it is that Christ becomes the way, the truth, and the life, and thereby Christ becomes precious to them that believe.

2. This faith triumphs only in a resurrection power brought into the soul by the power of God, and the consequent possession of a good hope through grace. " Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Faith is God's light in the soul—it not only discerns to us our disease, but the remedy too : it travels into the very secrets of Christ's heart—examines the love which he bears towards the sinner, and then comes down in the witnessing powers of the Holy Ghost to the heart and conscience of the sinner, declaring that his " witness is in heaven, and his record is on high."

Men and ministers take upon themselves to say that I never had the law applied unto my conscience ; and that I never was delivered from bondage and death. " Oh, but (say you,) you should keep these things to yourself ; or people will be afraid to hear you." No : I will not keep them : I desire not to deceive any man

—nor to be deceived by any. This I will say, that from the early part of 1840, through the whole of 1841, 1842, and up to the middle of 1843, I laid under the sentence of death—under the galling yoke of a guilty conscience—and in a dreadful apprehension of eternal damnation—I could never triumph in anything in that state. The law of God was a terror to me, because I had wilfully violated it: the word of God was a terror to me—for it was indeed a two-edged sword, both discovering my sin, and condemning me for it: but when deliverance was wrought; when guilt was removed; when God appeared for me on that signal night, under the ministry of Mr. Abrabams, it was then a resurrection power was brought into my soul; a lively hope possessed me; and I did triumph in the aboundings of God's love and mercy as then realised in my soul. This is the second inward evidence of a living faith.

3. A living faith looks for an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Faith has to do with the hidden glories of the upper and the better world. It is the great business of faith to attract, and draw up the soul God-ward. Faith will not suffer the soul to find rest and comfort in any thing short of the inheritance. It says "if I may but touch the hem of his garment I shall be made whole." The whole work of faith lays in the "receiving a kingdom, which cannot be moved."

You may have good husbands or good wives: you may have kind and affectionate friends: you may have homes, and houses, and lands, and money laid up in store: but so certain as you are possessors of a living faith, it will witness concerning them all that "this is not your rest; because it is polluted." Therefore, while some can settle down in an earthly nest—in a form of godliness—or in the various associations and connections of this time-state, there shall ever be found, more or less, in the exercise of a living faith, a "forgetting the things that are behind; a reaching forth unto that which is before." The voice of faith, (at the opening of every seal,) is—"Come, and see:" Oh, precious faith! and thrice blessed the soul who is, by it, enabled to look, and "behold a door opened in heaven;" from whence proceedeth the invitation and the attracting power, saying—"Come up hither; and I will shew thee things that must be hereafter."

4. A living faith can depend upon nothing short of the power of God. No amount of gospel hearing nor gospel experience, can

ever constitute an arm strong enough to lean upon—the power of God alone can hold us up. While faith looks into the glories of the kingdom : and shews them to be both ready and reserved ; it holds up the living soul, so that it shall never be found among them “ who draw back unto perdition, but with them who believe unto the saving of the soul.” “ This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” “ Kept by the power of God.”

5. Connected with the existence of the faith of God's elect, there are two extreme points of soul experience ; “ greatly rejoicing,” and “ heaviness through manifold temptations.” It must be so ; constituted and situated, blessed and exercised as the true believer is in this time-state : neither all light, nor all darkness, are evidences of the life of God in the soul. At one time a solemn sense of pardoning love is realised, and he says, “ Christ loved ME, and gave himself for ME.” At another time, God hideth his face, the soul is troubled, corruptions arise, and he cries out,—“ Oh wretched man, who shall deliver me ?”

6. The *trial* of a living faith is found to be precious—yea, more precious than gold which perisheth. Every day, more or less, am I tried in my soul about the ministry, and about a real vital union to the Lord Jesus Christ. Where there is no faith, it cannot be tried ; where there is real faith, it shall be tried—the result of the trial shall be precious unto the soul. Almost invariably when I have been deeply tried about the ministry, I have been greatly blessed in my own soul, and also made useful to others. “ This is certain,” says Goodwin, “ there is no grace that God tries more than the grace of faith ; which is the most glorious grace a Christian hath : and this God loves to try to the end that the strength and glory of it may appear.”

This faith is a miracle of miracles ; it is founded, like the earth upon nothing in itself, and yet bears the soul up under the heavy weight of its sins, Satan's temptations, and the hidings up of the face of God.

You will notice, your faith may be tried with fire : that is, either the burning wrath of God appearing actually falling upon you ; or burning lusts and temptations meeting together in you. Two things a real believer will constantly find : the first is, some little support in the hottest conflict ; and some precious inward comforts resulting from it.

The last inward fruit of a living faith, is, a real love to Him, who, as yet, we have never seen. The possession and exercise of the very precious actings of love on the person of Christ is here styled "*receiving*—THE END of your faith—even the salvation of your souls."

That is at once both a solemn and a consolatory word written in the eighth of John's Gospel, where Jesus reproveth the Jews. First: it is a solemn word: for it shews plainly how awfully men may be deceived in themselves: and how bold and presumptuous delusions will make the man who is blinded and influenced by them. "Men, who are only outwardly called into a bare profession," (says Love,) "these do harbour and cherish most presumptuous persuasions in their own hearts that they are effectually called by Jesus Christ; whereas they never had any saving work of grace upon their hearts."

The Jews, in Christ's day, had these strong presumptions. They said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." And when Christ beat them off from this, they rushed further still into a daring presumption, saying—"we be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God." What was the answer? If God were your Father," said Christ, "YE WOULD LOVE ME."

In these words I clearly saw that where a genuine living faith is possessed—that faith being a fruit of divine relationship, and an evidence of the new birth, it gives the soul such solemn views of Christ in his glory—it gives the soul so to behold the value of his blood, the tenderness of his heart, the ability of his arm, that, like Esther—(the meaning of which word is "*secret* or *hidden*," and is descriptive of the inward workings of divine grace in a converted sinner's heart:) like Esther, I say, convinced that deliverance can only come forth from King Jesus—the quickened sinner says "I will go in unto the king; and if I perish, I perish." When the king saw Esther standing in the court, she obtained favour in his sight; and the king held out to her the golden sceptre. So Esther drew near, and touched the top of his sceptre: whereupon the king bid her tell out her request, assuring her that "even to the half of the kingdom it should be given her."

The love which a sinner has to Jesus Christ, arises out of a faith's view of Him as the King in Zion: the same faith which discovers his beauty discovers also the sinner's danger. *Necessity* on the one hand, and a *drawing, quickening, encouraging power* on the other,

brings the soul to Christ. Christ is pleased with this: seeing the poor sinner in the court—that is, in a seeking, waiting, anxious posture—standing as it were between the porch and the altar—he finds favour in the sight of the King. So sure as a sinner is brought by divine love in his heart to draw near unto Christ for deliverance, deliverance shall be found. That which strengthens this secret love is the kindness, the compassion, the freeness of his heart. “What is thy request? It shall be given thee to the half of the kingdom.” Christ and the Church shall be equal participators in the glory of the kingdom.

This, then, is certainly a real hidden feature of a living faith—“whom having not seen,” (with the natural eye,) we love. Apart from Christ, out of Christ, a sinner can have no love—no real, spiritual love to anything in heaven, earth, or hell. Does a quickened sinner love God? It is because God in Christ is reconciled to him. Does a quickened sinner love the Gospel? It is because Christ is the life, the light, and the glory of it. Does a quickened sinner love the saints? It is because they wear the image, and breathe the spirit of Christ.

But I must stop here. I have been led to see there are seven inward fruits of a living faith: there are also seven outward fruits of a living faith: virtue—knowledge—temperance—patience—godliness—brotherly kindness—charity.

How these are to be added unto faith: and what I understand by them, must be left until the next part part of the Earthen Vessel, in which, if it please the Lord, I will finish the poor testimony here so feebly begun.



## THE TESTIMONY OF LIVING WITNESSES

CONCERNING THE REALITY OF AN  
 INWROUGHT CONVICTION OF SIN—INWARD SENTENCE OF DEATH—  
 A SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST—AND A GOOD HOPE THROUGH  
 GRACE OF ETERNAL GLORY.

### No. II

“IS NOT THIS A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE?”

THE writer of the following letter, which, with some little abbreviations, I am constrained to insert here, has been (considering his age,) one of the most deeply tried and tempted souls that ever it was my lot to meet with. He is one of many whom the Lord has been pleased to bring under my poor ministry through reading “The Tree Cut Down.” Much might be said concerning him, which, in the Lord’s hands, might be useful to afflicted souls. His own testimony (privately sent to me, without the least idea of it ever appearing in public,) shall for the present suffice. On some future occasion, I hope to give a more explicit account of the dark and thorny path through which he has travelled, as also of his deliverance therefrom. In this way, may it please the God of all grace, to continue to bless the word through the unworthiest of his creatures, and all the praise shall certainly redound to his great and holy name.

Dear Brother,

I feel as though I must write a few lines, being deeply impressed at what you said, when addressing me last evening.

After that heavy affliction of soul, which no tongue can fully tell, I went down into the country, as I stated. Here I had an opportunity of reading Huntington’s works; especially his “Kingdom of Heaven taken by Prayer.” Even in this state there was that that went out after the blessedness he spoke of in his deliverance; but when he came to describe the hypocrite, I was perplexed, and could not decide whose I was, nor whom I served. I saw on the one hand those things described, that my soul could not deny having experienced; while on the other side, my soul hung in doubt. Here I took many lonely walks, and offered up many cries and tears that the Lord would appear for me in grace and providence. A situation soon offered without my

looking after it at all, and a way was opened for me to return to London; and my mind felt more serene, my bodily strength was recruited; but in all this there was not that faith in exercise that could lay hold of the word and call it mine. Shortly after, I was married to my beloved wife, who had keenly felt and mourned, and offered up many cries and tears on my behalf, in my deep affliction. I felt deeply humbled and melted down, that the Lord should have wrought for me in this mysterious way; but yet there was the exercise of that precious faith wanting in my soul. My walk was now consistent, and for two years and three-quarters I was enabled to maintain it, during which time I saw the Lord's hand in so many ways, (in bodily affliction, bereavements and shuttings up of providence, and deliverance in these things in answer to prayer,) that I could but at times believe that the Lord had thoughts of peace and not of evil toward me, to give me an expected end: viz.: that he would appear for my soul. The Lord having appeared for me in his providence, in answer to my breathings, in opening up a way for me in the situation I now fill. I felt deeply humbled and melted down under a sense of his goodness towards me; my walk was consistent, as before stated; I had thoughts of joining a Christian church. With this intention I took sittings for myself and wife at a neighbouring Baptist cause, and left where I had attended for some considerable time, as they were not Baptists, when suddenly my intentions were all thrown down; I was taken by surprise. Many times has my soul struggled to get away from this temptation, but in vain, for it would follow me, and I found by painful experience, that I had a nature that would sin; there were intervals when I seemed to get the better of it, and then my soul has been puffed up with pride and presumption. Thus I was continually ground against the two engines of satanic presumption and despair, and oh, what distress has at times filled my soul. My dear wife used often to say, "What is the matter with you; there is something that troubles you, and can you not tell it me? Am I not worthy of being told? have I offended you in any way?" but alas I could not tell her my trouble; and many times when she has been asleep, my eyes have prevented the night watches, bemoaning my condition; and she has awaked and called out, "what is the matter with you?" my reply was, "there is nothing the matter;" and I often carried an aching heart with a smiling face. I tried many inventions to get away from my trouble; I made solemn vows, called solemnly on the Lord to witness; but alas! all to no purpose: and I began to despair of recovery; when, I trust, the Lord directed my eye to look into a shop window, where I saw your little book, (*The Tree Cut Down*,) and determined to come and hear you. In the second sermon (I think) you said to this effect: "it may be there may be some poor sinner here that is beset with some besetting sin, and he hates it, but has no power to deliver himself from it." I could have got up and said, "here is the man!" From that



time your word was to me a searching word, and there was a most desperate struggle in my soul—in my distress I did secretly vow unto the Lord that if he would once more in mercy look upon my soul, and give me the smallest grain of hope, that I would come out from the world, and be joined to his people, and that the remnant of my days should be devoted to his service. I trust this was of God; for there has been that power in the preaching of the word; it has been made the word of life to my soul; so that, (if not woefully deceived,) in some small measure, my soul has known what it is to be melted down; *sin subdued*; and to find rest for my immortal soul. When a little of this precious oil is let into the soul, it makes a man's face to shine; so that it is seen, and this will make him walk as becometh the Gospel. My brother, is not the work divine?

These things, I trust, I can say, are to be found in my soul, through mercy, viz. :—repentance toward God; faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and a love to the Lord, his people, and his ways; and an abhorrence of the very appearance of evil. But I must conclude, praying that the Lord will enrich your soul with his heavenly grace, and bless your labours abundantly.

A.

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### AN ENQUIRY.

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I GIVE the following just as it came into my hands. If spared until the next month, I hope to say a few words upon it—but it is open for an answer from any friend who may be moved and enabled to notice it.

*May, 1845.*

Dear Sir,

A FRIEND would feel greatly obliged by your answering the following query, through the medium of the "Earthen Vessel:"—Is it possible to obtain such a knowledge of the entire sinfulness, and depravity of the heart, as to feel deeply sensible that it is incapable even of thinking a good thought, and to have at the same time such a perception of the just requirements of the law of God, as to see that it is impossible to produce anything satisfactory to divine justice, and consequently that there is no escaping from the wrath of God as revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness, unless the Lord himself provides the means of deliverance?

Is it possible for the natural conscience to discover these things by a knowledge of the Scriptures, or by being accustomed to sit under a gospel ministry; or can these truths only be learned through the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit?"

That the Holy Spirit may guide you into all truth, and enable you fully to preach the gospel of Christ is the sincere prayer of

A FAITHFUL FRIEND.

## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY :

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

### PART II.

HAVING, in my last, said a few things upon the ministry of the word, I merely give an extract or two in this number: the subject will be productive of materials worth preserving, as we proceed.

“ It is clear in Scripture, God may use ministers that are wicked themselves to convert others. The ministers of the seven churches of Asia, doubtless some of them were bad men; Paul tells you, 1 Cor. 9. 27. I keep under my body, lest when I preach to others, I myself may be a cast-away. Intimating, that a man may preach to others, and may be a means to save others, and yet not be saved himself. So 1 Cor. 13. 1. Ministers in this case may be as cooks are. A cook may dress many a dish, and let them go through his hands to furnish a large and stately table, yet of all these dishes himself hardly taste one; so ministers, they may dress many a dish for their hearers, yet they not lick their fingers, or taste of this spiritual food themselves. As in the building of the ark, there were many men built Noah's ark, to save others, that were drowned themselves; so many men may build an ark by preaching the Word, and the ways of God to save other men's souls, when they may be drowned themselves. Hence it is the Scripture tells us of stars that fell from heaven; many ministers, that seemed godly ministers, like stars in their generation, yet they fell, and became wicked and loose. And I remember Doctor Pembleton, a famous minister in the days of Queen Mary; and a man whose ministry had converted many Christians, yet at length he himself turned to be a Papist. Now these Christians did never misdoubt or suspect their conversion, because the man that converted them, was a bad man; they might be good people, though he was a bad minister: so that this is no ground in the world; though I confess it is not ordinary, that God makes wicked men means of conversion, but God ordinarily crowns the word most in the mouth of a godly minister, yet sometimes I say, God may use a wicked man to be a means to convert souls. And I would give you these reasons to prove, that a wicked man may convert souls, and that God ties not conversion only to a godly minister. Because first, the efficacy of the Word doth not depend upon man, but upon Jesus Christ; and Christ may make use of whom he pleaseth.

Secondly, if only a good man could convert, then this would follow, that we could be as well sure of another man's conversion, as we are of our own; which is a thing most untrue. For if only a

godly man could convert, then if I were sure of my own conversion, I were as well sure of his conversion that wrought upon me also; which cannot be, so that clearly this should lay no block in your way, because you discern the minister that wrought upon you to be no good man, seeing conversion is not tied only to a godly minister.—*Love.*

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“I was sent for to preach in a certain town where I had preached before; and I very readily accepted the invitation, and engaged to preach twice, or two discourses at one visit among the people. And I did so; and after I preached the last sermon, and had returned to the deacon’s house where I put up, Satan beset me in a most powerful manner about the two sermons I had preached to the people, suggesting that that was the worst piece of work I had ever done, and that I should see it turn out so in the end, and should be sorry for what I had done when it would be too late. Under this sad temptation, my soul sunk down into a most dismal condition, not knowing what to do, as I could not recall the two sermons which I had there preached before many witnesses. I at last retired to my bedchamber, and there I fell on my knees and earnestly begged pardon of the Lord for what I had done; for it appeared plain to me that I had most assuredly done wrong in preaching those two discourses. I also, while on my knees, very fervently entreated the Lord that he would be gracious as to order it so that the two discourses might be entirely forgotten by all those people who heard them delivered; because in that case I knew they could do no injury to the hearers. And this indeed was the thing that lay with so much weight on my mind, namely, that my two sermons would make wrong impressions on the people’s minds, and that the Lord would hold me responsible for the same; and yet I knew of nothing that I had said which was derogatory to the gospel of Christ. But of a truth I cannot describe the forlorn state that my soul was then in from this temptation.

“The next morning I found myself in the same sad condition, and without any prospect of a change for the better. I would have given the world if I had it, if those two sermons had not been preached by me, or that they might be every whit forgotten by the people. As I was now sitting in the good man’s parlour, very sorrowful in soul, and thinking seriously about the two discourses, and what the people would think and say about them, I heard a knock at the street door, and instantly it was suggested to me that some person was come to confirm me in my fears. The lady of the house went to the door to see who was there, and I soon found it was a man’s voice, and that he asked for me, and the lady asked him into the parlor where I was, but he objected, and wished to see me privately. At hearing this I was ready to sink, and knew not what I should do, as it now appeared evident to me that God had sent this man to tell my fearful doom. The lady returned from the door to the parlor, and told me I was wanted. I arose, and went to the messen-

ger, and directly saw who he was. He saluted me with 'A good morning,' and we shook hands, and he then paused awhile, and I feared greatly; at last he said, 'Brother Osbourn, I am come this morning, in my own name, and also in the name of all my family, to express to you our gratitude to Almighty God, and to you, as a servant of his, for the two discourses you delivered since you have been among us, and we beg your acceptance of ten dollars. Farewell; I am in haste.'

"I was struck with astonishment at all this, and for a little while it served to suppress my fears and distress of mind. Soon after this I left the deacon's house and went down to the dock to take the steamboat for home, but she was not ready to start off. I then went and walked on the strand of the river alone; and I had not been there long before all my fears and distress of mind about preaching the two sermons came fresh upon me again, and my soul was full of trouble, and the messenger's thanks, and the thanks of his household, and the ten dollars, appeared to me as a mere accidental circumstance, and it had nothing to do with the point in hand. With these exercises of mind I returned to the steamboat, but was a little too soon. As I was standing on the dock, a stranger came up behind me and laid his hand on my shoulder, and said, 'You, I perceive, are the person who preached in the Baptist meeting house in this town this week. You are a stranger to me, nor am I a Baptist, but I hope I love divine truth, and such preaching as you preached to the people; and I wanted to see you before you left the place, to express to you my thanks to the Lord for the preaching I heard from your mouth. And I also beg your acceptance of twenty dollars.'

"Through the mercy of the Lord, this broke the snare, and my soul was eased of its smart, and I went on home in a pleasant state of mind, and praising the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to me-ward."—*Osbourn*.

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"In preaching the gospel to my fellow creatures, as I said before, I at times was greatly difficulted: for I have thought that now are all my preaching funds exhausted, and I shall no longer be able to find any thing to say to the people, and they will discover my emptiness and then forsake me. I have sometimes gone to the pulpit with those feelings, and what to do I have not known; but for the most part the Lord hath been good to me in this matter; for I have received a fresh stock, and new light and strength from him, and have been enabled to speak to the people, with increased confidence and warmth. And then I have thought I would never more give way to such fears and suspicions, since the Lord had so surprised me with his goodness and grace. But so soon as ever my mind would again sink into darkness, the very same fears and suspicions about my not being able to say any thing to the people, would come upon me as strong as ever; and I have really thought that I could not, nor would not, continue in the ministry under such embarrassments,

for they were more than I could bear. I have therefore thought I would go far away with my family where I was not known, and settle down privately, and so have no more to do with preaching, nor with church-membership."

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"A MAN SHALL BE AS AN HIDING PLACE FROM  
THE WIND."

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THE following lines were written many years since by a brother in the truth, whose experience, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, they do very blessedly describe. It was my privilege very recently to hear them reiterated warm from his heart, as though they had but that moment been indited: and realizing, as I then did, such an unctuous application of them to my own soul, I begged hard for a copy of them, feeling persuaded their perusal will be profitable to many a sincere and humble follower of the Cross.

When wearied with the things of time,  
How sweet my soul 'tis to recline  
Thy head on Jesus' breast:  
To view him as thy all in all,  
Tho' lost and ruined by the fall,  
In him alone thou art blest.

Tho' we by tempests may be toss'd,  
And think within ourselves, we're lost;  
And thus give way to fear:  
The promise stands for ever true,  
And such vile worms as me and you,  
May plead with God in prayer.

There Jesus our forerunner stands,  
With robes of victory in his hands,  
For all that to him come:  
His willingness sure none can doubt,  
For he has never cast one out,  
But welcomes sinners home.

His blood has cleansed the blackest hue,  
This blood avails for such as you,  
Who many talents owe:  
The naked, halt, the lame, and blind,  
Sweet consolation here will find,  
For every kind of woe.

Here leprous souls a cure will find;  
And here the weary traveller's mind  
Sweet comfort will enjoy:

But rest assur'd no other prop  
Can bear a burdened sinner up  
But Jesus Christ our Lord.

In him, my living head, I see  
Salvation flow so full and free  
To me a sinful worm:  
My pride it humbles in the dust,  
Jesus alone shall be my boast,  
Who hides me from the storm.

Ere ever time itself began,  
Jehovah formed the glorious plan  
To save my soul from hell:  
Justice was fully satisfied  
When Jesus Christ, God's equal, died;  
Oh, wondrous love to tell!

Then shall I, in dead silence lay?  
And not a word for Jesus say;  
Who agonized and bled?  
Surely 'twould melt a heart of stone,  
To think what Christ for man has done,  
And suffered in his stead!

Lord, teach me how to tell thy love  
Until I reach thy courts above,  
My Jesus to adore!  
No tempter there to break our peace,  
But on Jehovah God will gaze,  
And praise him evermore.

### To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

("A Silent Observer of what is going on in the Church of the Lord Jesus," has forwarded to me the following letter, with permission to transfer it to the Earthen Vessel. May the true Church of the living God be encouraged and comforted hereby!)

Dear Friends,

In a day in which few are found who delight in the purity of that Gospel, which reflects equal glory upon the works, and ascribes equal dignity to the person of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, it is your unspeakable privilege to be reduced to the lowly obedience of faith, resting secure in the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.

In a day, when instead of adoring the Person, trusting in the righteousness of Jesus, and deriving all our supplies from his inherent fulness, so many men of virtue, natural religion, and of

eminent abilities, are straining every nerve to eclipse his personal glories, and bring into contempt his finished salvation—you cannot be thankful enough for that grace which has made you sensible of the plague of your own hearts, with your absolute helplessness, and indispensable need of an interest in Jesus ; in all that is his ; so as to make you flee for refuge to the hope set before you in the Gospel. This you would have had neither power nor will to do, if the Holy Ghost had not breathed upon you, as of old upon the dry bones ; and quickened you when dead in trespasses and sins.

Therefore by what principles soever others are influenced, you will find yourselves under the necessity of going on in an implicit dependence on the perfect obedience of Jesus, as the only spring of Christian holiness, seeing whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Thus called out of darkness into marvellous light, and constituted a church of the exalted Jesus ; a church whose only rule of worship and discipline is the mind of God, revealed in the sacred canon, exclusive of the capricious return of the unsteady on the one hand, and the lordly dictates of prelatie arrogance on the other. This being the case, you must expect but little countenance from men whose aim is to link the interest of Christ and the world together ; rather expect that a great share of tribulation shall be yours ; for were you to escape it, the Scriptures would denominate you bastards, and not sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.

You have indeed, as a church been called to wade through seas of affliction, and to encounter mountains of difficulty ; yet your spark has been kept alive amidst rolling billows ; your bow has abode in strength, though galled by the arrows of the adversary you have been helped to cleave to Jesus, and have a Scripture warrant to look to him for the appointed kingdom. This He hath promised, and He was never known to forsake them who desire to follow him in the simplicity of his appointed ways, notwithstanding he willeth them to wait, and watch for his blessed coming.

Your trials, my friends, have been principally from those of your own communion ; those who ought to have been helpers of your faith, and promoters of your joy ; those who eat bread at your table have lifted up their heel against you, and like Ahithophel of old, have turned their counsel against your tranquility. But God will enable you to surmount every difficulty, therefore you have encouragement still to persevere in following the simple dictates of revelation for in so doing you shall be established as a church, against which even the gates of hell shall never prevail.

In this militant state, one trial passes away only to make way for another, so that there is no room to expect rest and ease of any long duration. This circumstance loudly calls for the closest attention to instituted means. In times of apparent safety the mariners may take their rest, but in a storm all hands must be active, and stand firmly to their post.

When you look back to the scenes of trouble through which you have been brought, and reflect on your present situation, what reason of thankfulness to the great keeper, by whom alone you have been preserved. May you and I, be helped still to go on, making the Holy One of Israel our only refuge in all our trials, and immoveable foundation of our hope in the day of evil. Never forgetting that in a little while, those who sow in tears, shall reap in joy; who now groan under the cross, shall wear the crown, be where Jesus is, and behold that glory which he had with the Father before the world began; then shall all your sighs and groans be turned into hallelujahs to God and to the Lamb for ever and ever.\*

\* I apprehend the writer of this encouraging epistle intends it for that part of the professing church with which the Lord has given me to stand connected—that is, the Church of Christ meeting for worship in Crosby Row.

Who the writer may be, I know not, but it is evident enough that he is somewhat acquainted with the trials and difficulties which attend us by the way; “those who ought to have been helpers of your faith,” says the writer, “and promoters of your joy: those who eat bread at your table, have lifted up their heel against you.” Is there any truth in this? Are there any, who, like the Galatians of old, would have plucked out their eyes for us; but now lift up their heel against us? Aye, that there are. Men that are tossed about with every wind—and quickly turned out of the way. Paul speaking of such, calls them “false brethren:” he says, that “they were brought in unawares.” Who brought them in? “He said unto them, AN ENEMY HATH DONE THIS.” What then shall be done with them? “Let both grow together until the harvest.” Let them alone. The wicked are God’s sword: of his own church he has said, “I the Lord do keep it, I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.” But he has also said “the Holy Ghost shall baptise her with fire: whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor: he will gather his wheat into his garner; but the chaff shall be burnt with unquenchable fire.” It is, therefore, impossible but that offences must come; but woe unto them by whom they come.”

When professors turn away from the ministry they have espoused, and



from the ordinances they have embraced, it becomes a solemn and a weighty question—" *Who is in fault?*" Is there truth and vitality lacking in the ministry? Is there a mixture of error with the truth? If so, in a becoming way, it behoveth Christian men to leave such a ministry to itself, that it may fall. But even such a step as this should be properly taken. Do not speak with a flattering tongue, and with plausible speech to the man's face, and behind his back use that same tongue as a sword with which to stab him to the very heart. Such is the conduct of some calling themselves Christians; but certainly such things ought not to be. Resist error: reprove inconsistencies: testify against everything unbecoming the Gospel—but do it openly—do it boldly—do it face to face—that so, if possible, the current of iniquity may be stayed.

But, on the other hand, do men turn away from the ministry of the word, because that ministry strikes a heavy blow at sins besetting, and at sins indulged in, by the men who turn away? If so, their case is fearful in the extreme; and it may be that God's day of reckoning with them will be awful indeed.

Having thus far noticed the letter, and having thus freely spoken of facts that are not to be denied; it behoveth me also to testify that whilst there is much amongst professing men to distress and cast one down—whilst ministerial jealousy, self-righteous contempt, and the anger and disdain of the "elder sons," are surrounding us—God be thanked, having received help from him, we continue to the present time. Some inward peace is enjoyed, some little hope of ultimately getting home in safety, is realised: and although it is but a little reviving that we get in our present imperfect state, that little reviving is so precious, makes us so happy and content, that we do not envy the greatest nor most prosperous church in all the world. There are ten things which a good and gracious God has promised and pledged to do for his own dear people; the first of which, in my very soul, I believe to be an earnest of the whole. And the mercy is, God has laid the accomplishment of the whole of them upon himself—not upon us—nor upon our fellow man.

If you are, my reader, a haughty, and a high-minded, and a self-sufficient professor; I have got nothing for you:—but if you are a poor, trembling, buffeted, despised seeker after Christ and his precious salvation, come with me, for one moment: examine the things here set down, and know for thyself that God has towards thee thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give thee an expected end. The first thing which the Lord has pledged himself to do for a poor elect and redeemed sinner, is to "cause breath to come into him, so that he may live:" and as this breath is divine, and comes from God; so will it come out of the soul in holy longings after God. Have you this breath of God in your soul? Read the forty second Psalm. Is it the language of your heart before God? If so,

all the other things are laid up for you in God's covenant; and in God's time shall be made known unto you.

Are you ready to travel on, to the next step? Do you feel a hope that God has caused breath to enter in? Then that life is everlasting—that life is in his Son—'tis "hid with Christ in God."

Can you advance, poor soul?—Say, you, "yes—I can: for as the thirsty, hunted down hart panteth for the water brooks, so panteth my soul after God." Enough. Out of Egypt you have come. To it you shall never return.

Secondly, then, God says, he will "open all your graves." A grave is a dark, confined unhappy place; and Heman said that God had laid him in the lowest pit: and he was not the first child of God that had been there; neither was he the last: perhaps, poor soul, you are in some grave now: some dark, and dreadful dispensation has befallen you. Well, but in this grave you breathe for God: and he declares he will open your grave, and give you to behold the land that is yet afar off. Be then of good cheer.

Thirdly. The Lord will not disappoint you. Your expectation shall not be cut off. He says "I will cause you to come up out of your graves."

I am a witness of the truth of God—a pensioner upon the bounty of God—and a poor prisoner looking out for the delivering hand of God. First, I am a witness of the truth of God. I laid in a dark and loathsome grave; and open it myself I could not; but the Lord shone in while there I lay, and wrought deliverance too. Secondly, I am a pensioner upon the bounty of God. Some people think that because I now preach, in so many places, and withal, because a friend has lent me a printing press, that I must be doing well.

And so I am: but it is not, perhaps, in the way they think—that of making money. No, no. The Lord sees it best to keep me very low: many times, my pockets are completely emptied; and then somebody or other is constrained to find me out, and again to supply my necessities. It is really precious only to watch his hand in temporal things. But thirdly, I said, I am still a poor prisoner looking out for the delivering hand of God. There are three heavy burdens yet laying upon me. What are they, say you? The first is a body of sin and death: the second is unbelief: and the third is some one or two old debts that, through some unhappy events, I contracted some few years ago, and pay them off, as yet I cannot; but even this grave is open. Do you ask me how?—I tell you, I have got faith to believe that every farthing shall be honourably paid, this faith opens the grave: but even this faith must be tried.

This, my reader, is the way God opens a sinner's grave—even by giving him faith: "all things are possible unto him that believeth." What

grave is your's? Has God opened it for you? Then He will cause you to come out. Bless his precious name.

Fourthly. The Lord promises to put His Spirit in you. A spirit of love toward, and dependence on, a covenant God.

Fifthly. You shall know the Lord, as your God—as your present help in every time of trouble, and as your everlasting reward.

Sixthly. God declares He will save you, or deliver you out of all your dwelling places, and will cleanse you, you shall have no other permanent dwelling place but himself and to fit you for himself He will cleanse you.

Seventhly. He will make an everlasting covenant of peace with you. With the eternal God you shall be at peace, however much you may be disturbed in other quarters.

The eighth blessing is, "I will place them." You may try to go here and to go there—to be this, that, and the other—but says the dear Lord "I will place you."—"Abide thou with me: fear not: he that seeketh my life, seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard."

Ninth. "I will multiply them." The whole ingathering of the church, the building up of the saints—and their meetness for glory is with and from the Lord himself.

Finally. "My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea I will be their God, and they shall be my people." The glorious climax of the whole purpose of God. A hope so much divine, may trials well endure.

Reader, for the present, Farewell.

A Biographical memoir of the late Mr. James Francis, (many years Minister of the Gospel,) will be commenced in the July number of the EARTHEN VESSEL; written by his son, Mr. Samuel Francis; and regularly continued until complete.

Many letters are laid by and left unnoticed only for the present month.

The Narrative, under the head of "The Valley of Achor," was finished in the Supplementary number.

It was in a moment of much dejection that tidings arrived from St. Mildred's Court, Poultry. Bless the Lord for another testimony: it filled the heart with gratitude, and a determination not to eat my morsel alone. I'll tell the others all about it, by and bye.

In the next number, (the Lord permitting,) will be given—"The Source, Nature, Extent, and Design of that Power which Fallen Spirits are permitted to Exercise in and over the People of God."

"The difference between assurance and groundless presumption," by good old Love, will be given if possible, early.

In answer to the enquiry about Brook's Letters—the pith and marrow of them will be given under the head of "The Gospel Ministry," from time to time.

## A SIX-FOLD DESCRIPTION

OF

### THAT EFFECTUAL CALL WHICH IS OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.

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THE following letter from a "THREE-FOLD TRIED YOUNG MAN," has led me to enter upon the above most important subject.

My reader: if thou art living in the rich assurance and enjoyment of thy heavenly Father's love: unshaken and confident in thy redemption by Christ; and walking in a holy possession of the Blessed Spirit as thy testifier, sanctifier, and leader into truth; then, you may pass on; for this is not so much designed for you. But, if you are troubled in soul because of indwelling sin on the one hand, and uncertainty respecting the final issue of thy present conflicts on the other; then, read the following pages, if you can, with prayer to God; for certainly herein is set down some few of those things which grow up and out of the inward residence of the grace of God.

I first give the letter which I received; and then, being requested to answer it in this work, have proceeded to do so according to the ability and help which the Lord has been pleased to give.

Sir,

I am one whom the Lord has led to see and feel (for what end I know not,) the deep, deep, sink of iniquity I have within. Indeed, I labour for words to *express* what I feel on this point: and here, dear sir, I am, and have been for an amazing length of time. I am *lost*, but not *found*; sick, but not healed; *bound*, but not loosed. Sin growing stronger and stronger, and myself getting weaker and weaker; till I am driven by the dreadful workings of sin in all its forms, almost to despair, and if the Lord does not *soon* deliver me, *despair* I must. In this state, Sir, I have been brought over and over again, but *no deliverance experienced in my soul from it*.

Having heard yourself at Crosby Row and many others of God's sent servants at *Zoar Chapel*, state, that when the Lord brings a *living* soul into deep trouble *he always brings that soul out*, which statement I have compared with the experience of God's saints recorded in his word, and have found it quite true; but I have been for a long time; and am in deep trouble, and am not delivered, although I have cried, I think, from the bottom of my soul for deliverance, *none has come*. At another time I have felt as careless, indifferent and unconcerned about anything of the kind as the stones in the street, I am continually committing secret

sins *knowingly*, which must be *wilfully*, for which there is no pardon. I feel that my case is without a *parallel*. Am I not in a dreadful state? Do be so kind and tell me in your next what to do, which, if I am not in hell, I hope to see. I know that all you can say will not effect my deliverance; none but a Triune Covenant God can do that; still, as you have been in similar circumstances, and you have obtained mercy and deliverance I thought you might be able to tell me how I should act. I have cried and do cry but *in vain*. Oh, so full, so full of sin—and no brokenness of heart *felt* on account of it. I hope if I can to hear you on Tuesday evening, but am not certain. Still, dear Sir, do not fail to answer this in your next '*Earthen Vessel*.' Pray excuse all grammatical errors, as I am really in too much earnest to stop to correct this from

A THREE-FOLD TRIED YOUNG MAN.

I had read the foregoing epistle again and again; but to attempt to administer one word of advice or consolation appeared to be out of my power, because the work of God in the soul of a quickened sinner is not to be hastened. God shuts, and he alone can really open.

I folded up the letter, and laid it aside with several others which have recently come into my hands; but I seemed compelled to take this one and read it again; and feeling my soul a little drawn out unto God for direction—not wishing either to wound a quickened conscience, or to prop up a delusion—I was constrained to take up the word of God, when immediately the 34th verse of the seventh chapter of Acts, arrested my attention—"I have seen, I have seen, (says the Almighty,) the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them."

These words appeared as though given to me with reference to the subject and author of the letter then laying before me.

Now, who this individual is, I know not: but there are four things in the above words which I feel in my soul, are applicable to, and, consequently, sooner or later, shall be realised by him.

First: I believe he is one whose name is written in heaven: chosen in Christ unto eternal life: and one of the "MY PEOPLE," of whom Jehovah (though in type,) then did speak.

Secondly: I believe, that he is at present in Egypt: that is very much under the power of satan, led captive by besetting sins, and sorely plagued by the corruptions of the flesh.

Thirdly: I believe the blessed Lord has set his eyes upon him for good: the blessed Spirit, with a holy and heavenly light is looking into the most secret chambers of his heart: God is searching him with candles: which signifies a passive light: a discovery of indwelling depravity, without any powers of freedom or deliverance from it; and consequently like Israel of old, he groans, but seems to groan in vain.

Finally, I feel assured that the dear Lord will "COME DOWN:" down to the lowest condition into which he can possibly sink, and that he will deliver him.

What my faith in these particulars is grounded upon, I shall now briefly state. And, first,

I believe this, because of the secret way in which the words out of Acts and the young man's words ("the Lord has led me to see and feel," &c.) were together put into my mind. Faith speaks out of the dark and low dungeon, and says "The Lord has led me to see and feel the deep, deep, sink of iniquity which I have within." And did the Lord ever lead a sinner to a painful knowledge of his own dreadful condition, and there leave him to perish? No: I will say, as did the wife of Manoah, "if the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have shewed us all these things." Judas saw his awful condition; but the Lord did not lead him into such a view of himself, as to enable him to cry out for help, but left him to dash himself at once into hell. Again, I do believe that the writer of this letter, is a vessel of mercy, because, in the very path he has described, my soul has travelled; in that awful state, my soul has laid; "but I obtained mercy." The writer says, "I am lost, but not found; sick but not healed; bound but not loosed."

Some man will be ready to say, "this was Spira's case; and it may be the case with the writer of this letter.

There are two things in the young man's case different from Spira's. First he has not openly and wilfully trodden under foot the blood of the covenant and cast away the truth. Secondly; with all the misery of his soul, he has been helped "to cry from the bottom of his heart for deliverance." And, thirdly, he is brought to look to, and lean only upon the arm of sovereign, omnipotent grace for help.

I have no desire slightly to heal his wounds: God forbid, that I should be found daubing with untempered mortar: neither can I attempt to nurse him in his despondency. It appears very plain from the word of God, that redeemed sinners, (who alone are effectually called by divine grace,) are the only persons in whose souls is realized that amazing sentence of Paul's, where he says, "*But sin, that it might appear sin, WORKING DEATH IN ME BY THAT WHICH IS GOOD; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful.*"

Look, my fellow sinner, for one moment, at the description which Paul here gives of the convincing and quickening operations of the blessed Spirit in the conscience of one that is really born of God. He says that he was made to see and to feel sin to be sin, to such an extent that *it actually wrought death in him*. By death, I understand, not only a dying to self righteousness, but also, a fearful apprehension of the righteous indignation of a holy God against sin. This state of things, as

belonging unto God's elect, was set forth by the name of the second river which went out of Eden to water the garden—that garden is the whole election of grace.

“The name of the second river,” says the Holy Ghost, is “Gihon; the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.”

Havilah is the first land in which the elect of God are found. “Havilah, say the learned, comes from the root, which signifies to be inwardly troubled as those are which undergo the pains of child-birth.” Moreover it means “a land heavily laden with golden treasure, waiting to bring forth.” Such is the womb of the Father's purpose and covenant, and such the belly of Christ, where all the chosen seed are, (previous to effectual calling,) secretly, but certainly hidden.

But Ethiopia is the second land: and it is figurative of the second estate of the chosen seed. They are brought out of their secrecy—into an open and an experimental acquaintance with their real character. Gihon, signifies “to bring forth with groans and sighs.” Here is a vessel of mercy—an Ethiopian; clothed in the blackness and vileness of sin—the holy law of God burning against him: and in this state he knows the Ethiopian *cannot change his skin*; neither can he wash it white: wherefore he brings forth fruit—(that is, he brings forth confessions and expressions of his defiled state,) with groans and cries: for he cannot be reconciled to his misery: neither can he obtain deliverance from it.

But what saith the Lord in the 68th Psalm? “*Princes shall come out of Egypt. ETHIOPIA — ETHIOPIA SHALL SOON STRETCH OUT HER HANDS UNTO GOD.*”

There is the promise. The poor Ethiopian—black with sin—and almost burnt up with fear and terror—still, Ethiopia **SHALL NOT DESPAIR**; Ethiopia **SHALL NOT PERISH**; Ethiopia **SHALL SOON stretch out her hands unto God.** yes; yes; young man; be you who or what you may, if the dear Lord has really let divine light enough into your soul to see your blackness; and if, (alarmed at the sight,) you are brought to stretch forth your hands unto God: expressive of your secret desire to love him, to be reconciled to him; to be saved by him: if you have been led to stretch forth your hands unto God, expressive of your faith in, and entire dependance upon, the glorious **GOD-MAN**, the Lord from heaven: solemnly assured do I feel that your redemption draweth nigh.

Following upon these brief remarks, I do desire to lay before you the following

**SIXFOLD DESCRIPTION OF THAT EFFECTUAL CALL, WHICH IS OF GOD UNTO SALVATION.**

First, When God goes about effectually to call a poor sinner into a state of grace he puts a clear light into his soul, whereby he may see the heinous and aggravated nature of all his sins, more than ever he did before. Rom.

vii. 8, 9, 13. Paul tells you, before the commandment came, he was alive and sin was dead; that is before the power of the word came upon his conscience to convert him, he was alive; i. e. he thought he was a good man, and a just man, and he thought sin was dead, sin was destroyed; he never knew sin so sinful: "but when the commandment came sin revived and I died:" when the word of God came with power upon my conscience, and light upon my judgment, then I saw I was a dead man, sin had killed me, and I saw sin was reigning, and sin was raging within me and what then? ver 13. "I saw sin exceeding sinful:" he never saw sin so before conversion, before his call, when he was a Pharisee; but when the word of God came with power upon his conscience to call him, then saith he, I saw sin to be exceeding sinful. Now (O beloved) hath God ever done thus with your souls? may be you look upon sin with a transient and general view, but do you look upon sin so as to see more evil in sin than ever you saw before? This is the course God usually takes. Methinks God deals with a converted sinner, as it is spoken in Job xxxiii, 27, 28. "He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it doth not profit me, he will deliver his soul from going down into the pit, and his life shall see the light:" that is, God looks upon the mass of mankind in the world, and saith, if any man say he hath sinned, and it did not profit him, that is, if he look upon sin as an evil, and that he never did get good by it: then saith God I will deliver his soul from hell, and bring him to heaven.

Yea, but you will say, may be, sometimes God may do this; to afflict men, and trouble men in mind, make them see their sins: but is this God's usual work?

Yes, it is, ver. 29. "Lo, these things worketh God oftentimes with men." Mark, it is not a seldom work, but it is God's work often, he will make you see your sins, see them to be fruitless, and see them to be unprofitable, "Lo these things God worketh oftentimes with men. Hence you read, John xvi, 8. "When the spirit shall come" (mark his office) "he shall convince the world of sin." The first act of the Spirit in converting a soul, and calling him, is to convince him of sin. And I remember Piscator thinks this accomplished in Acts ii, 37. "When they saw their sin in crucifying of Jesus Christ." This is the first work of the Spirit of God, in your calling: he will convince you of sin. Now, O beloved, to how many do I speak this day, with whom God hath never taken this method, since they were born into the world? How many are there that have been told of their drunkenness, and told of their lusts, and of their deceits, and of their licentious living from day to day; and yet to this day they never saw sin to be exceedingly sinful: they never were convinced of sin to purpose? If they did indeed see their sin, first, it was but a transient sight, soon come and soon gone; or else, second it was but a general sight, to say we are all sinners; or third, if they did see their sin, it was but a confused sight: no way distinct; or fourth, if they did see sin, it was an unhumbling sight. The sight of sin did never humble them in God's sight. I intreat you, beloved, do not lay hold or have hopes of being effectually called, if God hath not shewn you the heinous and aggravated nature of sin. There is a speech, Job xxxvi, 9, 10. "He first shews to men their works, and their transgressions, that they have exceeded; and then he opens their ears to discipline, and commands them to return from evil." Mark, then the Lord doth it, when he makes them see their transgressions, that they have exceeded. Now have you seen that you have exceeded in your passions and in your



pride? Have you seen sin to be exceedingly sinful? This is God's word; and happy are you that are brought into Christ's school, were Christ doth take this method with all.

Second. After God hath put a light into the soul, to make you see the sinfulness of sin; then, second, God fastens these thoughts on the soul, to make you sensible of the great misery that your sins have brought you into; to cry out with Paul, Rom. vii, 24. "Wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" There Paul cries out of his wretchedness and misery, by reason of that body of death, the sinfulness of his nature, which he confesses did as much trouble him, as if a dead body should be tied to his living body: alluding to the custom of the Romans, in punishing notorious malefactors, which he takes to be a most grievous punishment. Why, beloved, have you ever seen this? Did you ever see that misery that sin brought upon you?—that sin did divest you of righteousness—did rob you of your God—banish you from his presence—entitle you to hell—and make you objects of his wrath? Now, were you sensible of this misery? this is God's method, to make you see your misery by reason of sin.

Third. God puts the soul into a kind of spiritual astonishment, that the poor sinner doth not know where to go, what course to take, which way to run, how he may get pardon for his sin, and recovery from his misery. This you find mentioned as God's method, Acts ii, 37, upon three thousand at once, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" They were even in a maize, the word wrought upon them, and they saw Jesus Christ crucified to be their sin; and now they cry out in great astonishment, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" When God effectually calls a man, he will leave him a little to himself, that he knows not which way in the world to turn. Now, when I speak of spiritual astonishment, mistake me not; for first, I press not such a measure of humiliation, nor such a measure of trouble of mind, how great it must be; nor, secondly, do I press the duration of it; how long it must be—that you must be so long and so long; nor, thirdly, do I press an absolute necessity of this, as if a man could not be called without it. Indeed, we read of Lydia, "that her heart was opened," and she never troubled nor astonished; and God sometimes works thus in an extraordinary way: but I press this, that ordinarily, it is God's method in some measure or other, at some time or other, to put his people into such a plunge, that they shall not know which way in the world to turn themselves. And so were those three thousand, Acts ii. They could not tell what they should do to be saved.

And here further, if you ask me, with whom doth God most of all take this course, to put them into such spiritual amazement; to put them into horror and terror about their everlasting estate? I answer, first, those that have lived in a course of profaneness before conversion, let them look to it. If thou hast been a knotty and stout-hearted sinner against God, God must give thee many a blow before he can hammer thee to his own will. You that have been guilty of drunkenness, and guilty of adultery, or guilty of sabbath-breaking in a gross and licentious way, that have made this world a stage to act wickedness upon, look to it: boast not of your calling; if God hath not brought you in this way, you have ground to suspect you are not yet called. They that before conversion were loose in their lives, if they find not this spiritual amazement, it is not likely they are called. And therefore I verily suspect your call, that can jump out of a course of profaneness into a course of profession; that can jump

from a course of malignity to delight to hear sermons, and love ministers. You that have been opposers of godliness, if you do not shew an eminent work in your conversion, I greatly suspect whether you are converted or no: because it is God's usual method, if men have been men of gross lives before calling, to bring them to great astonishment when they are called.

Those that have often sinned against conscience, that do as it were lay conscience waste; that are prodigal of sinning, not caring for sinning against never so much light, and never so much conviction. Beloved, you shall not have so easy a coming to heaven. God will first lay many strokes upon you, and draw heavy groans from you. David saith, "By reason of thy terrors I am afraid, and my bones are dried up." You are subject to most horror and astonishment, that do sin against conscience. Again,

Fourth. When God hath done thus, made you see the aggravated nature of sin, shewn you your misery by reason of sin, and brought you into such a condition that you cannot tell how to be saved; then fourth, this is God's method, to take you from your own bottom, beat you off from resting in duties, and beat you off from dependence upon graces, and beat you off from everything in yourselves. This was God's work in Paul, Phil. iii, 9, 10. I was, saith Paul, "Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews;" that is, my father and mother were Hebrews. What then? and I was, "touching the law, blameless." Mark, he was so standing upon his own legs, upon his own bottom, that he thought himself a holy man; a man blameless touching the law. But now, saith he, "what things were gain to me, I count loss for Christ; yea doubtless, I count all things loss, that I might be found in Christ, not having my own righteousness." Here Paul before conversion depended upon his holy living and honest dealing; but now I am converted and see my folly—now "I desire to be found in Christ, not having mine own righteousness." See how God did unbottom Paul from any goodness in himself, to make him rest upon Jesus Christ: and this is God's work with thee; he will unbottom thee from thyself, and make thee see thou canst not be thine own Saviour.

Fifth. After he hath unbottomed thee from thyself, he puts thee upon earnest longings and looking after Jesus Christ. When the poor soul hath ransacked duties and gone to this minister and the other minister to be satisfied; and he sees duties cannot help him, and prayer will not help him—now he thinks, I see none but Christ to lay my head upon; and I see none but Christ I must make my recourse unto. And now he is so longing after Christ, that if all the stones in the streets were gold and all the building of his house were diamonds, and all his garments bespangled with pearls, none of these should interrupt, or stay him from running after Jesus Christ; and this, as I may say, is God's second work. The three first may be in wicked men, they may see their sin and misery thereby, and be in a maze not knowing which way to go. But these two are a form beyond the wicked: they never unbottom themselves, nor ever have any longings or breathings after Christ at all.

Sixth. It is God's method after all this, to make them find abundance of contentment and acquiescence in Jesus Christ; that they may have occasion to say, I see that help is laid upon one that is mighty: I see I have pitched upon him, that is both able and willing to do me good. The Lord "hath given me everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace." And now, beloved, having spoken of these things,

how many of my readers have I left behind, that haply the Lord hath used none of these methods with their souls? O Lord, I am not able to tell you your misery, but I entreat you take heed, and do not wrap up your souls in presumption and groundless persuasions; for believe it, these are God's ordinary methods he takes with most souls in bringing them to glory.

Before I proceed to give the advice which my correspondent asks—and which, by the bye, is no easy matter—I would beseech of him to read a few things which I will here put down illustrative of the smallest beginnings of a real work of grace in the heart and soul of a vessel of mercy.

Now that we may discover what are among the *smallest*, yet the most indisputable principles and evidences of God's work in the soul, notice there is

First, a light in the soul to see the evil and the mischievous nature of sin, though not an ability to mortify sin. The entrance of God's word giveth light, and giveth understanding to the simple, that is, the first work of the word upon the soul, the very beginning of converting grace in the heart is light, whereby thou seest sin and its sinfulness. As it was in the first creation, the first thing that was created was light: so in the second creation, the first work is to "open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Upon the work of conversion in the soul, the first degree of grace is to be enlightened with the light of the living. So that where this light is wanting, there cannot be a work of grace.

Secondly, inward desires to leave sin, and to cleave unto God. Grace doth not consist so much in an actual mortifying of sin, as in an unfeigned and settled purpose of heart to leave it.

The prodigal's resolution to go to his father's house, argued some grace in him. "I will arise and go to my father's house," that is, I will leave my wicked company and courses: and it is said, "his father saw him afar off, and ran and met him." The Lord did work in him a purpose to leave his sin. Gregory on this place saith, "That remission of sin came to his heart before his confession broke out in his speech to his father."

Having an earnest desire to be of some spiritual benefit unto this distressed young man, and to other troubled souls, if it please the Lord to accompany my feeble efforts with his blessing, I pass hastily away from these plain but essential buddings and beginnings of the grace of God in the soul, to observe that it is possible there may be the strongest temptations from the devil, where the grace of God has taken possession of the heart, and that these temptations may be of so long duration, and so violent in their nature, as, apparently, to forbid the hope that ever God has or will shew mercy to one so filled with corruption, lust and sin.

You find that after Christ had in an extraordinary manner "fasted forty days and forty nights," he was immediately after tempted of the devil; and so also after his baptism, "no sooner was he out of the water of baptism, but he was in the fire of temptation. The Israel of God are no sooner out of Egypt, but this hellish Pharaoh pursues them. And Hezekiah had no sooner kept the solemn passover, but Senacherib comes

up against him. All this is to shew us, that after grace has come in then the devil will labour to fly-blow and mar the new born desires and struggles of the soul.

That strength whereby a sinner overcomes himself, his sins and his most dreadful foes, as well as that power whereby he comes to love, to believe in, and to serve the Lord, lays only in, and can only be derived from the God of all grace.

Grace is not only a creature, but a weak creature, conflicting with enemies stronger than itself, and therefore cannot keep the field without an auxiliary strength from heaven. The weakest goes to the wall, if no succour comes in grace in this life is but weak, like a king in the cradle, which gives advantage to satan to carry on his plots more strongly, to the disturbance of this young king's reign in the soul, yea, he would soon make an end of the war in the ruin of the believer's grace, did not heaven take the christian into protection. It is true indeed, grace wherever it is, hath a principle in itself, that makes it desire and endeavour to preserve itself according to its strength, but being overpowered must perish, except assisted by God, as fire in green wood, (which deads and damps the part kindled) will in time go out except blown up, or more fire put to that little; so will grace in the heart. God brings his grace into the heart by conquest: now as in a conquered city, though some yield and become true subjects to the conqueror; yet others plot how they may shake off this yoke: and therefore it requires the same power to keep, as was to win it at first. The Christian hath an unregenerate part, that is discontented at his new change in the heart, and disdains as much to come under the sweet government of Christ's sceptre, as the Sodomites that Lot should judge them. What, this fellow, a stranger, control us? and Satan heads the mutinous rout against the Christian: so that if God should not continually re-inforce this his new-planted colony in the heart, the very natives (I mean corruptions) that are left, would come out of their dens and holes where they lie lurking, and eat up the little grace the holiest on earth hath, it would be as bread to these devourers.

Having thus far given a few words illustrative of the real and absolute existence of divine grace in the heart, I desire to close up the whole with one or two practical remarks; yes, PRACTICAL REMARKS.

It is declared, by some eagle-natured professors of the gospel, that I am a legalist, a mongrel, a mixer up of works and faith. I am content thus to be misrepresented, because I know something of the dust that is in the eyes, something of the rust that is on the conscience, and something of that callous and unclean covering which overlays the hearts of those who thus speak.

I am poor, and despised; and justly so: and as regards my own unworthiness, and the contempt which I receive from men who have stood well in the church and in the ministry, I desire to offer nothing by way of defence: but, what shall be the end of that mass of modern Balaams, who, in this very day of gospel commerce and gospel compromise, are running greedily "for reward"—feeding themselves without fear? clouds without water; trees, whose fruit withereth, raging waves of the sea, foaming

out their own shame? I say, what shall be the end of these eagles who now fly so high, that they even "thank God, that they have a minister" who engenders and encourages a faith that relieves them from "the heavy task of dragging their poor carcasses to a throne of grace?" Oh, that, like Zaccheus of old, they may be brought down from the tree, and hear the Saviour's voice proclaim— "This day is salvation come to this house."

In coming then to a closing practical word, I observe, that that poor sinner who is overmastered with strong corruptions, has certainly much reason to conclude that he really is destitute of the grace of God. Nevertheless, there may be grace, where there are strong and most deadly corruptions and lusts. "How, then, may I know," (asks that learned and faithful servant of Christ, Christopher Love,) "How may I know that I have the life and the love of God in me, although I am assaulted and overpowered by strong and prevailing corruptions?"

Let us look seriously at this matter for one moment. And

First, I would ask, "Though you cannot fully subdue sin yet do you strongly oppose it? If so, there is grace and strength of grace too, which is able to make and hold up this opposition. An uncontrolled subjection unto sin, argues the strength of sin; but an irreconcilable opposition of sin argues the strength of grace. Strength of grace is not so much seen in those particular acts of suppression, and actual overcoming of it, as in that constant and habitual frame of heart in the opposition of it.

"Second. If thou hast a strong measure of humiliation, though thy sin be great, if thy sorrow be great too, it evidenceth thy grace is so also. It was great grace in Manasseh, that he 'humbled himself greatly,' though he had been a very great sinner.

"If thou hast strong cries to God against thy sins, this argues grace, though it be ready to be deflowered by thy corruptions. If when corruptions and temptations prevail, thou prayest to the Lord with strong cries and tears, this argues grace, yea, and the strength of grace.

"Fourth. If thou hast strong affections that carry thee to Christ, certainly thou hast grace, though thy strong corruptions often carry thee from Christ. Peter had more infirmities and corruptions and sins, than all the disciples besides (excepting Judas.) He took Christ aside, gave him carnal counsel, and said as to his sufferings, 'Far be it from thee Lord, this shall not be unto thee,' for which Christ said unto him, 'Get thee behind me, satan.' He dreams of merit, and boasts of what he had done for Christ, as it is observed of him, when he said to Christ, 'Behold, we have forsaken all and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?' Peter of all the disciples was the most confident of his own strength, and boasts what he would do and suffer for Christ—'Though all men should be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended. And if I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee.' Nay, and presently after this confident undertaking, Peter denies Christ, and swears and curses that he knew him not. Some observe, that Peter's cursing was not only his cursing of himself if he knew Christ, but that he also cursed Jesus Christ, that so he might appear to them to be none of his disciples; and yet, notwithstanding all this, Peter had not only truth and reality, but eminence and strength of grace: for though temptations and corruptions did

sometimes prevail, yet he had strong affections towards Jesus Christ : he did and suffered that which few or none of the other disciples did.

“ Though in the cases before mentioned strength of grace may be consistent with strength of corruptions ; yet there are other cases wherein they are altogether inconsistent. As for instance,—when the strength and workings of corruptions are not clearly discovered to the soul ; for grace will set up such a light in the soul, as shall discover the darkness of corruption. Where corruptions are not sensibly bewailed, it is to be feared there is no grace. So where occasions to those strong prevailing sins and corruptions are not heedfully avoided. Certainly if thou hast grace to make thee sensible of what corruptions thou art incident unto, thy grace will make thee aim and desire to walk circumspectly, and to avoid all occasions leading thereunto. If beginnings of each corruption be not diligently suppressed, in this case strength of grace and strength of corruption are utterly inconsistent. Though there may be strong grace and strong corruptions in the soul, yet the habitual reign of any one corruption is utterly inconsistent with grace and the strength of it.”

I had not the least idea of extending my remarks to so great a length : but there are thousands of souls who are in a measure afflicted with inward conflicts and outward foes ; and for their sakes, I felt a desire to lay down a few things which ever have proved themselves to be fruits of the tree of life.

As regards the young man's desire, that I should “ tell him how he should act,” is a most difficult task. I fully believe that if I am right in my faith respecting him, in the midst of all the dreadful conflicts of soul, God will keep him resisting sin ; hating sin ; fearing sin ; and as far as in him lays, turning from sin. God will keep him crying, more or less powerfully for deliverance ; and, in the end, it shall be seen, it was not in vain : God will keep him reading and hearing the word ; and hereby, he will often be reprov'd, quicken'd, and caus'd to hope in the rich aboundings of that mercy of which the Psalmist spake, when he said, “ Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption.”

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Is our spiritual combat a wrestling ; then courage, Christians, from those words, “ Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, Eph. vi. 10. One rightly observes, That the Christian of all men needs courage ; a cowardly spirit is beneath the lowest duty of a Christian ; the fearful are in the forlorn of those that march for hell, the violent and valiant are they who take heaven by force ; except thou canst prove thy pedigree by an heroic spirit, except thou wilt dare to be holy in spite of men and devils, never think thou art begotten of God. Oh how uncomely a sight is it, a bold sinner and a fearful saint ! one resolv'd to be wicked, and a Christian wavering in his holy course ! to see hell keep the field, impudently braving it with displayed banners of open profaneness, and saints to hide their colours for shame, or to run from them for fear who should rather wrap themselves in them, and die upon the place.  
GURNAL'S Christian Armour.

## THE MINISTRY AND THE MARTYRDOM

OF

MR. CHRISTOPHER LOVE.

The reverend Christopher Love was born at Cardiff, in Glamorganshire; he became a servitor of New Inn, Oxford, 1695, aged 17; and in 1642 proceeded to master of arts. He was at the beginning of his ministry, preacher to the garrison of Windsor, then under the command of Colonel John Venn; and afterwards successively minister of St. Ann's near Aldersgate, and St. Lawrence Jewry, in London. He was the author of sermons, and some pieces of practical divinity, which gained him a considerable reputation.

After Charles the Second had treacherously sworn to the *solemn league and covenant*, and had been crowned King in Scotland, many persons were apprehended in London by the Commonwealth for holding private correspondence with the Saints. The ministers who were apprehended, were Dr. Drake, Mr. Jenkins, Jackson, Robinson, Watson, Blackmore, and Haviland; who, after some time, were released on their petition for mercy, and promising submission to the government for the future; but Mr. Love and Gibbons were made examples, as a terror to others. The Reverend Mr. Love was brought before a new *High Court of Justice*, erected for this purpose, as was the customs of those times for *state criminals*. The Rev. Mr. Jackson was summoned; but refused to be sworn or give evidence, because he looked on Mr. Love to be a good man; saying, he should have a hell in his conscience to his dying day, if he should speak any thing that should be circumstantially prejudicial to Mr. Love's life. The court put him in mind of his obligation to the public, and that the very safety of all government depended upon it; but he refused to be sworn, for which the court sent him to the Fleet, and fined him five hundred pounds. By other witnesses, it appeared that Mr. Love had carried on a criminal correspondence both with the King and the Scots.

Mr. Love called no witnesses to confront the evidence; but at the close of his defence confessed ingenuously, that there had been several meetings of persons at his house; that a commission was read; but that he had dissented from it. He acknowledged further, that he was present at the reading of letters, or of some part of them. "But I was ignorant," says he, "of the danger that I now see I am in. The Act of August 2, 1650, makes it treason to hold any correspondence with Scotland, or to send letters thither, though but in a way of commerce, the two nations being at war: now here my counsel acquaints me with my danger, that I being present when letters were read in my house, am

guilty of a concealment; and, therefore, as to that, I humbly lay myself at your mercy."

He concludes with beseeching the court that he might not be put to death for state reasons. He owns he had been guilty of a concealment; and begs the mercy of the court for it, promising for the future to lead a quiet and peaceable life. He puts them in mind, that when *Abiathar* the priest had done an unjustifiable action, king *Solomon* said, he would not put him to death at that time, "because he bore the ark of the Lord God before David his father; and because he had been afflicted in all wherein his father had been afflicted. Thus," he says, "I commit myself and my all to God, and to your judgments and consciences, with the words of *Jeremiah* to the rulers of Israel: As for me, behold I am in your hands, do with me as seemeth good and meet to you; but know ye for certain, that if ye put me to death, ye shall surely bring innocent blood upon yourselves; but I hope better things of you, though I thus speak."

The court allowed Mr. Love the benefit of counsel learned in the law, to argue some exceptions against the indictment: but, after all that Mr. Hales could say for the prisoner, the court, after six days hearing, on the 5th of July, pronounced sentence against him as a traitor.

Great intercessions were made for the life of this godly person, by the chief of the Presbyterian party in London; not only by his wife and friends, says Mr. Granger, but by several parishes in London, and by fifty-four ministers. His wife presented several moving petitions; and two were presented by himself;—but the affairs of the Commonwealth were now at a crisis, and King Charles the Second having entered England at the head of sixteen thousand Scots, it was thought necessary to strike some terror into the Presbyterian party, by making an example of one of their favourite clergymen.

Mr. Love was ordered to be executed on Tower Hill, August 22, the very day the King entered Worcester at the head of the Scots army. He mounted the scaffold with great intrepidity and to the people, made a long speech, wherein he declared the satisfaction of his mind in the cause for which he suffered:—and then said, "Beloved Christians, I am this day made a spectacle unto God, angels, and men; and among them I am made a grief to the godly, and a laughing-stock to the wicked, and a gazing stock to all; yet, blessed be God, not a terror to myself. Although there be but a little between me and death, yet this bears up my heart, there is but a little between me and Heaven. It comforted Dr. Taylor, the martyr, when he was going to execution, that there were but two stiles between him and his Father's house; there is a lesser way between me and my Father's house, but two steps between me and glory; it is but lying down upon the block, and I shall ascend upon a throne. I am this day sailing towards the ocean of eternity, through a rough passage to my haven of rest;



through a red sea to the promised land. Methinks I hear God saying to me, as he did to Moses, "Go up to mount Nebo, and die there;" so, go thou up to Tower Hill, and die there. Isaac said of himself, that he was old, and that he knew not the day of his death; but I cannot say this. I am young, and yet I know the day, the kind, and the place of my death also. It is such a kind of death as two famous preachers of the gospel were put to before me, John the Baptist and Paul the apostle. We have mention of the one in Scripture-story; of the other in ecclesiastical history; and Rev. xx. 4, "The saints were beheaded for the word, and for the testimony of Jesus;" but herein is the disadvantage which I am in, in the thoughts of many, who suffer not for the word or conscience, but for meddling with state-matters. To this I shall briefly say, that it is an old practice of the Devil, to impute the cause of God's people's sufferings to be schemes against the state; when, in truth, it is their religion and conscience they are persecuted for. The rulers of Israel would put Jeremiah to death upon a civil account, though it was the truth of his prophecy that made them angry, because he fell away to the Chaldeans. So Paul must die as a mover of sedition. The same thing is laid to my charge; whereas, indeed, it is because I pursued my covenant, and will not prostitute my principles to the lusts of men; I had rather die a covenant-keeper, than live a covenant-breaker. Beloved, I am this day to make a double exchange; I am exchanging a pulpit for a scaffold, and a scaffold for a throne;—and I might add a third,—I am changing this numerous multitude upon Tower Hill, for the innumerable company of angels in the holy hill of Zion; and I am changing a guard of soldiers for a guard of angels, which will receive me and carry me into Abraham's bosom. This scaffold is the best pulpit I ever preached in; for, in the church-pulpit, God, through his grace, made me an instrument to bring others to Heaven;—and, it may be, this speech upon a scaffold may bring God more glory than many sermons in a pulpit." Afterwards he said, Though my blood be not the blood of nobles, yet it is Christian blood, minister's blood, yea, more, it is also innocent blood; and I speak it without vanity, the blood of a martyr. I magnify the riches of God's mercy and grace towards me, that I who was born in Wales, an obscure country, and of obscure parents, should be singled out for honourable suffering. For the first fourteen years or my life I never heard a sermon preached; yet in the fifteenth year of my life, it pleased God to convert me. Blessed be God, who not only made me a Christian: but also a minister, judging me faithful and putting me into the ministry, which is my glory. I had rather be a preacher in a pulpit than a prince upon a throne; I had rather be an instrument to bring souls to Heaven, than that all nations should bring tribute to me. Formerly (said he) I have been under a spirit of bondage; yea, some times I have had more fear in drawing out of a tooth, than now I have for cutting off my head. When fear was upon

me, death was not near; now, when near to me, my fear is vanished.

“ Before I lay down my neck upon the block, I shall open my case, and that without animosity or revenge; God is my record, whom I serve in the spirit, I speak the truth and lie not; I do not bring a revengeful heart unto the scaffold this day, Before I came here, upon my bended knees, I have begged mercy for them that denied mercy to me; and I have prayed God to forgive them who would not forgive me. I have forgiven, from my heart, the worst enemy I have in all the world; and this is the worst that I wish to my accusers and prosecutors, who have pursued my blood, that I may meet their souls in Heaven.

“ I am for a regulated mixed monarchy, which I judge to be one of the best governments in the world. I opposed, in my place, the forces of the late King, because I am against screwing up monarchy into tyranny, as much as against those who would pull it down into anarchy. I was never for putting the late King to death; whose person I did promise in my covenant to preserve;—and I judge it an ill way of curing the body politic, by cutting off the political head. I die with my judgment against the engagement; I pray God to forgive those who impose it, and them that take it, and preserve them that refuse it. Neither would I be looked upon as owning this present government; I die with my judgment against it;—and lastly, I die cleaving to all those oaths, vows, covenants, and protestations, that were imposed by the two Houses of Parliament. I see men thirst after my blood; which will but hasten my own happiness and their ruin.”

“ I have no more to say, but to desire the help of all your prayers, that God would give me the continuance and supply of divine grace, to carry me through this great work I am now to do; that I, who am to do a work I never did, may have a strength that I never had; that I may put off this body with as much quietness and comfort of mind as ever I put off my clothes to go to bed. And now I am to commend my soul to God, and to receive my fatal blow, I am comforted in this:—Though men kill me, they cannot damn me; and though they thrust me out of the world, yet they cannot shut me out of Heaven. I am going to my long home, to Heaven, my Father's house, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to Jesus Christ the Mediator of the new covenant, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the judge of all, in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. I conclude with the speech of the apostle:—“ I am now ready to be offered up, and the time of my departure is at hand; but, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, and not for me only, but for all them that love the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, through whose blood I expect salvation and remission of sins;”—and may the Lord bless you all.”

After this he prayed with an audible voice, for himself and his fellow-sufferer, Mr. Gibbon, for the prosperity of England, for his covenanted brethren in Scotland, and for a happy union between the two nations; making no mention of the King.

Then he made a short prayer privately. He then rose from his knees, and said, "Blessed be God, I am full of joy and peace in believing; I lie down with a world of comfort;"—and having taken leave of the ministers, and others who attended him, saying "The Lord bless you all," he laid down his head over the block; and when he stretched out his hands, the executioner did his office by taking it off at one blow,—before he had attained the age of forty years.

Nothing can be more correct than were the following predictions of Mr. Christopher Love, respecting the state of the professing church in England, since his time.

"A FEW nights after he was sentenced to be beheaded on Tower Hill, which was on the 22d day of August, 1651, ten days before his appointed time, by the sentence he received at the bar, being one night visited by two of his intimate acquaintances, or bosom friends, as he himself called them, they began to complain of the cruelties of the times, and the malice and the usage of time-serving brethren; to which Mr. Love answered, "And think you this an evil time? No, no, this is the very time when grace and true godliness can be distinguished from hypocrisy. Many have followed Christ hitherto for the loaves and are now turned back for the roughness of the way, and the sore trial and tribulation which others met with who are gone before them! There are many in London at this very day, who think to go to Heaven in their gilded coaches, and have denied Christ's cause before men (against whom I now witness): and Christ, in his never-failing word, has promised to deny all such before his Father and the holy angels. This is the time to discern between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. They formerly were my familiar acquaintances in fellowship and sweet converse. I sent this day to have a few words with them here in the prison; but they would not come,—for their countenance is fallen, their consciences wounded. They cannot look me in the face; because I knew of their resolution, and was a witness to their perjury: but ah! how will they look the blessed Jesus in the face in the morning of the resurrection! What answer or excuse will they have for what they have done? O foolish people, who think to escape the cross and come to the crown! I tell you, nay; you must all suffer persecution who follow the Lamb!—we must come, through great tribulation, through the fiery furnace of affliction, before we can enter the land of joy and felicity! Know ye not, that the souls that were slain for the testimony of Jesus are placed under the altar? Happy, happy are those men at this day, and ever shall be happy, who suffer for Christ's sake in a right and charitable way,—not through pride and hypocrisy,

without the root of the matter, to have it said that they died martyrs : these are they who will miss their mark ; and those who denied the call and looked back, shall never have the honour to find it ! I am now pointed out by many to be in in a destitute and forlorn condition ; but I would not exchange my state ; no, not for all the glory that's on the earth ; I find my Redeemer's love stronger in my bonds than ever I did in the days of my liberty ; therefore, I hold living here as death itself. I am as full of love and joy in the Holy Spirit as ever bottles was filled with new wine. I am ready to cry out, " The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me : " I will not take upon me to prophesy ; nevertheless, the Spirit of the Lord causeth me to utter,— usurped authority, now in the hands of Cromwell, shall shortly be at an end,— England shall be blessed with meek Kings and mild governments ; powerful preachers and dull hearers,— good sermons to them will be as music to a sleepy man : they shall hear, but not understand ; nor lay the word to heart, to practise it in their lives, to walk by it ! O England, thou shalt wax old in wickedness !—thy sins abound like those of Sodom ; thy voluptuousness shall cry aloud for vengeance ; the Lord shall threaten and chastise thee, yet in mercy and love, he will look upon those that fear him and call upon his name ; he will spare and save them alive in the days of his anger, when the wicked shall be sifted from amongst you as the chaff is sifted from amongst the wheat ; for out of thee, O England, shall a bright star arise, whose light and voice shall make the heathen to quake, and knock under with submission to the Gospel of Jesus !—he shall be as a sound of thunder in the ears of the wicked, and as a lantern to the Jews, to lead them to the knowledge of Jesus, the only Son of God, and true Messiah, whom they so long mistrusted ; for the short work spoken of by the apostle, which the Lord is to make upon the earth, in the latter age of the world, cannot be far off.

**THE MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP.**—The Consul, in urging Polycarp to recant, said, " Deny and reproach your Christ, and I will release you. Fourscore and six years, said Polycarp, have I been his faithful minister. Never did he use me unkindly. How can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour ? Still the Pro-Consul pressed him to swear. If, said the holy man again, you will pretend yourself ignorant of my character, and under that pretext urge me to swear by what you call the genius of the emperor, know I am a Christian, and if you desire to learn what Christianity is, allow me the space of one day and I will inform you.

Unless said the Pro-Consul you abjure, you must be thrown to the wild beasts. Let them come on ; said Polycarp, we Christians are not used to change from better to worse, but from bad to better. You shall be burnt alive, said the Pro-Consul. Your fire, said Polycarp, will be spent in an hour, but that which is reserved for sinners is eternal. Dispose of me as you please. The Pro-Consul was confounded at this alacrity and sprightliness, but proclamation being made, that Polycarp had professed himself a Christian ; the Gentiles and Jews of Smyrna, demanded a lion should be set upon him which the governor denying upon a point of prescription, he was condemned to the flames, and so he stripped himself to his very shoes, which were usually drawn off by others that were ambitious to touch the flesh of so venerable a saint. Then they moved that he might be nailed up to the stake ; but he told them, he that would support him under the pain, would enable him to keep his body quiet and steady ; so being only chained, he prayed aloud, and cried Amen. The fire was kindled, and the flames waving in sheets round his body, which did not seem to scorch, but appeared like gold in a furnace, and exhaled an aromatic odour an executioner was commanded to thrust him through with his sword, which was no sooner done, but such a stream of blood issued from him that it extinguished the fire. Thus died this truly apostolical and prophetic bishop."

**THE GOSPEL MINISTRY :**

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

## PART III.

THE BREATH OF OUR NOSTRILS WAS TAKEN IN THEIR PITS.

“The hardest battle that I have had to fight lately,” (said that laborious preacher of the gospel, W—— B——,) was about five years ago. I was riding over part of the country leading on to Hastings, when all at once a question was put to me, “Do you believe that there is a God?” I answered, “certainly I do.” “Do you believe him to be a God of wisdom?” “Yes. He is wisdom itself.” “Look you yonder, then” (said the evil spirit in him) what wisdom, or wherein lays the necessity for God to be pouring water into the sea which is already full?”

Singular and strange as it may appear, the poor preacher fell into the trap laid for him; infidelity took possession of his mind. I believed, (said he) that I was a deluded man, a deceiver, and that there was neither God nor Christ, nor truth in the gospel which I had preached. What to do, I knew not: but at length determined to go to the place where I was appointed to preach, and tell the people how I had all along been deceived myself, and that I felt it my duty to undeceive them. In this state of mind he continued: and in this state of unbelief, he went into the pulpit “a more unhappy wretch,” said he, “could not be found. Pray to God, I could not; for I did not believe that there was any. After singing however, I got up and read a few verses of a chapter, and then attempted in some form or other to speak in prayer; but in great confusion and agitation of mind. It was while in this act of professed prayer, that a mighty rush was made upon him. As though a voice thundered out of heaven into his already poor distracted soul, saying “this night shall you be struck dead before all the people, as a public example to deter others from such wicked presumption.” This prevented him from proceeding further; with a few stammering sentences he set down, fully determined to tell the people, as soon as they had sung the second time, the whole of the delusion which had been discovered unto him. With this determination he arose; but he was constrained to read a portion of God’s word for a text, after which he related the whole of the dreadful circumstances just as they occurred. “I had no sooner,” said he, “spoken out the terrible sentence—‘this night shall you be struck dead as a public example, to deter others from such wicked presumption,’—than the Lord broke in upon my soul; and never did I preach a bleeding Jesus to poor sinners with more sweetness, liberty, and power, than I did that night.

The sequel will illustrate and confirm the fact, that God’s mi-

nisters are often called to travail in soul in the very same troubles that those poor creatures are in, to whom their ministry is to be made a blessing. It was so here.

"The service was over," (continued the good man,) "and I was walking away from the chapel, when a man accosted me, saying—'Mr. B——, I wish to speak a word to you.' Mr. B——said, 'what is it?'"

The poor man then stated that he had been a follower of the truth for some years: but he had for a long time been in a fallen, backsliding state. That he had been constrained to come up to that house of prayer that night—but it was with the horrible feeling and inward persuasion that there God would strike him dead before all the people for his daring and wicked presumption. No sooner did the preacher give utterance to that terror which had in that pulpit seized and distressed his soul, than the Lord was pleased thereby to break the snare in which the poor backslider was laying and to bring him once more into the peace and liberty of the everlasting gospel.

However much dead dogs, proud pharisees, letter men and dry doctrinal preachers may be disposed to sneer at facts of this kind and character, let them know assuredly that hereby is experimentally fulfilled, in the members of the mystical body, that which was so emphatically declared of, and so painfully realised by, the great and glorious covenant head of the church, (Lamentations iv. 20.) "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, WAS TAKEN IN THEIR PITS: of whom we said, "Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen."

Christ, and the real ministers of Christ, are here called "the breath of our nostrils." The Lord Jesus Christ is "the breath of his people's nostrils," originally, essentially, completely and eternally, himself the fountain of eternal life. His ministers, in whom dwelleth the Holy Ghost, by measure, are the breath of the people's nostrils;" instrumentally: I say, instrumentally.

And a more solemn truth was never declared, than Jeremiah here preaches, when he says "the breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord was TAKEN IN THEIR PITS." In the mighty travail of his soul, he was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

And the same is true, in a measure, of the real sent servants of Jesus Christ. It was a great word which the Saviour spake when he said, "for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth."

If you turn to that striking scripture, 2 Timothy ii. 6, and take the marginal reading of it, you have these words: "The Husbandman *labouring first*, must be partaker of the fruits." God's sent servants are husbandmen, laborious husbandmen; and the labour of their souls for the church precedes the deliverance to be wrought by their ministerial labours. "Consider what I say," says Paul. This is not a matter to be trifled with. The Lord alone can give a

right understanding of this solemn mystery: but in my soul I believe that in proportion as a man is useful in begetting, nourishing, and delivering living souls, so will be his inward sorrow, wrestling, grief, and pain. He shall, in a spiritual sense, be taken in their pits: these pits he shall become really acquainted with: these pits he shall describe: out of them, he shall cry unto God, and obtain deliverance, and thereby shall he become God's mouth to separate the precious from the vile; and to bring out of captivity the purchased sheep of Christ.

You that are looking at the gospel ministry as a popular, respectable, and opulent profession, and aiming therein to stand; to you I say, take heed, lest being deceived, puffed up, and hardened, ye do at last fall into the snare of the devil.

Paul seems to speak, at the end of his journey, like one who had found it hard work indeed to maintain his ground: he speaks like one almost spent with labour, with conflict, and with fear; "I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith."

If an anointed priest unto God, may you go, and do likewise.

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THE SEVENFOLD INWARD OPERATION AND THE SEVENFOLD  
OUTWARD EVIDENCE OF A LIVING FAITH.

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Continued from page 129.

There were five things proposed to be noticed from these words: 1. The things referred to: 2. Their essential residence: 3, their aboundings; 4, the fruitfulness and value of them: and 5, the spiritual desolations of that soul who is destitute of them.

I have spoken of faith, (as the Holy Ghost hath, by Peter, set it before you in my text) as being manifested by a seven fold inward operation: and have now just to add a few words illustrative of its sevenfold outward evidences. "Beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance: and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity."

I understand the exhortation of the Apostle here, as I do the prayer of David for destruction to come upon the wicked; those prayers were prophetic: the Holy Ghost did, by and through him, declare what the purpose of God concerning the wicked was; and the Holy Ghost did, by them, ask God to do his own will, and speedily to destroy all who set themselves against him. In the same way, to a certain extent, are the faithful exhortations of the Gospel and the Epistles to be understood. They are not only spiritual weapons wherewith the blessed Spirit stirs up the minds of believers to a diligent pursuit after the things of God, but they are prophetically descriptive of the growth and progress of the hidden life of a regenerated vessel of mercy. In the first chapter of Peter's

first epistle, you, have the seven inward operations, of which I have spoken.

But this candle of a living faith which God lights up in a man's soul, is not to be put under a bushel: no; it is designed to throw out its branches—to yield its fruits, and to diffuse its savour in the life and conversation of the man. Therefore, in the first chapter of this second epistle, we have an enumeration of these external rays; and it is of them, as here set down, I will now just say a few things.

1. "Add to your faith, *virtue*." By this I understand that the faith of God's elect is not a barren speculative, theoretical light in the brain; it is not simply a scriptural creed in the judgment, and a believing power in the soul; but, inasmuch as faith has to do with the everlasting love of God, the atoning blood of the Lamb, and with the regenerating and sanctifying powers of the Holy Ghost, it doth, by the light and heavenly power of these things, bring into the inner man, that constraining, cleansing, and healing virtue, which results in a peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Furthermore, by virtue, I understand that sincerity of heart, and that decision of character, which a holy, living faith in Christ most assuredly will produce.

2. Knowledge. That is, not only a humble searching into the mind of God; a diligent watching of the hand of God; but a taking hold, by faith, of the power of God, as our father Jacob hath shewed us.

In the 107th. Psalm, we have a wonderful description of God's various dealings with his people.

My dear Christian friend; if thou art really seeking for godly counsel, for that knowledge which is declared to be better than gold, for that wisdom which "leads into the way of righteousness; dwells in the midst of the paths of judgment; and causes those that love her to inherit substance;" I say, if thou art desirous to know how this knowledge is obtained—and what that way of righteousness is, you may be a little helped, by looking (with prayer and faith,) into the 107th. Psalm. And certain I am, that it is there the Spirit shews WHO IT IS that doth add virtue unto faith, unto virtue knowledge; as also in what way this adding, or multiplying is brought about.

First as to *who they are*. They are "THE REDEEMED OF THE LORD whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy: and whom he hath gathered out of the lands."

These are the precious souls. They are gathered out of the land because they are redeemed.

What this redemption is, eternity alone can fully declare; but the things which accompany God's gathering of sinners, you will here discover, if any real spiritual light be in you.

They are described as *wanderers in a solitary way; having no city to dwell in*. Hungry and thirsty, their souls faint within them.



So it is with a sinner whom God quickens into life: he has to walk principally in a solitary way. It is but here and there that a traveller is to be found in the same path; and perhaps not a single one with whom he can long walk; and then as regards his dwelling place, that cannot be found under the canopy of heaven; no church, no ordinance, no minister, no doctrines, no privilege nor earthly possession can ever prove to be a permanent dwelling place for a soul that is truly made alive by God the Holy Ghost. In this state they are led to cry unto the Lord: he delivers them: they bless his name; and thereby learn the wonders of that mighty arm which brings salvation near.

The knowledge which is added unto virtue, appears to be a spiritual apprehension, and a practical observance, first, of the various trials and mysterious providences which most peculiarly belong unto the members of the mystical body; and, secondly, of the power displayed, and the faithfulness manifested by the Lord in supporting his people through, and in delivering them out of all their sorrows; hence, this 107 Psalm closes with the following exciting proclamation:—“whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.”

In the adding of this knowledge unto faith and virtue, then two things are necessary: first, wisdom, that is a saving faith in Christ, which not only lights up the mind and judgment to behold Him as the way to God; but also works a vital union of heart and soul; and a sanctified following after, dependence upon, and fellowship with, the Lord of life and glory. The other thing necessary, is an observance of God's dealings with his people; and a diligent inquiry unto the fact of our individual interest in them.

This knowledge, then, my reader, must have much to do with our present peace.

Do not pass hastily away from the consideration of it.—“To inquire into the spiritual state of our souls is the best husbandry in the world,” says the writer of the preface to Christopher Love, whose striking remarks I here further subjoin:

“There are two great mistakes, to which the best of Christians are very subject:—First, either to despise and disparage the work of Grace, if their measure be small. Secondly, or else, if their attainments be somewhat considerable, to sit down contented with their acquired measures.

We beseech you take heed of both these evils, which are both alike, unthankfulness to God, and injurious to your own souls; the one despiseth the truth, the other the growth of grace.—I. If thou art one of the tender plants in Christ's orchard, a weak lamb in his flock, a babe in his family, yet despise not the day of small things in thy soul; though thy gifts be few, and thy comforts fewer, yet tread not out thyself the smoking flax; stay thyself upon his name who is the Rock of ages, and whose work is perfect, and his grace unchangeable, who will bring forth judgement unto victory;—slight not the least measure of grace, though the first and ruder draught be but drawn on thy soul; yet, be comforted in this, that the im-

age of Christ is begun to be renewed there; but be sure thy grace be right. Temporary faith, partial obedience, mercenary love, pretended zeal, legal sorrow, feigned humility, make up a lifeless picture of a professor who hath the form of godliness without the power of it; but, it is true grace that makes a true Christian. Common gifts and graces may bring a man near Heaven. This treatise, therefore will teach thee to bring thy grace to the true touch-stone. It is one of the saddest considerations that can settle in the heart of a Christian, to think how a formal hypocrite may go towards heaven with his seeming grace; and how low a true child of God may fall by sin towards hell, and yet have real grace. It is a dreadful thing to think how many professors in our age rest in duties performed, and parts acquired, and never examine themselves whether they are in the faith, and have attained that true grace which reprobates and hypocrites can never have!"

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WHEN SHALL ANTICHRIST BE DESTROYED—AND BY  
WHAT MEANS?

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From this ladder\* we may foresee the ruin of Babylon. Babylon hath three times; a time of ascending, a time of triumphing in, and a time of descending from the throne. Now the tide of the sea of Rome is falling, and she is well nigh in the last descension. Providence hath arraigned and condemned the scarlet whore; she is at present naked, and ere long she shall be burnt for an whore: she shall have fire for fire, and blood for blood. The Lord is gathering faggots, I mean his instruments, in all nations, and will certainly and suddenly set fire to the papal glory, and all her lovers shall not be able to quench it, Rev. 18. She shall be as visible in her shame as ever she was in her glory: God will not take man's advantage for her ruin, her overthrow shall be fair. God will not, as the General said, pilfer the victory; the pangs of a travailing woman shall overtake her, God will wipe pity from his heart, and will not be interceded for a reprieve, his work shall not prove abortive. It shall be more truly, the Lord's *veni vici* (than Queen Elizabeth) coming against her, and overcoming her. She shall fall as a mill stone, that of itself rolls down the hill, faster if tumbled down; especially if by a strong hand, the hand of an angel. Rev. xviii. 21. God will make bare his arm; which fears neither blows nor blood, for it hath a bone in it, whereas man's arm is but the arm of flesh; and likewise he will overthrow her completely.

God never rested in the creation till he had finished all; know that God will be as perfect in the works of providence, as in the works of creation. Her ruin shall as certainly be effected, as it is determined. The decrees of God know no futurity, time to come is the tense of man's grammar; Babylon is fallen, Babylon is fallen. Sion is more than conqueror, Rom. iii. She overcomes by faith before she comes into the field; she conquers before she conquers. The day of antichrist is almost at an evening, the glass of Babylon is well nigh run, the number of her months are even expired. Let all the physicians in the world apply their plaisters, and afford their

\* The ladder of God's providence.

cordials, it is in vain; her disease is mortal, and her blood is now cold in her veins. If providence have not armies on earth, it will have armies in heaven against her; there is no halt to be made, or if there be an halt in our sense, there is no retreat to be beaten; one alarm after another shall be given till she be taken. Mended or ended is here an useless proverb. But may some say, who shall do this? the kings of the earth are yet her liege subjects, generally, and will satan cast out satan? and the sight of Rome is infectious; and some think opposing Babylon, in this age, is much like Saul's sending messengers to take David, who in the way fell a prophesying, 1 Sam. xix 20. How many have gone up to oppose Babylon, and have returned her brats? It is not setting Rome on fire will burn down babylon, yet the Lord will use military means; Antichrist reigns properly in the understandings and consciences of men; and it is far easier to kill the body, than wound the soul of Antichrist; therefore God will destroy her especially. How? with what artillery? with what ammunition? even by the Spirit of his mouth and the brightness of his coming, 2 Thes. ii. 8. The darkness of popery cannot abide the gospel sun-shine. Antichrist hath played his part on the stage; the vizards are now pulling off, and the stage itself a pulling down, Rev. xviii. 21. Must is, as we say, for the King; now Christ is King, and he must ultimately reign 1 Cor xv. 24.

### Notices and Answers.

THE suggestion for inserting in the future numbers of THE EARTHEN VESSEL, "A Critical Review, and Inquiry into the state and condition of the Churches professedly holding the truth in the present day," is thankfully received. As regards the unpleasant feeling which the ministers and leading members of the church may feel towards the Vessel on that account is of no consequence. They are, with but here and there an exception, decidedly against the work and its author too. But what of that? Let but the Review be based upon truth: let the glory of God, and the edification of such of his family as are yet in the wilderness, be sought; let an honest, spiritual, straight forward course be maintained, and, as regards the results, take no thought about them. It certainly does appear that much very valuable matter, might thus be brought together; which, as a Record, might not only be interesting at the present moment, but be useful for reference on future occasions—If possible, it shall be commenced in the part for August, and regularly continued.

The letters containing the Biographical Memoir of the late Mr. James Francis, are unavoidably deferred until next month: so also is the Answer to "A faithful Friend."

The source, nature and extent, of the power of fallen spirits is partly in type; but the length of the answer to the young man, in the early part of this number has given rise to its delay.

The second letter "To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ," is, of necessity, laid aside for this month. Let not our brother think himself slighted: his communications will be esteemed and inserted.

Will, "W. J. R." favour us with his address? His letter should have been answered if his abode had been known. There can be no question but "the Lord has put a cry into his soul for deliverance;" and that cry will be answered. Oh, for thousands of such crying souls.

A SPIRITUAL AND CRITICAL REVIEW, AND INQUIRY  
*into the Origin, Progress, and Present Condition of such  
Christian Churches in the British Isle, as do practically  
hold the Truth.*

EMBODYING MR. GREENFIELD'S

**VIEWS OF THE PRESENT CONDITION—FUTURE PERSECUTIONS—AND MILLENIAL GLORIES OF THE  
CHURCH OF GOD'S ELECT.**

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"O Lord, according to all thy righteousness, I beseech thee, let thine anger and thy fury be turned away from thy city Jerusalem, thy holy mountain: because for our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and thy people are become a reproach to all that are about us."—Daniel ix. 16.

"And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads: for YOUR REDEMPTION DRAWETH NIGH."—Luke xxi. 28.

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THERE was a sentence uttered by Mr. John Evans, of John Street Chapel, on the morning of the 22nd June, which we would here record as fully entering into the spirit and truth of that which we design and desire, with the help of God, to notice from time to time, under the above distinct heading.

"*We are passing,*" said he, "*through a dark stage; a stage of much trial; a stage that ought to bring men to their knees; that ought to bring the church to humiliation.*"

This is the point at which we have arrived; whether men can believe it or not: a point—a state of things which if really believed, and felt, must work out the position described—"humiliation before God," according to the example given us by the prophet Daniel, whose words are written above: the fact that such is *not* the position of the Church, as a professing body, proves to a demonstration, that she does not feel—she does not fear—the heavy clouds that evidently are gathering over her head.

Christian Reader—there are then, three most solemn and important branches, or departments, in the work unto which we are now called; in the prosecution of which we do most earnestly crave an interest in your prayers; the co-operation of your heart, your head, and your hands; and though last, not least, your sympathy and forbearance with us in our weakness, and in our many infirmities, which we know will be mixed up with and manifested in the working out of so arduous a task.

We cannot forbear to mention that this labour has not been rashly nor presumptuously entered upon. It is now nearly four years since this matter was first secretly but powerfully laid upon the mind: many attempts have been made to bring to the birth; and as many resisting powers have been encountered, keeping us, of necessity, in silence, and oft times in despair.

Still, the task lays charged upon us; outward circumstances and inward powers again unite to thrust us forth.

May it be seen to be of God! May His glory be sought! May his blessed Spirit nerve our hearts; make strong our hands; and, by us, warn, edify, and comfort the Church, and all the glory shall redound to a triune covenant Jehovah, Three Persons in ONE GOD. Amen.

The three branches of our work are these:

First: to shew wherein it appears that the present state of things is one of darkness, and approaching trial.

Secondly: To notice that want of humiliation, reverence, Godly fear; and decision for the divine glory, so glaringly discoverable in the professing churches of our Lord.

Thirdly; To speak comfortably unto Zion, in all her distresses; fully uniting and triumphing in the beautiful exclamation of a dear servant of God, who says: "with regard to the issue of this day of trial, I can have no more doubt that it shall end in the purification of the Church, than I can doubt of my own existence. In the destruction of the 'man of sin,' it will end: therefore let no regenerated, believing child of God be scared;" for, as the venerable and catholic Edmund Greenfield writes, (in his new work which we have presently to introduce and review,) this is certainly that "*foretold era of universal temptation and trial*"—it is that day of apostacy and foretold general satanic, anti-protestant blasphemy which must come: nevertheless, says he, "ALL IS WELL, my brethren, and companions in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ; we stand in our eternally appointed stations; the Church of God is one body and one Spirit: and the Holy Ghost the Comforter will, in all essential points, keep the regenerated elect 'in the unity of the Spirit, and in the bonds of peace:' wherefore we defy, and challenge the devil and his angels, with the Socinian, and sevenfold union of the blaspheming mystery of iniquity to break the union."

It is, to us, somewhat remarkable, that at the very juncture in which we were about to enter upon the particulars above enumerated, and somewhat briefly to introduce our plan as here laid down, we received, gratuitously and unexpectedly, one copy of a new work just issued from the press, written by Edmund Greenfield, an old and esteemed labourer in the vineyard, at Staplefield, in Sussex.

This work is entitled—"A Treatise on the Holy Ghost the Comforter: His Power in Operation for the Salvation of his Heirs, and His Blessings upon and within them from Glory to Glory; and on Presumptuous Wilful Sins, and Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost."

We have read this work of Mr. GREENFIELD'S with the deepest interest: and although, with reference to what may be called the prophetic parts of it, we shall simply let the writer speak for himself, without attempting either to confirm or controvert the views he has advanced; still, we are justified in saying, upon the whole, it is a sterling work—a monument of eternal, vital, doctrinal, experimental, and practical truth—a clear statement of all that can be good and essentially useful to sinners in time; a realization of which

shall conduct them to the realms of glory. In saying thus much, we heed not the jealous bickerings of our opponents: we speak as in the sight, and in the fear of God: and rejoice that our Lord has yet such holy, able, living witnesses to the reality and power of the truth as it is in himself. Oh, Zion! let thy priests, (both public and private), "lay aside all malice, guile, hypocrisies, envies, and evil-speakings," and with us, by the help of God, unite in carrying forth throughout the British Isle, this richly laden vessel of new covenant stores.

It is written in a happy, devout, mind-enlightening spirit-stirring, soul-comforting style: it is written by a man who knows the Three One God; who fears, and loves to serve, with all boldness and faithfulness, his Holy Master; who longs to finish his (already nearly finished) course with joy, and the ministry which he hath received of the LORD JESUS, to testify of the Gospel of the grace of God.

The work consists of thirteen chapters; containing in its bowels the very cream, fulness, and substance of a whole body of divinity.

Learning, as we do, from the preface to this work, that the venerable author has been "on his watch-tower, in the Holy Ghost, watching and praying unto the Father, in and through Christ, for wisdom, and power to minister; and holding in view," and closely surveying the motives and movements of "all those united Mahometan, Socinian, Popish deceivable powers;" and having moreover, been employed from January until May, 1845, in writing this book; we can do nothing better than throw out (by way first, of review, and secondly, in confirmation of what we have already hinted at, as an earnest of that which lays before us,) a few of the most valuable portions of this excellent treatise.

Unto this Review, and Summary of the Contents of this work, my Christian Reader, we do earnestly call your serious attention. It is needful that you sit down to it with prayer, and a composed mind, and doubtless its perusal will be of a lasting benefit to you, should the dear Lord, the Spirit, lead you experimentally into a holy acquaintance with your personal interest in the "things new and old" here brought forth by a servant of the most high God—yes; we say "a servant of the most high God;" for, although there have been bitter contentions between him and some other of the dear Lord's sent and anointed servants; although, as Mr. Greenfield, in this book observes, "some persons, even men of renown, have asserted that I am, verily, a madman, a wandering star, a false prophet, a liar, a deceiver of the people, a bloody man, and a man of Belial; yes, verily, (continues our author) I have publications and letters now before me, shewing all those names recorded of me;" still we are assured in our own souls, that he is an able and a faithful minister of the New Testament; of whose life and writings we have much more to say than can here be given.

The work opens with a Chapter on the "Eternal Divine Personality and Godhead of the Holy Ghost." This chapter is

brief, but clear, and is followed by a second, containing "The Scripture Proofs," wherein the writer gives you what he terms "the life and foundations of Protestant Trinitarianism," of which the following is the substance:—

"Behold, whilst the glorious Three, the High and Lofty One, inhabited eternity, self-existing *nameless*, or names secret; that one self existing eternal divine person, in the glories of his entity, with his word spoken to one other self-existing, eternal, divine person, said, "Thou art my Son," and so doing, he *constituted* himself, the eternal divine Father. Matt. xxviii. 19. And the one other self-existing, eternal divine person, *begotten*, was *constituted* the eternal divine Son, Matt. xxviii. 19. having an inexhaustible fulness of communicable life, light, grace, truth, wisdom, power, prudence, sustenance, immortality and glory, for all the Godhead's future glories. The one other self-existing eternal divine person proceeding in his entity in his glories, possessed and rested upon the Son in all his fulness, in the bosom of the Father, and anointed the eternal divine begotten Son, and called him Jesus Christ, and by so doing, he *constituted* himself, the eternal divine "Holy Ghost the Comforter," (Gen. i. 1; Matt. xxviii. 19. John xiv. 26.) Such was, and is the eternal everlasting divine mystery of one God, a Spirit, the Godhead; in the glories of his sovereignty, in infinite relation, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, God and the Father and Christ."

The third Chapter is on the Eternal Infinite Delight which the Three Blessed Persons had in communion with each other from all eternity in their fore-knowledge and determining counsels for the church's, comfort and consolation; which closes with the author's view of, and sentence upon Pre-existerians. For want of a knowledge, (says he,) in the declaration and manifestation of the Holy Ghost, and the Father, and Christ, a certain sect, called pre-existarians, resisting the Holy Ghost, vainly imagine, and publish, that 'Christ had a human soul created in his divine person eternally;' and others of them, declare 'He had a human *body of flesh* created over his divine person and human *soul*.' That '*Sonship* pertained and now pertains (they say) to his human nature only.' So they hold and publish a most deadly error, and are the most deluded idolaters of all the sects of anti-protestant anti-trinitarians. See 2 Cor. xi. 4. 1 John ii. 22. The learned and pious Dr. Gill, was so distressed in his day at seeing the increase of that *awful error*, pre-existarianism, he added another article to his former to guard his pastoral charge, the church of God, from their vain imaginations and idolatry. And the judicious Huntington and Hawker, with Gadsby, were as much distressed on that account as I am, which their blessed writings assures us."

Chapter Four is on the predestinated Marriage Union of Christ and the Church simply proved from the word of God. The Fifth Chapter opens with what may be termed, a statement of *the origin of sin*, and *its entrance into the world*. We give a few of the leading

features of our author's view of this deep mystery. He says "the glorious Three-One in his glorious high throne having in foreviews seen all creation in plan, perfect in motion, and the angelic, with human race, as perfect in works and worship, as they could be on the first sabbath day of time. \* \* \* In weighing and trying all, in the glories of his wisdom, prudence, omniscience, omnipresence, and divine perfections, fore-discovered, that 'Lucifer the son of the morning,' that is the *first shining* non-elect angel, that would issue from his creating powers, on the morning of *time creation*, would, after the first sabbath, self-conceive sin, and refuse to worship, honour, and obey his creator, Jesus Christ, his Lord and God, judge, lawgiver, and king; so leave his *first estate*; and in pride, and rebellion, in self-deceivings, idolize *himself*, (but a *creature*.) as a *god*! Thus God Three-One, foresaw Lucifer set up himself the first *idol*! And in God's fore-views weighing and trying all the non-elect angels, he discovered them all conceiving sin, and going to pride and rebellion, through Lucifer's doctrines of falsehood and idolizing himself, and testifying he was God, like the *Most High*. Yes, the glorious Three-One fore-saw all the non-elect angels, after the first sabbath of time, worshipping Lucifer, the creature self-exalted *idol*, the *false* and *murdering god*. And therefore in eternity, he said in himself and recorded in his book within his glorious high throne, 'They shall be confounded.' Then the glorious Three-One in determined counsel and fore-knowledge, having agreed upon the *arrest* of the non-elect angels, after their sin and rebellion in time, (their trial,) and charging with folly; and to put on, and reserve them in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day, and cast them out of heaven to the earth, allowing them to rove in the earth, and air, for certain times, under restraints; yet permitted to tempt, and try to seduce the human race to *serve* and idolize them as gods, especially Lucifer, their chief Beelzebub, Apollyon, Satan. The glorious Three-One fore-ordained Tophet for them, a bottomless pit, to be *sunk*, the first act of time creation, over which the foundations of the earth should be laid which Tophet, should be a lake of *unquenchable fire*, designed to cast them all into at the end of time, for everlasting punishment, and endless torments. (See Isa. xxx. 33; Matt. xxv. 44; Mark ix. 48.) Moreover the glorious Three-One discovered, that by Lucifer's temptations, the human race in their first created righteous, holy parents Eve, with Adam, would *sin*, unite with the sinful angels, fore-called devils, and that in Adam all the human race, would *sin*, and *fall*, and so all breaking the divine law of good works, and worship, become *mortal* or *sinful*: in these eternal fore-views of the glorious Three-One the sentence of death *spiritual*, death *temporal*, and death *eternal*, passed and was eternally recorded, by the glorious God. Neither did God open any secret of his upon passing that sentence, to be *experienced* in time on all the *human race*, that in previous lengths of eternity, salvation *from death*, and justification of *life*, was appointed for any of the human



race, the *election* or the *rest*! It was for his glory to conceal that thing. The human mind being struck with wonder, at God's fore-knowledge, fore-views, and eternal fore-determined, and fore-decreed sentence of *death*, as may be the case with some of my readers, they may think and say, Why did not the glorious Three-One, in his fore-knowledge, and fore-views of sin in time, alter his purposes, decrees, and laws? My reply is, that in the glory of his perfections he would not, he could not alter. 'He *was* and *is* of one mind.' Behold then the awful consequence was, that in and from our first sinful parents all human posterity, have been, is now, and shall be unto the end of time, *shapen in iniquity*, and *conceived in sin*; so that in conception, the election of God, are children of wrath, even as others.

"All the Holy Ghost's witnesses, are assured and sent to publish, That reprobation, as well as election, was *eternal, absolute, everlasting unalterable*." The reprobation, in eternity and in time, and through time, and through endless eternity are declared and recorded, 'The border of wickedness, the people of God's curse.' Mal. i. 4; Isa. xxxiv. 5."

After speaking of the wisdom of God in hiding from us, those who are reprobates, he adds:—

"Sometimes the reprobation of *silver glossed professors* of justice, judgment, mercy, and truth, holiness and christian zeal, are discovered to be reprobate silver, in answer to his witnesses' faithful prayers to the Father, in and through Christ in the leading, teaching and blessing of the Holy Ghost. In that way king Saul was made known by God, to Samuel, to be a reprobate, and his death, self-destruction, was the full proof of his reprobation! And God was so pleased to assure me of certain persons' reprobation in the same way, and their temporal deaths confirmed it. Some high professors, like Ahithophel, Judas, and Demas, real protestant Trinitarian public ministers, by their fruits holding the truth in unrighteousness, proving their reprobation, as many in these days are proving their reprobation by *turning* away from the church, and plotting against her, in *this time of distress*, uniting with Mahomet, and the pope of Rome, Socinians, Papists, Puseyites, and all the mystery of iniquity. Their *deaths* will presently *prove* their *reprobation*; 'They that hate the righteous, shall be desolate.' 'Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.'

The Sixth Chapter is full of rich and irresistible proofs as to the making of the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure for the salvation of the whole election of grace: the substance of which is comprised in the following paraphrase upon the 19th verse of Isaiah xxvi.

"We testify, that as the Holy Ghost the Comforter, in the glorious high throne before time, interceded with groanings, unto the Father, and which through Christ, moving in the same rich mercy and great love, the glorious 'Three-One' grieved in eternal

relational grief for the church elect, in all the millions of members, as one, the Father eternally spoke to Christ, and the Holy Ghost, (the glorious three being one essence, one spirit, one will, one mind, one power, the Godhead;) saying 'Thy dead men shall live:' Christ, in himself determining to become incarnate as the Husband and Head of the church elect, to save and redeem all, said, 'Together with my dead body shall they arise.' The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, determining as did the Father, and Christ, that in his seven-fold or perfect powers, he would possess the whole church elect, as one, as they were begotten, and Satan cast out by the Father to live, and by grace and truth from Christ's fulness, be new creatures; he would quicken all, and sanctify all, as all should be justified in and through Christ; said, to the foreviewed church *elect dead*, 'Awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew, (or divine grace, in divine power,) is as the dew of herbs, (that brings the herbs, though tender, out of the earth,) and the earth shall cast out the dead.' Thus at one view the glorious Three-One fore-saw every *elect person*, from Adam and Eve, unto the last conceived, called the offspring, (Isa. xlv. 3, 4, 5;) all meted for glory; yes, the glorious Three-One, fore-saw the last *resurrection to immortality*, in the last day, and their ascending into glory, triumphant over sin, death, and the devil, in and through Christ, who engaged to be God incarnate, the last Adam, take on the iniquity of all, in the set time; be circumcised, suffer, and bleed meritoriously, fulfil all righteousness, and endure, in his church, his wife's stead, all vindictive wrath; and dying, *voluntarily die!* by *pouring out his human soul unto death!* Gen. ii. 17; Isa. liii. 12. So respecting the sins and demerits of the elect church's *transgression*, as was foreseen, he engaged in the everlasting covenant with the Father and Holy Ghost, to finish on *Calvary's cross*, so all was present in vision, before the Father, and Holy Ghost; See Isa. liii. 12, to make an end of sins, and make reconciliation for iniquity, in the Godhead, and bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up the vision, and to anoint the most Holy."

The Seventh Chapter is "on the commanding of the covenant;" that is, as we understand it, the treasuring up, ordaining, and securing in the covenant, all that fulness of grace provided for the Church, both for time and eternity. And in tracing out this covenant fulness, the author has shown something of the harmony that exists between the hidden treasures of the covenant of grace and that secret work begun and carried on in the hearts of elect sinners, by the Holy Ghost. We would say a word or two to MR. GREENFIELD, on his views with reference to baptism: but, it would be occupying space to no purpose. We know him to be a determined man: and certainly, have neither hope nor faith to believe that he will ever now be brought to follow his Master in Jordan's stream; we will not therefore go out of our way, in this our review, by any means to stir up angry feelings, on a point in which we do so widely differ.

In passing through the eighth chapter, which treats principally of the trials and persecutions which peculiarly belong to the members of the Church of Christ, we were grieved to find that a spirit of enmity and of malice is still being entertained against him.

In the following extracts, the eternal safety of the church, as also, the fiery trials to which her members are exposed, is spoken of in terms which seem to declare, that the writer has indeed painfully learned on the one hand, that he is "a man of like passions with ourselves," and the subject of many infirmities: while, on the other hand, he has realised something of that soul-supporting, sin-pardoning, heart-comforting grace, which the blessed Spirit communicates unto the living in Jerusalem. He says,—

"Oh, my brethren, what could we do, without the influential, in-abiding, gracious operations, and almighty preservation of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter? All praise and glory to his glorious person and name, he has, with the Father and Christ, one God, bound himself by covenant engagements, and by oath, to preserve us from destruction by our own sinful infirmities, or by the devil and his angels, God himself "watering us every moment," and all his church. Moreover, we testify that the devil and his angels, in all their *malicious designs* to bring the election of God, in ministers and churches, to *destruction*, as they have and will lead to destruction the *reprobates*, from Cain, Balaam, Core and others, to Judas, and to many in these days, and to the end of time. Yet they cannot destroy, or by any means *harm* us; no, no, but rather *do us good*, through the wonderful government of the Holy Ghost, who holdeth all devils in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day. Thus the devil leading Shimei to cursing, condemning, and calling David a bloody man, and the devil's son, or a man of Belial, as the pope of Rome cursed and called Luther, and as many Shimeis have cursed all God's worthies, in the devil's influence, unto the cursing and condemning the blessed Huntington, Hawker, Gadsby, and many public witnesses, bishops and pastors, *now living*, with *myself*, are God's commanded covenant heart and soul-humbling blessings, even to shew us, that we are every moment in danger, and, if not kept by the Holy Ghost as the apple of his eye, sin indwelling, or sinful acts, or the devil's bruising, temptations and oppressions, would *destroy us*. But David said, as I have been enabled in the Holy Ghost to say, unto this day, under the devil and Shimei's cursing, "Let them curse, for the Lord hath bidden them." It was and verily is a covenant blessing, although the devil designed the same for a *curse*, to rend David's soul and heart, and to scatter if possible his armies, and God-blessed church, as we find this day. Indeed I have such *oursings* from a certain Shimei at this moment, in a letter open on my writing table, exceeding all I have had for the past twenty-four years; and I would not suffer one of the most zealous of my friends to destroy that Shimei. No, no, these satanic, sensual cursings, are *blessings in disguise* to the world.

Such has been my case from time to time, in the divine favour, even as Paul found. Paul says his most severe trial from God, came through his government of the workings of the powers of darkness, after his being favoured with visions and revelations. 'Lest I should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelation, there *was given me* a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.' My readers will notice, the apostle says, 'There was given me;' that is, the Holy Ghost gave Paul the trial, by only letting Satan, send one of his most *vile, subtle angels*, as a pricking thorn and buffeter most furious, first into Paul's flesh, or old man, to work distressing things which he abhorred; and secondly, to buffet his *soul*, and the *spirit* of his mind with anguish and darkness, of which all God's ministers in measure experience at times. See John xvi. 20. Yes, so was the trial, as a covenant gift of God, and which I have and do now experience, that the apostle could not as heretofore, by and in all his gifts of faith and spiritual strength, in resisting the devil as a pricking thorn and buffeter, cause him to flee from him. No, no, God in letting him have a certain length of his chain, and tormenting powers, with his vile prince Satan, with himself, and all the black legions, designed for cursings to Paul's destruction, God intended, and in governing the affair toward Paul, were for heart and soul humblings, and covenant commanded blessings: so were the trials, buffetings, and burnings of the protestant God-blessed martyrs in all ages.

Therefore the answer Paul received from the Father, in and through Christ, by and in the power and blessing of the Holy Ghost was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Or, I only, very God, am a *match for devils*. All is right my blessed Paul, you are ordained to suffer for Christ's sake: "My grace is sufficient for thee." By which divine, gracious sentence, Paul was inexpressively humbled, and in the triumphs of sufferings, the joy of the Lord being his strength, of which we all *experience* our given measure, Paul in the Holy Ghost, said unto the Father, in and through Christ, 'Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong,' 2 Cor. xii. 9. 10. That weakness was found by Paul until he died in the Lord, as all we old public witnesses and pastors experience in measure, of all nations, for the glory of the Godhead, as for our own good, and for the church's benefit. By which we are preserved from arminianism, and sinful presumptuous libertinism.

In giving this extract, while we have wholly preserved the substance and spirit of the matter, we have omitted, as also in all other extracts, much that is referential, explanatory, and extraneous.

To this, we add another extract, on the *Essential Oneness of the true Church of Christ*. Speaking of the deaths of many of God's beloved saints and servants he says, "of the recent peaceful death of the blessed Gadsby, whom I call Bishop Gadsby of Manchester, who whilst death worked in him, as his preaching and writing prove, and assure us that through the power and blessing of the Holy Ghost, he ministered life to the church, even by his last breathings and words, namely, Free grace! free grace! free grace! which last words being recorded, proves his election, and that his soul is in glory. And the records of his last words shall be a *life-giving blessing* unto the end of the world; in union with all the writings of the Holy Ghost's ministers, with unworthy me and mine, since the Scriptures were finished, let devils and men say and do all God permit. The blessed Gadsby, we all know, died a real *Protestant Trinitarian*, as Paul died, and all God's ministers. The non-essential forms and modes of ministration and differences of the Lord's ministers, always notice, my readers, are for the glory of the God-head, for the bruising of devils, for the furtherance of the gospel, and for the benefit of the churches. See Num. xi. 25, 26, 29; Luke ix, 49, 50; Rev. xxii. 17, 21.)

#### A LAW-WORK IN THE CONSCIENCE.

In the ninth chapter the writer enters his protest against two heresies generally held, preached, and published, respecting a law-work in the hearts and consciences of the elect. We shall make an extract or two. The first heresy, says Mr. Greenfield, "is that NO LAW WORK is needed by the sons and daughters of God, or by God ever wrought within and upon them; and the reason is (those witnesses say) because 'salvation for the *election* is freely by grace through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ; and because it is recorded, 'the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' But those blessed truths are no proofs that a *law work* is not experienced within, and upon the whole election when renewed, but the reverse. We pray you to observe, the Holy Ghost saith unto the Father, "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest, from the days of adversity until the pit be opened for the wicked.' Ps. xciv. 12, 13. By these words of the Holy Ghost we have a full proof that every elect son and daughter of God, from Adam and Eve to us, and unto the last renewed elect child of God unto the end of the world will have a spiritual law work. We notice and declare there are various degrees of the terrors of the Lord experienced by his election in the first spiritual law work, and also degrees of the plague of their hearts, and distress of their souls; because some are infants, some little children, some in manhood who have been awful sinners, as Manasseh, the thief upon the cross, and Paul, the jailer and others. Let my tender-hearted readers who are experiencing the covenant commanded blessing of a law work, as renewed in the

spirit of your minds, trembling in filial fear as Jacob did of old, and as Josiah trembled in his palace, and as Hannah was distressed at Shiloh, or as the multitudes were pricked in their hearts, and felt heart and soul distress, in sighs and cries for mercy, be assured you are God's elect, saved, called, begotten, redeemed, and renewed; the law and testimony is ingrafted in your hearts and souls, and is the first sure token of your salvation, from which time, in a degree of heart and soul distress (which I have experienced,) you are taught and led by the Holy Ghost, to give all diligence by sighings, and mourning, prayers, reading and hearing, to make your calling and election sure, working out your own salvation (from sensuality and carnality, which is a plague to you, and out of Satan's snares and temptations, and from vain professors, and from certain errors, unbelief, and doubts,) with fear and trembling, because it is God the Holy Ghost that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. Mark ye, my readers, who are renewed of God, it is a spiritual law work; that is the manifest line of separation of the elect from the reprobate, as we read between Cain and Abel, Esau and Jacob, Rahab and her companions, and the two thieves were so separated who were crucified with Christ. We testify, therefore, that all God's election, sooner or later, for a long or short time, when begotten and renewed of God, did of old from Adam, and through all ages to this day, experience a spiritual law work, which together with Satan's bruising decreed, (Gen. iii. 15,) and his fiery darts hurled, every elect person have a degree of Christ's sufferings, and is, by the Holy Ghost, declared a fiery trial. Therefore, according to the determined counsel and fore-knowledge of One God Three glorious Persons, and agreeable to his everlasting covenant of salvation, redemption, grace and glory, (Rom. viii. 28, 30.) A spiritual law work is essential; all passing under the rod in order to be brought, by the Holy Ghost the Comforter, into the bond of the covenant as his heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ. (See Ezek. xx. 37; Rom. viii. 17.) Thus we are assured that all infants, before or in their dying moments, and little children also, are begotten by the Father, have grace from Christ, and are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and through a spiritual law work, with the testimony, verily have a spiritual birth, without which 'not one can enter the kingdom of God.'"

After some scriptural arguments in proof of the nature and reality of this law work in the new-birth our author concludes that "all who deny a spiritual law work as aforesaid, are left satisfied with what they call, the effects of grace, and delusive imaginations, that by conscience accusing and excusing, and by certain meltings, tears, and a partial separation from the outward pollutions of the world, they think they have true tokens of God's loving them, so they fall short of pressing forward like the first prodigals, Adam and Eve, for the pardon speaking blood and imputed righteousness of Christ. (Gen. iii. 15—21.) They strive not by

grace through faith, in soul distress with the prodigal, the thief upon the cross and the whole elect gentile church, set forth by Christ as one prodigal, who received blood sprinkling, pardon and remission of sins; the robe, the ring and the shoes, blessed be God, I received all whilst I was in heart and soul distress, in and under the first spiritual law-work, praying in the Holy Ghost unto the Father, in and through the blessed Jesus Christ, the one only Mediator, in these words 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Which divine blessing about forty years past, in all the divine progress from my being by God, called, delivered from the devil, begotten of God, having infused grace and truth, with the Holy Ghost's possessing and renewing, was exactly as Adam and Paul, in and under the spiritual law-work, and the washing of regeneration. So I had at length a personal spiritual birth; and then God put on my clothing, the robe, the ring, and the shoes, which was some years before God sent me publicly to write and preach that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and by doctrines with ordinances, to minister and feed the church of God, 'which he hath purchased with his own blood.' "

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The tenth and eleventh Chapters are big with illustrations and Scripture proofs of two cardinal gospel principles, viz, "The Incarnation of the Son of God;" and "The sevenfold perfections and pentecostal powers of the Holy Ghost." To read them with understanding requires no small degree of penetration and patience. We could wish the style was more simple; and the matter less confused: but we will not complain. In the eleventh Chapter the writer takes a brief review of the progress of the gospel chariot; and the great movements of God the Holy Ghost in ages past and gone; and then comes up to survey the present position of the Christian Church. On this point, he says

There are good men who, to this day, think and say, we are in the twilight of Sardis; but they err in that respect, as the blessed Huntington erred and was greatly perplexed, sometimes saying 'tis Sardis, and then it is Philadelphia. But we are assured, the church, within all states, is Philadelphian, and the pentecostal powers, and blessings, of the Holy Ghost proves the same in all the world, to convince gainsayers, now that the scriptures are translated into all languages, 'tis verily in a certain sense the Philadelphian glory, exceeding that of the apostles' miraculous gifts, for by means of missionaries, with kings, queens, princes, nobles, judges, and governments, with ambassadors and consuls united in Philadelphian love, zeal, as by armies and navies, all carrying the scriptures into all the nations, and by national with family protestant trinitarian schools being founded, and by the peoples of nations being civilised and evangelised, by these powers there are millions of devils wounded and cast out of the elect of God,

whilst all peoples are progressively enlightened in their minds, giving up gross idolatry, and old immoralities, that the devils are obliged to flee by millions into Rome, mystical Babylon, and into the various undecided senates of nations for succour. Thus while the Holy Ghost, by the Missionary Society and its branches, and by the British and Foreign Bible Society and its branches, are used by the Holy Ghost as his buckets, pouring out the waters of truth and grace as a river flowing through the world, which is his saving health among all nations, behold, the wilderness and even the desert of Arabia, and all the dark corners of the earth, as also to Ethiopia and others as foretold, are raised up in 'little strength,' which is the promise to the Philadelphian State at its rise. (See Rev. iii. 8.) \* \* \* And know ye, that now the devils, Jesuitical, Popish, kings, princes, missionaries from Rome and other nations and parts of the whole world, after the Bible has circulated, are risen up against the Holy Ghost, by which an awful apostacy has been effected in most senates of nations, especially in Great Britain, but, as God liveth, the same is only bringing about his purposes for their consumption. (See 2 Thess. ii. 8.) They shall not shut the open door, saith the Holy Ghost. No, no, no; the increase of the government, and peace of Christ in the pentecostal powers, and blessings of the Holy Ghost in all Philadelphia, shall consume their strength.

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Let not protestant trinitarian Britannia fear or be dismayed, for the glorious Three-One is our defence, and our shield. Let the protestant minority in the senate triumph, for, as God liveth, if the son of perdition—the pope of Rome—with his popish Jesuitical kings, princes, and priests joined by the false prophet of the east, Mahomet, and some anti-protestant emperors of the north and south, making up the mystery, Babylon, come to feast with the apostacy of Great Britain, and to drink wine, praising gods of silver, brass, iron, wood and stone; the pentecostal powers of the Holy Ghost will proceed, and we will bear witness against them; yet when the set time comes for heavier trials than we have now, I testify that many public renewed, protestant exalted personages of nations, senators, with witnesses, bishops, and other real protestants will be slain by the anti-protestant powers as in the reign of popish Queen Mary, (Rev. xi. 7.) But the Holy Ghost, as the scripture proves, having all kings, queens, and national powers, with armies and navies, as well as the whole earth and its riches in his hand, he being very God, and the Spirit of the Father and Christ, being his heirs' the protestants' Comforter, and keeper in all nations, kindreds, peoples, and tongues, he will raise an army wonderfully courageous for a battle with all the aforesaid united satanic anti-protestant powers and meet them to fight (see Isa xlix. 25, 26,) the great battle continuing, from beginning to end, about three years and a half ending the destruction of the anti-protestant armies, about A. D



1926. See the dates proved as follows, take 666, Rev. xiii. 18, the rise of the beast and popery, and add to it 1260 years makes 1926, Rev. xi. 3, and be assured then that Babylon, the present Rome, and all the united strong-holds of the anti-protestant unions with Mahomet in the east, and all anti-protestant towers of strength shall be in ruins. (See Isa. xxv. 2.) And Rome, the bloody, blasphemous, idolatrous city and its environs as the scripture assures us, will be burned with fire and brimstone, as Sodom and Gomorrah was burned of old, and the remnant of the presumptuous wilful sinners, idolators, and blasphemers at the end of "the battle of that great day of God Almighty," (Rev. xiv. 14,) shall be slain with his swords put into the hands of the noble protestant trinitarian warriors, at that time protestant Britannia, being leaders by her sons, after the present apostacy are gone, like Ahithophel, Judas, and Julian, to their own place. \* \* \*

Then all the silenced witnesses will rise up in the Holy Ghost's pentecostal powers, (see Rev. xi. 11 ;) and after adjusting all national affairs in church and state, then protestants with protestantism will be universally set up under the whole heavens. (See Dan. ii. 35. and vii. 27.) And that power and glory will be the Holy Ghost's beginning of the first resurrection, and the fulness of the gentiles will be then brought in by the Holy Ghost. (See Rom. xi. 25.) Then will follow the first resurrection of the Jews, which will be effected by the power of the Holy Ghost through his gentile pentecostal witnesses, pastors and watchmen from kings and queens to the lowest of all, (see Isa. xlix. 22, 23,) as one voice sounding, by preaching, prayer and blessings, (see Ezek. xxxvii. 7, 9, 13, 14.) And then a king shall be found among the Jews, who, in the pentecostal powers of the Holy Ghost, shall be as David. (See Mich. vii. 14 20; Hosea iii. 5.) Therefore, we find that all the elect renowned Jews, with Gentiles, shall be spiritually grafted into Christ, their own olive tree, (Rom. xi. 25, 26, 36.) Thus Jews and Gentiles will become, in the height of Philadelphian glory, one fold. And all unrenewed Jews being enlightened in their natural minds, and being rendered protestants by profession, will be so united and rendered obedient in Philadelphian love by the Holy Ghost in his pentecostal gifts, for his heirs, the elect's sake, as the Bible directs, that they will be so free that all the gentile sovereigns and governments of nations shall agree to surrender to the Jews their former lands and possessions. This is true prophecy, (see Jer. xxxi. 4, 5, 17; Dan vii. 27;) and the king of the Jews will be crowned in Jerusalem, in the presence, and by the assistance of gentile kings, princes, nobles, and powers who, with Jews, will shout at the coronation of the king of the Jews, whilst the trumpet is sounded, saying, "God save the king." 1 Kings i. 34.

Thus the Jews spiritually, nationally, politically, ecclesiastically, civilly and monarchially, shall be one with the gentiles, as one kingdom, the Lord's. Obad. xxi. Then will commence the universal beating up swords into plough-shares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. (Mich. iv. 3.) So will end the fifth general pentecost of the Holy Ghost. And

the whole renewed election, Gentiles and Jews, upon earth, in protestant trinitarian union, shall enjoy "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Then according to scripture dates about A. D. 1997, the Holy Ghost will rush in most gloriously the sixth glorious pentecost, giving ministerial gifts, graces, and qualifications universally far exceeding all previous pentecosts. (See Isa. xxx. 26.) Which will be the beginning of the millenium, when the angel of the covenant, on the behalf of the election, will lay hold of the dragon, the devil, and Satan, even all devils, and chaining all, will cast them into the bottomless pit, and shut them up, and set a seal upon him, that they should deceive nations no more, till the millenium, or the thousand years be fulfilled, and after that he must be loosed a little season, so saith the Holy Ghost. Thus the first benefit and blessing of the sixth general pentecost will be all peoples freed from devils, so that not one person shall be bruised, tempted or oppressed by devils, through the millenium. (See Rev. xx. 2.) Then there will be a kind of restoration of all things; (Acts iii. 21;) even as before the sin of Eve, with Adam, and all in Adam. (Rom. v. 12.) Yes, in the sixth general pentecost, the new heavens and earth will appear as promised, wherein dwelleth righteousness. (See Isa. lxxv. 17; 2 Peter iii. 13; Rev. xx. 4.) And not one unrenewed unrighteous person upon earth, shall live again in a civil, political, anti-protestant line, to hurt or destroy in all the earth, then God's holy mountain. (See Isa. xi. 9; Dan vii. 27; Rev. xx. 5.) Nevertheless, all the peoples upon earth will be mortal, marrying and giving in marriage, very fruitful, and multiplying exceedingly, replenishing the earth, even until the end of time, when God the Son cometh in glorified humanity, to perform all the glories promised.

• • • Moreover be ye assured, that through the millenium, God the Son, Jesus Christ, will not be visible upon the earth, as some good men have supposed, and unscripturally published, about his personal reign on earth, no, indeed, the heavens, his glorious high throne, will be Christ's exalted place of personal abode, until the end of time, and therefore the "saints living and reigning with Christ on earth for a thousand years," (Rev. xx. 4;) and the rest not living again until the thousand years, or millenium is finished, (verse 5;) signify the protestants universally reigning, by and in his blessing, with him in his invisible presence (for proofs see ye Matt. xxviii. 20;) and by his Holy Spirit, the Holy Ghost's pentecostal power, all kings and queens being rendered real protestants, shall certainly fill every throne upon earth. (Rev. xx. 4.) So that protestants in protestantism, shall have the ascendancy over anti-protestants, and anti-protestantism, even so, that every anti-protestant person upon earth, shall be under them and their rule, powerless, nay dead respecting any opposition to protestants, or protestantism, as Ham was, in the ark. (Gen. vii. 13.) So the blessing of God, through the millenium will be surpassing all former days, even so, that there will be hardly any sickness in the human bodies; and as the air, earth and elements, are cleansed of devils, (Rev. xx. 1, 2,) there can be no bruising, temptations or torments of devils in human souls and minds, neither are then to be any deaths of the saints, so all things will be new, for John foreseeing all saints in visions, as we now see them manifestively in the written word of the Holy Ghost's pourtrayed visions, we know that 'saints shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years.' So that when Christ comes from heaven at the end of time, to change the living saints, from mortal to im-

mortality, and raise the mortal dead bodies of all the saints, immortal for their souls to re-enter immortal, from Adam to all others, as the Scripture proves, there shall be living saints, much older than Methuselah, who was 969 years. (Gen. v. 27.) Oh, the blessing of the Holy Ghost's sixth pentecost, the churches and states of nations, as one kingdom, will be glorious indeed; the knowledge of the Holy Ghost, and the Father, and Christ one God the Lord, will be universal for the Holy Ghost says "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Hab. ii. 14.) There certainly will be new heavens and earth in a literal and spiritual sense, as the Holy Ghost assures us in these words, "Moreover the light of the moon, shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days," (Isa. xxx. 26.) There will therefore be such life, light, truth, grace, and blessings coming down from the Father in his glorious high throne, through Christ the communicable fountain, in the perfections, power and blessings of the Holy Ghost, into his witnesses, pastors, and watchmen, and through their writing and preaching in the pentecostal powers of the Holy Ghost, that tens of thousands of God's election, shall be converted, baptized with water, and receive the ordinance of the supper of the Lord, until the whole earth shall be as one holy mountain, filled with grace, truth, and glory, far exceeding Solomon's temple, (see Isa. xxx. 26.) And all persons who are not renewed, shall be so enlightened, for the thousand years, and be so obedient, that their being not renewed, shall not be known only to God, \* \* \* And Christ in his doctrines and ordinances, will be so precious, called the tree of life, by and in his ordinances, whilst the Holy Ghost leads his heirs to him, and through him, unto the Father, that all nations shall be healed, in that sense there shall be no curse. (Rev. xxii. 1, 2, 3.)"

"Nay, so blessed will be the state of the universal protestant trinitarian church, that all the election shall enjoy the blessing of non-condemnation, far surpassing all previous times. And God the Son Jesus Christ will be apprehended by faith, in glorified humanity, in heaven, yet invisible upon earth in all nations, reigning in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem; (heaven and earth) before his ancients gloriously. And then all saints in union and communion, not one being tempted or buffeted by devils, will speak and sing of their eternal election, and predestination to eternal life by the Father, in and through Christ, and of redemption by Christ, and of grace infused at being spiritually called and begotten by the Father, and of the possessing and renewing, and regenerating powers and blessings of the Holy Ghost, saying, 'we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God,' that is, the Holy Ghost. Thus all saints will progressively past all former days, be assured of their glorification. *Psa. lxxxiv. 11; Rom. viii. 30; Rev. xxi. 3.* \* \* \*

In these ways will the Holy Ghost proceed through the millenium, so that really new heavens, and a new earth, will be enjoyed by all saints without any interruption. So will be the millenium glories. 'Behold,' saith God, 'I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy; and I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.' *Isa. lxxv. 17, 18, 19.* Yes, my readers, the Holy Ghost, and the Father, and Christ, one God, will rejoice over Gentiles and Jews, one fold, one church, and one state with joy. Yes, God will rest in his love as on the first Sabbath-day of time, *Gen. ii. 2;* he will joy over her with singing, see *Zeph. iii. 17,* and all the churches, as one, will have an enjoyment of God in pureness and

knowledge, although mortal, far exceeding all days since the fall. Therefore, in all humility, self-denial, and filial reverence, in 'strong consolation,' I testify, the Holy Ghost, for his own praise and glory, and his church's benefit, hath shewn us things to come; and sent me, in union with all the orthodox, to publish the same in this treatise. (Jer. iii. 15; John xvi. 13, 14.) Moreover, through the millenium, which, according to scripture dates, will begin about A.D. 1997, and end about A.D. 2997, (the day and hour no man knoweth,) the saints, exceeding all other times, will enjoy, righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Yes, sevenfold exceeding ours of these days, and all succeeding. Isa. xxx. 26. And respecting temporalities, there will be the same blessings, for the earth and seas, in all riches and produce, will seven-times exceed all former days, so that there will be no lack of anything; all the former poor shall be replenished. Yes, all peoples shall sit every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree, and none shall make them afraid, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. (Micah iv. 4) The ploughman, shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all hills shall melt. (Amos ix. 13.) That promise of our God is to be understood spiritually and literally, in the new heaven, and new earth; for then all people will walk every one in the name of God, saying, 'we will walk in the name of the Lord God for ever and ever.'"

Thus we have given our readers some opportunity of judging for themselves of the value of the work which we have introduced to their notice. Some things here declared, are startling: but why so? Simply because we are so fortified by pre-conceived prejudices, and so little inclined to study the word of God for ourselves.

The work closes up with two short Chapters. Chapter XII. is on the blasphemy and wilful sins against the Holy Ghost, after that millenium of which our author has spoken in the extracts we have given.

In this Chapter, we have the origin of the sin against the Holy Ghost found in Lucifer, the devil, and from him flowing down to all non-elect angels and men; as also a declaration that as the elect are predestinated unto eternal life, it is impossible that ever they shall be guilty of that unpardonable crime.

But as we purpose, if spared, to return to the subject again, and to notice other works of Edmund Greenfield's in future numbers, we now leave it by saying any friend may obtain a copy of the work herein reviewed on application to William Whiting at the Chapel in Crosby Row, or at the office of this publication.

## The Christian Record.

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RAMSDEN CRAYS BAPTIST CHAPEL, (near Billericay, Essex.) This is a quiet and retired little sanctuary wherein the glorious doctrines of the Gospel of the grace of God are preached, by one brother MADDOX, whom the Lord has been pleased to raise up, and to bless unto the people for several years. The congregation (comprising perhaps from 150 to 200 persons,) is gathered up from a large tract of open and thinly populated country—some travelling six, ten, and even twelve miles regularly, to hear the unadorned administration of eternal truth: and I thought surely this is an evidence that these people love, and have realised the power of sovereign grace. They come not here, because there are no churches, nor fashionable dissenting letter-men, for these are equally within their reach; neither come they here for any peculiar gift (of a natural kind) in the preacher, nor for any temporal benefit to be derived from the people; but early on the Lord's day morning, they leave their habitations; and in many cases, no doubt, their families, and travel up to Zion. Truly, it is a pleasing sight! and forcibly declares there is a solemn reality in the soul that feeds upon, as also in the power that dispenses and accompanies the word of life.

The 16th of July, in the providence of God, I was taken down to speak unto the people assembling in this place. On the previous evening, (knowing that many prejudices had been laid in the minds of the people against me,) I besought the Lord to give me a word which should be clothed with and accompanied by the blessed Spirit's power, so that I might be confirmed and assured that it was his will I should go. I do believe the Lord answered me, for very quickly, the following words out of the eighth of Job, was laid in my soul,—“Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man; neither will he help the evil doers.” “Behold,” was very peculiarly precious to me; it was as though the Lord said, “Go, and be yourself a living witness of this glorious truth; that severe and long, sore and dreadful as may be the consequences of sin; yet, God will NEVER CAST AWAY A PERFECT MAN.” With this matter in my soul, I set out for the scene of my labours, accompanied by two kind and excellent brethren in the faith. Our place of destination, was Outwood Common, near Billericay, which is an elevated piece of land of immense height, from whence most extensive and interesting views are taken of the counties of Essex and Kent. Having had some refreshment, and feeling somewhat uneasy in my mind, as to whether I had not, after all, come to this place without the approbation of the Lord, I left the house and my friends, and went out into the solitary walks which run through this beautiful country; and here I besought the Lord to meet and bless me. My mind was soon stayed and comforted by two things. First, as regards my coming, the Lord gave me this word, “If a Levite come from any of thy gates out of all Israel, where he sojourned, and come with all the desire of his mind unto the place which the Lord shall choose; then he shall minister in the name of the Lord his God.” (Deut. xviii. 6, 7.) This was enough to give me a firm hope I had not come unsent, for I did feel an inward wrestling, breathing of soul, that I might go up “with all the desire of my mind,” for the glory of God, the exaltation of the Saviour's name, and the real, eternal benefit of his people. Secondly, as regards the subject itself,

while strolling through the lanes and roads of this secluded spot, I saw, first, that this Perfection, of which my text did speak, laid virtually, eternally, and completely, in the blessed Person and finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, as declared by himself, in the 17th John,—“I in them, and thou in me, that *they may be made PERFECT IN ONE.*” Never before, I think, did I ever have such a sweet and holy view of this truth, that all that ever was or could be found in the Lord Jesus Christ, as Mediator, was in Him for that company of perfect ones which the Father had given Him: and that all their precious souls could ever need for time or eternity, was treasured up in Him, wherein you see the beauty and consistency—the breadth and the length of that word which declares, “ALL THINGS are possible to him that believeth.” The next thing which I was led to see, was the experimental realization of this perfection in the hearts and consciences of the elect, as set out in such a wonderful way, in the 16th of Ezekiel,—“thy beauty; it was perfect, through my comeliness which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.” And, thirdly, the practical fruits of the Perfection, as also the time-comfort and blessedness which it produces, as the Holy Ghost witnesses by James,—“But whoso *looketh* into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, *this man shall be blessed in his deed.*” Here, then, did the Lord lay open this great gospel truth in my soul; whereby my loins were girt about, and my soul caused to rejoice.

On arriving at the place of worship we found a great number gathered together; and before long it was filled: among whom were many seeking and weeping souls. Thus, in love and power, the Lord carried me down; blessed me in my labour, and returned me in peace, to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

Should this meet the eye of that afflicted soul who so blessed me in the name of the Lord, let me say, that the testimony so humbly and affectionately borne, did greatly comfort me in the Lord. Ramsden Crays, and the dear sheep of Christ there folded together, under the humble pastor, MADDOX, may great grace rest upon you, with every needful blessing, prays, your's in truth,

C. W. BANKS.

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CASTLE CARY, SOMERSETSHIRE.—I have lately been favoured with communications from a christian friend, at Castle Cary, in Somersetshire, whose testimony of his own soul's experience is in accordance with that which peculiarly belongs unto the election of grace. Before I give a few brief remarks upon the state of the professing Churches in that part of the country, I shall let him speak for himself as regards the reason of the hope that is in him: and I do so more particularly with a desire to be instrumental in encouraging some who are similarly situated. “In many parts of this highly-favoured land, and in the midst of some of the most densely populated towns, there are but a few who are really decided for vital, experimental truth; many of these little bands are without any living minister; all the public means they are favoured with, is to meet for prayer and reading the Word of God, and the sermons of godly men. Often are the souls of these poor famished sheep cast down by the way; and often are they tempted to believe, that if they really did belong to that vineyard of red wine, which God has declared he will *water every moment*, that certainly they should not be so left.” But, in my very soul, I do believe that in many such little secluded churches, (for churches they

are, being knit together in the Spirit,) there is more genuine christian love and unity felt and manifested : more real worship of God exercised, than is the case in our large, and apparently flourishing congregations.

“ It was my privilege, (says he) to have gracious parents, and was from childhood, kept from breaking out into those lengths of outward sin which many have run into. I do not remember that I have ever been free from inward convictions, which, at times, have been very keen : but it rested in a mere form. I used never to be able to rest satisfied, until I had read a prayer morning and evening ; and by strict attention to my moral duties and performances, I hoped my old Adam nature would have been improved, or wholly got under ; but I have for years found that to be a hopeless task. I do increasingly feel that the sink of iniquity within is past all human comprehension.

“ Being naturally of an inquiring mind ; having read many sound authors, and mixed with many of the Lord’s people. I feel that there is such danger of getting hold of these things merely by the exertion of natural power, and often when I hear or read, and receive the truth, I fear it is merely intellectual enjoyment. My disposition is naturally trifling ; which I feel to be a burden, and I do earnestly desire to feel a deeper work within. I can say from the bottom of my heart, that I love the Lord’s truth and his people ; and earnestly desire to have my heart made right in his sight. I have before now enjoyed some precious seasons in hearing Mr. Irons, Mr. Abrahams and Mr. Wells ; as my business generally calls me to London twice a year. Oh, what a mercy that salvation is all of grace, and that it is not dependent on the exercise of any creature work.

“ You wished me to inform you of the state of professing churches in this part of the country. I can assure you, look where you will, it seems to be nothing but a contention for forms and ceremonies ; a respectable congregation ; a naturally talented preacher ; and a labouring to break down the line of discrimination between the Lord’s family and the world. These things seem to be the chief aim of the preachers in these parts. There is what is called an Association of ministers for the county ; but I solemnly believe that such is the withering influence of such associations that there is not a faithful minister amongst them ; on the contrary, they are the first to persecute the poor children of God. I know instances in proof of this assertion ; another dark sign that still darker days are approaching, is, this, the Lord seems to be removing many of his ministers, and their places, are filled by those who preach a false Christ. I could mention many such places which have come under my own notice ; in fact, it has been the case in this town. Still in this and other places around us, there seems to be a few that are led by grace to embrace the truth ; and cannot be satisfied with the general preaching of the day : they meet together in a room or small chapel, where they can be fed either by the preaching or reading of some of the published Gospel sermons. We have only our place here once a day as yet, but we hope, after a while, to have it the whole day. Indeed there seems nothing else here worth living for, and feeding upon. Oh, to be led further and further into the great and glorious righteousness the Lord Jesus has wrought out for his people ; it does indeed seem a great mercy that such vile wretches should be noticed by Jchovah. Oh, the blackness within ! At times I am led to exclaim with Hart—

‘ Can ever God dwell there.

“Your’s, I trust, in the best of bonds,

W. C.”

**CAVE ADULLAM BAPTIST CHAPEL STEPNEY.** The half-yearly meeting of the friends connected with, and interested in, the cause of God and divine truth, was held in this place on Monday, July 7, 1845. A somewhat numerous party sat down to tea, in the midst of whom was a little band of itinerant labourers in the gospel field; various accounts of the different scenes of their labours, and of the many circumstances therewith connected were related in an interesting manner. In the evening, a public meeting was held; from the statement read by the Secretary, it appears that there is still a debt on the building amounting to upwards of £170; but from the spirit manifested, perseverance and patience (attended with a divine blessing) will, no doubt, shortly clear off the whole. Mr. William Allen, the Pastor of the Church, was in the chair, and was supported by ministers of other churches, who severally addressed the meeting on those subjects which are more immediately connected with the eternal peace of the redeemed. The church of Christ meeting for worship in the Cave doth certainly contain some sober, zealous consistent and Godly men; and the success with which the Lord has favoured our brother Allen, since he has been called to labour in this part of the vineyard, is a manifest confirmation of the truth of that word wherein Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house or brethren, or sisters or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold, now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." When we contrast the past life and present position of Mr. Allen with the various legacies<sup>n</sup> herein set down, we do not think there is a word of it but has, both literally and spiritually, been realised by him. May great grace rest upon him and upon the whole Israel of God. Amen. (See note on the wrapper.)

**ZOAR CHAPEL, CANTERBURY.** Wisdom itself hath declared that "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at *my gates*, waiting at the posts of *my doors*:" and the Holy Ghost, by the mouth of James has added, "Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them, that love him." These two very precious portions of God's word were laid on my mind, soon after reading a brief epistle from a faithful friend, in which he says—"For distinction sake, our place is named 'Zoar Chapel;' a little one, and few men in it: but it is better to be with a few living souls than with a host of dead professors."

No church, or body of believers, can possibly be more deeply afflicted, tried, and torn to pieces, than has been that little flock with whom (for a time) the Lord did permit me to stand. Since my unhappy separation from them they have been most grievously wounded and driven by adverse winds. After they left the new chapel, (St. John's, which was professedly built expressly for them) they assembled for worship in the little Chapel at Sturry, a short distance from the city. Here another severe calamity awaited them, and they were again left as a flock without a shepherd. Subsequently, and for a considerable period, they assembled for prayer and reading, in an hired room, until, under God's good providence towards them, a very compact little chapel has been fitted up; and wherein they now meet to wait upon, and to worship that Triune Jehovah, and covenant God, who has enabled them to endure temptation, and in some humble measure to realise his blessing. Since the place has been opened, my



friend says—"we have only had two supplies yet, Mr. Septimus Sears and Mr. Taylor: I enjoyed Mr. Taylor's ministry; so I also did Mr. Sears. Mr. Mackensy has promised to pay us a visit during his stay next month." Oh, that many of the Lord's faithful servants may be constrained to sympathise with the inhabitants of this little Zoar, and to preach unto them the unsearchable riches of Christ. I will only add one other sentence from the letter referred to—"We have a hope that when we can clear our way, the Lord will send us an under shepherd: but we must *stand still*." Lord! command some of thine own sent servants to "speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward"—and do thou increase them with the increase of thyself: and "add unto them of such as shall be saved." Amen and Amen.

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JAMAICA ROW BAPTIST CHAPEL, BERMONDSEY.—The Church and Congregation meeting for worship in this place have been for a long time on the decline. On Lord's day July 6th, the Pastor baptised one person, an aged man, who was the same evening received into the Church: but additions have now for a long time, been of such rare occurrence, that the Pastor has given the Church notice to leave them at Christmas next should there be no better prospect. "The fact is," says an old disciple, "he, (the pastor,) is a good man; and preaches the truth as far as the Lord has taught him; but I believe that his work at Jamaica Row is done."—"The fact is," we should say, that in London, such is the fickleness of the generality of hearers; that unless the Lord is pleased to go on to bless a man to the continued ingathering of souls; or, unless a man has a very peculiar something about him that is calculated to keep up an attracting influence upon the people, a very few years will find him with empty pews to preach to.

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GROVE CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL.—The twenty-sixth anniversary of Mr. Irons' Chapel, at Camberwell, was held on Tuesday, the 22nd July, 1845, when three sermons were, as usual, preached, and money was collected. In the morning Mr. Irons preached from the first clause of the 6th verse of the 122nd Psalm—"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." The sermon, from what we could gather, appeared to be a pastoral exhortation; and certainly was of a wholesome and necessary character. He commenced by shewing that Jerusalem was typical of the spiritual church of the Lord Jesus Christ—That this church, and all the privileges belonging to her, were of divine appointment, founded in paternal love, divine substitution, and invincible grace. These three gospel principles he expatiated upon with his usual warmth and eloquence. Some excellent matter was brought out in illustrating "the peace of Jerusalem." After a few words upon that essential peace obtained by, and realized in, the putting away and pardon of sin by the one offering of the Lord Jesus Christ, he spoke a little with reference to peace of conscience. He said, "if ever I am left to speak an unhallowed word, or take an unhallowed step, I find it produces a kind of mutiny, confusion and distress within: and causes a shyness in my next approach to the mercy seat; without removing the persuasion that God is my Father, that Christ is my Redeemer, and

the Holy Ghost my Teacher." He certainly did, in a few words, point out the two-fold experimental character and condition of a true Jerusalem believing sinner: *he has peace with God*, through our Lord Jesus Christ, justification, by faith, being declared and wrought in his soul; but he is still, and notwithstanding, the subject of infirmities, and these infirmities oftentimes bring a degree of guilt upon the conscience; which can only be removed by a fresh application of atoning blood. The matter of prayer for the peace of Jerusalem he charged home upon his people very closely indeed. He said for himself he should not think he went to sleep in safety; nor could he expect any thing through the day to prosper with him unless he had first supplicated the Lord for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem. We are fearful that the churches, generally speaking, are verily guilty concerning this matter; gospel preaching and gospel hearing are become too much common-place matters at least, to a very great extent it is so in London. Who among us, honestly in the sight and fear of God, can adopt the 5th and 6th verses of the 137th Psalm?—"If I forget thee, oh Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave unto the roof of my mouth: if I *prefer not* Jerusalem above my chief joy." Oh, my reader, is the suspicion unwarranted, that there are indeed but few, who do so recognize, so rejoice in, and so pray for Jerusalem as that it is with them, the *first*, and most essential point, save that of their own souls' interest in the redemption that is by Christ? We would pray God to lay it solemnly and powerfully upon our own hearts, and upon the hearts of thousands of his dear family in this and other lands—to "*pray for the peace of Jerusalem.*" One thing that Mr. Irons exhorted the people to pray for gave rise to a query in our mind. He said that they were to pray that our Lord and Master would do again as he did in the days of his flesh, take a whip and whip out of the temple all the buyers and sellers, and money changers. We did look at him so hard when he said this, and immediately the question arose in the mind—"If the dear Lord was really to whip out all the money changers, and buyers and sellers from what we now call our professing Jerusalem, *where would he stop?*" Oh, what would become of the great body of our gospel preachers and gospel hearers? Certainly they would be whipped out of the professing temple; for buyers and sellers they have become; as is manifest from the fact that people are now told from the pulpit if they do not take and pay for sittings, they shall not approach the table of the Lord; and moreover two pound ten, and three pound is now charged by "*the leading gospel preachers*" for one sermon. Well, well, an allusion to these things may give offence; but what of that? They are among the abominations that are rapidly flowing in; shewing us clearly that popery is not confined—tyranny, oppression, and penance, are not confined to the priests and peoples of the church of Rome, but that our so-called Protestant churches and

Protestant Ministers are giving fearful evidences that "the man of sin" has crept in unawares.

In the afternoon Mr. Abrahams preached. An esteemed brother has favoured us with the following brief outline of his discourse:

"His mouth is most sweet." Song of Solomon, v. 8.

First, Who is this person here spoken of?

Secondly, The mouth, or office.

Thirdly, The comparison—"Most sweet."

Fourthly, Who is the party who is thus privileged to say, "*His mouth* is most sweet?"

First, who is this *him* or person, whose mouth is so sweet? Who is it intended? Who? Why king Solomon, to be sure, whose throne, with the steps leading thereunto were paved with gold. There is a description in Daniel of an image, whose head was of gold. As this represented a certain monarchy, so it typified this glorious Christ as the head of his church. Solomon was also a type of this glorious he or him, in his wisdom. It was said that his wisdom was as the sand on the sea shore. Can you count it? Well, he is the brightness of his Father's glory, he is altogether lovely.

Secondly, "His mouth is sweet," as it speaketh from the heart; in the first of Hebrews, "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the Fathers, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his son;" and who so fit, my friends, to speak, as he who was acquainted with all the things in ancient counsels? There is a sweet description of this speaking in the first of John as *he* was walking, John cried out "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" behold, he says again, "behold the Lamb of God." And it is said the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed him, listening to his gracious words. The enemy might have suggested to them "Why dont you go forward? Why don't you go and speak to the man to his face, and tell him how delighted you are with his preaching?" but no, they followed him; they may have said as many a dear child of God does, 'I wish he would speak to me first I long to speak to him.' Well, it is said, that as they followed him listening and longing, He turned round and spoke to them; and they went home with him to hear more of his blessed words. Again it is recorded in the seventh chapter of Luke, that a woman that was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat went unto him. Did she rush into his presence presumptuously? O no, she went behind him, and while there waiting and wishing he would speak to her, it is said, he turned to the woman, and said "Thy sins are forgiven, thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." Sweet words, "His mouth is most sweet," I might instance his speaking to Saul of Tarsus and many others; but time forbids.

Thirdly. The comparison, "most sweet;" his word through his ministers sometimes is very sweet; but his speaking is superlative;

never man spake like him; O no, none ever spake like him, or could, when he said, "It is finished." Two Jews were once sent to him, and they were high in office, they were similar to High Sheriffs in this country, they went with others to take him, but when they heard him they returned and said, "never man spake like this man"

Fourthly, Who is the person privileged to say "His mouth is most sweet?" Who is it? Why Solomon's wife. Yes, 'tis the Shulamite, the bride of Christ. She is enamoured with him, hear what she says of him in the tenth verse of this chapter: "My beloved is white and ruddy;" both human and divine: "His head is as the most fine gold," setting forth his head-ship of the church. She then goes on to speak of his eyes, his cheeks, his lips, his hands, his belly, his legs, his countenance, and as if his mouth was too precious to be mixed up with others in its place, she seems to reserve her expression of this, until the last, when she cries out, his mouth is most sweet," for through this, I receive, in expression, the love of his heart, yea, she says: "he is altogether lovely; this is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

Mr. R. Luckin preached in the evening.

A critical review of the origin, progress, and present condition of the cause at the *Grove*, will be found in an early succeeding number.

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#### HARROW-ON-THE-HILL BAPTIST CHAPEL.

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THE re-opening of this place of worship after the re-building of one of the walls, took place on Thursday, July 24th, 1845, on which occasion three sermons were preached; that in the morning by Mr. James Wells, of the Surry Tabernacle; that in the afternoon, by Mr. Arthur Triggs, of Zion Chapel, Waterloo Road; and that in the evening, by Mr. Thomas Stringer, of Snobs Fields.

We left London by an early train, which set us down something more than a mile short of the place of our destination; after strolling about for some time in different parts of the antiquated and scholastic town of Harrow, inquiring for the Baptist Chapel, we found it in a quiet, and retired spot, neatly fenced in, and having in its front and right hand side a piece of burying ground: the chapel itself is a small oblong building, prettily fitted up with pulpit, gallery, pews, vestry, baptismal pool, and every necessary convenience, and is calculated to hold from 150 to 200 persons. It is a pleasing sight to find, in such secluded parts of our land, houses built for, and devoted to, the God of Israel, wherein his dear children can assemble together to hear, feed upon, and rejoice in, the precious and glorious truths of the everlasting gospel.

Having arrived at the Chapel some considerable time before the service commenced, and finding one or two of the friends busily preparing for the interesting business of the day, we walked in and sat down, and one of them, who we soon learned was Mr. Thomas Smith, the worthy pastor of the church, gave us a few particulars

connected with the cause of God and truth in that place. It appears there has been a church formed there upon gospel principles for upwards of thirty years; that many very zealous and devoted members of the mystical body of Christ have been therewith connected, and that at the present time there is a church composed of thirty-five members, under the pastoral care of Mr. Smith. May the dear Lord richly and blessedly fulfil in their experience, both individually and collectively, the text and substance of the morning's discourse, of which we presently come to speak.

Between ten and eleven o'clock a vast number of vehicles of every description, (from the large omnibus to the pony chaise,) came pouring in from London, and other parts; so that the Chapel and its courts were literally filled; the day being fine, many were accommodated with seats in the burying ground, altogether there was a very large and interesting congregation.

Mr Wells after reading and prayer, took his text from the 37th verse of the 36th chapter of Ezekiel, "I will increase them with men like a flock." He was as usual, exceedingly fluent, and appeared to enjoy the great essential and everlasting truths which he was enabled to deliver. The following is an outline of the spirit and substance of the discourse.

He commenced by stating that the sentence preceding the text was to be considered in a two-fold point of view: first as a declaration of God's order of things—"I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." He said, in reality, there are no exceptions to this rule, for although it is said of some that before they call he heard and while they were yet speaking he answered them;" yet this can only be God's manifested mercy in answer to the secret intercessions of the blessed Spirit in the soul. It is secondly, a precious promise: by the house of Israel, God will be enquired of; and in answer to their inquiries and cries, he will do it for them.

He divided the text into three parts. First, the distinction, "Men." Secondly: the promise, "I will increase them." Thirdly, the association, "like a flock."

The preacher observed that the distinction—"Men," was to be understood as contrasted with, or in opposition to beasts and reptiles. He took this distinction as opposite to two animals—the serpent and the swine: shewing that the people of God, in their regenerated state did not manifest those prominent characteristics which we know belong both to serpents and to swine: but that they are *men*: expressive of their dignity through grace divine.

The serpent, according to its character as portrayed in the word of God, is peculiar for its enmity and craft; and therein is an apt illustration of those who, being without God and without Christ, are left in a state of enmity against him, and of hatred to the truth: and to live and die in enmity against God's election—against the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and against the sovereign teachings of the Holy Ghost, is to live and die in enmity against God.

Upon the divine and sovereign teachings of the Holy Ghost, Mr. W. dwelt with much emphasis and clearness. He shewed that where the soul was favoured with much of the love, presence, and power of God, there would assuredly be an accompanying measure of the plagues and abounding of sin. Grace will not allow us to be high without also being low. Paul soared high even into the third heavens, but he shall also have a thorn in the flesh that he could not get out; whereby he comes to cry unto God, and to prove the all-sufficiency of his grace. Mr. W. declared that the children of God could clearly distinguish between the teachings of man and the teachings of the Holy Ghost: he said there is as much difference between the teachings of men and those of the Holy Ghost, as there is between a farthing rush light and the sun shining in its brightness.

That there is a solemn, and a most essential distinction between human and divine teaching cannot be doubted for a moment; but that the children of God can always clearly distinguish between the one and the other, so as to say "this teaching is only of man, that teaching is certainly of God," is a statement that might somewhat puzzle many of the weaklings in the faith.

In opposition to serpents then, God's regenerated family are called men, because the enmity of their hearts against the truth is removed, and they have become rooted and grounded in their knowledge of and love to that truth: and a man once rooted and grounded in these eternal truths can never be carried back to a state of enmity again. We have many in our day who come in, and receive the truth for a time; but bye and bye you find them under some dead Calvinist, and if you ask them how this is, they tell you, you go too far: their enmity is not removed: their minds may be enlightened—but they have not been touched in the right place, which is the conscience.

The next thing noticed as descriptive of these men, was that of their honesty and simplicity in opposition to the craft and the subtlety of the serpent.

Mr. W. here shewed the flagrant craft of the serpent in prevailing upon the woman to eat of the fruit of the tree. We suppose that there is a certain license for imagination allowed to pulpit orators, as well as to plenders at the bar: because we could not see any scriptural authority for declaring that the serpent in recommending the tree—said, "See, I am only a serpent and once I had neither speech nor reason; but having ate of the fruit of the tree, I have obtained both speech and reason: you eat of the tree and ye shall be as gods." But we pass on. The same craft (said the preacher is now in existence. Church of England men, Moderate Calvinist men, and Free-will men, cry out, "see what churches and chapels we have built; see what sinners we have converted; see what a vast amount of good we have done: we are sure the Lord is with us."

But the Gospel requires no craft nor subtlety nor creature

applause—nor creature schemes, nor fleshly forms. When the poor publican went into the temple, if there had been any of our Church of England people there, they would have asked him if he did not want a prayer book, but his answer would have been—NO—I want the eternal mercy of the ever blessed God.” The grace of God makes a man honest in his love to the truth; and simple and sincere in his profession of it. God has said of his people “they are children that will not lie.” When I find a man with these two things, honesty and simplicity, I love that man: he has but, one greatness about him, and that is, he feels and he confesses, he is a great sinner and needs a great salvation.

Some can talk about, and describe as deep a law work as Mr. Huntington had; and can talk about and describe as high and as great a deliverance as Mr. Huntington had; and after this go away, either into some deadly error, or to wallowing in some abominable sin, therefore I want something that will abide, something that will wear: and I know that where God implants in the heart a real love to his truth, it will effect a thousand times more than all the terrors that ever a man can endure.

But again, these are called men; not only in opposition to serpents, but also in opposition to swine. That is, they cannot feed upon husks, neither can they wallow in the mire. A living sinner wants real substance; he wants living food; bread from heaven; wherefore it is certain that a letter-man—a dead preacher can be of no use to him, because this letter-man is altogether out of the secret. Eternal realities are revealed in the soul of a quickened sinner. and he wants an eternal salvation, an eternal righteousness, an eternal kingdom and eternal glory. He can feed upon nothing short of that eternal provision which is received out of the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ—his blood applied—his love shed abroad—and his truth realised by the power of the Spirit, can alone suffice. These are men in opposition to swine, secondly, because they cannot wallow in the mire. I know some of you will be ready to tell me, that the swine, are not originally and by nature fond of mud: if reared and brought up clean, they will be as careful to keep themselves clean, as any other of the brute creation; and it is only because they are neglected and suffered to wallow in mire, that they become so habituated to it. “Well,” say you, “and what are you going to make of that?” I am not going to make anything of it, more than to say, that man as first created, was not originally fond of wallowing in sin: and I am sure when God takes a poor sinner, and washes him in redeeming blood, he will no longer love to wallow in sin and the lusts of the flesh.

But we have, secondly, here, a promise—“I will increase them.” This is to be considered in a two-fold point of view. First, God will go on increasing those who love his truth until the whole election of grace shall be gathered in. But it was more particularly with reference to spiritual blessings with which the Lord doth increase his dear people individually, that Mr. W. spoke

the matter for which was principally gathered from the chapter out of which the text was taken.

1. The entire and eternal removal of iniquity. "I will remove the iniquity of the land in one day." Among many other portions of the word whereby the eternal redemption of the church was shewn, Mr. W. dwelt with peculiar sweetness upon the words of the Evangelist (Luke xxii. 44) "his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the *ground*:" taking occasion to shew herefrom that as the ground was cursed, through the fall, so, by the shedding of his most precious blood, the roots of bitterness had been killed, the mountains of transgression thrown down, and the evil beasts driven out of the land: for the elect's sake. The fruitfulness of the land of Israel was also very blessedly pointed out. But our space forbids our fully detailing the various ideas that were advanced

Under the last head of the discourse, namely, "*Association*," he shewed that there might be, among the people of God, much dissension in minor matters, but that there must be an essential oneness and union in all the great realities of the everlasting covenant. This point was illustrated from facts connected with Israel of old. If an Israelite had stood out and refused to pass through the Red Sea, he must for ever have perished: if an Israelite had rejected God's method of leading the people through the wilderness, or if he had refused to drink of the water which flowed from the rock, he must certainly have been destroyed. There is but *one way* whereby we can escape eternal wrath; and therefore there is but one answer to all the queries that may be put to the people of God relative to their salvation—"It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed." Differ much as you may (said the preacher,) about the mode or manner in which truth shall be served up to you—in the great leading points of truth itself you must be one—you must be united. Ministers have different gifts; and different modes of setting forth truth—and some like one man and some another. I dare say (said he in his usual humorous strain,) some of you do not like me so well as you do your own parson; but I hope you have heard me as well as you can, and I will hear your parson as well as I can.

This essential oneness was clearly shewn to lay in God's sovereign choice of his people; in the redemption of their souls by the Lord Jesus Christ, and in regeneration by God the Holy Ghost.

It was a sermon altogether admirably adapted to the occasion, and, although there might appear to some, too much of natural humour, still the grand fundamentals of the gospel and of Christian experience were enforced and illustrated with spirit and ability, and we trust in most cases applied with power and received in love.

Mr. Wells, in his appeal for the collection, passed a very high eulogium on his friends at the Surry Tabernacle. He said they had spoiled him for begging—for no sooner had a hint been dropped



at any time, or half a word spoken about any thing being wanted, than in it came, so that he had never had any practice in begging. It must be exceeding comfortable (to the flesh at any rate,) thus to have all things at one's beck: perhaps it is not so with all the servants of God: we have often seen, however, both in the profane and in the professing world, striking illustrations of Solomon's word—"a man's gift—(*a man's gift*)—maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men." Of Mr. Wells it may be justly said, as the Preacher of old said of himself: "*I gave my heart to know wisdom;*" but whether he has also learned the other part of the statement—that "in much wisdom *there is much grief*, and he that increaseth knowledge *increaseth sorrow*," is a matter which we shall not meddle with: certain it is "a man's wisdom *shall be commended*:" it "shall make his face to shine;" and as certainly shall "the boldness of his face be changed." (Eccles. viii. 1.)

In the afternoon, Mr. Arthur Triggs preached to the people from the words of John. "Ye know that he was manifested to *take away* our sins:" and in the evening Mr. Thomas Stringer preached from the two last verses of the third chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

Upon the whole this was perhaps the brightest day that the good people at Harrow-on-the-Hill have seen for some years; at any rate they had three great parsons—and crowds of visitors; and collected altogether near upon fifteen pounds: so that the labours of the day were certainly not in vain.

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#### REHOBOTH CHAPEL, RATCLIFFE HIGHWAY, LONDON.

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THE fifteenth anniversary of this place of worship was held on Tuesday July the 29th, 1845. Mr. Thomas Shirley, of Sevenoaks, Mr. John Foreman, of Hill Street, Dorset Square, London, and Mr. Sedgewicke, of Brighton, were the preachers. That venerated and faithful servant of God, Thomas Shirley, took his text in the morning, from the 4th and 5th verses of the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. In his introductory remarks, he spoke of the many false delusions by which men are influenced in religious matters. "I once knew a man, (said he) who would often say. "It is true, I am a very wicked man now, but I think some day I shall be a very religious man, *because*—I have a Godly mother, and she prays much to God for me." This was the delusive ground upon which this man founded a false hope—for he perished in his sins." In speaking from his text, the dear old saint shewed, first, that it contained a very sublime and glorious description of the character of God: **GOD WHO IS RICH IN MERCY.** Secondly The manifestation of that mercy—the grand cause of the Church's salvation—His great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sins." Thirdly: the gracious effect flowing from the manifestation of this mercy, and the essential evidence of our interest in it—hath quickened us together with Christ, Fourthly: The great consummation of the whole—"by grace **YE ARE SAVED.**" It appeared from the report read at the close of the service that the Church of Christ under the pastoral care of Mr. Milner, is in a peaceful and prosperous state. May the dew of Heaven richly rest upon them; and as the young man, who opened the services of the day, fervently prayed, may the waters not only come up to the ancles, and the loins, but may there be many swimming times in the hearts and consciences of the

## To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### LETTER II.

#### DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS,

THAT was a well chosen petition of brother David, when he said, "one thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple." Ps. xxvii. 4. But say you, how came David with this petition? I answer, God put the desire in his heart, that he might dwell in the house of the Lord; and by grace enabled him to petition to him that the promised desire of his heart might be fulfilled; and this is the way God deals with his people, by first applying the promises, and then enabling them by the power of the Holy Spirit, to pray for the realization of them in their own soul's experience; but one thing, says David, as though there had been no other thing worthy of his notice, much less that had the possession of his heart. This one thing was, that he might dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life; see the beauty of the Lord, and enquire in his temple; and nothing short of this will satisfy the desire of a living soul; for, Paul says that if in this life only we have hope we are of all men the most miserable. Methinks I hear the poor doubting soul saying, might I have this one thing, and all earthly beauties might, for me, be left to themselves. Allow me just to say, poor soul, that if you really have got the desire, you have the certain earnest of that which is desired, for God never gives the desire but sooner or later he gives the object of that desire; that is, the personal glories of the Lord Jesus Christ in his mediatorial character as Emmanuel, God with us: and this is what I apprehend, David meant, when he said, "that I may see the beauty of the Lord:" for, this I know is what every poor soul wants; when they have tasted that the Lord is gracious, they want to see and know their union to and interest in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I pass on to notice,

That whilst God has a church in the wilderness, that church shall be more or less afflicted: and what more than sanctified affliction tends to wean the believing soul from the things of time and sense? What tends more to make the heart long to be at rest in the peaceful mansions above, where sinning and suffering are known no more for ever? Even the apostle Paul found to his bitter experience, that wherever he went, bonds and persecutions awaited him; and the effect which this produced was an earnest desire to depart and be with Jesus. Phil. i. 23. But, say you, if the Lord had afflicted me in my family, or business, I could have borne it; but the church is assailed by ungodly men, it is to be feared who have crept in (as the apostle says) unawares, and they disturb our peace. Oh, my brother my soul weeps with you

for the state of our Zion, but do not let us forget, that God's church is his Naomi, *i. e.* his sweet, or pleasant one, and it is his pleasure sometimes to bring her into the wilderness, mark the expression, when God is about to try his people they must be brought, as well as kept, by his power, in the trial: but when he is about to speak comfortably in the manifestations of his love and mercy to the church, then he says that he will allure her and bring her into the wilderness, and there, saith Jehovah, I will speak comfortably to her.

But in such sifting and trying times, how many of these gosselers turn their backs on the church; as if no way interested in her concerns; notwithstanding, at their first entering into her communion, they solemnly professed to cast their lot in with her's for the worse as well as for the better: but let all those professors (who cannot walk with the church only in her peace and prosperity) know that they betray their want of affection to the great head of the church; and it is to be feared thereby prove that they have neither part nor lot in the matter of God's salvation, and it is of little consequence how soon these Adonibezeks, these lords of the world, and tyrants of Jerusalem, return to their own proper place, and company, for they cannot at all profit the souls of God's dear people.

I have many times painfully observed, since I have stood in connection with a Christian church, that it is no uncommon thing for these professors to be continually finding fault with the ministry of the word; hence their salutation is, if they meet you by the way, "Well, how did you get on, on Sunday? How did you like what Mr.— said? Did you not think that he ought not to have said so and so? Did you not think that the greater part of the discourse was uncalled for, and all to no purpose?" But not one word said about the manifestations of God's love to their soul, not one word said about the power and efficacy of the precious atoning blood of the Lamb being applied to their consciences by the power of the Holy Ghost. But the fact is, it is to be feared that these men's hearts are not right in the sight of God, for they appear to be struggling betwixt guilt, and pride: guilt, from a consciousness that their conduct cannot bear the strict examination of gospel truth; and pride, which prompts them to seek by every evasive means, to conceal their infamy; but go on, my brother, and be not discouraged at what the adversary shall say: preach the preaching God hath bid thee; and leave the result with him, casting anchor upon that precious promise, Matt. xxviii. 20.

Difficulties and trials, my dear friends, you must expect to meet with in this time state; for it is through much tribulation that we shall enter the kingdom; but an entrance once administered into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, will amply repay your toil and suffering here below, and your present afflictions appear but as waters which have passed away. Let then

your eye and your cry be ever to Jesus for his Spirit's teaching, which first inclined thine heart to leave thine own land for Jesus and his salvation, remembering that it is he which giveth you strength and courage to hold on in the way even to the end, and who also has promised to bring you safe to the heavenly felicity. John xiv. 3. "For as many (and no more) as are led by the Spirit of God they are the sons of God." Rom. viii. 14.

"A SILENT OBSERVER OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE  
CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS."

"THE BITTERNESS OF DEATH IS PAST"—A WORD OF EN-  
COURAGEMENT TO THE SAINTS AND SERVANTS  
OF THE MOST HIGH GOD.

My dear Brother,

You have perhaps ere this, heard that it hath pleased the Lord to take from us, my dear mother,—and without a doubt, from us to himself; she has been numbered with the silent dead four weeks and two days, and I rejoice to know that so long she has been engaged in singing "the song of Moses and the Lamb"—It was a sudden, and an unexpected visitation; a dispensation of providence we had not thought of—and I assure you, as a family, we feel the stroke;—oh! may it be abundantly sanctified to each of us.

You will I know rejoice with me, when I tell you, that we are not left "to sorrow as men without hope." The evidence she has left behind, yields abundance of satisfaction, as it respects her safe arrival "into the kingdom of God's dear Son."

The first few days of her illness were marked by great depression of spirits—darkness of mind—and an extraordinary sense of herself as a sinner: so much so, that she doubted whether she had any interest in the death and sufferings of the Lord Jesus—producing an agony of spirits *indescribable*. But this darkness, by an almighty hand, was dispersed, and succeeded by glorious light, the light of the blessed gospel; faith being in exercise, her soul, released from its bonds, (as it were,) sang surprising grace, and she broke forth in language like this, "I have conquered; I am more than a conqueror through Christ who hath strengthened me." "I am a sinner of the deepest dye saved by grace. Grace from first to last; all of grace." She appeared to have been taken from herself entirely, and placed simply and fully, upon the finished work of the Lord Jesus. I never saw that beautiful hymn of Toplady's, so strictly illustrated, "Rock of ages shelter me," as in the dying experience of my dear mother." Read it, and you will have a much better description of her last days, than I could possibly give you. She spoke of you, and expressed a wish, that if it were possible, to see you; you have her dying re-

membrances; suffice it now to say, that the valley, though long, and painful; yet she has passed through it in triumph, exclaiming "I fear no evil, his rod and staff they comfort me." And shortly before the spirit quitted its cumbrous clay, as though she stood upon a summit, and could review "all the way the Lord had led her," and at the same time beholding the "goodly land before her," she said "he led me forth by the *right* way, that I might go to a city of habitation." "Blessed Jesus! thou art altogether lovely; come quickly," and so closed the career of an affectionate mother. I could have filled my sheet with the detail, but I fear you will think I have occupied too much of it already; at the same time I thought it would rejoice your heart, and encourage you in your mission still loudly to proclaim the aboundings of grace to the chief of sinners, ascribing all the glory to him, to whom it is due. I should be glad, if the Lord should lay the words I have quoted above, on your heart, viz. Ps. 107. 7, to have your thoughts upon it some day, in the "Vessel." It appears to me to be a delightful illustration of the *believer's* experience; the way sometimes dark, crooked, rough, mysterious, leading through the vale of adversity and the waters of affliction; yet after all, "the right way," right in its commencement, by Calvary; right in its continuance through the wilderness; right in its close through Jordan, right, because *he who only could*, brought them into it; and who completes what he begins; consequently leads them through it into the promised rest; "the city of habitation,"—habitation!! how sweet the sound! a house not made with hands *eternal* in the heavens; in which is deposited all that is essential to the everlasting felicity of the redeemed, sanctified and glorified Spirit;" where cares disturb not—where sorrow knows no admission; sin defiles not—perplexes not, distresses not—but where harmony, without discord, follows the rapturous shouts of all who are privileged to sing "redeeming grace." My brother, may I meet you there; join with you there, in ascriptions of praise to him, to whom *all praise* is due.

Oftentimes are we thinking of you, and your work, making mention of you, in our prayers to Almighty God, that he would bless you, and make you a blessing to his chosen seed. May he assist you at all times in "breaking the bread of life" to sinners famishing for salvation; ever enable you rightly to divide the word of truth, and make you a useful watchman upon the walls of Zion.

Cry aloud, spare not; lift up the voice; Antichrist is abroad in the world. "The man of sin," under a variety of forms, makes rapid progress, with enlarged strides. The sword has been put into your hands; at least I believe so: it is your's to use it, to the glory of the Captain of your salvation; it is my ardent desire, that the word as it is declared by you, may be attended with demonstration of the Spirit and clothed with power; so that in the issue it may be seen, that in the hands of the Lord you have

been a sharp and mighty instrument, for the specific purpose of cutting down the strong holds of sin and satan, and establishing the kingdom of Christ in the hearts of many of his chosen ones.

I have read with much pleasure, and I trust with humiliation of spirit, the late numbers of the "VESSEL." "FRANCIS SPIRA" made me tremble; while "THE PROPHET THAT HATH A DREAM" searched me deeply, and caused me to fear, lest I, in my poor way, should be trespassing on ground not prepared for me; while I believe I can with my heart in the presence of Jehovah, say—I have no other desire, than the furtherance of his glory: my inefficiency I feel, and am at all times compelled to exclaim respecting myself "Who is sufficient for these things?" while up to the present time, I have been assisted and enabled to testify in some little way, of things concerning the kingdom. Frequently have I been compelled to go forth empty, and sorrowing, yet as often have I been enabled to sympathise with the Psalmist when he says "God is a very present help in time of need:" I cannot deal in flowers of the flesh; I desire not to please, and I wish only to proclaim salvation by Jesus Christ. That truth often encourages me when depressed—"Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts." Instruments may be weak, insignificant, and apparently useless. But he can work by them, (and who shall hinder) to the effecting of his own wise and gracious purposes. I look upon you as a Boanerges, while I feel myself to be among the weakest of the weak;—yet are there not wheels within wheels, some small, some large, some strong, some weak: which he, the mighty framer, hath fixed, in the constitution of his wondrous and glorious machine? He it is gives power to each, and I trust it is here, my brother, that I glory with you. May it be mine to listen to the same address with yourself, "Well done thou good and faithful servant." Oh, that Christ may be exalted, the sinner abased, and God glorified in the work. I do, must, and hope, ever to insist upon living evidences within, the Spirit testifying with our spirits that we are born of God.

J. K.

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"WITH MY SOUL HAVE I DESIRED THEE IN THE NIGHT."

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Dearly beloved in the Lord,

Being in distress of mind naturally, you must excuse my saying much at this time; many things, cause me to be much cast down, but with all this there seems to be one feeling predominant in my soul, viz:—that I do desire submission and resignation to the divine will of God. I did manage to get to our Prayer-meeting last night, and can assure you it was a short season of enjoyment to my soul; but I do not know how it is with you, whether you or any one else is tried in the same way, but I find that I often fall on my knees before the Lord in private, when no eye sees me but the Lord's, and anything and everything seems to take possession of my spirit before that which I most desire, and I am obliged to rise from my knees crying "shame and confusion of face belongeth unto me O Lord." But, sometimes, when I go to the Lord's house, I am enabled to tell him my personal feelings, to pour out my griefs before him

and feel in return, sweet peace in my soul: and then that old serpent says, "you know it is only because there are a few people before you, and thus it is you endeavour to make people think you have an inwrought experience." But, my dear exercised brother, all this will not do, he *is* what he always *was*, A LIAR!—join with me, my brother, my heart at last seems warmed, to bless the Lord;—oh, that his precious blood-shedding—his precious love—his unalterable purposes—his sure and certain sin-atonement sacrifice—may be such an antidote against sin in you and me, that while we hate ourselves for what we feel, we may exalt his blessed precious name for his thoughts of love, peace, and mercy towards us—that we may be blessed with much nearness is the desire of yours in the truth—

J. W.

## "THEY SHALL LOOK ON HIM."

WHEN to Calvary I'm directed,  
By the God of love, to see  
How my Jesus was afflicted,  
All to ransom sinful me;  
Here is wondrous love indeed;  
This all other love exceeds.

View him sweating in the garden,  
Wrestling with the powers of hell;  
Hear him cry beneath our burden,  
"Father, if it be thy will,  
Bear away this bitter cup  
Or, if thy will, I'll drink it up."

"No, my Son, such condescension,  
Cannot now be granted thee;  
From what quarter flows redemption,  
If I do not punish thee?  
Where else can a sinful mortal  
Find salvation but through thee?"

See the incarnate Jesus coming,  
Laden with our nature's load;  
View the cruel thorns upon him,  
Scourged and smitten with a reed;  
Dost thou ask what all this means?  
'Twas to wash away thy sins.

Look again to Calvary's summit;  
And what mysteries there appears;  
See the man of sorrow smitten,  
Yet the God of endless years.  
Oh! what wonder, love, and mercy,  
In our Jesus here appears!

See him on the tree uplifted,  
There behold almighty God;  
See his visage how dejected,  
Pouring forth his vital blood;  
Ah, these cruel sins of mine,  
Helped to scourge my dearest Lord.

See the heavenly host all gazing,  
Wondering at the amazing scene:  
At the astonished sighs all asking,  
What the doleful scene can mean:  
'Twas not angels to redeem,  
But for sinners, Jesus came.

Through these pangs my Jesus suffered,  
Righteousness complete I see,  
For his sheep the blessed Shepherd  
Did obtain both full and free:  
So complete was that redemption  
That it flowed to sinful me.

Oh what rapture, love, and wonder,  
Does it to that soul impart;  
That can say with full assurance,  
Christ I know has changed my heart!  
Oh, my soul, what blessed comfort,  
Does the smiles of Christ impart!

Stand amazed, all ye seraphs,  
Stand astonished, earth and hell;  
That the prince of life and glory  
Should with mortals deign to dwell.  
It was love, unbounded love,  
Brought him from the courts above.

Shout ye ransomed sons of glory,  
Christ, the victory has obtained,  
Death itself could never hold him,  
Tho' by sin our Lord was slain.  
'Twas that he might rise triumphant  
O'er the powers of hell again.

From this rock, this blessed fountain,  
Flows such comfort to my soul;  
That I find no room for doubting,  
When my Jesus I behold.  
When I view him as my days-man,  
Then I can and will be bold. —J. F.

Such has been the sweetness of these precious lines—and so assured are we that they will be to many others, that we pray our brother to favour us with further communications—

"Why should the wonders he hath wrought,  
Be lost in silence and forgot?"

**SUPPLEMENT**  
TO THE  
SEVENTH PART OF THE "EARTHEN VESSEL."

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THE  
**GOSPEL MINISTRY.**

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*Memoir of the late Mr. James Francis.*

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**CALL TO THE MINISTRY**  
OF  
**JAMES RAYNSFORD.**

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*THE WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH  
NOT TO BE ASHAMED.*

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**CONVERSION TO GOD IN EARLY LIFE.**

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LONDON:

JAMES PAUL, 1, CHAPTER-HOUSE COURT,  
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1845.

PRICE ONE PENNY.



## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY :

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

## PART IV.

MEMOIR OF THE LATE MR. JAMES FRANCIS,  
[IN LETTERS FROM HIS SON.]

DEAR SIR,—I now purpose to give you some account of my dear father, JAMES FRANCIS, as far as memory will enable me; as what I shall write, is either what I have witnessed, or what I have heard him relate himself; and, simple as it may be, may the dear Lord bless it to some poor soul: peace be with you. Amen. My father was born in Fore-street, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, on the 8th of November, 1765; his father, JAMES FRANCIS, was a God-fearing man; and my father being brought up to attend different places of worship, his mind became arrested when quite a youth. He used at six o'clock in the morning, to attend Lothbury church: he has said he was so zealous for being in his place, and fearing lest he should not be there in time, (it being generally one or half-past, before he could retire to bed on the Saturday night), he would always have the watchman call him at five o'clock, winter and summer: at eleven o'clock, he attended Mr. ROMAINE's, at St. Ann's, Blackfriars: in the afternoon, a prayer-meeting at the Tabernacle; then, sometimes in the evening at St. Ann's, Blackfriars, and at Tabernacle; and after service again at a prayer-meeting, and then home, and prayer at home. Thus he went on for years, as he used to say, a pharisee of the pharisees; he was so strong for salvation by works, that he was highly offended if any one contradicted him in his views: his brother, GEORGE FRANCIS, (late of Snow's Fields, Borough), saw his delusion; and said to him one day, "James; you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity; and notwithstanding all your religion, if you die in the state you are now in, you will be damned as sure as your name is James." This greatly offended him; so much so, he hardly forgave him for more than a year and a half; and his answer was to him at the time, "that is my look out, and not yours: you mind your own business, that is enough for you to do." This remark went like a dagger into his heart and, stuck to him for two years, when the Lord met with him under the ministry of Mr. W. ROMAINE, as the Editor of the Gospel Magazine states in his last December number, (a just and a blessed remark), that he closely attended and evidently fed under this Christ-exalting ministry, the effect of which was so clearly manifest in his last years. "So fully was he led to discover the completeness of Christ's redemption-work, and so blessedly had he found him a refuge and an antidote, amid all the sorrows and perplexities of a lengthened pilgrimage, that it was good—it was heart-cheering—to hear the dear old man testify of Him, under whatever trials or exercises he found those among whom he mingled, labouring. We may speak feelingly on this subject, for we found him a cheering companion when personally in the depth of sorrow. His eye—his hand—was ever upwards. 'To Jesus—to Jesus,' was his language, he one's exercises what they may. An evident entering into

—a kindly sympathizing with—the trial; then, a pointing up on high! 'This—this was the character of the man, and we miss him much.'

At the age of twenty-four, he was married on the 29th of October, 1789; which union lasted for forty years: my mother was a good wife to him; although at times a very trying one. He went on rather comfortable for sometime, in Old-street, until the dear Lord saw fit to afflict him with illness, whereby he was much reduced; after this, he went to Camden-town, where he recovered; and, by the help of his God, went on well for some time, but in very great bondage of soul. Again, everything he put his hand to, seemed to be against him in his business as shoemaker. "Well," (said he), "these things are against me, and I cannot be the Lord's." We here quote from the Gospel magazine:—

"When sickness or calamity come upon a worldly man, he will frequently be the first to send for the advice—the aid of, it may be, his persecuted neighbour. Take one among the many striking instances which occurred in Mr. Francis' career. There was a gardener—a middle-aged man—who lived in the neighbourhood; a regular plodding money-getting man, Sundays and week-days were all one with him: he in his garden, and his wife at the wash-tub or the ironing board. This man, exposed to the weather, took cold, and, fearing expense, neglected it, and took cold upon cold. The result was, it settled upon his lungs, and when the doctor was sent for, his testimony was, that he had been called in too late. 'The doctor says, that the cold has fixed upon my lungs and that die I must,' said the dying man, addressing Francis, 'and, as I have heard that you are a *very good hand* at visiting people that are sick, or going to die, I have sent for you to read to me, and to pray with me, and *whatever your charge is, I will pay.*' Here was a 'pretty' speech, by the witness! 'It came like death to me,' said the dear old man. 'I scarcely knew how to reply.' However he did make some kind of answer, adding that money in such matters was out of the question. 'No, indeed,' said the dying man, becoming mighty particular all at once—about to perform wonders now—and going to heaven by *works*, most certainly, 'no every man is paid for his labour, and so ought you to be; and if you will not consent to be paid for it, I will not let you come at all. Worse and worse! as blind as a bat, and as dead as a corpse! Slavish fear and dread of dying in operation, and nothing more—the two frequent concomitants of a death bed! Well the old man thought it best to let the sick man appear to have his own way; so he read and went to prayer. The old man went again and again, until at length tracing the ravages of the disease, and wishing to ascertain the state of the dying man's mind, he said, "You are gradually getting weaker, and I have visited you so long a time, now what is the state of your mind in the prospect of death?" 'Well, replied the man promptly, 'I listen to all you read and say when you are here; and when you are gone, I read the chapter over again, and repeat as much of the prayer as I can remember. So that altogether I think I am *a much better man* than when you first came to me.' Here was a speech! What a convert! The old man stood amazed—perfectly confounded. But the Lord overruled the expression for good. Its ignorance—the total want of light which the dying man betrayed—excited the concern of his visitor, who had liberty given him to point out man's lost estate—the nature of a broken law—the enmity of the human heart against God,—and the things of God. The man listened, and

wondered; and when dear Francis went again the next day, he betrayed great restlessness and concern. His *goodness* was going; his *badness* began to appear to his own view. The work deepened. His anxiety increased, until it really and truly burst forth in the jailor's cry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' Now, the old man, under the power of the Holy Ghost, began to preach Christ, and that opened the blind eyes, spoke pardon and peace to the dying man's soul, so that for many days he lay rejoicing in his Lord. Towards the close, however—within the last day or two of his life—darkness came on; the enemy was permitted to set in like a flood, and the poor man called all in question, fearing that he should perish after all. Francis felt this much, but believed the Lord, who had done so much for him, would assuredly, again appear, and set his soul at liberty. Going into his room, he beheld the poor man lying with a terror stricken countenance, like one in despair; his eyes closed—his hands clasped—himself evidently in much mental suffering. The doctor was present, and said 'in less than an hour he will be gone.' 'I felt it much,' said Francis; 'I wanted the Lord to confirm the work—give further testimony that it was of himself; I begged him to break in. At length he said, 'Oh! what shall I do? I am dying—I shall presently be in eternity. What shall I do?' 'You can do nothing,' I replied; 'may God help you to look to Christ.' He again closed his eyes, and I saw from the movement of his lips that he was in earnest prayer. Presently a sweet beam came over the dying man's countenance; it brightened wonderfully; and opening his eyes, raising and clasping his hands, he looked upwards, and exclaimed, '*Oh the blessings from above!*' louder, '*Oh the blessings from above!*' With the last words (said the old man) he seemed to breathe out his very soul; his hands dropped—his eyes closed—his head fell one side on the pillow,—and all was over!"

(To be continued in the Eighth Part of the "EARTHEN VESSEL.")

## CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF JAMES RAYNSFORD, Of Horsham, Sussex.

WE have lately had this hard working minister of God's gospel in London: and on Friday the 18th of July, 1845, he preached two sermons at our little Benaiah, in James Street, Camberwell New Road: where he was well received.

It has fallen to his lot, like many others of his fellow-labourers, to be cruelly reproached by men; it has been our privilege to hear him, in the most solemn manner, make such a statement, as not only caused us a little to envy him, but also fully to believe that the slander of men against him is as false as hell itself. We shall soon in the *Earthen Vessel*, give a very striking case of his usefulness; for the present we confine ourselves to his call to the Ministry, written by himself, and published in his "*Ebenezer*," in 1837, a second edition of which we hope will shortly appear.

"Often have I been made to drink the wine of astonishment, and in amazement and agony of soul, have been driven to the Lord, as the Queen of Sheba came to Solomon, with many hard questions. But I knew not at that time why I was in this peculiar manner exercised, for I had not

then the least idea of ever being called to speak in the name of the Lord. Such, however, must drink deep of bitter waters, as well as enjoy the sweet; and all that God sends to the work he will qualify in the furnace, and fit them for it in the school of affliction: and, if my reader is a preacher, I must say faithfully to him, that if God the Spirit has not taught him by real heart-felt experience, and furnished him with divine credentials and testimonials, from Zion's college, which is Zion's furnace he is running without God's sending, and shall not at all profit God's people, whatever may be his eloquence, learning, or abilities.

"Build on no man's parts or merits,  
Behold the gospel plan:  
God sends his Holy Spirit,  
And the Spirit sends the man."

"In the year 1826, it began to be heavily laid on my mind, that the Lord had shown me great and sore troubles, and many wonderful deliverances, for the benefit of the souls of his elect family; and, although I felt an inexpressible love to them, and was deeply interested in their welfare, yet my great unworthiness—unsuitness—absolute and entire incompetency to such a work as preaching the gospel, drove me to my wit's end. The matter was still, however, deeply impressed upon my mind, nor could I get rid of it, though I strove against it, prayed against it, and sometimes was fully determined never to make the attempt, feeling in some measure the awful responsibility, and being at the same time poor in my circumstances, and sorely tried with many crosses and afflictions, all of which seemed to say, "Touch not the work." The heavy conflicts about it I kept in my own breast, except laying the matter before the Lord. I was fully satisfied in my own mind that he had prepared and appointed me for his work, but I wanted to see his hand in it more clear. Sometimes I was resolved not to attempt to preach until I was more free from troubles and afflictions, being greatly ignorant that God's hidden ones are fed by his tried and exercised servants. Hence Paul says, 'If we are afflicted, it is for you.'

But I am fully satisfied that if the Lord appoints a man to his work, his providence will open doors for him, and he will find him work to do, and another man cannot do it. But in general it will be in the midst of strong opposition, and, as Paul said, "A great and effectual door is open unto me, and there are many adversaries:" thus I have found it. But the Lord has stood by me, and therefore I need not fear what man can do unto me.

I was requested to attend a meeting of a few friends who assembled in a room on a sabbath morning for prayer and reading the word; and being much favoured with the presence of the Lord on one of these occasions, and as he had blessed several portions of the 103rd Psalm to my soul, many times, in the midst of much fear and trembling I read that Psalm for the first time, endeavoured to expound such parts of it as had been blessed to my own soul. This was for some time continued, but no tongue can tell the dreadful work I sometimes had in my own mind, after I had been speaking, often praying to the Lord to forgive my presumption and solemnly promising that I would not thus again offend. I had not yet come forth upon a text, nor did I intend to do so; but one evening I was quite unexpectedly called upon to preach to a small congregation, at five minutes' notice; this I solemnly refused, but could not get out of it; for the Lord knocked off my fetters, softened my heart, blessed his word by

the sweet humblings of his Spirit in my soul, set my tongue at liberty, and it was a sweet season to me and I believe to some others. After this I was appointed to preach at a friend's house every week; but I often dreaded the time as much as a criminal dreads the assizes; and once I was tempted to write a note to say I was taken ill, and could not come. But then I thought, 'What if any of the people should call on me to see how I am, how shall I clear myself? Thus was this snare broken.

"But I still felt more and more unable, more and more unfit and unworthy, and was more and more crossed in almost every thing, so that sometimes I felt myself the greatest fool that ever lived to attempt to meddle with such a most awful and important work. I once actually gave it up for three months, and was determined to speak no more in the name of the Lord; but I was then like a servant that had run away from his master, or rather like a disobedient child fleeing from his father. No rest could I obtain, for I indeed felt the word of the Lord "a fire in my bones." Sometimes the enemy of my soul would whisper in my ear, "How can such a complete ignoramus as you attempt to speak in public? Besides you are so poor, no person will ever listen to you, and again you will bring your family to the work-house, by spending your time and strength in preaching." And what was far worse than all this, was fearing God had never called me to the work. This often placed my soul upon the rack; and, when any one came and told me that the Lord had blessed them under me, I had such a sight and feeling sense of my great unworthiness, that I could not believe them, for I was so mercifully humbled that I thought it was morally impossible for God to bless his word to any poor soul, through the means of such a lump of dust and ashes as I felt myself to be. However, the Lord opened doors for me, and no man could prevent it; in many instances he blessed my soul in the work, as well as the souls of others. But the craft, power, and designs of satan often compelled me to turn the battle to the gate. Sometimes when my soul had been indulged a little more than usual in the pulpit, satan would slide up to my naturally-proud heart, and say how well you have preached to-day! you will get on now." And then I have been hoarding up something for next time; but the devil was sure to ransack my hoards, and rob me of all this; or else it "bred worms and stank by the morrow;" and then I went as 'a fool to the correction of the stocks,' obliged to come again to the fountain, as empty as ever, for all needful supplies. Thus, 'having nothing, I possessed all things,' but 'the full soul loatheth the honeycomb.'

"In the year 1833 I went from Brighton to Warbleton, merely on a visit to some of my old friends, and, as they heard of my preaching I was invited to preach to a few of them one sabbath evening, which I did, in a friend's house; and they strongly pressed me to come over to them again. Three months after I visited them again, and they had provided a wheelwright's shop for me to preach in on the sabbath and a friend's house on the week evenings. I returned to Brighton with the promise that I would see them again before long.

"The next time I visited them, the congregation amounted to upwards of three hundred persons, which was what I never had expected, as my only intention was to have spoken to a few poor old and infirm people, who were not able to travel any where to hear the word. But God's thoughts are not as ours. I had never thought of continuing at Warbleton, much less of any person coming to hear me

from Ninefield, or Burwash, or any other place, where there was such preaching as they could hear; and, though I have suffered much reproach on this account, yet I assure my reader I have felt sorry when I have seen persons leave their former place of worship, where the truth was preached, to come to Bodle-street. God knows I would not intentionally hurt the minds of his servants on any account, and I have often publicly told my hearers my feelings upon the subject, but it was not my province to forbid their coming, if they were resolved to attend. The enemy has had a great hand in all the suspicions, jealousies and calumniating reports against a poor worm on the above account, but God knows I love from my heart his faithful servants, whatever I may suffer. From many living testimonies, and the witness of God in my own soul, I feel satisfied that it was the leadings of his divine providence which first brought me to Warbleton; my earnest prayer was, that, I might not come unless it was for the glory of his name, and for the profit of his people. When this is the case, satan will roar, and set all his servants to work if possible to prevent it.

## THE TESTIMONY OF LIVING WITNESSES

CONCERNING THE REALITY OF AN

INWROUGHT CONVICTION OF SIN—INWARD SENTENCE OF DEATH—  
A SAVING FAITH IN CHRIST—AND A GOOD HOPE THROUGH  
GRACE OF ETERNAL GLORY.

A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY  
DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH.

Dear Brother Banks,

I am in receipt of your kind letter, accept my thanks for the same, the advice it contains I shall adopt, I trust the Lord will enable me to do so, "be you quiet, wait you only on God, take heed that no man, angel, or spirit deceive you." This, I think, is the best advice I ever received from you. It came to hand, at the right time. What a wretched man shall I be if I allow any man to draw me out without they are commanded from on high! God as much commanded Cornelius to send for Peter as he did command Peter to go; the two commands met each other; and the parties so intrusted, were quite satisfied. I need not tell you I hate men-made parsons; and I abhor the conduct of men when they try to get men into the ministry without the command of God to do so; that has been of old and is now, one of the very worst evils in the church; and therefore ought to be withstood; these men-made parsons are seen to turn out to be mercenary, dead-letter men; the worst enemies the church have upon earth are those who teach for hire; judge for reward; and divine for money; these wretched characters will, nevertheless, say, "Is not the Lord among us?" yes he is; and he will be seen: for these rebels will compel the Lord, for the sake of his church, to plough

Zion as a field, and to throw Jerusalem up in heaps, that she may be drained of these wret of all merchants.

I have been this day instructed to run through the word, and look at the Lord's method of instructing those whom he intends to make teachers; they must experience an earthquake or two; a terrible blast or two; they must know something of the power of satanic suggestions, before they will put their heads between their knees, and say, "behold I am vile." I am sure that the man of God, God's minister, must be humbled; he will have to be hunted by Saul; to flee out of Egypt for his life; to be let down in a basket, so that he may escape; to walk bare foot, and go naked; to be put into a dungeon; yea into the lion's den or the fiery furnace; out of the belly of hell he must come; before he will have any milk in his ministry for the church of God; and before he will know much of that still small voice of pardoning love and mercy. After this he will be willing to lay down, as it were, and let the Church suck, at the breast of Zion's consolations; the more a vine is cut the better it bears; the more a tree is blown about, the less apt it is to have too many useless shoots: the man that is to be God's real minister must make up his mind to be delivered always unto death; the promises which are in the Bible are only applicable to such. "Out of weakness they are made strong" to the church of God: the lion must be killed before honey can be taken out of his belly. Thus much, and more I have seen, and I believe it is somewhat fastened on my mind this day.

C. C.

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#### CONVERSION TO GOD IN EARLY LIFE,

##### *The testimony of a living soul.*

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DEAR SIR,—As I have for some time felt a desire to give you some account of the way that I have been led, I hope the Lord will make you faithful and give you a discerning eye to see which part I belong, whether the "chaff," or the "wheat;" for to me it is a great question. If I had been called out of darkness into light suddenly, I think that I could not have doubted the change. I believe it was at the tender age of six years, that I first felt myself a sinner. I well remember, one morning, before my mother came up to dress me, being struck with the sense of being such a sinner—that God could never pardon me, which made me weep very much; and I told my sister, (for she was with me), that I did wish Christ was upon the earth now, then I would go to him and bow down at his feet, for I felt if I could see him he would forgive me. Soon after this I lost my youngest sister, which was the first time I ever remember trying to pray; it was by my little dead sister, when quite alone, that I did entreat of the Lord to pardon my sins, and give me a new heart, and not only to enable me to fear but to love him too. About this time I was sent to a Sunday-school, where much pains was taken for our instruction, and dearly did I love my teachers, not only because they taught me to read, but, because they prayed for me. At this time I was the subject of strong convictions, for I thought the devil would take me away in the day-time, and at night have been afraid to close my eyes, lest I should

open them in hell; and having the distance of three miles to go to school, often have I been in prayer all the way that the Lord would make it manifest if he had called me, and set me apart for himself. But one thing did sometimes give me a little hope, and that was, I did so dearly love those that I believed that loved the Lord, and I hated those that hated God: and I could not join with them in play, and their company was a burden to me. And during this time, my visions in the night were most awful, one in particular I will notice:—I thought I saw a round ball hang on a tree, which I was forbid to touch; but, I broke this commandment and pelted it with stones, and out of the ball came things like snakes, which stung and tormented me in an awful way, after which I ran to my mother for relief, and she said, "Ah! foolish child, you have broken my commandment!" and she took the tormentors and cut them to pieces, and put them in the fire, but could not kill them: and she told me, "it was the worm that dieth not, and it would never end." With this I awaked, and behold it was a dream, which has brought me no comfort.

At the age of fourteen I went to service, and was placed in a religious family, for about one year: many were my convictions during that time, but often felt much hardness of heart. From that place I was removed to London, among those that feared not God; then I was called to endure persecution; and indeed, to me it was joyous and not grievous, for it drove me more earnestly to cry unto God, that he would manifest himself to me as a sin-pardoning God. One Lord's day hearing Mr. HARRIS preach from these words, "So that I might win Christ, and be found in him," those sacred words came with such weight and power to my soul, and I felt such melting down on account of my unworthiness; and yet, such a love to Christ, that I could freely have given my body to be burnt, if I could but win Christ; and being so melted down under the sermon, I was observed by the congregation, and after the service the minister came and spoke to me, which was the first time I ever spoke to any one about the work of God upon my soul: for I feared it was not the real work of God. For several years I was under no regular minister; I went from place to place, sometimes got a few crumbs, and sometimes some sharp arrows. When in my seventeenth year I went into a Wesleyan chapel, and the preacher took for his text, "the barren fig-tree," which I thought did so resemble me; for I felt I was covered with green leaves, and that of mine own gathering, and when I looked for fruit there was none to be found. Then there was a command for the shovel to be used and for dung to be brought, and the tree to be spared; and so it has been up to the present moment. But, where is the fruit? I was led deeply to consider upon what foundation my hopes were fixed for eternity. Poor worn was I, brought into that society as a member, but trembling lest I was never bought with the most precious blood of Jesus. But what I felt in my soul during the three years I was in their society, I could never express; the bondage of soul and the weight of guilt. If I spoke of it to my class-leader, he would tell me to do this, or that, which only muffled my feet instead of breaking my chains off; and I laboured hard, night and day, to obtain a righteousness of my own: but I found, by painful experience, the more I tried to rub off my old sins the deeper I became in debt—for the very thoughts of my wicked heart I felt were enough to send me to hell; and the minister would tell me, if I went to hell it would be my own fault, and I believed him until the Lord (I must believe) opened my eyes.

When I was between nineteen and twenty, it pleased God to place me



in a family where the sound doctrines of decided truth are held forth, and I hope are embraced by them. The first few months I was there, who can tell the enmity I felt against joining in family prayer with them, for the thought of election I could not bear, and that was their only topic; and Paul's blessed Epistles were like swords to me—read them I could not; but, at last, I began to think there was no fault in religion at all, when it pleased God to put into my hands "Dr Hawker's Commentary on the Epistles," which led me to cry unto God mightily, by day and night, that he would save me in his own way: and I felt that all my own righteousness was as filthy rags; then was I made to know how God was just in punishing the wicked, and yet the justifier of them that believe in Jesus—and I could join in with the poet,—

\* If I had been sent to hell,  
His righteous law would approve it well.\*

For I felt a wish for God to be glorified by me, whether I went to heaven or hell; and deep was the anxiety of my soul, at this time, as my nights were often spent sleepless, and wrestling with God in prayer. But, O! the devil did now so beset me, and often have I thought that he has been on my back while I have been upon my knees before God; and when rising from my knees would call me an hypocrite, which sometimes has drove me back to God more earnestly than before: and sometimes have been enabled to call him a liar, where the Lord has given me a little glimpse of himself, as Friend and Elder Brother, and let a little light, hope, and love into my soul.

Now I attended a Baptist-chapel near where I lived, and often have wondered that God did not strike me dead when I have entered the door, for the rebellion that I felt against election, and then that professed and loved it—that if it had been in my power, I would have pulled down their chapels. But, there was a "hitherto shalt thou go and no further;" and the Lord was able to stay the enmity of my wicked heart, and take it clean out, and place love there, which I believe he has, or I am wofully deceived. I believe I have known something of the blood of Jesus sprinkled upon the conscience, and which cleanses the heart from sin; and what it is to be "dead to sin," but I want sin to be dead to me. But, O! it is as much alive as ever, which makes me cry out, "O, wretch that I am." But, at the time I was under the ministry of my dear pastor, Mr. DENHAM, I did enjoy much of the presence of my Redeemer, and many sweet and soul-reviving and precious promises, did he give my poor soul, which makes me cry out, "O, that it was with me as in months that are passed, when the candle of the Lord shined round about me." For more than two years much has been the darkness of my mind, and many very severe trials and conflicts have I been called to pass through; and fearing lest, at last, I should bring a dishonour on the cause of God, and a reproach upon his people. So numerous are my fears, that I am beset on every side, and they are the foes of my own household working within my breast; if I pray, they beset me; and if hearing the word, they annoy me, and often cause me to call in question where it is that I stand, whether on the Rock of Ages, or on the sand of destruction.

Many times I have been tried to the quick under your ministry, and many times found some comfort and a little hope, that the Lord would manifest himself as a God of love, which I trust he hath done many times; but, as soon as my soul gets into darkness then I begin to doubt his

love to me again, and fear that it is all a delusion, and that I never was brought into the sheep-fold by the door, but, by the by-way of my own making. I hope the Lord will make you faithful, and deal with me as he shall enable you. My desire is, if I am deceived, that the Lord would undeceive, as I have given you a short account, and as brief as I could, of the way that I have been led, for eighteen years; and I can say, before God, from that time I have been afraid of sin, and could not sin so cheap as others. My christian love to you, and to the dear church over which you are placed; and may the Lord lengthen your cords and strengthen your stakes, and keep you together in the bonds of peace and unity, and favour you with the choicest of his blessings. S. D.

TAKING ROOT DOWNWARD, AND BEARING FRUIT UPWARD.]

My Dear Pastor,

HAVING been for some time past much exercised with a desire to open my mind to you, but after many attempts finding it impossible, I take my pen to address a few lines to you. May the Lord in mercy preserve me from saying any thing but what I have experienced for I much dread presumption: as many are busy in writing and speaking against you, I think those to whom you have been made useful ought to testify the same, and I must say your ministry has been made an unspeakable blessing to me, though it oft shakes me to the very centre; and leads me to much searching of heart, and to cry with David, "Search me, O God, and try me, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." I was much encouraged last night when you spoke of the two fears, and dared not deny but I felt them; for I hope at times the Spirit does indeed bear witness to my soul that I, even I, am accepted in the beloved, that my worthless name is in the Lamb's book of life: for I often think how awful will be my state, to have it in the Church book here if not found there. Oh, the thoughts of being deceived, makes me tremble, and the enemy often tells me I am, or I should not feel so much sin; and I should be able to talk with you as others, and a thousand other things; yet under it all there is a secret hope and firm trusting in that precious blood which can wash the foulest clean. I am often harrassed with this awful thought, that if I am to be saved I shall; and therefore it it is of no use my being concerned about it; not that I am tempted to go into the pleasure of the world; for bless the Lord, I have long seen the vanity and emptiness of these things; but to neglect my *Bible* and secret prayer, and when I attempt to draw near to God, the world and its concerns seem to crowd in upon my mind, that I cannot collect my thoughts and at times can only say "God be merciful to me a sinner." What must be the feelings of those who trust all to their prayers I know not, for I am brought to feel, if one good thought would merit heaven, I do not possess it, and the longer I travel in the way the narrower it appears, and the harder seems the conflict; but at times I can join with the Poet, and say,

"He who hath helped me hitherto,  
Will help me all my journey through;  
And give me daily cause to raise,  
New Ebenezers to his praise."

If this can fail, I must be lost. I often wish I could live with eternity

always in view, and when we reflect on the uncertainty of life, I think it most desirable to live as we should like to die, but instead of this I too often seem swallowed up with the concerns of this life, and though I enjoy so much of the Lord at times in his house that I have frequently thought I would rather if it were possible, die in his house, than enter into the busy scenes of the world again; after all this with shame I confess I have scarcely left my seat, before I have been planing something for Monday. Oh, what a poor miserable creature I am; but I must draw to a close as I shall quite weary you, hoping you will forgive me if I have done wrong, for I know sin is mixed with all I do, and if you think I am indeed deceived, and on a wrong foundation, I trust you will be kind enough to tell me. May the Lord abundantly bless, and prosper you, with many seals to your ministry, and souls for your hire, and you indeed be as a star in his right hand. May he lift upon you the light of his countenance and give you peace is the sincere desire, and prayer of,

Your's unworthily.

M. C.

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# THE TRUE SERVANT OF JESUS CHRIST ;

HIS SERVITUDE; HIS FREEDOM; AND HIS REWARD.

*Being the substance (with some few additions,) of a Sermon  
preached in Crosby Row Chapel, August 17, 1845, by*

C. W. BANKS.

“Thou art my servant : I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away. Fear thou not ; for I am with thee ; be not dismayed ; for I am thy God ; I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”

Isaiah xli. 9, 10.

WHAT precious words are these ! What more could the Lord have said to poor Jacob, that is not here declared ? First the text is personal—“*Thou.*” There is nothing general in the great salvation that is in Jesus Christ : the whole world is witness against the universality of God’s everlasting love, for millions live and die without ever having that love shed abroad in their hearts ; and surely that sinner cannot be loved by God with an everlasting love, who is left in enmity and rebellion against him, and in ignorance of him. The redemption that is by Jesus cannot be universal ; for it is declared to be a redemption from the curse of the law, therefore could never be for that sinner who dies under the curse : it is declared to be a redemption unto God : and therefore could not be for that sinner who never had one spiritual desire after him. The work of the Holy Ghost is not universal : he quickens whom he will : convinces whom he will : reveals in them, the glory and the grace, applies the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ ; and only such do really know and realise that new creation, without which the kingdom of God cannot be seen. The whole work of God is sovereign, special, and divine.

“*Thou art my servant.*” It is as positive, as it is personal. The work of God is absolute. It is founded in an eternal foreknowledge, and unchanging purpose—and made secure by an almighty power. I am by nature, an impatient creature ; and I felt this morning as though all my faith in God, and confidence, as regards my call to the work, was gone ; and I inwardly feared, as I have done many times before, that I should really have to lie down in sorrow. This made me to cry unto God, from the very bottom of my heart, for another manifestation of his love to my soul, and another confirmation of my soul’s interest in the covenant of grace. Bless the Lord, he did almost immediately break into my soul with the words which I have read as a part of my text—“*Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God ; I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.*” By these words, my fears were dispersed, my heart was softened, my mind was enlightened, and I believed I was to go that morning and preach from those very words. In going, however to read the word with my family, I opened upon the 12th verse of the 8th of Ecclesiastes—“*Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his day be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him*

PART VIII.

M.

but it shall not be well with the wicked." These words made a sweet and solemn impression on my mind, but I returned to my room to meditate upon the former text: and I was permitted to think upon these words with much inward comfort, until the time had nearly arrived for the service to begin, when the word—"yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God," arrested my mind again in such a way that it was as though some one told me to lay aside my previous meditations—to dislodge my mind of the whole—and to go up with these words. I was enabled thus to act, and trust a blessing was in it.\*

In coming to the blessed word which I have this evening read, I notice there are two things which appear most clearly set out in the word of God. First, that the Lord will have his people to be made manifest as such; and, secondly, he will have them instructed in, and comforted by, the great mysteries of his grace.

That the Lord will have his people manifested is evident from the 17th of John: and the mysterious way by which this is frequently brought about is plainly written by Paul in the 19th verse of the 11th chapter of the first book of the Corinthians—"For *there must be also heresies among you.*" What for? "*That they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*" The visible church is made up of two sorts of people, some that are not, and some that are "*approved in Christ,*" as was Apelles of old, of whom you read in Rom. xvi. 10, whose name is significant, meaning "I exclude," and "*I separate.*" And such are all who are approved in Christ: they exclude all and every thing, as a foundation on which to build, but the glorious person, blood, and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: and by the help of God, they are separated from the curse common to all other sinful mortals; they are separated from the world, as regards its vain delights; and they are separated from every false and fleshly counterfeit of religion: the very heresies which other professors fall into, and are swallowed up by, are the means very especially of making manifest the real election of grace: to every one of whom, by the regenerating and sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, it shall be said, "*Thou art my servant: I HAVE CHOSEN THEE, and not cast thee away.*"

Moreover, I observe, it is the will of our heavenly Father, that his people should be greatly encouraged and comforted in the eternal provisions he has made for them. How delightful is his commission to all his faithful servants in the 40th chapter of this prophecy! "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion;" (*see margin*) "get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem (*margin*) lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, BEHOLD YOUR GOD."

Mark the several features of this all-glorious text: the Lord Jehovah calls upon his ministering servants to "get up into the high mountain." What mountain can it be? First, observe, it is called "*the mountain of God;*" that is, Jehovah's eternal and absolute sovereignty: it was here where Moses first saw the LORD CHRIST, who appeared to him in a flame of fire: and depend upon it no true servant of the living God will ever see or preach the Lord Jesus Christ apart from the eternal sovereignty of the Lord God: the promise made to Moses was, when he had brought the people out of Egypt, he should "*serve (or worship) God upon this mountain:*" wherefore it appears clear that the man, who bows not to, rejoices

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\* I have since had reason to believe God sealed this home upon the heart of a poor sinner.

not in, and consequently does not proclaim the sovereignty of God, gives manifest proof he is not one whom "the Lord seeketh to worship Him." Secondly, observe, that the glorious person of the Lord Jesus Christ is called "THIS MOUNTAIN," in which the Lord of hosts did declare he would make unto all people "a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees," &c. There you have set out, the precious blessings of Christ's fullness as made known by the Holy Ghost, through the gospel. It is indeed a feast of fat things when by faith, a living sinner realizes his interest in electing love; in redeeming blood: and in justifying righteousness. Once more observe "in this mountain he will destroy" (or *swallow up*) the face of the covering cast over all people,"—that is, sin and a fallen nature: both of which as far as the elect are concerned were swallowed up in that mighty ocean of divine wrath in which the Lord Jesus Christ was baptised. Oh! what a mountain—what a mighty rock—what an eternal foundation, is the glorious God-Man unto his church. "Lift ye up a banner upon the high mountain," said God to Isaiah—and until a man has been commissioned—yea until, like Ezekiel, a man has been brought in the visions of God, into the land of Israel, and set upon this very high mountain, upon which is the frame of the city; (Ezekiel xi. 2.) I repeat it, until a man is thus brought into a solemn acquaintance with the absolute sovereignty of God, in his love to, and choice of the church in the person of his dear Son; and experimentally to know that upon this rock the church is built; he is unable to tell good tidings to Zion. This is one feature of a good servant of Jesus Christ by the way. But I come more immediately to the text: wherein you have four things respecting the beloved servants of God:—

1. Their character. 2. Their condition. 3. Their conflicts; and, finally, their consolation.

First. Their Character: and God first calls them "Israel," that is, "a prince that hath prevailed with God." This description of character answers, first, to those holy triumphs which a living faith produces in the soul; and, secondly, to that ultimate state of glory into which the whole Israel of God shall be brought.

That living sinner who is the subject of a divine faith, obtains thereby, in a measure, an experimental victory over his sins to walk in the light and liberty of the gospel: the Assyrian may tread upon the borders of his soul; may enter into and appear to destroy the whole of his hope; and indwelling sins may harrass and distress him; but victory over the reigning powers of a sinful and deceitful heart shall be found by him: victory over unbelief, victory over the transitory vanities of the world; and a secret hope; yea, a humble confidence of interest in Christ shall be realised.

Second. God calls his people by the name of Jacob; a supplanter: or one that obtains the blessing in a way that is contrary to the laws of nature.

When a natural, unregenerated man gets stirred up in his conscience, and thereby is sent on a religious errand, he runs out into a field of formal worship and Arminianism, to hunt for the blessing; but Jacob has the blessing put into his hands; and is compelled

to say—"the Lord thy God brought it to me" The great and holy truth that is here set out is this, while our Esau nature is in the fields of sin and apparent death, God brings the blessing into the soul; life—eternal life is brought into the souls of God's elect before their fallen nature is called home to obedience and devotedness to God.

Before we pass on, look for one moment at the glorious fulness of Jacob's blessing. "God give thee," said his father Isaac, "of the dew of heaven." The soft bedewing, and sanctifying powers of the Holy Ghost, are one essential part of Jacob's blessing: every elect and regenerated sinner shall be blessed in his soul, more or less, with those soft meltings of soul, before God; those earnest secret drawings forth of the soul after God; and those inward risings up of faith, and love, and hope, and desire towards heavenly possessions, which nothing but the bedewing of the blessed Spirit can produce. Second. In Jacob's blessing, there was to be "the fatness of the earth:"—that is the glorious fulness of that salvation which the Lord Jesus Christ obtained when he "finished transgression, made an end of sins, and brought in everlasting righteousness."

Poor Jacob! have you at all looked into the richness of that *everlasting righteousness* which God hath prepared for you in Christ? "The hand-writing that was *against you*"—all the moral and ceremonial ordinances—as well as all the enmity, opposition, and rebellion of your wicked heart *against them*—he abolished; he hath "*blotted it out* : and *took it out of the way*, nailing it to his cross." So that the Holy Ghost by Paul declares "where there is no law, there is no transgression:" and certain I am that there is no law against any of God's Jacobs—they are not under the law: Christ has, for them, "*gone to the end of it*"—fully magnified and honoured it for them—rolled it up in his heart—silenced all its curses, threatenings and terrors; yea, in taking the church, he took into the account, all her sins, all her transgressions against the law; her sins he washed away by his own blood, and the law for her he magnified, in every jot, in every point, and every offence; so that he has put it out of the reach of an elect sinner ever so to violate the law of God as to bring upon his head eternal condemnation. Strong language this! and strong indeed is the security which a believing sinner has in the Lord Jesus Christ. So spake our glorious Lord himself—"Verily, verily I say unto you"—with what a solemn assertion does he introduce this most wondrous truth! "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION:" and the apostle Paul, who was led very deeply into the holy mystery of this eternal truth, says, (speaking of the salvation of the church) "it is of faith, that it might be by grace; *to the end*, the promise *might be sure to all the seed.*" Thus then in Jacob's blessing, there is the fatness of the earth: "plenty of corn and wine," the good-

pel and the grace of God ; and all other things that may be needful to preserve and bring him up to glory.

Upon the high grounds then, of eternal relationship, vital union and complete redemption, the Lord says, "Thou art my servant ; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away."

There is a two-fold beauty in the word of God, whereby this spiritual servitude is laid out : first, you have it in the Old Testament ; secondly, you have it in the New.

In the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, you may read the old covenant law as regards the poor Hebrew servants, which, while true in a literal and old covenant sense, are also true in a spiritual, and new covenant sense—"If thou buy an Hebrew servant," said God, under the old covenant, "six years shall he serve : and in the seventh year he shall go out *free for nothing*. If he come in by himself, he shall go out by himself, if he were married, then his wife shall go out with him." If, at the end of his servitude, he "shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free : " then he was to be brought to the judges ; and also to the door ; and he was to serve for ever.

A beautiful typical representation and declaration of the fact, that none of God's Jacobs can easily, and in great haste, rush into the assurance of faith ; into union with the church ; and into an embracing of the ordinances of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. The figure here is so full and complete, that it would require a volume fully to draw out the several features it contains, I can only name a few of the most essential : may the blessed Spirit lead you experimentally into the fulness of the sacred mystery.

First, notice *the six years' servitude*. It was in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth.

I observe that while the figure *seven* is used by the Holy Ghost to denote that which is finished, complete and perfect : so the figure *six* is also used to denote that *the preparation for that which is perfect*, is also equally complete. There were to be *six cities* for refuge. The measuring reed which Ezekiel saw in the hands of Christ was *six cubits* long. What was that reed a type of, but the gospel of Christ?—That is "the rod of his strength, which the Lord the Spirit is sending out of Zion ;" it is declared to be "THE POWER OF GOD unto salvation to every one that believeth : by it, in the power of the Holy Ghost, the people are made willing : by it, the temple of God, the altar, and them that worship therein, are measured ; while the outer court, by this measurement is "cast out" (see margin of Rev. xi. 1. 2.) God's elect are compassed and measured up by the everlasting gospel—and by the application of the same to their hearts and consciences, all their experience and practice is measured ; whereby a solemn distinction between the works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit are manifest. But to come to the servitude of Jacob—notice, there are six years. No abstract, isolated principle will do.

Reader—whether thou be a parson, or a private hearer—whether



you be like that Assyrian described in Ezekiel xxxi. or whether you be but a way-faring man, it matters not: I will tell thee again, no isolated part or principle of the gospel will do. What James says of faith, is true of every gospel doctrine, and of every grace of the Spirit—"if it be alone, IT IS DEAD:" if it live not in a holy wedlock in the soul, being the fruitful mother of children, depend upon it that faith is not of God.

Poor Jacob; come then, and look at the six years' servitude which God has brought thee through. Let it be understood by "year," I do not mean twelve calendar months, but a certain period known only to God.

The first year of this servitude, is spent under the galling yoke of deep inward convictions of sin. Many of the Lord's people are alarmed because they fear they never had a law-work in the conscience. Now, "by the law is the knowledge of sin;" if, therefore, conviction of sin, a feeling sense of inward depravity, have made you hate yourself, caused you to cry unto God for deliverance from sin and your sinful self; and shewed you the necessity of atoning blood, you have experienced, at least, one year of Jacob's servitude.

The second year, is the alarm in the soul, arising from the holy majesty and solemn terrors of God's law. The law of God is that "iron wall," that middle wall of partition which Christ hath broken down. And although the church could say, "My beloved standeth *behind our wall*;" by which I understand that while a poor *convinced sinner* is hidden up in and bound by the flesh, the law is a wall of terror to him: it pronounces a curse upon all his sins; and he is not yet permitted to behold Christ, as standing behind the wall ready to save. The law is a schoolmaster still to instruct and humble; and blessed is the man whom God doth chasten thereby: the end being, that he shall have rest while the pit shall be filled up with the wicked.

The third year of Jacob's servitude, is found in the pangs of a guilty conscience.

Look, poor Jacob, at this fact: there were to be three cities of refuge on this side Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan; as you read, Numbers xxxv. 14. So in the real conversion and spiritual servitude of poor Jacob, there are three essential things wrought in his soul, before there appears to be any passing over the black Jordan waters of a death in trespasses and in sins. These three are—first: Conviction of actual sins committed; second: Terrors and threatenings of God's law against those sins; and third: The guilt and fear consequently realised in the conscience, which, by the secret operations of the blessed Spirit, has been made both honest and tender: and doth loudly proclaim the justice of God in punishing for sin. But, oh, what does poor Jacob suffer from these three! A wounded spirit who can bear?

As this matter doth so greatly increase under my hand, I must defer until next month, the remainder; the Lord sparing, and enabling, it shall then be given.

## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY :

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

### PART V.

#### THE DEATH OF THE LATE JOHN WILKINSON,\* AND THE CALL TO THE MINISTRY OF WILLIAM SKELTON.

WE have in the press, and hope, by the help of the Lord, shortly to publish a little Work, entitled, “The Sovereignty of God; as displayed in Creation, Nature, Providence, Grace, and Glory; the eternal Election of the Saved, and the eternal Reprobation of the Damned.” This work, wherein the most solemn and glorious truths of God’s word are set out in a clear, distinct, and scriptural manner; has been written by WILLIAM SKELTON, late of Totness, in Devonshire; now pastor of the Baptist Church, meeting for the worship of a Triune-Jehovah, in Zion Chapel, Brabourne, near Ashford, in Kent.

Appended to the subject to which we have referred, is a deeply interesting statement, of the life, the rebellion, the struggles, the throwings down by sin and satan, the ultimate real conversion to God, the happy experience and call to the ministry of the said William Skelton. From this statement, we have made the following brief extract, in the hope that it might answer three ends: first, shew forth the sovereign grace and glory of God: secondly, be of some use to poor travellers to Zion: and, thirdly, induce some kind friends to send in their orders for a few dozens of William Skelton’s book; for, though rich in grace, and called to be a minister of Christ, yet has he to labour hard to support a family; and, like the writer of these few lines, knows from experience, something of the hardships of the way, as-well as the unbounded goodness and faithfulness of God.

Reader,—Peruse carefully the following account of Skelton’s Call: if the Lord give you to feel a union of soul to him, do what you can to circulate his little work.

“The following sabbath-day, for the first time, for well nigh five

\* Further particulars respecting this servant of God, will, if possible, be given in our next number.

years, I was found again publicly at Mr. Wilkinson's chapel; and I am sure I could have kissed or washed the feet of both minister and people, for the love I felt to them for Jesus' sake, through the blood of atonement: the same sabbath being New Year's Day, 1826. The dear man preached in the morning from Psalm xx. 5. "We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the Lord fulfil all thy petitions;" and surely I could rejoice in the salvation of God, in discoursing on the words, as to setting up our banners in the name of our God. He described the child of God, being brought into the sweet service of Jesus, the King of kings, as being like to a young recruit, determined to fight under his banners—the banners of his power, his love, and his mercy, being their banners. My soul ate every word; it was a blessed season to me—a New Year's Day blessing indeed! "old things were passed away, all things were become new." There being no service there in the afternoon, I anxiously longed for the evening, to be again in attendance; and it being the evening for the commemoration of the Lord's death, by attending to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, the dear man preached from Matthew xxvi. part of the 27th and 28th verses: "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins." And now every matter which the Holy Ghost had fulfilled in my soul, and every feeling I had experienced in my heart, through his almighty operations, there was brought forth in the ministry of the word, (the minister himself being ignorant of the matter of fact as to myself, or what had transpired between God and my individual soul in the past week), so that it was surely the house of God to me: it was an heaven began below. I fed by faith under the word on the body of Christ, and drank his blood as having been shed for me, for the remission of my sins. And now the public service of the evening being ended, the people were about to partake of the Supper of the Lord; it was what is called open communion, any one being desirous were allowed to partake—but this, at the time, I knew not; yet, I could not refrain (by any means) from asking the man, who carried round the emblems at the service, if I may be favoured and allowed to sit with them, and partake as a poor sinner, who had felt the blood of Christ precious to my soul: and now, without asking me any questions, he merely said, "William, go over and sit down in your seat: whoever feels desirous is welcome here." Accordingly I took my seat, and now the dear man commenced the service by giving out for singing, he, at the same time, making remarks on the language of the hymn of Hart's, beginning with

"Pity a helpless sinner, Lord."

And as the hymn was sung, and while the service was attended to, as I ate the bread and drank the wine, my soul realised such blissful feelings, as the sufferings of Christ were revealed to the eye of my faith, and his dying love was openly displayed unto me, and my soul realised an interest in the same. I say, my soul realised such

overflowing, blissful, melting feelings, as I will not attempt to describe, the same being indescribable—better felt than expressed. From this period my lot was cast in among the people of God, and by the space of two years (I say the truth in Christ, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost that I lie not), the house of prayer was my delightful dwelling-place; during which period (though in the midst of extreme trials and difficulties as to temporal things) I knew not a barren season under the ministry of the word. Finding the same to be quite in accordance with my state or frame of mind, whether it was joyous or grievous, I enjoyed intimate communion with God: he gave me a blessed assurance, that I should endure to the end, which he effected in the following way and manner:—

Being led sometimes to be extremely jealous of myself, lest I should after these things go back as I had before, I felt earnestly desirous, that the Lord would give me some sweet assurance, by his word and Spirit, that he would keep me unto the end: and one night, as I lay in bed, I dreamed I was in a room alone, and suddenly there came into the room to me, a woman clad in spotless white attire, whom I recognised as being one Mrs. Hewit, a person who died when I was a little boy, and of whom it was concluded she died in the Lord. And I thought I said, "It has been concluded upon by some of the Lord's family, and I have also been led to think so, that you departed hence to be with Christ, which is far better. Now, pray, do inform me—is it so? and are you in possession of heavenly bliss?" To which I thought she replied, "Yes." I then said, "Your husband left this world a short period after your departure, having professed the name of Christ, and stood in church membership with yourself, joined among the same people. Can you tell me if he is in possession of that heavenly felicity with yourself?" To which enquiry I thought she shook her head, and departed instantly from my sight; and I was left alone to form an opinion in reference to the interview and conversation. And, now, while most seriously reflecting on the conversation, I felt (though in a profound sleep) my soul occupied thus: I thought now, I have publicly professed the name of Christ, and am found among the followers of Jesus, shall I endure to the end, and be found among the heavenly host above? I then fell on my knees beseeching the Lord, as with a wrestling spirit, that he would give me some blest assurance that he, who I believed had begun a good work in me, would carry it on unto the end, when I thought I heard the Lord speak, as from his glorious high throne, in an audible voice unto me, "I will guide thee with my counsel, and afterward receive thee to glory." I received the sweet words from the mouth of the Lord, and broke out in praising and blessing his dear name (I saw no shape or form) believing it would be as he had spoken, and so awoke in the midst of being so engaged. I knew not the words as being scripture, that is to say, recorded in the word; but, on taking the word when I arose in the morning, I found these words in the book of Psalms: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and af'er.

ward receive me to glory," which words David never had spoken soul-feelingly, had not the Holy Ghost first assured him of the fact he herein records:—the faithfulness of my God to this in promise I have proved these twenty years past, in the midst of all the devilism, corruption, and depravity, which still abides in my old man of sin, or flesh: the broad seal of the Spirit was also given unto me, in the midst of these two years, under the ministry of that servant of the Lord, John Wilkinson, and which was realised in my soul thus: one Wednesday evening I was in attendance on the means of grace; concerning which I needed not the whip of the slave-driving deacon, or the lash of the mere professor-flogging parson, to cause me to fill my place—for, reader, the service of God's house was to me at that time, a perfect freedom and heart-felt delight. But that night I shall never forget it. I was requested to be out of my regular place of sitting, by reason of the absence of the dear man who used to snuff the candles, having been requested to fill his place, by sitting under the chandelier. I think I had done my duty, or fulfilled my office once; but the text, which was this, 2 Corinthians, v. 5, 6. "Now, he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit; therefore, we are always confident." And when the dear man of God began to describe that confidence, as being the consequent effect produced in the soul by the Holy Ghost's earnest, as being given unto the soul, and felt in the soul, the same Jehovah the Spirit performed the same things in my soul's experience there and then; so that I forgot all about the chandelier, the candles, or the snuffers. The Lord had lighted up his candle in my heart, so that there was no obscurity relative to my eternal standing in Christ Jesus, to the praise of free sovereign, eternal, electing love, grace, and mercy. And I felt assured of being in heaven at last, with all the chosen, redeemed, regenerated family of Jehovah, as if I had been then present in a glorified state there.

In the course of this two years it was weightily, powerfully, seriously, and solemnly laid upon my mind, that God had designed me to preach in his name; and he was pleased to call me to that work again and again. But, O! the trembling of soul I felt on the subject. The first circumstance I can remember relative to a call to the ministry is this: I was one night in my master's garden, when an apprentice, about seventeen years old, beseeching the Lord to bring me to the knowledge of and into the joys of his salvation, and these words flowed forth from my soul, I told him, "then will I teach transgressors their ways, and they shall be converted unto thee" and I felt in my soul that the matter, in the Lord's own time, would be accomplished. Yet, for nine or ten years, could not see how; but, after the Lord had so graciously revealed himself unto me, and brought me to the knowledge of his salvation; and as I have attempted to relate, had given the sealing of the Spirit unto me, the matter was so lodged with weight on my soul that I could not remove it, though my inmost soul trembled at the thought, which

trembling I will attempt to describe, if I can. One sabbath-day evening, after the dear old servant of God had finished his discourse, (and a blessed discourse it was to me,) as he came, (apparently like a mass of weakness, through bodily infirmities and age) one said to him, "it seems, sir, as though you were almost done up for preaching; and therefore (said he) I think you had better throw your mantle on some other, upon William here," (as I stood by, little thinking such a thought could have occupied the mind of any one about me.) But, if I may so express myself, I thought I must have fainted on hearing such a sound. I hastily departed out of the chapel for shame and confusion of face, and trembling of soul; but as it is recorded concerning Samson, that the Lord blessed him and the Spirit of the Lord began to move him at times in the camp of Dan, between Zorah and Eshtaol. Judges xiii. and the two last verses; so it was with me at one time, in a most especial manner, while hearing a discourse from the said words, I felt the moving of the Holy Ghost prompting me to go forth and preach the unsearchable riches of Christ, while the dear man of God, John Wilkinson, was discoursing on these words, and attempting to describe a real call to the work of the ministry. But these things I dared not make known to any one until one sabbath evening, after service was ended at chapel, I took a walk with a dear brother in the Lord, and we had some sweet and comfortable conversation, at the close of which he said, "William, I have a question to ask you, and you must give me a direct answer, and before I ask the question you must promise me so to do. Not having the least conception of the nature of his question, I promised him, if possible, I would. "Then," said he "it is this: have you ever found your mind led towards the ministry of the word?" Oh the state of my feelings as he proposed such a query; which required yea or nay; but though I could at the moment have consented to be struck dumb, I was obliged to answer "yes:" beseeching and intreating him to keep the same in his own bosom. At another time, when my dear pastor named his text, which is in Gen. xlviii. 21; "And Israel said unto Joseph, I die; but God shall be with you," which words were so powerfully laid upon, and lodged in my very soul, that I was certain the Lord had by them told me that after the decease of this dear servant of his, he would bring his own purpose to pass by bringing me forth in his name and message. However, I felt no impatient haste about his doing so; and how he would work I knew not; nor was I concerned about it. It now pleased the Lord to remove to himself my dear minister; and oh, the bitter grief it was to me. He had preached for the last time on the sabbath evening, from these words, "Thou canst not see my face and live:" his God was with him indeed, strengthening him in body and soul: one expression I can never forget, which fell from his lips that evening: "Brethren, (said he) soon, and that very soon too, this flesh of mine with all the corruption which is found in it, shall drop into the grave; and my ransomed soul shall quit its present lodging, and soaring

away from earth, shall be lost in the beatific vision of my God." As he closed the service, by himself giving out a hymn,

"To you who know the Lord, I speak,  
Is my beloved near?  
The Bridegroom of my soul I seek,  
Oh, when will he appear?

Such Jesus is, and such his grace;  
O may he shine on you;  
And tell him when you see his face,  
I long to see him too."

Which last words the dear old saint sang with great sweetness; (methinks I hear the same even now.) As he passed down the aisle, through the midst of the people, as had been invariably my custom for two years, I assisted him from chapel to his dwelling; and as he leaned on my arm he said, "William, I am sure my work is finally done; and that I shall never more be found in that place again," meaning the chapel. He was taken very ill when we arrived at his house, and continued until the following Thursday evening; when, while in the act of joining in the Hallelujahs of heaven,

"He drop'd the mortal clod,  
And left the world,  
To be for ever with his God."

The Lord was pleased soon after this, to remove me from Devonport to St. Austle in Cornwall, where I remained but one week, and returned back to Devonport again. A month then elapsed, at the termination of the same, I had a most remarkable dream to this effect: I thought I was in some strange town, and that Mr. Heath, with whom I served my apprenticeship, was looking for apartments for my dwelling-place, with my wife and two children, and that in this place I found a God-fearing widow woman, to whom the Lord had made me useful as an instrument in his hand, to the establishing of the soul in grace. On awaking I said to my wife, I feel assured that God would open a door in his providence for us, and we shall be removed away. On that very day, about ten o'clock in the morning, I was sent for by my master's nephew, who still is in business in Devonport, to call on him before the evening, as he wanted to see me particularly. I felt assured of a door being opened. On waiting on him, I found it was to make arrangement about my removing from Devonport to serve his brother at Totness, Devon., as foreman in his business as boot and shoemaker, to which place and situation I speedily removed, leaving my family still at Devonport, for the space of some weeks; during which time it actually and literally fell out, that Mr. W. Heath, sen., who was living with my master (his nephew) at Totness, looked out for and obtained the very apartments which myself and family occupied on their coming. But here I found a lamentable deficiency as to having my soul fed by the ministry of the word. Some months elapsed and during which time my soul was well nigh starved: I sighed for

a return of former privileges, to be favoured with something more than a yea and nay gospel, which I found to be no gospel to me. Now, it pleased God to introduce me to an afflicted widow-woman, whose name was Catherine Bussell, residing in Totness, on the premises I was then occupying, whom I found to be one with whom I could walk in spiritual matters—a lover of truth—a lover of Christ—a lover of vital godliness: and I found such a knitting of soul unto her, that she became my sole companion at her house; where, after some little time, it so fell out on a certain sabbath-evening, there was found about five or six professing persons at her house with myself; and it was agreed upon to spend the evening together. Then, it was requested that I should read the Sixty-ninth Psalm, and deliver my thoughts on the same, as the Lord should direct me at the moment, she putting the book into my hand. And here I must state, that I never opened my mind unto her or any other person, about the ministry, in Totness. I trembled within me at the thought of being so engaged, but a refusal would not be taken by them. I looked at the Psalm, and the Lord brake my cords, snapped the fetters which bound my tongue, and so fulfilled their desire: and I trust the Lord was present with the little party.

The next sabbath-evening it was proposed that the same kind of service should be attended to at my house, or rather room; and the Lord gave me liberty in expounding his word. To this we attended for some time on sabbath-evenings, the number continuing to increase; when the Lord at last led my mind to a text or portion of his word. It now took place that a room was hired for the public worship of the Lord, where the Lord enabled me to preach in his name three times on sabbath-days, and once in the week season. Now, after some little time, about the number of nine or ten, with myself, were enabled to form a Church, among whom the Lord maintained me, for nearly fourteen years, preaching that which the Lord bid me, which I trust has invariably been the unsearchable riches of Christ, being “determined to know nothing among men save Jesus Christ and him crucified.” But, surely, it cannot be expected I can give account of these years in this publication. This may appear hereafter.

And now, to come to a close, the wheels of Jehovah’s wonderful machinery of providence moved so as to bring me from Totness, Devon, unto Brabourne, in Kent, to take the oversight of a few of the Lord’s poor afflicted, harassed family, who are joined together in church fellowship, at Zion chapel, at which place I arrived, August 31, 1844. I would beseech an interest in the prayers of God’s children on my behalf, and in the behalf of the Church over which it has pleased the dear Lord of his vineyard to place me as an *under shepherd*—not an hireling: that the many adversaries which are permitted to rise up against the peace, unity, and comfort of the Lord’s family,—may be overcome through his might; and that all who seek the hurt or destruction of Zion, may be frustrated in their projects and designs.

Now, reader, I leave thee, whoever thou art, and myself, and



all that concerns thee and me, in the almighty hands of him who is the great Almighty Potter, and we the clay, and doth as it pleaseth him in heaven and earth, and in hell, praying his sovereign majesty, if it is his heavenly will, that you and I may at last be found around his dazzling throne in glory; to cast our crowns at his feet, and praise and adore everlastingly the love, the grace, and mercy of a Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the Person of an eternally glorified Christ, unto whom be glory, by the church, throughout all ages; world without end. Amen.

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### MR. GREENFIELD'S NEW WORK.

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SINCE the publication of the seventh part of the *EARTHEN VESSEL*, which contained a lengthened review of Mr. Edmund Greenfield's recently published work on "The Holy Ghost the Comforter," I have been in many quarters censured. Moreover, I have received a letter from the venerable author himself, which I here transcribe, and shall, *for the present* defer making any other comment upon its contents, than simply to state that when I spoke of "confusion," I did not for a moment wish it to be inferred that in those chapters, error was mixed up with truth, or that there was obscurity, or darkness in the matter: but simply in the style; the numerous parentheses rendering the reading difficult. With reference to what Mr. Greenfield calls the "*Immersion Idol Water Pool*," I shall now only declare *I am not labouring* to bring real Christians into bondage;" the earnest desire of my soul is that "they be no more tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but that speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head even Christ; and I have yet to learn that the *separation of the two ordinances*—baptism and the Lord's supper—can be justified from the word of God. That man, who shall be instrumental in proving to me, from the Scriptures of truth, that I am in error, shall be accounted my friend: daily experience, observation, and the testimony of living souls confirm me in this fact that there are thousands of real believers who are powerfully convinced that baptism by immersion is an ordinance instituted by our Lord, practised by his apostles, and to be observed by his disciples in every age; but, because there is in it a cross to be taken up; because there are churches and ministers who treat it altogether with contempt, and because it is universally declared to be by no means essential to salvation, therefore they follow the example of their leaders, and neglect it altogether. *Is not this being ashamed of Christ?* But, I forbear. The following is the letter referred to above:—

Barnhall House, August, 14, 1845.

Staplefield, Crawley, Sussex.

Edmund Greenfield,

To C. W. Banks, may grace and peace be multiplied unto you, and your's, from the Father of mercies, through Jesus. Amen.

"Tears, my brother, in Jesus, have been my meat, day and night," say, many days, and nights, but the Holy Ghost the Comforter, who, with the

Father and Jesus, is one God; our Covenant God, is, and has been my stay; "Glory to God in the Highest." "His banner over us is love."

But we feel the sad effects of the fall; human nature when not supported by the Lord God, *fails under infirmities, and Satan's temptations, and bruising*s, (as did Ahithophel of old, and many of the most fierce powerful monarchs, see Romans of old, and many self destroying professors of those days, under bereavements, and through Satan's permitted murderous powers.) "It is therefore of the Lord's mercies, we are not consumed." For some weeks I have had much company, and a God-blessed daughter dying, and she died in the Lord God her Saviour, triumphant, on Sabbath before last, and is now buried. Therefore until this morning, I have not been able to *review*, your *reviews*, or read your *Seventh Number*. My reply is, I thank you, for your doings, and that shall not be all, when I have a little time. But stewards must be faithful, and as God made me so, before he put me into the ministry, and have rendered *me fearless of men* it is necessary for me to declare frankly my mind to you. It is that you cannot *do exploits*; or have John's true fellowship; see 1 John i. 3. until you leave *the bigotry of waters*, and the *error of re-baptizing*: see Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Acts. ii. 39, 40. As to your declaration of confusion, respecting two chapters in my treatise, on the incarnation of God the Son, and the pentecostal blessings, and powers of God the Holy Ghost, *wants proof*, and ought to be *controverted*; I am ready to meet any *controvertists*. If indeed your intentions are *love*, to me, to God, and his cause; the aforesaid things will be your bondage, and *miserable binders* to all persons, who are *weak enough to unite with you*. Therefore in Christian charity, as your friend and brother in Jesus, I say by your review declarations, I perceive, although you may not know it, that you are labouring to bring real Christians into your bondage, and cast a stigma on the Lord's free men, by your procedure; even the God-blessed, God-sent, ministers of reconciliation, in union with myself, and Editors, with their united powers, who have been and are now labouring for *protestant union*, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, according to the Holy Ghost's declaration by Paul in Eph. iv. 3. and as the following words run; "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in the hope of our calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God, and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us, is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Eph. iv. 3—17. We know these are *essentials*, but respecting *water baptisms*; we know, there are *divers baptisms*. Read ye proofs from Gen. to 1 Cor. x. 1—4, to Heb. vi. 2, and ix. 10, to the end of Rev. And your declarations of not desiring to create *angry feelings* in me about *Jordan's stream* is futile, and *beneath the order of reviewers*.

Now I pray you to duly consider, and make it a matter of earnest prayer and some length of watchfulness, at *the feet of Jesus*; see Joshua v. 14, 15. Eph. iii. 14, 15. James i. 5, 6, before you openly resist my declarations; in the presence, of the Holy Ghost, and the Father and Christ, one God, being knit in heart to all the orthodox, ancient, and modern, in the divine comfort, together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding; Col. ii. 1, 2. In which I say, although you know, as do hundreds of peoples, that I love, and favour many *immersion baptists*, yet if you intend *your Tree Cut Down—The Root Preserved*, to be the *Organ only for Immersion Baptists, seducing baptized Christians, into your re-baptism*, in your *Water Pool*, you are *not my organ*, or *my Lord's*, as all the Scriptures assure us; therefore as God liveth, Immersion Baptists shall

give way to Protestant Union. Eph. iv. 3, 4.; Rev. xxii. 21. Finally, longing for Christian *universal union* and *fellowship*, my prayers, and desires, for you to God in your given talents, are, that you may not only publish, but also preach, "The glorious gospel of the blessed God." And in so doing, if you *form* your Church, casting out the *immersion idol water pool*, with your *concision laws*, and "receive believers, of *diverse water baptisms*, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one God, the Godhead, Matt. xxviii. 19. 20, receiving all who approach your table, desiring, to eat and drink the Lord's *Instituted Supper, bread and wine*, See 1 Cor. xi. 23—26. "Receiving all that come in unto you;" as the Holy Ghost inclined the Apostle Paul, see Acts xxviii. 30; you will be a *great friend to immersion baptists, who fear God*, and be a blessing in your day in the *divine blessing*, effectually *working for union*, and *Christian fellowship*. See Eph. iv. 1. 2. 3. and 1 John i. 3. And you will soon have a *large Church in London*. Because in so doing, you will honour God, our blessed Saviour, his *ways and ordinances*, uniting with, and honouring, the blessed Paul the Apostle of *us Gentiles*, with John, and others to Polycarpe, and others to Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, and their successors, to Romaine, Whitfield, Huntington, Hawker, and us. May God enable you. Amen.

Know ye, it is my intention to continue taking *your periodical*, and I pray you, *publish this letter*, as soon as *convenient*, and your *Christian reply*. I am your real Christian friend, in truth, and love.

EDMUND GREENFIELD.

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### ISSACHAR IS A STRONG ASS, COUCHING DOWN BETWEEN TWO BURDENS.

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DEAR BROTHER BANKS,

I cannot help telling you that I was very much encouraged under your ministry this morning. I had been praying the Lord this morning to shew me how I was to come to a conclusion that he had been, and was, at work in my soul, those words which you mentioned to me made an impression in my mind,—“What more could I have done to my vineyard?” they came up again and again in my mind, and often turning them over and over, these words seemed to open their meaning: “Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord thy God hath led thee.” Now, you may think what you like about this, but I was obliged to say that the Lord had done all things well, and that his hand had many and many times been very conspicuously seen by me on my behalf, and that, times without number I have experienced the bedewings of his love, leaving me at no loss to determine for the time being, that I was an object of his eternal choice: this was to me as “gathering up the fragments.” Well, this morning, as soon as you began to read the chapter, “Go and fetch,” saith our Lord to two of his disciples, “that ass; and if any one says anything to you, say the Master hath need of him:” that portion took hold of me. I appeared to be that ass and colt too—I say, these animals were a type of a child of God, they are twain, but, nevertheless, it is one man; and on this *colt and ass* Jesus rode into Jerusalem, but, poor things, they had a very rough passage, notwithstanding the hosannahs of the people, for they

had to tread upon creature garments and branches of trees. I thought the bows were put in the way by the enemy; however, I saw that the minister went into the city, and as he had Jesus of Nazareth, as it were in his soul, the whole inhabitants were moved, and I beheld him going into the temple, (the church of God), and lo, when he came there, he found many merchants of the worst kind; them he drove out, even to the sellers of doves, and said unto them, "it is written, my house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves."

Now, mark, what kind of characters came to Jesus Christ of Nazareth; were they such as had plenty of money? if they had, we are not informed of it; but, they were *blind* and *lame*. Well, blessed be God, the whole want not a doctor, and so he will be sure to have the discontented ones: and what appeared more wonderful according to common sense is, that these whited sepulchres, should be so enraged about the healing these lame and blind. If no miracles are performed, the enemies will not so much care; but, if the poor soul should be led to see Jesus, as the only hiding place of God's wrath—and if he should have strength imparted, so that he can stand upon his feet and sing Hosannah!—not to this great doctor or the other great doctor—but to Jesus, Immanuel, God with us, there the venom of the serpent's children will be seen. Well, I did not stop here, but I followed this real minister a little further; he, we are told got very hungry, and for the purpose of getting somewhat to eat, he went up to a place of worship, under the character of a fig-tree, but not one bit of fruit thereon: nothing but leaves. Then he said, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward and for ever:" the stick was wild; it had never been grafted. The disciples wondered at the condemnation of their Master, and the direful effect that followed; but he gave them to understand, that if they did not doubt, that then they should do greater things. I further observed that the priests asked him, by what authority he did these things? *We have said the priests* alone the authority to licenoe a man, and, therefore, tell us what business you have to preach and teach these poor people, and upset our money-tables, for we get a good living by this one work. At this juncture in came this question,—Jesus Christ commissioned his disciples twice to preach the gospel. Luke xxii. 36. "And he said unto them, when I sent you out without purse or scrip, lacked ye anything? and they said, nothing. Then he said unto them, but now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his bag, and he that hath no (fleshly) sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." Which of these is a man of God to notice. We cannot tell, must be the answer of every microenary, and so they will be confounded; for their conscience tell them, that as they have received pardon, (that is, if they have got it), let them as freely promulgate that pardon.

After this I looked at another minister of God, even David; and after that, Gideon; but David first. I begin with him while a boy, feeding sheep, and then he had, as I perceived, the power of God in his soul—for he slew a lion and a bear, and rescued a lamb from their jaws. There he took, (as Mr. W— says,) five smooth stones, as recorded in Rom. viii. 29. 30. and sent one of them into the forehead of the great enemy, by which he got his head and sword; and then that exalted him to the command of Saul's army. But here he did not please the *devil*, or in other words, the *bastard Calvinist*, so he was obliged to flee, and hide himself in dens and caves: and all this time he had a tender conscience, for his heart smote him for cutting off Saul's skirt. After being more satisfied than ever of his coming to the throne of Israel, from this circumstance, a fit of

unbelief entered into him, and there he said, "I shall one day fall by the hand of Saul; and off he starts to seek an asylum in the enemies' dominion, and as soon as he got there he lost his tender conscience, and he begins lying; and when he saw that his deceiving the king of that country was likely to be an advantage to him, he went a little further; and having lost all fear, and all love, he was determined to join the enemies of the Lord, and fight against the children of God—who had sung a short time before in dances, Saul his thousands, and David his tens of thousands. But, here I saw God's interposition, not only on David's part, but also on my own, for it was brought to my remembrance when I joined the infidels, and the dreadful conduct I then was the subject of. Oh! when I left to follow them, what kind of a place I found Ziklag: all my companions gone, and my dwelling was burnt. This made me cry unto the Lord in a way that I never did before.

Now, as this paper is full I must drop the subject; but, let me tell you, I followed him up to his death-bed: and then I went to Gideon, and found him threshing; and as it was shown me secretly praying to the Lord, I traced it right up, even to his making money his God, and an enquiry of that as to which he should do. Judges viii. 27; xvii. 5.

C. C.

FAVERSHAM, KENT, AUGUST, 1845.

Dear Sir.—As you appear to be going on a sort of a cruise in your Vessel, and looking a little into the Churches, I have thought of saying a word or two to you about the state of things in this part of the country. I cannot pretend to dig deep into the origin or first entrance of truth into this town; neither is there any necessity. Some few years since the friends of Mr. Beall, (who was then the only real Gospel minister in the town, and who was the pastor of a church, consisting of about thirty or forty persons,) his friends, I say, thought it prudent to erect for him a larger chapel, which was called, "Gatefield Lane Chapel;" in which place of worship we have been favoured to hear many of the Lord's anointed servants. Strange to say, however, that very soon after, these good people entered their new place, they began to be tired of Mr. Beall, and after much consultation, prayer and watchfulness he was induced to resign his pastoral office: and the people, in some measure, were divided. A young man by the name of Denham, was soon after ordained here by Mr. John Stevens, and succeeded for a little season to draw a goodly congregation. Circumstances at length induced him to leave; and the people were again left without a minister. During Mr. Denham's time, I should tell you, some of the staunch old veterans for solid truth, who want and will have something more than a picture to look at, and something more than a nosegay to smell to, separated themselves, and met together in a small place, having occasionally such good men as Mr. Warburton, Mr. Kershaw, Mr. Mackensie, Mr. Tiptaft, and others to preach unto them: but at length Gatefield Lane Chapel has been purchased by a most benevolent friend to the cause of God and divine truth in this town, and all we seem to want now is for FOR THE LORD TO SEND US a pastor after his own heart. I must add, we have been blessed for a short season with the ministry of Mr. Septimus Sears:—and I believe it was the desire of some that he should be settled amongst them; there is, however, no prospect of that at present; in fact, many of the *believers* in the great truths of the gospel have manifested so much fickleness of mind, that we know not what to

think, or what to say: one thing, however, is certain there are such divisions among those who profess to know and love the gospel of the grace of God in this place, that our strength is not sufficient to supply the entire temporal necessities of a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. P. W.

### THE CITY OF NORWICH

Mr. CHARLWOOD, of Norwich has recently published a new edition of two Sermons preached in 1841 at Jireh Chapel, St Benedict's, Norwich, by Mr. John Warburton. These sermons are introduced by a preface, which contains a brief review of the past and present condition of the city of Norwich, as regards the truth as it is in Jesus. We make the following extract from the aforesaid preface:—

Mr. Warburton visited this City in 1857, and it was with considerable difficulty that a pulpit could be obtained for him to preach once; indeed the favour was considered so great by those who granted it, that the person employed to obtain it, promised never to ask it again; and yet this was where the truth was preached, at least, in the letter. Having previously witnessed how readily Mr Warburton had been received both in Brighton and London, even by people that were not Baptists, I never was more surprised in my life than to witness the reluctance with which one solitary pulpit was opened to him in this City of great profession, and from that time, I felt a desire to see a place opened in Norwich where this man of God in particular, (who was more on my mind than any other,) would be cheerfully admitted at any time, and I believe the desire was from the Lord, and quite agreeable to his blessed will, for the following portion of the word of God rested with power on my mind, "Delight thyself also in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him, and he shall bring it to pass." Psalm xxxvii. 1, 5.

In 1840, the Lord granted the desires of my heart in the opening of Jireh Chapel, and previous to this he granted me more than I ever hoped for, which was raising up one among us to speak in his great name, who is now the stated minister of the place; his ministry has been made a peculiar blessing to my soul, as well as others.

The Lord honoured us in the opening of the Chapel, by a visit from his dear servant the late William Gadsby, of Manchester, who preached the first sermon May, 5th, 1840; this was a season that will not soon be forgotten by many; but the Chapel being small some friends solicited the use of the Tabernacle, for Mr Gadsby to accommodate the numerous friends that wished to hear him, but this was immediately refused by a great professor, who had power over that place, and said he had heard Mr. Gadsby was a man of bad character, whom he could not admit into the Tabernacle pulpit. Large congregations in London and elsewhere have thought it an honour to receive this highly-favoured servant of Christ, who was thought unworthy to enter the Tabernacle pulpit, although the gospel was once preached there.

Many years ago, application was made for the same pulpit, for Mr. Huntington, but the parties then in power refused him also. This proves the truth of what Mr. Huntington states in his works, when he says, "People beg money to build Chapels in the name of Christ; they also lay foundations in the name of Christ; but let a Minister come with Christ in the heart—the hope of glory and the pulpit door is shut against him directly." Such was Norwich in 1840, and such it is now, except two Chapels where the truth is preached. But let a man come that preaches duty faith and the law of ten commandments as the only Rule of Life, and all the errors of Fullerism, and even Arminianism, and he will be heartily received in all the great Chapels of this City; and it may thus be proved, that Universal Charity loves all but God's sent servants. • • I knew a professor in Brighton, that said he wandered about from one Chapel to another in that town, until he got starved in soul, when he was obliged to go to Church Street Chapel, where he was sure of a good heart meal. The minister of that Chapel was like Micalah, he would not say, "A Confederacy." Isaiah viii. 12. I used to wonder why he did not go there always.

A man in Norwich, that occasionally preaches, lately told a friend of mine, that he believed the Gospel was not faithfully preached in Norwich, only at Jireh Chapel and Cherry Lane, and yet very seldom, if ever attends either. How strange this appears to a poor child of God that is in earnest for salvation. He does not want the Gospel wine mixed with water. No: but as dear Huntington says, in a sermon, "That when the

Lord makes manifest in the conscience of a poor awakened sinner, that a minister is sent of him, to that ministry he will cleave, and not stand at the helm, and watch to see which way the stream of public applause runs, but watch the waters of life, that make glad the City of God? while professors that aim at nothing but to take the strongest side, act like Alexander the Coppersmith, and follow a multitude to do evil, in opposing the advocates for truth, contrary to their own judgment and conscience: such thrive no better in their profession than Aithophel, whose counsel was turned into foolishness." And truly the children of God had need strive, like Aaron and Hur, to hold up the hands of the few faithful ministers of the Gospel left in the land, for there is much to discourage them while on the other hand, the devil will be sure to stand by his own children, as in Ahab's days, the king and all the people almost seemed to side with satan's ministers.

### JOHN ROBINSON.

JOHN ROBINSON—the author of the following acrostic—is a weather beaten, tried, and afflicted servant of the living God. Both in a literal and in a spiritual sense, he knows the truth of that beautiful verse—"they that go down to the sea in ships, and do business in great waters; these, see the works of the Lord, and his wonders in the deep." He has stood on deck and witnessed death and destruction, hurling his comrades into eternity, while his own life has been miraculously preserved: and now he is standing on the deck of time, and on the margin of a perishing world, waiting for the summons to leap into that peaceful ocean of immortal love and glory wherein his ransomed soul shall for ever bathe with infinite delight. The following lines are descriptive of the sober and the spiritual character of the man:

I n hymns of praise and truth sublime,  
O sacred Spirit, Dove divine,  
H elp me among thy saints to raise,  
N ew honors to Immanuel's praise!

R eveal in me thy saving power,  
O 'er every thought thine influence pour,  
B lest with that faith which works by love,  
I nspires the heart, and leads above.  
N ow, O my soul, arise and sing,  
S alvation's source, that glorious theme,  
O n this alone thy trust repose,  
N or cease till life in victory close.

WHAT IS THAT NEARNESS TO GOD, AND ACCESS TO HIM,  
THAT A MAN HATH IN TIME WHEN HE IS  
BROUGHT WITHIN THE VAIL?

"It lies not only in the first application of grace, and change of the man's state, when in Christ Jesus he that was afar off is made nigh by the blood of Christ; for whenever the virtue of that blood comes upon us by the Spirit of Christ, God comes near to us, and we are brought near to God; but there is still more and more nearness enjoyed by his people. Exercised christians are able to give a distinct account of their having this nearness at some times, and of their want of it at other times. He may be suspected indeed for an hypocrite, that hath no changes, Psal. iv 19. for the true Chris-

tian's sky is never long clear and without clouds ; change of weather and change of way, is usually found by travellers to heaven. Every believer indeed hath still the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him ; " for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ; but there are some singular out-pourings of the Spirit promised and bestowed, and well known by all believers, and they are precious enjoyments. The Spirit the world cannot receive, because he sees him not, neither knows him, says Christ ; but you know him, for he dwells with you, and shall be in you, John xiv. 17. This access to God within the veil, is sometimes experienced in prayer, yea, most frequently in that exercise is the light of God's countenance lifted up, and the soul made to say, " I love the Lord because he hath heard the voice of my supplication." Do not ye believers know this, that sometimes you have been so troubled that you could not speak ? Psal. lxxvii. 4. that your hearts have been so bound and straitened, that you could do nothing, and say nothing before the Lord, but sit as dumb and oppressed, all dark above, all dead within, and all doors shut upon you ? You cannot neglect prayer, and yet you could not perform it ; but behold, you have quickly found the two leaved gates cast open to you, your hearts enlarged, and mouths wide opened in asking, the windows of heaven open, and the banks of the rivers of life broken down, and the streams gushing in upon you, like that in Isaiah xlv. 3. " I'll pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground." Also this access to God within the veil is sometimes experienced in sweet communion and fellowship with God ; " Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." This communion with God is a mystery, sweet indeed to them that have it, and surpassing all the delights of sense and reason ; but to them that have it not, it is incredible and unintelligible, a stranger intermeddles not with this joy. Ye that know not what it is, although the word be full of suitable and savoury expressions of it, yet it is a riddle and dark parable to you, it is only tasting of it that can declare its transcendent sweetness. ' O taste and see that God is good !' You that know what it is, tho' you cannot express it, yet you can relish and understand some sound words about it. It may be, you feel it sometimes at a communion table, sometimes in a barn or cow-house, sometimes in the field, or under a bush, as *Nathaniel* under a fig-tree : but what you felt you cannot make the world understand : only when the Lord directs the minister to speak somewhat suitable to it, you're ready to think, O it is just like the thing I felt at such a time and such a place ; that which the minister is saying from God's word, hath a sweet sound of that which I got yonder, when none in all the world heard me or saw me : But (*Nathaniel*) when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee, says Christ. I heard you groaning to me, I saw you wrestling with me, I put your tears in my bottle, and poured in my comforts into your soul. O know you what it is to be brought near to him, and to have the clouds and veils that are on your hearts, or on your faces scattered, and the light of his countenance lifted up upon you ? Have you not been sometimes on the mount, so as to think, ' O how



good is it to be here? Have you not known what the warm and healing beams of the sun of righteousness upon you are? Have you not tasted that in his company that hath made all the wells of worldly comforts like puddle water, loathsome and unsavoury to you, yea, that hath made you groan in this tabernacle, and long to be at that complete and uninterrupted communion above, whereof all you tasted on earth is but a small earnest? However, the veil was rent, that you might enter within the veil into the holiest, to a begun heaven even in time. Grace being the same specifically with glory, there is but a gradual difference; and therefore the believer even on earth, is said to be 'come to Mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to the innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born that are written in heaven, to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,' Heb. vii. 22, 23. Why, when does the believer come to all this? Even when he comes by faith to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, then he is come to heaven itself, the true holy of holies inchoatively, or by a begun entrance. But, second. There is a consummative entrance into the holiest, that the believer shall have, as a fruit of the rending of the veil, and that is, when he comes to the heaven above, to the higher house, whither the forerunner is for us entered, having rent the veil; which was rent that we might have access to God in glory, as well as in grace, and the the believer will not be half in, as it were, but completely within the veil: for then will his communion with God be completed; then his knowledge of God, his love to God, his delight in God, his vision of God's glory, his conformity to God's image, will be complete, 'for that which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect shall come,' 1 Cor. xiii. 10. O what a sweet exchange will that be, when faith will say to vision, I give place to you; when hope will say to fruition, I give place to you; when grace will say to glory, I give place to you; when partial communication shall say to perfection, I give place to you, when short transient views will say to uninterrupted everlasting joys, I give place to you! Little wonder, then if believers long to be wholly within the veil (but I insist not on it) for then indeed, he fully enters into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Thus you see the two great ends for which the veil was rent; namely, the way might be made for Christ's entering into the holy of holies, and so for our entering in through him, and after him."—*Erskine*.

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#### NAOMI'S JOURNEY OUT OF MOAB; AND HER BLESSEDNESS IN THE HOUSE OF BOAZ.

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THE history of Naomi, is exceedingly precious when viewed as figuratively descriptive of the dealings of God with a quickened sinner; and of the things which he is called to part with, and to

pass through. In the first place Naomi—which signifies “*Pleasant and Agreeable*,” is a true type of every elect sinner—every such soul being complete in the completeness of Christ, and perfect through the comeliness which he has put upon the whole election of grace. Secondly, Naomi is the wife of Elimelech—(Ruth i. 2.) which signifies “*My God is king* :” who was certainly a very glorious figure of the eternal Godhead and glorious Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Elimelech and Naomi go down to Moab together. Moab signifies “*the land of my father* :” Christ came down to this Moab, this fallen land of our fallen parents, and here he died ; here he laid down his life for the church. Now the first source of Naomi’s affliction was the death of Elimelech : and the Holy Ghost declares that we are “*planted together in the likeness of his death* ;” that is, he died for sin, he died to sin, and was crucified in the flesh : there can be no scriptural evidence that a sinner has any interest in Christ who has not thus been planted together (*experimentally*) with him in the likeness of his death : it is the death of Christ realised in the soul that alone can kill the sinner to himself and his sins. The Holy Ghost speaks expressly to this end in 1 Peter iii. 18. the design of the Saviour’s sufferings and death was “*that he might bring us unto God* ;” in order to this, he was “**PUT TO DEATH IN THE FLESH, BUT QUICKENED BY THE SPIRIT.**” And these two things are eternally united in the work of God the Holy Ghost, in the consciences of redeemed sinners : they are *put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit*. Herein it is that they have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings ; hereby it is that the sentence of death is passed upon everything within them : hereby they become the subjects of godly sorrow ; and hereby are prepared in a measure to “*hear that God has visited his people by giving them bread in the land of Judah* ;” and so to hear as ultimately to come out from the country of Moab. You will observe, that Elimelech and Naomi had two sons—the name of one was Mahlon ; the name of the other was Chilion. Both these are significant of what poor Naomi loses, when once God resolves to bring her out of Moab. Mahlon signifies “*a song*” or “*infirmity* ;” it may be taken for something that is very transitory and imperfect : such are all the carnal delights, and sensual short lived gratifications which this world affords ; of the whole of them it may be said, they are but songs of infirmities—and these are sure to die when Christ and his cross, his sufferings and his salvation, are revealed in the soul. Chilion, the name of Naomi’s other son, signifies something that is *finished and complete* ; and how fully is this realised in the real conversion of a sinner unto God ! What a solemn finale and finishing stroke is there put to his creature righteousness, and creature perfection ! Chilion’s death may be a lingering one ; but die he must. This is not all. When Naomi comes out of Moab, her two daughters-in-law come with her : Orpah and Ruth : and here the experience of a sorrowful soul is still further portrayed. Or-

pah means, "the nakedness of the mouth." And oh, what a nakedness and emptiness is there found in all the formal ceremonies, resolutions, and expressions of the flesh: how much of this nakedness of the mouth," is there among the empty professors, and letter-preachers with which the nominal church abounds; but its nakedness, its lifelessness, its lack of heavenly dew and savour shall soon be discovered by a living soul. A naked mouth—a letter gospel, (though it be ever so sound) will never satisfy a hungry and thirsty soul.

But the "nakedness of the mouth" is expressive of the fickleness of a quickened sinner's resolutions, promises, and prayers: all these things turn back, and leave the poor soul painfully to learn that in him, "that is in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But there is one that cleaveth unto Naomi. How strikingly significant are both the name and the conduct of Ruth! Ruth signifies one that shall be "filled and satisfied." And she is hereby typical of the gospel promise which stand good to living sinners: "blessed are they who do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." This gospel promise comes to poor Naomi when in Moab; it comes with her out of Moab; like a poor sin and self condemned sinner, she says, "go back; I have no right to thee; I have no interest in thee." But the gospel promise, being moved by and filled with, the power of the Holy Ghost, says, "intreat me not to leave thee: for whither thou goest I will go: where thou diest, I will die, and there will I be buried." And this gospel promise—this precious Ruth—never leaves poor Naomi until to her it is said—"Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee without a Redeemer: his name shall be famous in Israel: and he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life: and a nourisher of thine old age."

Reader! Trace out the features of this most delightful history! Say; is it the spiritual history of thy soul's experience? In Naomi—her sorrow in Moab—her coming out therefrom—her trouble by the way—her ultimate connection with the house of Boaz—and the eternal blessedness which she did from him receive; in all this you have a most faithful illustration of the service, the freedom, and the glorious reward that belongs unto every true servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

C. W. BANKS.

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## Notices and Answers.

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Thanks to a "A Faithful Friend," for the hint given. We have no connection or association with any of 'the great men' in the ministry—neither do we desire any further than what may be quite in accordance with the will of God. There is a system of recommending one and another; whereby some men soon get what is termed 'popularity,' but the man who has none to recommend him, nor to carry him on, but the Lord, is most unlikely to be deceived by flattering appearances.

No other explanation can be given as to why the EARTHEN VESSEL cannot be procured in the country than the following: some publishers are prejudiced against it, and will not procure it; nevertheless it is to be had of any bookseller who will take the trouble to write for it.

The memoir of Mr. James Francis will shortly be completed in a Supplement, if the Lord will.

Sermons by the late Mr. Gatwood of Hitchen will be given shortly.

The Poetry from Castle Cary, and the Third Letter to the Church, are both in type but could not this month be squeezed in: both next month, if spared.

THE

DOOR IN THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HOUSE.

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*An Epistle of Gratitude ; addressed to the Church and Congregation  
meeting for Divine Worship, in Crosby Row Chapel, King  
Street, Borough, London.*

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BELIEVERS IN THE LORD JESUS CHRIST,

When the Lord, in the dispensation and government of his providential mercies, was about to open for us a more effectual door, there were some who cried out, "*Have nothing to do with the place ; for, Ichabod is written upon its walls.*" And, to our astonishment, we quickly learned that these very men who had earnestly endeavoured to persuade us not to enter into the place, because Ichabod was thereon written, had themselves determined, if necessary, to fly thither for refuge.

Blessed be God, we have, I trust, again and again, proved that "THE DOOR IS IN THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE HOUSE;" and, that this door having been opened for us not only in heaven, but also in our own consciences, therefore we have been favoured with a little reviving in our bondage : and a little access at the throne of grace, God himself bearing witness in the consciences of many, that we have not run nor laboured in vain.

At the request of a beloved brother in the Lord, and in accordance with the secret directions of my own soul, I desire now to give you a brief outline of the message which the Lord sent me to deliver at Ramsden Cruys, in Essex, on the 18th of September, 1845.

Two days before I left London, the following words (from 1 Kings vi. 8,) was sweetly laid in my mind ; and I felt persuaded I was to speak from them in Essex ; which thing came to pass ; for they laid the foundation for my preaching both morning and evening on that occasion. The words are these :—

"The door for the middle chamber was in the right side (*or shoulder*) of the house : and they went up with winding stairs into the middle chamber, and out of the middle into the third."

I have no desire at all to blow my own trumpet ; but like the Psalmist, I feel that "my soul must make her boast in the Lord ;"

and, therefore, while reproach and envy are going on to dispute and question, let faith and gratitude go on to praise and admire the hand that hath such great deliverance wrought!

Having been safely conveyed to the house of prayer, and found the people waiting, and prepared to hear what God the Lord would speak unto their souls; after singing, reading and prayer, I declared unto them how I came by the text, and then with the help of the Lord, proposed to speak from the words in the following order:—

First, to notice the house itself.

Secondly, to speak of the right side (or shoulder) of the house.

Thirdly, to shew that the door was *in the right side*.

Fourthly, to notice the winding stairs which lead up to the middle chamber.

Fifthly, to speak of the middle chamber: and,

Finally, a word or two of the inner chamber into which the middle chamber leads.

As I am not writing from notes, but from the impression which the words have left upon my mind, I can only give you a very short summary of what was delivered: although the whole of the two discourses cannot be given, yet, the substance of them here will be found.

First, then, of the house itself: which was sweetly applied to me as being typical of the setting up, and of the covenant fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. His everlasting righteousness, is that "house from heaven," with which the whole election of grace shall at length be clothed upon.

Of the setting up of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the eternal councils, and with all covenant mercy and righteousness to bestow upon those which the Father had given unto him, the Holy Ghost spake by Solomon, when he cried out "**WISDOM HATH BUILDED HER HOUSE.**"

It is a glorious triumph sounded over the very wreck and ruins of sin itself. Sin has poisoned, deluded, and damned its millions a thousand times told. Oh! who could look into the deep pit of Tophet, and there behold the millions of lost, despairing, and condemned souls, sunk into everlasting horror, and yet preach universal redemption? Who can look around upon the millions who are now greedily serving satan, living in sin, and treasuring up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath, and yet talk of a general and universal sacrifice for sin? Who can contemplate the awful errors, delusions, and spirits of Anti-Christ now swarming in the earth, and yet say that the Holy Ghost, the only Spirit of truth; the only quickener of the soul; the only revealer of Christ, is given unto every man? Alas! Alas! Destruction and death, sin and satan, misery and horror, do almost universally reign.

Still there is an ark floating upon the waters: there is a refuge opened in the city of destruction: **WISDOM HATH BUILDED HER HOUSE.** "It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance," Jesus Christ is the house which Wisdom hath builded: and "whosoever

cometh unto him, he will in no wise cast out." This is the first glorious gospel declaration. Sin, like a mighty deluge, has run through the earth, and made it a valley of dry bones; a common grave yard: a very pest house itself; so that not one has escaped the plague, and pestilence of the fall: nevertheless, a door of mercy has been opened: a house of shelter has been built; and the voice of sovereign love and mercy says, "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled." "There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared."

What said the Church of old, concerning this house?—I answer, it is evident, that Christ shewed her the house: its glory, its security, and her right and title to it: so that she cried out "*the beams of our house are cedar, and the rafters are fir.*" The predestinating decrees, and the mighty flowings of the electing love of God towards Christ and the Church, are the beams of this house.

"OUR HOUSE!" What an expression it is of that mutual interest, love, faith, and divine relationship which a living sinner realizes when experimentally brought into a faith's view of the fulness, and power, compassion and grace of the Lord Jesus Christ! The Church exults in the stability and eternity of Christ's salvation: "the beams of our house are Cedar." Cedar is a wood much celebrated in the word of God. Cedar is incorruptible; it is beautiful in appearance; of great substance: and fruitful in its nature. How apt an illustration of the predestinating purpose and electing love of God, those mighty beams of that House of Mercy which is Jesus Christ himself!

Wisdom hath not only built her house; but she brings in her guests, to partake of the rich provision there treasured up. First, you hear the Church proclaiming the eternal duration and grandeur of the house; as she walks round it, and exclaims "the beams of our house are cedar:" but presently her voice is heard within—"he hath brought me into his banqueting house; and his banner over me is love." "Sorrow may endure for a night;" the night of conviction; the night of godly sorrow; the night of terror and dismay; the night of soul desertion, all these are nights of darkness; but when Christ is revealed; when he picks up the poor sinner going down to Jericho; brings him into gospel truth, gospel peace, gospel power, and a sweet sense of pardoning love, it is then that "joy cometh:" Christ is then a banqueting house; or, as some of the old Bibles have rendered it, "*a wine cellar,*" where the sorrowful heart is made glad, because guilt is removed from the conscience, darkness from the mind; and the fear of eternal death from the trembling spirit. Christ realized in peace and power, is a banqueting house indeed.

Thus, then, you have the eternal beams, and the experimental beauty of this house; the salvation of an elect sinner is laid in foreknowledge, predestination, immutable decrees, and almighty love and power: these are its foundations and its beams. The experi-

mental beauty of the house lays in the bringing of the prodigal home—in the Father's embracing him; the pledge of love given to him, and the feast of mercy of which he is called to partake.

There are three things which appear to distinguish the true believer in Christ from all other men: these three things Paul expresses in his second epistle to the Corinthians: *In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*

First, the really regenerated believer in Christ has a view of the Lord Jesus Christ as this great house of eternal safety and salvation to the whole Church of Christ: in that house there is the sinner's "right to the tree of life" written at full length in "God's eternal book:" in that house, there is the sinner's meetness laid in atoning blood and justifying righteousness; and in that house there is the sinner's seat prepared, and his crown laid up. A blessed revelation and application of the interior of this house in the soul by the power of the Holy Ghost is heaven begun below.

The second thing, is the groaning: *in this we groan*: this is another feature of life in the soul. Very frequently the believer is as hard and as dead as a stone; and as dark as the tunnel under Primrose Hill; and he has no more power to groan than he has power to pray, or power to mount up into the middle chamber of divine communion: there are other times when the fiery darts of the wicked one fill him with such horror and fear, that his poor soul does inwardly groan and sigh; but, is this inward groaning always accompanied with an earnest desire to be clothed upon with *this House which is from heaven*? Oh, no—far from it: unbelief, slavish fear, and a trembling soul, unite to cry out—"Not yet: I am not prepared to go: let me stay a little longer, until this calamity be overpast: until this sin is subdued; this conscience purged; and this heart made right with God!"

But when faith says to the poor troubled soul, as Jahaziel said unto Israel of old, "*Ye have no need to fight in this battle; stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you: be not dismayed by reason of the great multitude: for the battle is not yours' but God's.*" When this mighty conflict within is really known to be the consequence of the indwelling of the life of God in the soul; and when out of this prison-house the soul looks by faith, and beholds the blessed Immanuel as a faithful and compassionate High Priest over the household of God; it is then, that an earnest desire to be clothed upon with this glorious house from heaven is felt by this child of grace.

Poor soul! so long as you are at home in the body, groan you must; but, how joyful, how cheering is the fact, "we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

II. Notice *the right side* of the House. In the margin it reads "in the right shoulder." By the right shoulder, I understand the

eternal Godhead and omnipotent power of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Men and ministers have written and spoken upon Issachar as being a type of a hypocrite in Zion: they say he is the strong, the hardened ass, that coucheth down between sin and a profession of godliness. I cannot thus view Issachar myself. The interpretation of his name is, "a price, a reward, or a recompense:" and I believe these will not apply to a hypocritical professor—for there is neither price nor recompense connected with his abominable wickedness: but let these terms be applied to our glorious, our spiritual Issachar, the Lord Jesus Christ; and how full of life and expression they are! He had a price to give—and he gave it:

"The price—his own heart's blood."—

"He gave himself"—and look at the recompense! He carries the law back to his Father magnified and made honourable: and what does the Father say of his elect, as they lay in the ruins of the fall? He says, "they are a people robbed and spoiled; they are all of them snared in holes, and they are hid in prison houses: they are for a prey, and none delivereth: for a spoil, and none saith, Restore." (Isaiah liii. 22.) What a wonderful description of the poor sinner in his dreadful captivity—snared indeed he is; and in prison houses he dwells; and nobody—priests, nor parsons, nor people—big men nor little men—none of them can deliver him; or restore unto him, what sin and Satan have robbed him of. What is to be done? "How," says God, "shall I put thee among the children?" "Lo, I come!" says the mighty GOD-MAN. He beholds "the rest to be good—and the land to be pleasant"—(the rest there spoken of, is God's everlasting love to his church; it is that "sabbath of rest which is holiness unto the Lord," Exodus, xxxi. 15—16. "It is a sign between a covenant God, and the children of Israel for ever." His choice of Zion; his love to Zion; yea, Zion herself is that rest—"this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell; for I have desired it." Psalm, cxxxii. 14.) The Eternal Son of God our spiritual Issachar—"saw the rest to be good; and the land"; (the glorious inheritance of the saints) "to be pleasant:" therefore "he bowed his shoulder to bear; and became servant to tribute:" the mighty God humbled himself: took upon him the form of a servant; became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Herein lays the value and the efficacy of Christ's atonement: it was GOD IN CHRIST: the glorious, the invisible, the incomprehensible, the great "I AM," coming down, and dwelling in our nature; stooping to bear our burden; taking the whole government of the church's redemption upon his own shoulder; and by this Almighty power casting all her sins into the depths of the sea; and bringing up a new and an everlasting righteousness: it is this, I say, that stamps eternal redemption by Christ with dignity, value, efficacy and power. "The Door is in the Right Shoulder of the House," Christ is the Strength of Israel; and the Strength of Israel will not lie; nor ever fail or forsake any that put their trust in him.

III. Having briefly noticed the house and the right shoulder thereof; I come now to the door itself: of which the Holy Ghost most distinctly speaks, and says, "the door for the middle cham-



her is in the right side of the house." This was indeed, a complete and glorious shadowing forth of the person of our most holy Lord! First, we have his covenant fulness in the house itself; secondly, we have, his eternal Godhead in the right shoulder; and here we have his mediatorial work and office, in the door.

Two things you will notice in the commission given to Ezekiel: First, he was to shew the house to the house; and secondly, he was to "*mark well the ENTERING IN OF THE HOUSE; with every going forth of the sanctuary.*"

These are the two great leading features of the gospel ministry: the covenant fulness of Christ is to be held forth, and to be held up to the view of the Church of the living God; and, secondly, there must be a clear tracing out of the work of the Holy Ghost in his gathering in and meetening of sinners unto the kingdom of immortal bliss and glory.

It is of Christ, in his mediatorial work and glory, that I have here a word or two to speak. Our Lord himself used the figure that is employed in the text: first, he said, "he that entereth in BY THE DOOR is THE SHEPHERD of the sheep; and, after this he says, "I AM THE DOOR." Now the question is, what door is that of which Christ speaks in the second verse of the tenth of John? Is it the same as is spoken of in the ninth verse of that chapter? I answer no, certainly not; for the first door which he refers to, he speaks of as being separate from himself: a door by which he himself enters in, and thereby becomes the Shepherd of the sheep. That door then, is the same as Ezekiel saw, and of which the Holy Ghost by him, speaks in the 44th chapter of that prophecy—"Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east: *and it was shut.* Then said the Lord unto me; this gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD the God of Israel, hath entered in by it; therefore it shall be shut. It is for the Prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the LORD." The door in the gospel by John; and the gate in Ezekiel's prophecy, are the same: it is THE LAW of God: by reason of the fall, it became utterly impossible that any living sinner could ever enter into the presence of God by that door; wherefore it was shewn unto Ezekiel as being SHUT: and, mark the two-fold solemn declaration: *it shall not be opened; no man shall enter in by it.* Here is an eternal shutting out of the whole race of Adam, by reason of a broken law. What a solemn position!

Oh, ye high-flying priests and people; who can treat the law of God with such contempt; saying, "We have nothing to do with the law: we have only to preach Christ: and we have only to believe on Christ!"—Know ye, that as it was with Ezekiel respecting this gate; and as it was with John respecting the book; so shall it be with every elect sinner, sooner or later; he shall be brought to see this gate eternally closed against him: and hence shall arise the heart-felt cry—"How then shall man be just with God?"

This, then, is the most plain and positive illustration of CHRIST as the door. He has opened the gate: he came forth and magnified, fulfilled, honoured, and carried back the law, without a spot, blemish, or a single flaw: and it is now declared that "the LORD is well pleased"—What with? With the righteous fulfilment of his law: as is written, "the Lord is well pleased for, (or on account of) his righteousness sake:—"He will magnify it" in the salvation and glorification of all for whom it was fulfilled: and he "will make him (*i. e.* Christ,) honourable in the giving him to be head over all things unto the church. (Isaiah xlii. 21. see margin.) Christ having magnified the law on behalf of his own sheep, the Lord declares that "they shall enter into his sanctuary: they shall come near to his table: and they shall keep his charge: Christ, I say, having magnified the law, says "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, *he shall be saved*; and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Here is the first branch of his mediatorial work.

But this is not all. Christ is not only *a door of entrance*, by which elect sinners shall get admission; but he is also, *a way of eternal fulness*; of perfect righteousness; not only opening for them *a door of access*; but also bringing unto them all essential meetness, and bringing them into a glorious realization of those unsearchable riches treasured up in himself.

It is, I trust, for *the want* of some more substantial and fatal mark against me and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, that critical, and suspicious, and jealous men, charge me with being "a fanciful interpreter of the word." Such presumptuous judges of men and ministers, and such Khorah-like hearers of the word, will here find abundant materials to carry out and still further report their wicked aspersions. Certainly, they shall have their reward.

In coming to speak a word or two more, of Christ, as the Mediatorial Door, I shall simply give expression to the view with which my soul was favoured of the following portion of the word of God.

To me it was revealed that the eternal union of the Church unto Christ, as also the benefit she derives from the sacrifice which Christ has made for sin, was shadowed forth by the answer given to Abraham when he asked the Lord how he should know that he should inherit the land.

What was the answer given unto him; and what was the typical import of the answer?

The answer was as follows. The Lord said unto him—"Take me an heifer of three-years old, and a she goat of three-years old; and a ram of three-years old; and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon."

This word was laid in my soul as setting forth the complex character of the Lord Jesus Christ, the two-fold nature of the church; and also, the union of the Church unto her covenant head.

First, there is the complete character of Christ as MEDIATOR. The heifer, or young cow, being a clean beast, shadows forth the young, the clean, and holy nature of the Redeemer; as well as the great fruitfulness of his work? What creature is there in the whole of God's creation so fruitful, so useful to man, as the cow? There is milk for such as are weak and of tender years; there is meat for strengthening and nourishing the body; there is clothing for the naked; there are shoes for the feet.

What a wondrous type and shadowing forth of the love, compassion, righteousness, redemption, and mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus Christ! In the she-goat, there is another striking emblem of the Person of Christ. The goat is of a middle species, between the deer and the sheep: these two prefigure the combination of swiftness, and of softness, in the Person of Jesus. He is swift in his appearances unto his beloved people; swift in flying over the mountains of their guilt and iniquity; swift in his reproofs for their numerous transgressions; but soft in the chastisements of his hand; and in the yearnings and manifestations of the love of his heart toward them. But a more striking discovery of the Person of Christ is yet to be seen in the she-goat: she has two qualities combined in her nature: swiftness, which represents the sins of the whole church; and softness which prefigure the nature of the elect. The enemies of God's elect are called "a swift nation," (Deut. xxviii. 49.) and the elect themselves are said to have "faces like the faces of lions; and to be as swift as the roes upon the mountains." (1 Chron. xii. 8.) In the bearing of their sins; in the destruction of their foes; and in the bringing his people out of Egyptian bondage, the Holy Ghost declares that "the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud." Sin is that swift beast (Micah i. 13.), to which the chariot—(What chariot is that? Is it not that chariot of fire which took Elijah, and the whole church of God into glory?)—was to be bound.

Not only swiftness, but softness was also contained in the person of Christ—that is, "the children being partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself *likewise* took part of the same." Both the sins of the Church and her nature were found upon the person of the Son of God. Beside the young heifer, and the she-goat, you note, Abraham was to take a ram; which denotes the strength and glory of the sacrifice, which our Immanuel made for sin: in the heifer you have the pure and holy nature of the Son of God; in the she-goat, you have the combination of the Church's sin, and the Church's nature as meeting on him; and in the ram, you have the mighty power by which he put away sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

Observe, further, that in connection with the heifer, the she-goat—(mark, it was a *she-goat*,) and the ram; Abraham was also to take "a turtle dove and a young pigeon:" there you have the Church of God's elect both in her wild, and in her tamed, or sanctified condition. Mark you—(such of you, I mean, as are enabled to behold, and to feed upon, the perfect glory of this typical display of the richness and sufficiency of Christ's mediatorial work and offering; and of the church's eternal union to him)—Mark you, Abraham was to take these birds *with the* before-mentioned heifer, she-goat, and ram. "And he took unto him *all these*, and divided them in the midst; and laid each piece one against another: *but the birds he divided not.*" In this solemn transaction, I do behold a striking illustration of the all-glorious three-fold truth: first, that in all that Christ became, and in all that he did, the Church was with him, having an absolute interest in the whole: secondly, that in Christ becoming the sacrificial door for his people, there was a dividing asunder, and a casting away of all the sin that was found in those whose burden he

hrowed down his shoulder to bear: and, thirdly, that neither the bodies nor the souls of the elect shall finally be divided or separated from Him who loved them unto death: "but the birds he divided not." In a covenant sense, Christ is the door into the middle chamber: in a mediatorial, in an experimental, and in a representative sense,—CHRIST IS THE DOOR.

The door is in the *right side* of the house: What does it mean? Poor soul; I will say, there are, at least, three very great things implied. First; there is *strength* in it: secondly; there is *suitability* in it: thirdly; there is *access by it*.

When I say there is strength in it, I do declare that it is revealed in God's word, that there is no measure of weakness; there is no infirmity; no temptation, but what has happened unto, and been found upon the children of God; yet, *out of them all*, the Lord hath delivered them: Why? Not because of any strength in themselves; but because the door is in the right side of the house: and,

"It is he, instead of me, is seen,  
When I approach to God."

Might I stop to speak of the *suitability* of this door—where should I end?—All sorts, and all sizes of sinners, have proved that the door is in the right side of the house.

Poor soul—will you have Christ? Will nothing short of a full and finished salvation by Christ, do for you? Then do not say, this door is not large enough; look at Manasseh; look at Saul of Tarsus; think of the thief upon the cross; the prodigal; and Mary Magdalene; yea, come nearer; think of the marvellous grace bestowed upon a blaspheming Bunyan; upon an ignorant, benighted coal-heaver; upon an intelligent, but wickedly-disposed Hart; look for one moment, at the wondrous mercy, grace, and power bestowed upon sinful, wretched me; and then say, is there any sin; or any amount of sin; that can possibly shut that sinner out of Christ, who is flying to him; longing to lay hold of him: desiring to be wholly washed, sanctified, and clothed by him? Oh, no!—Christ is a glorious, a most capacious door for the whole election of grace; and this door is in the right side of the house.

IV. *The winding stairs.* "They went up with winding stairs." *Who went up?* The dwellers in the temple. They *went up*: they did not stand at the bottom star-gazing: neither did they merely run in and look at the door, and the staircase, and run away again: no more did they sit down at the first and second step, saying, "If I am to go up, I shall:" or, I should be glad to go up, but I am neither fit nor able:" No: the Holy Ghost says, "THEY WENT UP:" and this is true of the whole election of grace: "they go from strength to strength: every one appearing before God in Zion."

Christ, as the door, is at the top of the stairs: and the Church says he spake kindly and affectionately to her: "My beloved spake, and said unto me, rise up, my love, and come away." The

sweet invitation is expressive of the distance at which the poor sinner lays from Christ by sin and unbelief: it is also declarative of the love and affection of his heart toward his Church: he says, "O MY DOVE!" The church is Christ's Church: she is a select, a special, a separated body; and she belongs especially and eternally unto Christ.

What, say you, do you mean by "*the church*?" The simple definition of the term "church," in our own language, is *three-fold*—first it means "a place of solemn worship;" secondly, it means "an assembly of Christians;" or, thirdly, "a congregation."

Now the first of these, in a spiritual sense, is the true meaning of the term "the church." It is "a place of solemn worship." But what is meant by "a place?" Certainly not a building of wood and stone—but a building of "living stones." The church of Christ is a certain number of men, women, and babes, the whole of whom, from everlasting, were chosen, and predestinated unto eternal life and glory; chosen to make up one select body of glorified spirits who should ultimately set down with Christ, their covenant-head, in his kingdom. Every regenerate heart; every soul created in Christ Jesus, is "a place of solemn worship:" Christ is formed there; Christ is worshipped there; and the same is true of every assembly of real Christians: Christ is in the midst of them: and they seek him; they love him; they adore and worship him; and he speaks to them as he does not unto the world; holds fellowship with them as he does with no other creatures; and bestows on them blessings which other persons are not the subjects of. See—Ps. iv. 3; Deut. vii. 14; Isa. lxi. 9. Eph. i. 3, 4, 5; Rev. xix. 9.

The Lord Jesus Christ hath a very peculiar interest in this body of people. Speaking to the Father of them, he says, "Thine they were, and thou gavest them me: and *I have kept them*: not one of them is lost.

This sweet invitation from Christ to the church is expressive of the spirit and power with which he calls sinners to himself. There is nothing of terror or threatening in the Person of Christ, nor in his calling in, and bringing home of his sheep. The Holy Ghost says: "He gently leads them." When he finds the lost sheep, he lays it on his shoulder—(sweet figure of the entire weight of the church, in every sense of the word, being laid upon Christ) and brings it home.

See an illustration of the tender and affectionate care which the Saviour manifested over his church and disciples. They are met together in a room; it is significantly said, "*the doors were shut*." They were filled with fear: they thought all was over with them: they were not looking out for him; when lo! in an instant, "*JESUS STOOD IN THE MIDST*."

POOR soul! there is no door, nor any number of doors that can keep Christ away from those poor sinners which the Father hath given to him. How often do all the doors appear to be shut! Look which way you will, there is no seeing Christ—no open door to Christ—no apparent hope of finding Christ. Oh, how does every door appear to be shut; and, like the disciples, we sit down for fear of the Jews. (John xx. 19.) But, presently, without any labour on our part; without any noise or confusion; Jesus is found in the midst—not to terrify and alarm, but to speak peace. "Jesus said unto them, Peace be unto you." Until Christ comes, there is no way of escape: but he brings all needful mercies in his hand.

Another proof of the tenderness and affection of his heart towards his disciples, is to be seen in his subsequent conduct. How striking it

the account given by the Evangelist—"When he had so said, *He shewed unto them his hands and his side.*" How wonderfully descriptive of the love of his heart toward them: Look: as though he should have said, "See; it is me; see my wounded side; my pierced hands; I am He that was dead; and am alive again! I live! I live! I have conquered death and hell! their gates could not confine me: I am risen: and because I live, ye shall live also."

But to return. "They went up with winding stairs." Mark you; many sweet and holy mysteries are wrapped up in the figure here employed. Our covenant God has not merely set up Christ as the door of eternal life; leaving poor sinners to find him out or not; to climb up, or not; just according to their power or wisdom: Oh, no! He has "set a ladder upon the earth; and the top of it reacheth unto heaven." Yes; in Zion, there is not only Christ, as the Highway; but there is also the special way (Isaiah xxxv. 8.) and work of God the Holy Ghost, whereby sinners are really and truly brought into the bond of the covenant. By the stairs; I understand then, first, the glorious doctrines of grace, as laid out by the Holy Ghost in the 29th and 30th verses of the eighth chapter of the epistle to the Romans: the foundation of these stairs is laid in foreknowledge and predestination—"Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate." What solemn words! How certain it is, that these stairs were laid out and built for certain persons; who, from everlasting, have dwelt in the infinite mind, eternal purpose, and everlasting love of the mighty God!

The figure of the stairs shews you the certain, the eternal, the in-destructable connection existing between the doctrines of grace. A triune God did join them together in a holy covenant: God the Son, hath joined them together by love, and blood, by suffering, sacrificing, dying, rising, and ascending power! and God the Holy Ghost doth now join them together in the experience of the living in Jerusalem: so that predestination is joined unto election; and election is joined unto redemption; and redemption is joined unto sanctification; and sanctification is joined unto adoption; and adoption is joined unto justification; and justification is joined unto preservation; and preservation is joined unto presentation; and presentation—(Ephes. v. 26, 27.) shall usher in the elect, redeemed, sanctified, justified, and preserved soul into eternal glory. They went up with *winding stairs!* there is the *apparent mystery* of the way: sense and reason cannot see to the end: it is only faith, in the light of the blessed Spirit, that can look round the turnings—the many windings of this upward flight; and thereby receive, or behold, "the end of our faith, even THE SALVATION OF OUR SOULS." There is no obscurity or darkness in the way itself: none of the steps are broken or disjointed; neither have they ever given way, though thousands of millions of the heaviest sinners have travelled up to God upon them: not one ever came back, and said that there was any breach or breakage in the stairs: no, neither did ever one come back, and tell us, that

after going a long way up, they could get no further; but was compelled to return; neither was any one ever known *so to fall* down as to lose his life. Many, it is true, have slipped and tumbled about; and have hurt themselves severely; so much so, that they have gone limping for a long time after; but ask them, if the occasion of these stumblings laid expressly in the stairs? Let them answer, that have had experience in these matters: and well do we know the testimony they will bear.

It is also true, that many, like Balaam, have seen the safety, and the glory, and have prophesied and spoken of the beauty of these stairs; though they never set foot on one of them themselves; and many, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, have made a presumptuous rush to get on to the stairs, and dropped into hell in the attempt; because they would have done it without the Holy Ghost: still, we say, never was there one poor sensible sinner, who, by the grace of God, was brought to tread these holy steps, but found that He, who gives grace to begin, also gives grace to persevere even unto the end.

John Bunyan tells you that the winding stairs denote the continued turning of the living sinner away from every attainment both spiritual and temporal: and I know that there is a great truth in this sweet idea of our brother John: for, certain it is, that Christ, nor heaven, nor uninterrupted bliss, are not in, nor on, the stairs: we do now and then catch a glimpse of Immanuel's face; and we do now and then, hear his voice; yea, more than this; he does at times come down and give us a good lift up by the way: but, what is that word that is so largely written on every step? "*This is not your REST!*" Ah; that is it; and right well do we know that not one of the steps are large enough of themselves to lay down on: or to rest in, for any length of time; no, we want *the whole stairs*; and, we want the door at the top of the stairs; and we want the middle chamber, and the inner chamber too; that is, if we are really born of God.

You will observe that Christ doth especially speak unto his people in the "*secret places* of the stairs;" which I desire most particular to notice; but as I have so swelled this epistle, I shall for the present conclude: purposing to resume the subject in a brief letter to you in my next.

Beloved: examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; whether ye be really, vitally, truly, and experimentally on the stairs. My reader—before we part—is Christ, as the anointed of God, and, Christ, as the Saviour of poor sinners,—the great object of your soul's desire, and your soul's pursuit? Then, be of good cheer!

"The feeblest saint shall win the day,  
Tho' death and hell obstruct the way."

YOUR'S, TO SERVE IN THE LORD,

C. W. BANKS.

## EDMUND GREENFIELD'S COMPENDIUM

ON

ANA-BAPTISTS, THEIR DOCTRINES, RELIGIOUS FORMS, ORDER,  
MODE OF WATER-BAPTISM, VOW, WATER AND  
CONCISION LAWS.

## I N S E C T I O N S.

*The God-taught, and Scripture-directed labour of love for Christian Universal peace, union, Communion and Fellowship*,—See, Gen. iii. and iv. to Num. vi. 26. Ps. xxxiv. 14. Matt. v. 9, and 28. xix. 20. Eph. iv. 3—7. 1 John i. 1—4. Rev. xxii. 14, 17, 21.

## SECTION FIRST.

## BELOVED CHRISTIANS,

This compendium is commenced by me, in the will, grace, working, and command of our God; whilst, *as an old Author*, a baptist, God sent, Scripture-directed, minister in Christendom, and a Christian Protestant pastor, I am grieved on the account of the *schisms* that has been effected, and the desolating deeds that have been done in Christian churches by Anabaptists, since the death of our blessed Lord's apostles to these days; from their rise and progress, which I am, in this labour of love, in truth sent to declare and make manifest. Whilst I do believe many of them in Ministers, Deacons, Elders, and Peoples, are the elect of God and regenerated, as we read (Titus, iii. 5—6.); but having been beguiled by the power, devices, permitted temptations, and working of satan, the *ancients kept not*, neither do the *moderns now keep* the Old and New Testaments, God's book! *for their rule of faith and practice*. See Gen. and onward to Matt. xxviii. 19—20; 2 Tim. iii. 16—17; Rev. xxii. 14, 17, 21.) So being beguiled, and separating from God-taught—scripture-keeping Baptists, they were by them called Anabaptists; the grievous of the Christian, Scripture-keeping Ministers, Pastors, and churches.

And, I do declare, that I am now grieved for the anabaptists, weeping over them and their households; assured they are "grieving the Holy Spirit," and because they have scoffed at the Christian God-directed remonstrances, and publications of God-blessed authors, and because I fear they will scoff at, and pour contempt on this my labour of love in the Lord; but alas, I am comforted, strengthened and encouraged by these words speaking upon my heart, and in my mind; "God shall judge the righteous, and the wicked: for there is a time there, for every purpose, and for every work; (Eccel. iii. 17.), and "Thy work shall be rewarded." (Jer. xxxi. 16.) Therefore I am rendered bold in my God, and guided by his scripture counsel, "The anointing which I have received of Him, that abideth in me;" (1 John, ii. 27.) to proceed in my labour of love for peace, Christian universal union, communion, and fellowship; "to speak and write the gospel of God, with much countenance." (1 Thess. ii. 2.)

Be it known, therefore, to Christians generally, by these presents,



through "the Earthen Vessel;" a useful periodical in God's hands; and especially *be it known* to my professed friend and brother in the Lord God, C. W. Banks, the Editor, who is an Anabaptist Minister, and Pastor; and who, in his reply and remarks on my letter, published in the September number of "the Earthen Vessel," page 228, declares, "*That the man who shall be instrumental in proving from the scriptures of truth, that he is in an error, shall be accounted his friend.*" Verily, I never have seen, or read such an honest, honourable christian, scriptural expression, from any ancient, or modern Anabaptist Minister and Pastor. Therefore, as "God liveth" in his will, grace, working, scriptural counsel, and anointing, C. W. Banks shall find *that challenged* friend in me, Edmund Greenfield. And may God render my compendium a blessing to himself and hundreds of Anabaptists to convince them of their errors and lead them into the truth, as it is in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(To be continued.)

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SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GOODNESS AND FORBEARANCE OF GOD TO ONE OF THE VILEST OF THE VILE—ONE OF THE MOST IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE IN THE CHURCH MILITANT—BY CALEB COATES.

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Dear Brother Banks,

Some months since a few thoughts entered my mind respecting giving you a brief outline of my life and experience.

First, I thought you would thereby be enabled, in some measure, to understand why it is that

"I am in my own and others' eyes  
A labyrinth of mysteries."

Secondly, that if you discovered anything in it that, under the hand of God, might prove a blessing to any of the afflicted in Zion, and be a mean of exalting the glory of that grace, wisdom, and power, put forth by the eternal God, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, on behalf of those whom he hath loved with an eternal, and ever-flowing, burning love, that then you would allow it a corner in your EARTHEN VESSEL.

But when I learned from that periodical, that you had already the experience of three or four ministers under notice; I thought it would be an act of extreme folly in me to set my rush-light beside the luminaries of these valiant men in Israel; I thought also that they would make me to appear as contemptible in the eyes of every good man, as was David in the sight of the great Goliath of Gath; these outward things, and much inward horror of soul, prevented me for a time from prosecuting my purpose.

However I have received some fresh oil; my lamp is burnt up again; I have been by many circumstances stirred up afresh to this work; and having once more made it a matter of prayer to the Searcher of all hearts, I have this morning received confirmation as to what I am to do in the matter, by the application of the following scriptures:—"Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve? Canst thou number the days that they fulfil? or knowest thou the time when they bring forth?" (Job xxxix.) Again, "As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit, nor how the bones

do grow in the womb of her that is with child ; even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all." " In the morning sow thy seed ; and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, this or that, or whether they shall be both alike good." Eccles. xi. Again, this last scripture, though not the least in its effect on my mind, seemed to tell me what I must do ; namely : " Remember that thou magnify *His* work, which *men* behold, every man may see it ; man may behold it afar off." Job xxxvi.

I therefore send you this letter, being the first of a series ; which if you approve, I will continue one every month till finished, if the Lord permit. I have said a little about my father's life and experience, which is worth more than all mine put together, also I have subjoined one of his letters, which in a most singular way has fallen into my hands, after having been for a length of time laid aside and forgotten.

If you should put this in your little vehicle, let my title be " The goodness and forbearance of God to one of the vilest of the vile, one of the most ignorant and unstable in the Church Militant ;" and if any one of its readers should say of me that as I am a man of no ability ; of no learning ; but a poor, despised, and private individual, it is only pride and presumption in me to attempt this work ; let them know that it is my prayer to be kept from speaking wickedly for God ; and talking deceitfully for him, (Job xiii. 9.) and from lying lips and from a deceitful tongue, (Ps. cxx. ii.) and from justifying the wicked, or from condemning the just ; (Prov. xvii. 15). Yea, I hope to speak the truth as in the sight of God concerning all things whereof I may write. What an awful state I should be in, if I were to build my house on the quick-sand of lies and deception ! The wrath of the Almighty God, like a flood, will sweep away all such refuges ; and by the breath of his nostrils, as a consuming flame shall the Lord burn with unquenchable fire, all those who have no burial, who came in with vanity and go out in darkness, and whose names are covered with darkness, yea, notwithstanding their begetting a hundred children. Eccles. vi. And of having a covering of all the precious stones in the garden of Eden, though they walk up and down among the stones of fire for many years, and become eminently rich through preaching the gospel, (Ezk. xxviii.) yet, if they have not the gift of God to eat of those things whereof they preach, they will one day be laid before kings unto whom they will strike terror, and they will say, " *who then can be saved ?*" Must these ministers, with all their preaching ability bear their own iniquity ? " yes : " saith the Lord, whose name is holy. Ezk. xlv. 11, 12.

These are solemn things, my brother, unto which we do well to take heed ; that the light which is in us be not darkness : remember what that man, Spira, said to his friends, " I once did know God to be my father, not by creation, but by regeneration. I knew him by his beloved son, I could pray to him and hope for pardon of sin from him ; I had a taste of his sweetness, peace and comfort ; now contrarily, I know him as my enemy, I know nothing else to fly to but terror and despair." The account, this man gives of his experience, is enough to chill the blood of any trembling saint : he tells us " it is not an easy matter to be a Christian, it is not boasting of a faith in Christ without a conformity in life to the word and testimony. Many there be that snatch at the promise in the gospel, as if they did undoubtedly belong to them, and being flattered by the things of this present world, they pass on their course in quietness

and security; whom nevertheless the Lord hath ordained to eternal wrath." Take heed then, for, saith the apostle Paul, "he that continueth to the end shall be saved."

But I must not enlarge on this: may the God of all grace keep us in his fear, in his love, in his truth, and we shall not be far off from many adversaries. I proceed as follows:—

I, Caleb Coates, the second son of Robert and Mary Coates, late of Mickfield, in the county of Suffolk, was born on the 19th of May, 1808, when and where I made my appearance in this world of wickedness. My Father was then notorious for drinking and fighting, and my mother was also dead in sin; but when I was about the age of four years, it pleased the Lord to arrest my parents. My mother was convinced of sin first, and then about seven months afterwards it pleased the Lord to show my father what a rebel he was. And here I shall remark, as a proof of his rebellion and enmity, he was at work on a certain day with two christian men, and they said, respecting a certain Church Minister, that if he continued preaching as he then did, that he would preach himself and his hearers to hell. My father was filled with such rage at their conversation about this dead parson, that he went up to the two men with his reaping hook and threatened to rip them up if they said that again. However the Lord stopped him in his madness not many years afterwards in a marvellous manner; and made him beg for mercy. But several times after, receiving in his soul real contrition and sorrow for sin, he would break out again into open rebellion and blasphemy against that God whom he had been supplicating for mercy; and would feel determined to have his own way, and to go after his lovers; and so would begin swearing and drinking again; but this dreadful wickedness was as so many hedges over which he could not easily get, for as he said, they were as sharp arrows from the Almighty, sticking in his conscience. One time in particular, when my mother had cleaned her house, my father came in with a quantity of cabbage plants and laid them down direct where she had been cleaving, and then because my mother did not like him to do so, and so spoke to him about it, he swore at her, and then finding that all his religion and resolutions were destroyed, he was dreadfully tempted to blaspheme God, and such was his horrid state, and such the boiling up of the enmity of his carnal mind even into his mouth, that he stuffed it full of cabbage leaves to prevent it coming right out. At this time he did not know whether he did swear right out or not, and being dreadfully agitated, he exclaimed, "dear God, did I swear at you? did I swear right out at you?" then he felt almost distracted, looking like a man in despair, and on returning home one day with despairing feelings, he said, "I will open my bible, and will abide by whatever I may open upon," which was these words, "There is no peace for the wicked, saith my God." After reading these words he shut the book, and went up stairs; and while there, a christian man came to his house, to whom my Father used to say he would carry a faggot a mile at any time to burn such men. On his return from his chamber, this man of God began to talk to my father; but he would not hear any thing that he had got to say: my father said there was no hope for him, that he was entirely lost. This friend asked my father to accompany him on the Sunday following to Stoke Ash Chapel, which was seven miles distant, but my father refused to go, for, he said, two men go there that I once threatened to rip up. In this state

of mind on the Sunday following, instead of going to hear the gospel, he went into the parish church, and partook of the sacrament, and on the following Monday he went about six miles off to work; but being in such a dreadful state of mind he not only frightened those carnal professors in the church on the Sunday, but those persons also where he went to work. In this state he became unable to work, and was brought so low that he could not keep from his bed. Mr. Parker, of Wickham, had him sent home to his own house, and while in his own chamber, and in his own bed, the Lord the Spirit was pleased to reveal Jesus Christ crucified to his soul in such a manner that he appeared to be no further off than the bed post, and while the vision was before his eyes, my mother thought he was dying, and so she exclaimed, "My dear, do speak to me!"—he then said, "leave me alone."

This was a most solemn manifestation of the superaboundings of the love, faithfulness, and efficacy of the blood of Christ, which he afterwards related; and said, moreover, that *he was sure that Christ died for him!* After this, he went for the first time, to hear the Gospel preached by a Mr. Hurn, at Debenham, Suffolk; who afterwards left his church for conscience sake, and became a stated minister at a chapel, near Woodbridge, Suffolk. Under this minister my father was much blessed. I well remember seeing the tears roll down his cheeks while hearing that blessed man of God. I was then but a very little boy, but I wondered why my father cried so.

Shortly after this, it pleased the Lord to shew my father the ordinance of Baptism while he was reading the Bible, and he was accordingly baptized, and became a member of a baptized church at Stoke Ash, where he continued for upwards of thirty years, but during this time he was the subject of many dreadful captivities; and of as many wonderful deliverances, both in providence and in grace. A few of which I shall here relate; but least I should make this little rough painted history too large, I will be as brief as possible. It came to pass that my father took a situation as bailiff and gardener to a Mr. Glover, minister at Little Stoneham Church; this reverend gentleman and the devil together, no doubt, planned a scheme to keep my father from going to chapel; this was the trap: my father was to drive the family to church on Sundays, which he did; and while in this situation, he became so barren, so lifeless, so dead, and so stupid in his feelings that he did not know what to do; while in this state, he was violently tempted to get some arsenic and poison my mother, and then put all us children into the workhouse; but it happened on a certain day, that a Baptist Chapel was to be opened at Stow Market; thither my father went, and there it pleased the Lord to meet with him again, while they were singing these lines,

"Witness ye saints that hear me now,  
If I forsake the Lord."

So powerfully was the love of God shed abroad in his heart that he determined to drive his master no more to church. On the following Sunday, when his master told him to get ready, he replied, "I cannot go, Sir, I cannot hear your gospel; I believe it is your's only; and not the gospel of Christ; and so I must decline your place, if you are determined to make me go to church." Thus my father was delivered from two snares; that of poisoning my mother, and of going to church.

Some years after this, Mr. Glover sold his living to a gentleman of the name of John Wilcox, of London: this John Wilcox asked Mr. Glover

if he could recommend him a bailiff. Now my father had for years continued only as gardener for this Mr. Glover, and no other man could be recommended but my father. An interview took place; and my father suffered himself to be again entrapped, and to adopt the advice of John Wilcox, which was for him to give up his then business as a jobbing gardener, to let his house and garden; to turn his back upon his employers, and then come and live in a little house on his premises; which he did, though not without being first warned of the trouble that would await him. His employers very many of them prophesied truth concerning the step he was about to take; but I now believe God had a special purpose in it, for as the tower of Babel became an occasion and means of separating Noah's family; so, this unguarded step of my father became the means of scattering all of us. My father left Mickfield, and came to Stoneham, in January, 1817; bringing with him my mother, seven children, and two fat hogs; but he had not been in this, his new situation but a very short time before he received notice that Mr. W. needed his services no longer: but this man was constrained to keep my father for six years in his employ, during which time my parents suffered almost martyrdom both in providence and in grace. This gentleman used to go at times to my father's house on the week evenings when there would be preaching at a little new baptist cause in his locality; and tell my mother that she should not go; that he would not suffer her to leave her house; and as to my father, he was always too much engaged in things pertaining to his office as steward to be spared to go. At the end of this six years, we all caught the typhus fever; my father and mother, myself, and several of my brothers and sisters lay senseless at the same time. This dreadful disease continued to rage from April, 1823, until the Christmas following, when it pleased the Lord to recover us children and my mother to health, but my poor father long suffered from the effects of it in one of his legs. At this dead season of the year Mr. W. compelled my father to leave his house, taking with him my mother and eight children, 2½d. in money, and five loaves of bread; having no place to go to, save into a room from whence a poor woman had escaped in the middle of the previous night, for fear that her landlord should distrain her goods.

After this it pleased the Lord to let my father have another house, and to give him a few of his old employers he had served before, and which had prophesied truth concerning the tyranny of Mr. W——'s conduct; but as Paul and Silas must need go to prison, so likewise this furnace proved a blessing to my father, as it tended to burn the truth into his very soul, and gave him to experience the delivering hand of the eternal God, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost. About this time it pleased the Lord to send several of his real ministers into this part of Suffolk; and under the ministry of these—Mr. Gowan, now of Hailsworth; Mr. Defrane, now I believe in some part of Kent; and Mr. Tant, now of Brighton; my father was many times favoured with visits from the King of kings.

My father died triumphant in the faith, longing to depart, and to take possession of his long looked for inheritance, on the 13th Feb., 1840. During his last illness he was oft' times tempted to sell his Lord; but he would exclaim, "Oh thou blessed Lamb of God, I would not for ten thousand worlds keep him back, keep him back." At other times, he would cry out, "shut his mouth, shut his mouth." I did not visit my father during his last illness, but my brother Elisha did, who said to him,

"Father, perhaps you will get better now." At this he replied. "Away with it; away with it; I do not want to get better; I want to drag this muck rake no longer:" meaning his body of sin and death.

In my next, if spared, I will give you the letter written by my father above referred to, and then proceed with my own history. For the present, farewell.

Your's, to serve in the truth,  
C. COATES.

## To the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

### LETTER III.

Dear Friends,

When the Lord is about to do a great work for his church and people, it is no uncommon thing for the enemies of his church to be up in arms and set themselves in battle array against it; hence it is said that when Jehoshaphat was inspired by the Holy Ghost to set his face to seek the Lord, and to restore the true worship of God, that it came to pass that the children of Moab, and the children of Ammon, and with them others besides, the Ammonites came against Jehoshaphat to battle; and hence the church has ever found that when the Lord is blessing her to any great extent, that this threefold army, unbelief, sin and satan, are continually perplexing her, and setting themselves in battle array against her, so that the weak and fearful in Zion are oft' times afraid that they shall one day perish by the hand of this threefold combination of enemies; but fear not, poor trembling soul, for your God has promised that when thine enemy cometh in like a flood that his spirit shall lift up a standard against him—and

"His promises are yea and amen,  
And never were forfeited yet."

But it is also said that there came some that told Jehoshaphat, saying, "there cometh a great multitude against thee from beyond the sea on this side Syria, and behold they be in Hazazon-Tamar which is Engedi." 2 Chron. xx. 2.

Having occasion to call one evening at the house of a friend upon business, after business was over, my friend, a man of God, took up his Bible from the table, and read a few verses from the above chapter, when the words of the second verse arrested my attention; and as the Lord shall enable me, and depending upon him for a blessing to accompany them to the souls of his dear tried family, I shall endeavour to offer a few thoughts upon them, and shall notice in the first place, Jehoshaphat as being a type of the Lord Jesus Christ: First, in the signification of his name; for Jehoshaphat is a compound of Shephat, to judge, and Jah, the Lord, and means, the Lord is judge, or the Lord judgeth, and hence the heart of Jehoshaphat was strengthened at the recollection of this, and he said, O! our God, wilt thou not judge them, for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us;

neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee. Ver. 12. And God heard this cry of faith, and was faithful to his name, for when Judah came toward the watch tower in the wilderness, they looked unto the multitude and behold they were dead bodies fallen to the earth and none escaped; (ver. 24.) and not only is he the judge of his people's enemies to subdue and destroy them, but he is:—Secondly, the judge of his people, to reprove and chastise them, on account of sin and iniquity; however offensive this may be in the nostrils of some who would have us believe they are the highly favoured children of God; but the Holy Ghost says, that if they are without chastisement, then are they bastards and not sons: Heb. xii. 6—8 see also 1 Sam. iii. 13; Ezek. vii. 3, 4, 18, 30. and Heb. x. 30. For whose sins I would ask doth God chastise his people for but their own? not our dear Lord's, for bless his dear name, he was without sin\* neither was guile found in his mouth, for he was holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, (under the law) to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's, for this he did once, when he offered up himself without spot to God, that by the shedding of his own most precious blood, he might by the power of his spirit purge our consciences from dead works to serve the living God. Heb. vii. 26, 27; ix. 14. Thirdly, at the final restitution of all things he is to be the Judge, for the Apostle St. Peter saith in his sermon to Cornelius that God commanded him to preach unto the people and testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead. Acts x. 42. This among other characters of our Lord is one which he is to exercise as his own personal right; for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honour him, (by which I understand that the Father will have his own peculiar people to honour the son with the same honour as he himself requires, for the word, men, is not in the original, and therefore it must mean all the redeemed from among men) *i. e.* the Son even as they honour the Father. John. v. 22, 23 Matt. xvi. 27. 2 Cor. v. 10. But what a sweet consolation is it to the believer to know by precious faith that when he comes to judge the world in righteousness, and to minister true judgment to the people, he comes to confirm what hath already passed respecting the redeemed, and to declare that they are completely justified in his blood and righteousness, and cannot come into condemnation, though they are often now walking in darkness without any bright shinings, and saying—

“When thou my righteous Judge shalt come,  
 To fetch thy ransomed people home;  
 Shall I among them stand?  
 Shall such a worthless worm as I,  
 Who sometimes am afraid to die;  
 Be found at thy right hand?”

\* Though he was at the same time, the sin-bearer of his redeemed people.

But awful will that day be to all who are not found clothed in the righteousness of Christ, and washed from their sins in his rich atoning blood; but, fear not poor doubting believer, for though it will be an awful day to the wicked, yet to the saints of the Most High God it is said to be the day of "the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Tit. ii. 13.

"And if thy soul and Christ are one;  
 God will thy ransomed spirit own,  
 Made ready as his bride:  
 Cloth'd with the robe of righteousness;  
 The King will then approve thy dress,  
 And place thee by his side."

Secondly, Jehoshaphat was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ with respect to his wealth; for it is said of Jehoshaphat, that all Judah brought to him presents, and he had riches and honour in abundance, that he waxed great exceedingly, and that when he and his people came to take away the spoil of their enemies, they found among them in abundance, both riches with the dead bodies, and precious jewels which they stripped off for themselves, more than they could carry away, and they were three days in gathering of the spoil, it was so much. And what are the riches of our earthly Jehoshaphat, when compared with the riches of our heavenly Jehoshaphat (Jesus); hence the Apostle St. Paul says, that they are unsearchable, (the greek word signifies not to be traced out,) in Christ are riches of justification, riches of consolation, riches of sanctification, and riches of glorification, so that a precious Christ will be to the poor believing soul the best of all riches, because in him are all good things to be found; "for it hath pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell." Yes, believe me, poor doubting soul, when I tell you that in Christ there is a fulness of blood to bathe your poor polluted soul, and that this blood is efficacious to cleanse it from all sin; yes, from all sin; for God never pardons one sin, but he pardons all; and we dishonour him more, (saith an old divine,) by not trusting in him for complete forgiveness, than ever we did by sinning against him. In him there is a fulness of grace to supply all your needs while passing through the desert; in him there is a fulness of righteousness to clothe and justify every elect vessel of mercy; within him there is plenteous of redemption, and in him there is a fulness of glory to make all the redeemed eternally happy; so that the believer may well sing:—

"How can my soul be poor,  
 The pearl of price is mine;  
 In Jesus all I want, and more,  
 Is stor'd by love divine."



## THE EARTHEN VESSEL.

His merit grace and love,  
 His righteousness and blood,  
 Enrich me now, my treasure prove,  
 And pay my way to God.

Jesus is full of grace,  
 A treasure all divine;  
 I'll lay my wants before his face,  
 And call his riches mine."

But not only are the riches of Christ unsearchable riches, but the riches of the Lord Jesus Christ are said to be durable; hence the Holy Ghost saith by Solomon, when speaking in reference to our blessed Lord, "Riches and honour are with me, yea durable riches and righteousness." Prov. viii. 18. The Hebrew word means old riches; all other riches are but of yesterday—are new; but with me, saith Christ, are old durable riches and righteousness for every poor soul who feels their need of them.

I have read of one, that upon his dying bed called for his bags, and laid a bag of gold to his heart, and then cried out, take it away, it will not do. It will not do, worldly professor; think of this, for depend upon it, that worldly riches can never satisfy divine justice; they can never pacify divine wrath, neither can they ever quiet a guilty conscience; but the riches of Christ has satisfied them all; and when the poor soul is lying under the guilt of sin, what so relieves it as the riches of his blood! when the soul is surrounded with temptation, what strengthens it like the riches of his power and grace! when the soul is mourning under affliction, what comforts it like the riches of his dying love! and when both heart and flesh shall fail, and the soul comes to tread the verge of Jordan, what shall so comfort and support it, and land it safe on Canaan's happy shore, as the riches of his everlasting love and power. But I pass on to notice:—

Thirdly, that Jehoshaphat was a type of the Lord Jesus Christ with regard to the establishment of his kingdom, and the bringing of his people to Jerusalem with joy: for it is said, that the "Lord established the kingdom in his hand, and all Judah brought to Jehoshaphat presents, and he had riches and honour in abundance. Then they returned every man of Judah and Jerusalem, and Jehoshaphat the head of them, to Jerusalem with joy, for the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies, and they came to Jerusalem with psalteries and harps and trumpets unto the house of the Lord."

God the Father, when speaking of the kingdom of Christ, says, "Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill in Zion," &c. I have set my king, not an indifferent person, but him who is my Holy One, anointed of me by the Holy Ghost, and though they have gathered themselves together against me and my king, and would not that he should reign over them,

yet my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure, for I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion, and have given all the kingdoms of the earth to be in subjection to him, and he shall reign until he hath put all his enemies beneath his feet, and then shall he deliver up the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all. Then will he indeed bring all his redeemed people to Jerusalem with songs of deliverance, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall then in the fullest sense of the word obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

A SILENT OBSERVER OF WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE  
CHURCH OF THE LORD JESUS.

(To be continued.)

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EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM A BISHOP OF JERUSALEM,  
NOW TRAVELLING IN ENGLAND UNKNOWN BY THE  
PEOPLE.

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Kind Lady,

Accept this hasty reply, to defend truth. Glory be unto the ancient of days, Spirit of spirits, Life of lives. "God is love." God is good to all. The changeable creatures have not changed God. Love, essential true love cannot be turned into hatred. God changeth not. God hateth not anything that he made. The whole creation was good, very good; but by sin and lies, the creature changed from natural and moral perfection in which it was created. The whole creation was good, very good. But by sin and lies, the creature changed from natural and moral perfection in which it was created. The angels that fell from heaven were free-willers. They changed. Adam in his pure state was a free-willer; but he changed, and we are changing daily, dying daily. But can these changes in the mutable creature, change the very essential nature of God, which is love, or alter his immutable will, that is eternal? Impossible. Who hath resisted, changed, or altered, the good, acceptable, and perfect will of God? Neither angels, men, devils, time, sin, nor death, can possibly change Almighty God. That which is changeable is not God. The son of God took on him a changeable mortal body; not a sinful one, and bore our sins in his own body on the tree; and when he was condemned for our sins, sin itself was condemned in the body of his flesh, when he was changed from mortal, to unchangeable immortality, sinking our sins for ever in his death and blood. And by the power of the Spirit, the God-head, he was raised again, opening a way by his blood, resurrection, and righteousness, into the immutable life and unchangeable love of God; and into that love, we are quickened, and raised by the same Spirit: in perfect love we stand and live, "rejoicing in the hope of the glory of God."

God is love, and hateth not anything that he hath made. It is the creature deceived by satan and sin that hateth God; and sin is of the devil. The Lord did not make sin. God is love from everlasting to everlasting; and in himself who is love he hath loved us, and chosen us, not in moral Adam before the fall, nor in mortal Adam after the fall.

But he chooses us in his pure and holy son before the world began. And Christ the Holy Lamb came in the flesh, and by his death and blood hath slain the enmity, hatred, or sin for us, and in us when we receive the atonement; for we by nature hated God, not that God ever did hate us; and the spirit quickens us and brings us through that loving, bleeding Redeemer into perfect imperishable love in God. By grace are ye saved, and by faith ye stand. "This is the will of God that not one of his little ones should perish." They stand in the love of God and will of God, but those who stand in creature free-will, stand in a lie; and those who stand in a lie are in the wicked one, who is a liar, and lied and sinned from the beginning. But we are sanctified through the truth, and stayed in the will, love, that had no beginning, neither can it have any end. Glory be unto the God of Glory for ever. Amen.

Lady, I add no more now; but love, may the soft melting flames of Jesus' love, melt our souls more and more into one holy flame in him. Farewell.

"WORTHY THE LAMB."—REV. v. 12.

- "WORTHY THE LAMB!" that undertook,  
To save rebellious man;  
And in the eternal council book,  
First drew the wond'rous plan.
- "Worthy the Lamb! the Prince of Peace;  
Who left the realms above;  
Fraught with the riches of his gaace,  
To shew his Father's love.
- "Worthy the Lamb!" the Lord of Life,  
Who suffer'd, groan'd and bled,  
To save his Church from wrath and strife,  
Because her living head.
- "Worthy the Lamb!" exalted now,  
A King, and Priest on high;  
An advocate that ever pleads,  
And hears his people's cry.
- "Worthy the Lamb!" the angels sing,  
And saints their voices raise;  
Whilst heavens high arches ever ring,  
With ever ceasing praise.
- "Worthy the Lamb!" the church below  
Unites with those above;  
And one loud anthem ever flow,  
Of praise, to Jesus' love.

*Castle Cary.*

JOSEPH.

# THE SICKNESS OF ZION ;

AND

## THE TWILIGHT AGE OF THE CHURCH.

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“ And, behold, at evening-tide trouble.”—Isaiah.

“ The great day of the Lord is near, and hasteth greatly. That day is a day of wrath, of trouble and distress.”—Zephaniah.

“ And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads ; for your redemption draweth nigh.”—CHRIST.

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THE sickness of the church at this time is evident ; and the opiate has so far wrought in her constitution, that she appears almost in her midnight sleep. And who can awaken her ? None but he who came to his sleeping disciples, and waked them in the garden. The exact time of the night is hard to determine ; but the signs of the times, speak loud to those who have any spiritual discrimination. The time of Christ's second coming, the first resurrection, and the end of the world, no man on earth nor angel can know ; though many have pretended in these last days to know the time, and have prophesied of it, and have deceived many. But, indeed, “ it is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father has put in his own power.” Acts i. 7. But it is our privilege to watch the “ Signs of the times ;” and hath not the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud ? Think you, is it the night clouds spreading over the gospel day, or dispensation ? Think you, shall we have a tempest before the cloud disperses ? the cloud looks black, and big with something ; the air is very oppressive ; some are fallen asleep, and dreaming many vanities ; and those who are half awake, can scarcely breathe ; the air seems to be impregnated with some foul vapours, it may ignite, and burst suddenly upon us soon. Well, hurricanes and storms sometimes clear the air ; and there is much to be cleared away, before we can have clear skies and sunshine.

‘Twilight precedes midnight. Hark ! did I not hear *Luther's* time-piece strike ? “ Verily I believe that God will not bear with this

wicked world, three hundred years longer." The sixth vial appears to be poured, or pouring out; the Euphrates is drying up; the false prophets' days are numbered; the Turkish Crescent is waning; the Ottoman Empire is fast declining: and, when the seventh trumpet sounds (the last trump of God) and the seventh angel hath poured his vial into the *air*; the great voice out of the temple of heaven will be heard from the throne, saying "It is done." Rev. xvi. 17. Popery is rallying to her utter ruin; and like a mill-stone, must first be raised up, before she is hurled into the sea to rise no more. The cloud coming over us, is big with important events; the people were alarmed at the cloud, and a tumult was heard through the land; but they are silently gone to sleep again; they could not stop the evening shadows: and "They that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken, are drunken in the night."

Signs of the night being upon us—Popery, or the sly Roman Catholics, like evening wolves, are lurking in the dark forest around us; beginning to prowl: and if once they can obtain the civil power in Parliament, the sheep of Christ will feel their teeth. They will not be satisfied with their present grants: as the prophet saith, "they gnaw not the bones till the morrow." People persuade themselves that Roman Catholics are not what they formerly were; but the nature of the beast is not changed. O! Dissenters! Dissenters! the wolf came in with a lamb's skin on. You have let the wolf in among your children; he is getting his muzzel off, and you will not get him out. You may pat him and coax him; he will awake that shall tear you, and like a serpent that shall bite you; and where is the balm for our wounds in the night? O sinful nation! and sinful people, our sins have procured this for us. The night is upon us; the sun is gone down over the prophets. We are in the dark, we see not our signs, it is dark, and our sins and errors have blinded us; "darkness is covering the earth again, and gross darkness the people."

Another sign of the night is, the witnesses that have been a long time prophesying in sack-cloth, are beginning to finish their testimony, and the "beast is ascending out of the bottomless pit to make war against them." Rev. xi. 7. Those faithful servants have been giving a portion of meat in due season to the household of faith, and feeding Christ's sheep. But night is the time

when men are drunken. 'The night is coming on us when no man can work. "They that are drunken, are drunken in the night; and the evil servants, are beginning to beat their fellow servants." Luke xii. 45. For even those who we expect are the true church, are beginning to hate one another, and beat one another with ill words; and if it goes on, not only outward foes will scatter the church, but she will divide herself against herself, as those in Jerusalem at the time of her destruction, warred among themselves till the blood was seen running out at the sinks and gutters, before the Roman army went upon them. So is it now, the visible church have some evil servants in her, and intestine wars are evident; ministers against ministers, people against people, and various sects trying to conquer and subdue each other, and tongue-banging one another. The leaders of the people cause them to err. Through their pride, and self-importance are despising one another; and even those who profess to be of the same faith, and order, cannot bear the sight of each other; but are beating one another like drunkards of the night, at midnight revellings, swelling to see who is to be the greatest. And while these wars, and fightings within the church, that come of their own lusts and pride, are going on; the *Roman Catholics* without, are watching their opportunity to burst upon us as the Roman army did upon Jerusalem of old.

It appears that the sixth vial is almost poured out, and the nations are mustering for the decisive battle of Armageddon. Rev. xvi. 16. "Multitudes! multitudes! in the valley of decision, for the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision." Joel iii. 14.

Another sign of the night is—"The sun and the moon shall be darkened, and the stars shall withdraw their shining:" Joel iii. 15; corroborating with Matt. xxiv. 29; "The sun shall be darkened and the moon shall not give her light; and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers of heaven shall be shaken." The sun of righteousness is darkened now by the smokes, mists, and vapours of error, and wickedness from the pit; very little sun-light in the church; darkness without, and darkness within is known and felt by many, while others are fallen asleep, and dreaming that a millennial light and glory is beginning to dawn among us in this day. The ministry of the

times, is a dark ministry; the deathly natural feelings of corrupt nature is preached more than the glory of Christ, and his glorious gospel. The churches seem more like companies of dead corpses, than living, praising sons of God; death is come in at our windows; and death and famine, is felt by the living in Jerusalem; and the ministry is like "the dead burying the dead." Death, and creature pollution is the theme of the times, rather than the life, righteousness, and glories of Christ. Death is in the pot. People are eating the pottage and falling asleep, and tumbling one on another; the healthful meal, the living Christ, and his glory, is not poured into the pot, to take death and poison out of it. The night is come; and men have closed their shutters and are going to sleep in the dead religion of self; or rocking each other to sleep with the night lullaby; rather than awaking up harp, lute, and glory, to sing the high praises of God and the Lamb. The church, once "fair as the moon;" does not give her light, nor reflect the risen glories of her glorious Lord; but is eclipsed with the dark shadows of earth! earth! earth! The stars are fallen; many who stood as lights to the visible church, are fallen to the earthly, sensual, devilish religion of popery. The powers of heaven are shaken; the church is called heaven in many scriptures; the religion of the Spirit is in her, but, alas! the powers of godliness are denied, and almost shaken out of her, and the dark dead form set up in its place; stone busts, portraits, paintings, and dead images of godliness are seen in abundance, but the life, and the breath, and the motions of the Spirit, where are they? O! could I but cry aloud unto God to revive us. But O! I feel this death myself, and am almost ready to fall asleep.

"Waken, O Lord, our drowsy souls,  
To run the dangerous road;  
And if our souls are hurried hence,  
May they be found with God."

Another sign of the night is when the unclean beasts and unclean birds, that cannot bear the sun light, creep forth. John Bunyan, in his writings on the slaying of the witnesses, says, that "when we see all the unclean birds gathering together, and beginning to chirp in one cage together, we may know that the time is at hand." The unclean are those who are not sanctified by the Spirit, word, and blood of Christ, whether profligate or

professor. And since the night came on us, see how the uncircumcised, and the unclean, are gathering together in one army against the true Zion. Churchmen turning Puseyites, and going over to the mother of harlots; dissenters have for some years been forsaking the professed purity of their faith; going into the quagmire and uncleanness of Arminianism, free-will, &c.; which, in the essence, is Popery. And the whole great body of general dissenters, that are not sanctified through the truth, remain in the lies of satan, and if not members of Christ's mystical body, are but limbs of the man of sin and Anti-christ, and have the mark of the beast shut up in their right hand, if it is not on their foreheads in an open avowal of Popery. And have they not for years been uniting in one spirit, against those who are born of the Spirit, the true covenant of God? As the light and glory of the gospel sun declined, darkness and error came on in the name of light and truth; so that night fowls, and beasts of prey, are gathering together without; and when the trying crisis comes, doubtless will be formed in the army of Anti-christ, with a name and form of christianity, fighting against those who have the Spirit, and bear the image of Christ; none others will suffer in that day, depend on it. A professor of Christ is common among men, and easy to those who seek some outward show, or advantage by it; but suffering for Christ, is another thing. And, who will suffer for Christ in that? None but those who have "Christ in them, the hope of glory;" none but those who have his image impressed on their souls. But if we suffer with him, we shall reign with him.

Another sign of night is, when thieves disguise themselves, and go in the dark to plunder. The midnight thieves are out,—the thief cometh in the night. We are informed that the *Jesuits* of Rome, under the command of the Inquisitor General, are out in disguise in all nations, to deceive the whole world: and are bewitching the people to popery. Many are already in England in disguise, deceiving the people; not only foreign thieves, but thieves at home in the visible church, are storking about in this dark night, "and shall deceive many, if it were possible the very elect,"—not by preaching against election: the subtlest home thieves have election in their creed, to make the deception the greater, to deceive if possible the very elect. Swindlers and



coiners of base money stamp the sovereign's image on it; but it is not on real gold, but on base metal gilded; and weighed in the balances of the sanctuary they are not found to be good weight. It is not the new man created after the image of him that created him, in righteousness and true holiness. It is a false holiness gilded—"a potsherd covered over with silver dross;" it is old Adam and his dross passed through a false gospel mint. But night is the time when this bad coin is vended; and the church in the night have been deceived by such: and there is much in circulation now, "but every man's work must be tried as by fire." A hypocrite will perish in the trial. And when the founder begins to melt in many churches, I fear he will melt in vain—almost all dross, and little or no pure gold: but his gold cannot be lost in the fire. Now, who is the coiner of the base money?—the devil, not the Holy Spirit; and the thing coined is deceiving and being deceived: and night is the time to pass this bad coin, with all the false evidence and false witnesses on it. Adam, sin, death, and corruption, gilded over with gospel words, and not the new man, with the "Three that bear witness in the earth, the Spirit, the Water, and the Blood." For the Holy Ghost is witness for those who are created anew in Christ Jesus,—"The Lord knoweth them that are his," and they know him who is their life eternal; therefore, they have the love and faithful witness within them. "The Spirit beareth witness with their spirits that they are the children of God." For it is a new man created in a new and everlasting holiness in Christ Jesus; and the Adam body of this death and corruption, are no evidences of the new man, but the contrary. "It is the Spirit that bears witness, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me." John xvi. 26. This "he that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." And Jesus saith, "Ye shall bear witness of me." Thus, the new man, the true believer, hath the true witness of God, and is God's witness. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." But others receive the witness of man, old Adam wretchedness and corruption, and dead bones, are set up as witnesses, by men, but the witness of God is greater. 1 John v. 9. The rotten dead bones of old Adam set up, are no witnesses of life for the true Israel. The body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life. The dead bones of the multitudes of Gog are no witnesses,

but of death ; for the living passengers in this night, now passing through this dark valley of Hamon-gog, when any shall see a man's bone, the dead bone of old Gog and Magog, the body of the man of sin, they shall set a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-gog. Ezek. xxxix. 15. What sign ? "The signs that shall follow them that believe." Mark xvi. 17. Through the power of the Spirit, in the ministration of the gospel, the souls of them that believe, shall have the true signs and witness of the Spirit. And when the passengers, or spiritual ministers of Christ, have passed through this valley, all the bones of the body of Christ shall receive the life, breath, signs, and witness of the Spirit in them ; but those which are left of the dead bones of Adam, destitute of the Spirit of God, will be left as the bones of the multitudes of old Gog, the man of sin, in the valley of Hamon-gog ; and the city shall be called Hamonah—that is, the multitude ! "multitudes, multitudes, in the valley of decision."

Now, ye dear ministers of the Spirit in the sanctuary, where are we ? Do we set up our signs by the dead bones of Gog : or, is the night come upon us so dark, that "we see not our signs ?" What are the greater part of the churches professing Christ in this day ? Are they not like the sepulchres of Gog in the valley of Hamon-gog, painted with the smooth demure appearances of piety, when inwardly they are full of rottenness and dead men's bones—the bones of the multitudes of Gog ? Are not the ministers of Gog gathering the armies of Gog in all nations together, a large Magog to make war with the saints ?

Now, ye dear ministers of God, who are a flaming fire, and have the Spirit of God in you, go through the land and set up your signs, but do not gather the dead bones of Gog, and call them the bones of the living body of Christ. Do not preach the corrupt creature's sincerity, endeavours, and mere moral reformation, as signs of divine life ; neither preach the rottenness and corruptions of old Adam, as evidences to the children of God :\* too many dead bones are already gathered into the valley of vision—the visible church.

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\* Every poor sinner truly convinced of sin by the Spirit of God, most certainly feels rottenness enter into his bones, and tremblings in heart

“The burden of the valley of vision, what aileth thee now?  
 \* \* “The slain men are not slain with the sword, nor dead  
 in battle.” (Isaiah xxi. 1, 2.) Are they not dead in a profes-  
 sion? Set up your signs; the true signs of the work of the Spirit,  
 and the life of God in the soul; and may the Lord work with  
 you, in you, and by you, with signs following. Amen. Mark  
 xvi. 20. What of the night? The morning cometh!

A WATCHMAN ON THE WALLS.

LEICESTER, Oct. 12, 1845.

(To be continued.)

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE GOODNESS AND FORBEAR-  
 ANCE OF GOD TO ONE OF THE VILEST OF THE VILE  
 —ONE OF THE MOST IGNORANT AND UNSTABLE  
 IN THE CHURCH MILITANT—BY CALEB COATES.

Dear Brother Banks,

IN my last letter to you, which is published in the October number of  
 the EARTHEN VESSEL; I very briefly noticed a few things declarative of  
 the grace of God in my father, and the Lord's faithfulness to him; even  
 to and through the waters of Jordan: and I therein promised that I  
 would subjoin one of his letters which he sent me; that I cheerfully do,  
 that so he may, though dead, “speak for himself on God's behalf,” (Job  
 xxxvi.) much better than I can speak for him: and may the God of  
 heaven, who seeth not as man seeth, make its contents a blessing to some  
 one of his dear elect; which he assuredly will do, for he setteth not a man  
 to work in vain, though he may only spin goat's hair. (Exodus xxxv. 23.)  
 The letter is as follows:—

Stoneham, Sept. 15, 1835.

“My dear Son,

“As I have had no answer from London to my last letter which I sent  
 to your brother Robert; and being a little more settled in some way, I  
 thought I would write a few lines to you, through the upholding care, and  
 faithfulness of a merciful, covenant-making and upholding God, which  
 was ordered in all things; what a mercy, it is all things included in it;  
 then he hath ordained my tribulation-path, and the mercies that should  
 be thrown into it from covenant love.

“He who saw all things from the beginning, saw what the church would  
 be plunged into; born to cares and woes, a sad inheritance! but when

and lips; he feels his vileness, filthiness and corruptions unbearable,  
 But mark, these are all evidences in the court of conscience against the  
 soul; let experience speak; do not they all come in and evidence against  
 the soul to condemn it to death and hell? and the poor soul for a time  
 believes what they say: knows it to be true; and fears it shall perish  
 eternally; until the Holy Spirit comes in with a better witness of life,  
 peace, and pardon through Christ Jesus the Lord, and his precious blood.

the sinner that was loved by a dear Redeemer, who is equal with God ; and God the Spirit seals truth in his soul, and gives him divine understanding, he can see that he has got two inheritances, and he is sure of both ; although in one he cannot see what may befall him, yet a loving God has promised, " As thy day thy strength shall be ; " and that be far from God, to send out more promised notes than he means to cash : such thoughts are insulting his wisdom, love, and power. But, if our adversary can get us to buy any of his trash, he is sure to throw us down ; but the commandments of God to his children are, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it. I think this beginning means, when the Spirit of God, or rather God the Spirit, begins to work truth in the soul.

" Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God : he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. These commandments his children are called to keep ; and they are not grievous to them to keep, for when faith and understanding are given, they know rotten doctrine—the devil does not often get them down here—no : they, more or less, love the gospel, or tidings of mercy. This they know that the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did ; by which hope (Jesus) we draw nigh to God ; nigh enough to see man a rebel at his heart ; nigh enough to see sin condemned in the flesh of Christ, on covenant love and engagement ; nigh to see themselves condemned by law without Christ ; nigh to God by the blood of the cross : by one offering he hath perfected the blessedness of salvation, by bearing a load in soul and body, that would have sunk a world to hell ; that he might be their hiding place, who were ordained to believe on his name.

" From the late trial, the death of my father, which I have been called to witness, and to feel keenly in my whole frame, I think I have been led to see what a blessed bestowment is salvation, in knowing and feeling the desolate state the soul appears to be in, without these blessed discoveries, which are solemnly felt by them that die in the faith. Oh, the worth of the gospel, in all its doctrines, in all its discoveries. Oh ! what has not God given in his gospel kingdom, of needful blessings for his church below—knowledge, faith, hope, confidence, assurance ; to taste and feel the worth of the word of life : and where it is not felt, where it is not the will of God that we should not submit to his sovereignty, we might mourn till we languish for the evils we cannot heal. Oh, did we but live under a sense of the suitableness of gospel blessings, and live on our avowed principles, sure then we should not be moved out of the paths of pleasantness, for all such paths are peace. But our adversary goes and sets a lot of snares on every path we tread, and his satanic influence was ever too subtle and too crafty for man—helpless man, to encounter with ; and as God had promised a weapon for his children that will break snares and spring the enemies' traps, we are called to make our request to the Lord : prayer gets cold, heart gets harder, soul more insensible, dangers blacken up, and satan says, " Where do you think you are now ? give it up and hang yourself : " and so he worries whom he cannot destroy and then they have to make their requests again. Ps. cvii. 19. Thus through dismal shades and dangerous snares, they make their way to God. Here the dear crippled family meet Christ, the centre point, between God and man ; here they get their bones set, their hearts softened, their eyes

enlightened, their feet shod, and they set off afresh. But, alas! like a little child unguarded by its parents, steps into the mire again, and then again they fall.

"We doubt not, but that this very trying season, must have had a great effect on your garden. We want you to tell us whether it has not affected your spring crops; and if so, tell us what the Lord has placed as a substitute for them: and be sure to write to us, as we have a desire to hear from you as soon as convenient. We wonder Robert did not answer the letter respecting the death of his grandfather. Poor dear! he laid on my arms, and I had to lay his head on the pillow; then he closed his eyes in death, in three or four minutes.

"I think of trying to continue my mother in her house, if the Lord permit. May the Lord teach me how to act towards her; there is much evil attending that concern. I do hope I shall not be ensnared by the Sunday work. We remain much the same in providence, as to health. Your dear mother and myself are breaking up, little by little; but we want to leave ourselves in the Lord's hand; for it is said, "It shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him." Eccles. viii. 12. We very much want a few lines from Seba and from John; and we hope they must think so. We hope Robert is not offended with us: we could not let him know before; his grandfather had a very swift message, and as soon as I was able, I wrote him word. I hope he will write to us and Jesse also. I must conclude with our kind love to you and yours, and all your brothers.

"We remain, your loving parents,

"R. and M. COATES

I ought now to go on with my own history, but before I do that, allow me to add, that my mother is yet alive, and is living in the country; and while I was thinking about commencing this story, I was powerfully arrested by these words, "The people had a mind to work." Nehemiah iv. 6. I therefore paid her a visit, for the purpose of getting at the first part of this narrative; and I hereby testify, that my journey was not in vain. I found my mother in doubting-castle, writing bitter things against herself, drawing conclusions from what she felt working within, that she could not be a vessel of mercy. She said, her constant grief was that she felt so little or no life in her soul, and that carnality, hardness of heart, sensuality, deadness, darkness and unbelief, pressed upon her so heavily, that she many times thought that it was all delusion. However, when we began to cast up the way in which the Lord had been pleased to lead us through this great and terrible wilderness, (Deuter. i. 19.) she became overwhelmed, in meltings of soul; and she cried for joy of heart and said, it is all right—the Lord hath done all things well: my path is a right path notwithstanding its roughness. She also said that I had been instrumental in doing her more good this visit than all others put together. I stirred her up in a way of remembrance of what the Lord had been pleased to give them. His testimony and tokens were examined, or as the Psalmist saith, "I will consider thy testimonies," Ps. cxix. 95; and the dear Lord was pleased to seal them upon my soul as tokens for good. Ps. lxxxvi. 17.

Thus, I trust, my journey was not in vain; and now I shall proceed with reference to my own life, and shall notice, but very briefly, a few things con-

nected with my younger years, lest I should weary you with an account of things to no profit. I well remember my father carrying me miles when they went to hear the word preached, before he went to live at Stoneham, but never, to my recollection, was I very deeply convinced of my lost state; yet, an act of wickedness which I perpetrated, when quite a little boy, has looked me in the face, even to this day. When my parents removed to Stoneham, I was employed at the rectory belonging to the late John Wilcox; and on Sundays I was sent to a school, established at the parish church. In this school I learned to read a little, not only in books, but in my own conscience; for one day the rector preached from these words, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Luke xvi. 13. Then I began to look at myself, and to make many promises to be a better boy. I well remember that once I was attempting to pray in a certain place, and that instant my father came where I was, and seeing me on my knees, said, What are you at boy? I in a moment uttered a lie, which deceived my father, and drove my resolutions to be better, to the four winds; I have often thought of that act, and wondered how a lie should come into my mouth so instantaneously, and so contrary to the feeling of my mind. I do not recollect that I made any other attempt to pray; but I used to think that if I had time to say, "Lord have mercy upon me," just before I closed my eyes in death, that all would be well; however, God in the order of his providence afflicted me sore, and taught me otherwise; there is no getting away from under his hand.

When the typhus fever reached my father's house, I left it, and went and lived with my grandfather. But that dreadful disease, one day laid hold of me so powerfully, that I fell down senseless; when I came to myself, I wondered what had been the matter with me; I walked to my grandfather's house afterwards, and went to rest; but I was soon seized with it again. In the morning I was advised (feeling a little better,) to go home to my father's house, in barley sowing season. My father and mother were then laying in a state of insensibility; which was my fate, after the first night in that melancholy house. In this afflicted state, I laid nearly four months; during which time, many thought I should die, and Dr. Beck gave me the name of Resurrectioner, when he saw me recovering. In this illness, I had three dreams, one was, I thought I saw a ball of string in Dr. Beck's drawer, and when that was drawn out, I should go and live with that gentleman; which I did; but, there was no more signs of that, than there was of my being called by grace. In another dream, I thought the earth was level, and cleared of every thing, so that not a vestige was left under which a sinner could hide himself; and that all the clouds had left the skies, and that I was standing upon the earth quite naked, trembling, and in a stooping position; while arrows were shot into my back and sides; and refuge appeared to fail me. I dreamed again, and then I thought the earth was covered with beautiful green mountains, and vallies; and everything looked delightful; and I saw an abundance of sheep scattered over the earth, some were in flocks, others wide apart feeding by themselves taking no notice of those that were flocked together. I tried with all my might to get near one of these flocks, but in vain; at last I was told that I should be enabled to do so, and that the cattle on a thousand hills were the Lord's.

These two latter dreams have been very instructive to me since I have been called to know the truth, they are so significant of the two

states of a poor sinner: first, as being under the law; and secondly, as being brought to mount Zion, feeding on the pastures of eternal truth, that they need no comment of mine, to shew their meaning.

C. C.

*(To be continued.)*


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## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY:

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

### PART VI.

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## THE EXPERIENCE AND CALL TO THE MINISTRY

OF

### MR. THOMAS STRINGER.

A little work, embodying an interesting sketch of the early life, conversion and call to the ministry of THOMAS STRINGER, now minister of the gospel at Snows Fields Chapel, London, has just been published. It may very justly be termed "Thomas Stringer's reason of the hope that is in him:" we shall therefore in a few extracts from the work, let him speak for himself.

After a spirited, and smartly-written preface, (which well bespeaks the cast and tone of the author's mind,) he says,

"I was brought into existence, at Orpington, at the White Hart Inn, in the county of Kent, where I continued with my parents till the age of five years. My poor parents at this place were quite reduced in circumstances; and had a sale of what they possessed, and rendered nearly (if not quite) unto all that which was their due. They then removed from there and went to Dartford, in Kent, where they abode a short time.

\* \* \* To the best of my recollection we returned from Dartford back to Orpington, where we fell upon the parish for support: and because my father had acted upon honest principles, the parish officers always concluded he had got money, under which suspicion of theirs', we were treated like dogs, and suffered very greatly, scarcely allowed bread to eat; and were denied the annual or Christmas gifts, which made things go very hard with us; more so as neither of my parents knew the Lord, nor one of us as a family, which consisted of five children. \* \* \*

"About this time I was put to school, at the National School, Saint Mary's Cray, Kent, in which school I continued two years, being all the schooling I ever had. Shortly after I was put to this school, my parents obtained an order to be received into the workhouse, not being able to live out any longer; but, so great was the enmity of the officers of the parish, that they refused to admit my poor parents into the house, but said, the children may come in, and they should stay out and live how they could. Accordingly, myself and one sister were placed in the den, the others being married and at service: and here we were used brutally and trampled (as it were) under foot, our father and mother going like vagabonds or beggars, from place to place, for food to support them—and

were not allowed to see us, nor we them. This I thought was very hard and very tyrannical; the master of the house seemed never so happy as when he was flogging me, which he would do for the smallest offence, which was a great trouble to my poor sister. At length my father and mother, who were perpetually troubling the magistrates and overseers, to let them into the house, obtained permission, (something like the poor widow and the unjust judge :) so they came in, and for a long time were used very ill. After a time, the master of the house much approved of my father, and honoured him with the noble office of tax-gatherer, being, as I suppose, ashamed to do his own dirty work, so he made him a cat's paw for himself.

"We were in this place about two years, and I, instead of being kept to my school regular, as the other children were, was compelled to stop at home a great part of my time, and spin a certain quantity of goat's hair, to make nosebags for horses, or go without food: a little like the children of Israel, not aught of this task was to be diminished, straw or no straw; or I was driven out into the fields to keep crows off the corn, with a small piece of tough beef and eight or ten cold potatoes in my satchel. At length the parish officers requested us all to come out, and they would find employment for father and me, so out we came, and hired an old house for a shelter from wind and weather, but had scarcely any thing for domestic use; we fitted together a few bricks for seats and did as well as we could. Yet, we preferred it to the workhouse. Slight convictions of all that was wrong had followed me close for some time, but worn off at intervals. I was now about ten years of age, and began to form connexions, and be a confederate with the most low life profligates I could find; I was awfully addicted to swearing. My poor father often chastised me for mixing with such base company, telling me I should come to the gallows, which for a time much distressed and alarmed me; yet it was all my delight to be among them; and if any bad deed had been perpetrated, or any mischief had been done, Stringer was sure to be the first in the transgression, like a ringleader of the giddy rabble. \* \* \*

"About the age of twelve years, I was to go to work for one Mr. Mosyer, a large farmer and butcher in the village, for two shillings per week; in his service I continued nearly five years. Sometimes I was employed on the farm at husbandry work; at length I became his butcher boy and groom; and some sins from which I was secretly preserved, while in this situation, I shall not mention; only bless, and praise that God, who graciously kept me from them. \* \* \*

Convictions of sin, and inward struggles against it, appear to have been implanted in his soul at so early an age as between fourteen and fifteen: he says,—

"Convictions of conscience for all that was wrong, closely pursued me; so that I vowed and promised again and again to reform, in order to get rid of these lawful indictments; but no sooner was the vow made than broke again; and I returned to my old habits as usual. I went one Sabbath to chapel; the service commenced: the hymn and prayer much affected me; and rested with some degree of weight on my mind; the text was announced, and made a deep impression upon my soul, by the power of God; these were the words, "He sent redemption unto his people." Ps. cxi. 9. During the discussion of the subject, which was



with great warmth and energy, as was usual with Mr. C——, my mind was very much arrested with the words, *his people*, together with the description he gave of them, and their glorious redemption by Christ Jesus the Lord, from the curse of the law, sin, death, and hell. O, how sweet was this good news from a far country; I enjoyed it blessedly; and thought it was all mine! O what a possession! This sweet frame was very transient, for I soon became very miserable, having lost the savour of the subject: a gloom hung over my mind, and trouble took possession of my soul; the sin of swearing, to which I was so addicted, appeared like a huge mountain, which I thought would have crushed me to atoms; and many more awful sins and heinous crimes which I was the subject of, seemed to back it up, and threaten instantaneous destruction. I tried to pray, but could not. I endeavoured to call to mind, or recollect, if I had not done good, or been better at some one period, so that I might procure to myself a refuge from the threatening storm; but, alas, everything I thought of, seemed to bear this inscription, "SIN:" and, "the soul that sinneth shall die." This was a sore trouble to me for some time: I was quite afraid to lie down in my bed, and close my eyes, fearing I should open them in hell: I have watered my couch with my tears. Sometimes I thought the earth would open and swallow me up in a moment; and have looked about to see if any person was near to see me sink to rise no more. Then I have run away from the spot, thinking I might be more safe at another place. Again, I have rushed into company of any sort to get rid of my thoughts or drive away my distress. I trembled awfully at a thunderstorm, expecting a thunderbolt to cut me down every moment. I once dreamed I was gazing upon a most dreadful thunderstorm, the heavens looked awfully black; the thunder rolled through the vaulted skies as though it would rend the globe to atoms; presently a ball of fire fell from the clouds some distance from me, and bounded along on the earth straight toward me: O, how I trembled, fully expecting to be cut asunder thereby; about one or two yards before me, it bounded again, and went right over my head. I awoke and all was well. (Bless the Lord, O my soul.") Well, in the midst of this, I concluded I did not read and pray enough, so I augmented my task, and doubled my speed, and then got further behind than ever; my poor mother told me repeatedly I should go crazy with so much religion, whereas I had got none. I read the Bible till I was quite tired, and set up in my bed at night reading prayers, till I have fell asleep. Thus, while I was tugging and striving to make myself both holy and happy, the Lord was discovering to me more and more of my own vileness; so will he stain and mar the pride of man, putting him in his proper place, (the dust,) and securing to himself all the glory of his salvation." \* \* \* \* \*

Some remarkable instances of the preserving hand of God are then recorded; some providential mercies noticed; after which our author says.—

"Now I had not experienced what is called a law-work, so terrific and deep, as I believe some of the Lord's people do, my deliverance was in some degree imperceptible, on this account, or for this cause: I am quite aware many of the standard-raisers will cut me off, (as stated in the preface) but their censure I am quite prepared to meet and bear, (for this reason,) the Lord is my Judge, Isa. xxxiii. 22. and not poor puny man.

I constantly went with my master to hear the word; I believe it was in general faithfully spoken by various ministers, (as supplies.) Sometimes I heard with great joy, and sometimes with great sorrow, as it seemed to be all against me, and to seal my condemnation: then again, a portion or promise of God's word was made very precious to me, so that I again possessed 'for an helmet, the hope of salvation;' \* \* \* The Bible seemed very precious to me at times, and yet I thought it contained something to which I was a stranger, so that I begged of the Lord to teach me the right meaning of his word, in my soul's experience; and if I am not deceived, I have handled and tasted both the power and sweetness of it for some years past."

We come now to that part of the work where Mr. Stringer's mind was wrought upon with desires for the ministry. To trace out the mystery of a man's call to preach the gospel being one feature in the design of the EARTHEN VESSEL, and purposing as we do, (should the Lord be pleased to spare and prosper us in this matter,) to give the lives of many of the Lord's sent servants, who are comparatively hidden up in various corners of the earth, we extract rather copiously from this part of Mr. Stringer's work.

"While I was in the employment of Mr J——, my mind was wonderfully arrested with the great importance of, and earnest desire for, the work of the ministry. I have secretly envied God's ministers when they have been preaching, and longed to be in the pulpit, talking of and about Jesus with that liberty and enjoyment as they appeared to do. I have sometimes been afraid this was born of the flesh; but now I believe it was born (or begotten) by the Spirit. I often asked the Lord (if it was his holy will), to make me a faithful witness for him, and a decided preacher of his glorious gospel: at the same time, portions of scripture, one after another, would crowd into my mind, and open to my thoughts in such a way, that I have wished a congregation had been present, so that I might expound unto them the scriptures. I have gone into a wood, and preached to the trees and stubs; but the word spoken did not profit my hearers, I have been out on my master's business, both with bread and coals, which he used to sell; and a portion of God's word has been applied to my soul with such sweetness, opened and divided so blessedly, that I could not help preaching to the horse and cart I was then with; and have caught myself preaching, and looked about to see if any one had been hearing me, thinking they would conclude I was either mad or a fool to preach Jesus Christ to a horse and cart. Bless his dear name, he appeared so precious to my view, that I would and could have preached him to devils. Then again, I have had solemn tremblings of soul for ever thinking about preaching the gospel, such a wretch as me, and one so amazingly ignorant both in temporal and spiritual things; 'yct hath God chosen the foolish things of this world to confound the wise.' My mind was much exercised about the solemn matter, and sometimes greatly distressed; some of the Lord's people often told me they knew God was fitting me for the work of the ministry, and that a period would arrive, when he would send me forth with 'Thus saith the Lord.' I sometimes thought it would be, so, from what I knew, saw, and felt; and then I thought again, what a fool I was to indulge such a thought; considering my ignorance and total incompetency for such a solemn work. Satan here kept me looking entirely at

myself, which is sure to bring a person into despondency, relative to any point. I was not looking to him who can, and does make his own ministers, (independent of human help or learning,) able ministers of the New Testament, (or covenant,) not of the letter, (the old covenant,) but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

"But to return: at this time, and all this while, I knew nothing savingly of God's truth; nor of himself, and was greatly troubled on that account; satan was continually besetting me in a thousand different ways, tormenting my mind with cruel temptations of various sorts, especially about preaching; he has often told me I should commit suicide, or go crazy; I should one day lose my rationality, and then at once run mad and destroy myself; and from what I have seen and felt within and without, I have trembled much, and thought it would be so; under these painful suggestions I have been afraid to take my razor in my hand, fearing satan would take the advantage of me, and highly gratified would the infernal foe have been if it had been so; but his saints (the Lord's) are preserved for ever, and thus far I, with many more, are living witnesses to the truth of. Crown Jehovah! my soul! crown Jehovah! O ye saints, Lord of all. Now the way in which I was delivered from this and other complicated troubles, was the following: I was coming down a dark lane one evening, wondering in mind how the scene would end; and all at once satan put a question close to me, which I was quite unable to resolve; being in such darkness and perplexity of mind; this he well knew was the case, and so took the advantage of me. Yet did the Lord most graciously take the advantage of satan at this time, to his confusion, and the joy and rejoicing of my heart: the question he suggested was, "What is religion?" Oh what I did feel because I could not tell him, no one knoweth but God and myself; then, said he, you profess that which you know nothing about; you are a complete hypocrite: the sooner you give it up the better; before you bring an open disgrace upon the cause. Then again the question would come, "What is religion?" O! thought I, I am undone, it is all over with me now. Oh, that I had never been born. "O wretched man that I am, who shall or can deliver me?" O, says satan, there is no deliverance for you, you are a deceived deceiver, God has cast you off; he has done with you, and given you up to me; and then the question came again, What is religion? I tried to beg of the Lord to enable me to answer the question, and silence the foe; I thought of the words "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you," but I had no strength to do so. True it is that "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Well, while I was thus agitated and distressed, these words came sweetly to my mind; "Christ in you the hope of glory:" this broke the fowler's snare and liberated my soul: this brought joy and peace into my heart, and I wanted to answer satan's question with the same words, but he was gone. Ah, when Christ applies his own truth to the soul, or comes himself, satan is quickly absent. Surely then he shall and will deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence; he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust; his truth (Christ) shall be thy shield and buckler; well, I had no more of satan's company all the way home, nor for a long time afterwards; for I believe he knew I could answer his close question, and so kept his distance: and I know it is a religion that the devil hates, and so do thousands

of the pious folks of the day—because Christ is in it; yea, it is he himself.

\* \* \* \* \*

“A person who was, and still is a member of Mr Irons’s, Camberwell Grove, being a painter as well as a preacher, was sent down from Camberwell, by a person who held on a lease several houses in the village, (mine being one of them) to paint them: which work lasted about six weeks; during that time he was desirous of preaching in some obscure place, where no gospel was heard: now I had my eye, and my heart too, upon a village close by, long before this, called Farnborough, where I had often thought if it was the Lord’s will, I should like to speak in his dear name, having nothing there but a dumb dog in the church (so called.) I therefore desired him to go there, and I would stand by him; so we went together, like Abraham and Isaac, and called at a person’s house, who I believe knew the Lord; told him our errand; he seemed very glad, and went with us about the village with a chair in his hand, so as to afford our friend a pulpit, when we could get upon a spot where he might preach.

After many enquiries and as many objections, we at last were permitted by a good old man to have service in his yard, just opposite the George Inn. The chair was placed on the ground—the preacher ascended—I gave out the hymn, and two or three of us sung it; at which the folks looked very wild. My friend announced his text, which was these most blessed words, “Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.” John vi. 37. He spoke very loud, and the people seemed quite frightened: some peeped out of their windows—some out of their doors—some came out and stood a great way off—some jeered—some laughed—some ridiculed it, and so on. At length my friend (and brother) closed the subject; and some desired that the word should be spoken to them again: and the old man to whom the yard belonged, said, he had a cottage in the village, occupied by a poor man and his family, and he would see him, and get him to let us have the front room, which was a large one, for our use, for a trifle per week. He did so, and it was all arranged (without the least scruple) that we should meet there again the next Lord’s day. This was made known to the public, and we went again from the yard to the room, where twelve or fifteen persons were assembled: my friend preached warmly from Isa. ii. 11., “And the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day.” My soul enjoyed it much, and so did others who were present. Six successive Sabbaths, connected with Thursday evenings, my friend preached in this room, and many began to gather together, who expressed their pleasure and gladness at the place being open for the proclamation of the truth of God.

“My friend had now finished his work, (the painting,) and was about to return to Camberwell. One evening, when him and myself were returning from the room, he said, “Thomas, I am

now about to go home to London, so that it will be impossible for me to come down to preach regularly at the room, and it would be a great pity to close the room, and disperse the people. I consider (said he,) you are quite qualified and able to address the people, and keep it open; and I hope you will do so." At this request I was speechless for a time, and then begged to be excused, apologizing as well as I could, in order to waive the matter; but my friend's solicitations were more powerful than my objections, and he (as God would have it,) prevailed. I went up the ensuing Sabbath, trembling and shaking from head to foot; satan suggested I should have nothing to say, and all the people would laugh at me; for, says he, all the people about here know your origin and your pedigree; so that it would amount to this: "Is not this Stringer whose father and mother we know, and all his relations? Whence then hath he wisdom? or how knoweth he letters, having never learned?" Yet was there some sweet thoughts revolving in my mind, like the leaven in the meal, so I went on begging of the Lord to go with me, and help me to say some little in his dear name. I got to the place, and a goodly number were assembled, waiting for the parson: I spake to them with a trembling heart and faltering voice, from these words: "They shall come from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God" Death truly worked in me, but life in them; they expressed their surprise and satisfaction, having heard of me by the hearing of the ear only, so their voices were unanimous for me to continue to speak to them. I did so in the same room for seventeen months, and the Lord gave testimony to the word of his grace: the room now was filled to excess; between seventy and eighty persons have been there together, and several outside; which, with the realization of the Lord's presence, emboldened me greatly. A good old disciple being amongst us, who had a little property, said, that as there appeared a spirit of hearing, he hoped good would be done; that he believed it was of the Lord; and if I would continue amongst them, he would build us a little chapel. He did so; where I went constantly for more than three years.

"While I was here, God was pleased, I trust, to snatch three dear souls from the jaws of ruin, who are still pressing on to God: one very wild young man especially, who is now a member of Mr. Well's, Surry Tabernacle, Borough Road.

"During the time I preached here, I was very much tried in circumstances—for it was only now and then they collected a few shillings for my labours: and things went entirely against us in our little business. \* \* \* I recollect, one Saturday night, I had promised to pay a bill for five sacks of flour, and was compelled to forfeit my promise, it being a bad Saturday night, and money not coming in as I had anticipated. The anguish and distress of my mind was beyond description—satan setting in upon me on

all sides—keeping my promise to pay the bill, always before my eyes. Do not attempt, says he, to preach to-morrow: see what a lie you have told. Under this temptation I vowed and declared, I would not preach on the coming day. I walked the garden more like the man with the legion of devils, than a preacher of the Gospel; my dear wife was in pursuit of me, and a good old man with her, with whom we are acquainted, fearing I had committed suicide; and after a long search found me in a shed, deeply bewailing my sad condition. The old man and herself prevailing in getting me in doors, being now past midnight. I had a cup of tea, which refreshed my poor body; still my mind was in great distress. The poor old man remonstrated with me very sweetly, which did me a little good—begging of me to go and speak to the dear people as usual: and I shall never forget one remark the dear old man made, “When you get there,” said he, “if not before, the Lord will say, ‘Loose him, and let him go.’” This began to melt me down, and I proved, blessed be God, the old man a true prophet. After a restless night and with a miserable mind, I set out toward the place; I truly dragged on heavily—no text—no promise—and no heart (according to feelings) to ask for one: but O how sweetly did I realise the fulfilment of that precious text, “I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.” Rom. x. 20. Just as I was passing a clump of trees in a gentleman’s paddock, the Lord Jehovah gave me a text, and came himself with it—broke into my poor mind most blessedly: I was blest with much nearness to him, such familiarity with him, and such enjoyment of him, it was heaven begun below; all my darkness was banished, my trouble was removed, and my sorrow buried in the soul absorbing manifestation of the sovereign favour of a covenant God. The text he graciously gave me was this, “And they were astonished at his doctrine, for his word was with power,” Luke iv. 32.; and so most of the people found it, as well as myself: for I really had the presence and blessing of the Lord, while speaking in and of his precious name. Thus the old man prophesied under divine inspiration; and the prophecy was blessedly fulfilled in my soul’s experience. ‘When he giveth peace, who can make trouble, and if God be for us, who can be against us?’”

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An interesting and striking narration of the many trials and mysterious movements in providence, which resulted in bringing Mr. Stringer to London, here follows: the commencement of his ministerial labours in the metropolis are thus recorded:

“One Sabbath morning I was asked to go to the prayer meeting, in the afternoon, at the Surry Tabernacle, and here God first began to open my mouth, and my way in London. Accordingly, I went and was desired to read a portion of God’s word: I did so, and was enabled to comment experimentally upon it. So, after service, the general enquiry was, “Who is this?—Where does he come

from?" &c. Mr. Wells being out of town, I was asked to preach the following Sunday in the afternoon: I did so with trembling almost indescribable. Now, says satan, they will find you out: these people are wise, and know right from wrong, and will surely detect you; and only think, says he, what a spiritual man and a good scholar he is, that fills this pulpit. As for you, you will only be laughed at by them, for attempting to preach. Oh, how I did sweat and tremble under this suggestion. While they were singing the hymn, I had a good mind to go down, and say I was not well, but a thought entered my mind,—O, that is so cowardly; so they closed the hymn, and with faltering lips I announced my text, Rom v. 2. I spoke as well as I could for a little time, and was completely ashamed of what I advanced (for the brokenness of it,) and myself too. I crept out like a thief as soon as possible, calling myself a thousand fools for ever going near the place; yet the Lord was graciously pleased to bless the word to many of them, so that an union has existed between us ever since."

From this period, many doors for preaching the word, both in London and the country were opened to him, until his settlement at Snows Fields, where he now stately labours.

Upon the whole, the work contains a most straightforward, and soul comforting record of the goodness of God to his people; we trust it will be made a blessing to many of the chosen seed of God.

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*"Is Christ Divided? or, the Arminian's Friend."*

Such is part of the title of a little work very recently published by Mr. Bennett, of Paternoster Row. The title altogether is a gigantic and comprehensive one: the author therein declares that herein "those portions of Holy Writ upon which the doctrines of Universal Redemption; the Insecurity of the Saints; and Free Will are said to be built, are EXPLORED and EXPLAINED:" Also, that "research is made into the Original Language, whereby some portions are shewn to be incorrectly translated, and *the whole structure of Arminianism to have no foundation in the New Covenant.*"

While it is certain that all this has been experimentally learned out in the consciences of real believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, still, it is not too much to hope that in some humble measure this little work may be useful in explaining some obtruse and difficult portions of our translation of the Word of God. We are decidedly opposed to too much being said about the "incorrect translation of the Bible;" it is a translation which has been honoured and blessed to the conversion, consolation, and building up of millions of God's elect: and in the midst of all the opposition which earth and hell could ever bring against it, it has been preserved, and proved to be one of the richest boons that a covenant God ever conferred upon his people, as a help meet and companion for them while passing through the wilderness. On the present occasion, we simply let the

author of this work speak for himself, in the following extract whereby  
 THE ETERNITY OF THE ATONEMENT  
 is clearly made to appear :

“ For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy, under two or three witnesses : of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.”—Hebrews x. 26—29.

“ I shall take under consideration each one of these verses in their successive order. The translation of verse 26 is erroneous. The following would be correct—‘for if we have sinned *freely*\* after we have received the knowledge of the truth, yet is not the sacrifice on account of sins *failed* ;† so that this passage, instead of being supposed to support the dogma, that the believing family of God can ‘sin away their grace,’ doth, on the contrary, afford most holy comfort, by declaring the everlasting virtue of that sacrifice made by Christ Jesus, inasmuch as our sins cannot blot out our inheritance in glory, because the atonement once offered was *propitiatory*, neither can its efficacy *cease*, so that although we may act the part of Onesimus by running away from our Lord and Master, yet all our sin was known of old, neither can we come into condemnation before God, for ‘yet is not the sacrifice failed.’ I know not that I need scarcely continue my illustration of this verse, for my readers will do well in this case, as in all others to examine the previous part of the chapter or epistle, for thereby, their connective agreement can be more readily concluded, whether ‘I speak the words of soberness and truth ;’ but there is a beautiful attestation of the completeness of the sacrificial work of Jesus, (ver. 11, 12.) which moves in such sweet union with our revised translation, that I cannot avoid quoting it, *viz.*—‘for every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins : but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God ;’ forasmuch then as the Saviour hath atoned for sins, let none say he hath cancelled the transgressions of a man during the first thirty years of his existence, while those of his after life are unexpiated. Blessed be his name ! he hath finished the work the Father gave him to do, and hath extracted the curse due to our sins, ‘being made a curse for us,’ and though his children should be rebellious ‘yet is not the sacrifice on account of sins failed.’

“The 27th verse would be correct thus—‘but a certain dreadful

\* The only other places in which the Greek word occurs are 1 Peter, v. 2. Philemon 14 ; while in both places it is translated willingly. Its meaning is likewise freely.

† The Greek verb has the following significations : left behind, relinquished, deserted, surpassed, desisted, failed ; it occurs in 2 Timothy iv. 13—‘The cloak that I left behind,’ so that the sacrifice for sins is not left behind,



approaching of judgment and fiery wrath, which shall devour the adversaries (or oppositionists.)' The evident meaning of which is — 'that with regard to the soul, the adversaries cannot bring it into condemnation, because the sacrifice on account of sin can never cease to be efficient,' hence the difference between a priest under the mosaic dispensation, and our great High Priest, but as respects the adversaries, 'a dreadful approaching of judgment awaiteth them; and the 28th and 29th verses are descriptive of the great sin of which they are guilty who are the oppositionists of the saints, shewing the judgment of a former adversary—' he that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses,' and thus contrasting the crime, continues—' of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing; and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace,' or 'hath insulted the spirit of grace.' Now whose persecuteth the saints because of their non-conformity to the world, (and I will venture to say there is not one 'non-conformist' exempt) virtually persecuteth him by whom they were transformed, for it is written—' whoso toucheth you, toucheth the apple of his eye, and he who treads under foot the children of God, treadeth under foot the Son of God,' for Christ and his people are one, being 'members of his mystical body; so likewise 'they count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing wherewith he was sanctified, and insult the spirit of grace,' since by their enmity they do despite, by profaning the work of God, in trampling under foot, and warring against those whom he hath sanctified, and setting themselves in array as 'oppositionists,' both to the workman and his workmanship.

"That the foregoing is the true interpretation of these passages is made peculiar manifest by the 17th and 18th verses—' and their sins and iniquities will I remember *no more*.' 'Now where remission is, there is no more offering for sin,' which statement cannot harmonise with the supposition that the meaning of the apostle is — 'that if any sin freely after they have received the knowledge of the truth, a fearful coming of judgment awaits them,' but beautifully accords with the correct translation—' For if we sin freely after we have received the knowledge of the truth, yet is not the sacrifice for sins 'failed or left behind,' because 'by his one oblation he hath perfected for ever them which are sanctified,' so neither *can* the 29th verse refer to the saint himself treading under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing; for if so, how could Jesus be said to have perfected for ever them that are sanctified? Thus, I trust, it will be seen that I speak the truth, I lie not, and that this portion of holy writ is full of comfort to the believer, in the first place assuring him of the perfect work of Jesus; and secondly, in times of persecution to look unto God, who said 'vengeance is with me,' I will recom-

pense, saith the Lord. Though your adversaries, my brethren, be many, yet cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward, for the Saviour hath said, while upon earth—'rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for behold great is your reward in heaven.' Lastly, the 38th and 39th verses, are additionally substantiary of the truth of my interpretation—'now the just shall live by faith' and then, discriminating between those 'who are not of them who draw back unto perdition,' and those who 'in times of persecution are offended,' (which are they whose religion is not the Spirit) it is added—'whosoever will draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.' Blessed is that man whose soul can bear witness with the Apostle when saying—'but we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.'

"If this and the preceeding chapter are read, it will be perceived that my interpretation of these four verses is fully borne out. I am confident, independent of this, that I am correct. Let the 2nd verse of the chapter be kept in mind while the verses are considered: speaking of the offering made according to the law, and their inefficiency on account of their being offered daily, and shewing that they were not perfect, he says—'for then they would not have ceased to be offered,' now observe how beautifully this defect in the Mosaic economy is contrasted with the perfection of the sacrifice of Christ, for our revised translation of the 26th verse—'for if we have sinned freely, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, yet is not the sacrifice on account of sins failed.' Herein the apostle would say lies the difference; the one ceased daily, and the other never ceases, Jesus ever living to make intercession for us. In what way, I say, would the sacrifice of Christ be more efficacious than the sacrifices under the law; if, because a sinner committed sin freely, as did some worthies recorded in Scripture, the sacrifice of Christ was immediately to become of none effect; if this were the case it would be vastly inferior to the sacrifice of bulls and goats, inasmuch as the sinner could have resorted thither day by day, while the merits of Christ's death would cease. Oh, no! the Apostle could never have written to the saints, saying, 'ye are complete in him,' supposing there to have been a chance of their being *incomplete* at some future time, for as the saints are only seen in him, there must be incompleteness in Jesus before the saints can so be. Blessed be his name! He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. The passage is a most important one, and as it stands in our English Testament is entirely opposed to that everlasting propitiation which Jesus Christ hath made for the sins of the people. I have now endeavoured to explain this passage as I find it in the original Greek, and those of my readers who have had their souls sprinkled with his precious blood, will, I doubt not, be enabled to judge whether the sacrifice offered by Jesus is ever likely to fail.

"The adversaries spoken of in the following verse (27th) are both ghostly and bodily; and the Apostle first speaks concerning those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, who, though they sin freely, yet such is the all-sufficiency of that blood that its efficacy is ever the same, and being sanctified, and consequently made perfect *for ever*, and let it not be inferred from this, that it is esteemed a light thing to commit sin, this passage be-

ing written for the comfort of such as poor Peter—for the believing family of God, who might for a little season be led away of the adversary for whom remains fiery indignation, for the enemy delights to tell the children that if they are disobedient, their Father will cease to own them, but Scripture hath provided for all, 'being not ignorant of his devices.' Secondly, he informs them of the dreadful doom which awaited their adversaries, thus comforting them with the assurance of a future retribution and exhorting them to fight the good fight of faith, knowing the Scriptures, that hath declared God will punish those who war against his people — 'For we know him that hath said, vengeance is mine, I will recompense saith the Lord,' That St. Paul is here actually referring to persecutions is manifest by the 32nd and two following verses, in the first of which he encourages them to hold fast the profession of their faith, by reminding them of a former conflict, in the next verse how they had been made a gazing-stock by reproaches and afflictions, and in that following, how they even suffered the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and enduring substance."

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*"The Lost Found;" or, the Rebel Saved. Being a brief outline of the Superaboundings of Grace, over the Aboundings of Sin; in the experience of ———.*

We wish most heartily that the author of this proclamation of mercy, had annexed unto it his real name: although it would not have essentially increased its value; still, we like to know who the man is, to whom so large a measure of divine grace has been given: and we also like to know where the man lives, and what he is doing: in these respects the work before us is imperfect: but in the essential ingredients of a vital experience here is much that is calculated both to give pain, and to afford comfort to a spiritual mind.

Very awful were the lengths of sin, to which the author of this book appears to have gone; and most miraculous are the deliverances which the ever-blessed God evidently commanded for this poor Jacob: the attention is rivetted with a chain of events of no ordinary kind. We can now only find room for a brief extract; (the work itself can be obtained of Mr. Paul, publisher, Chapter-House Court, Saint Paul's;) the writer says—"The solemn doctrine of God's sovereignty laid so heavy upon my soul, that I have often trembled to open the sacred word of God, for fear of reading my own condemnation. Sometimes I have sat and looked at it for a considerable time, quaking and fearing, and dare not open it. One night as I was going to bed, I determined to look into it; and I opened the solemn book, and—"God is a consuming fire," entered my conscience like a flash of lightning; I fell down upon my knees, then buried my head in the bed-clothes, but was not able to speak for fear: for I verily thought that God was going to cut me off there and then. I felt satisfied that the devil was in my bedroom, and I expected every moment to feel myself locked in his infernal grasp. The agony of my soul was intense; I dare not look

up, for I thought I should see the infernal foe, and there I remained till my bed-fellow came into the room. When I got into bed, these words came into my mind, (not with any sweetness or power, but they kept reiterating in my soul)—“with the Lord there is mercy,” “with the Lord there is mercy;” and every time this reiterated, it was contradicted with a solemn oath. I am satisfied this came from the devil, for I trembled at the words, and tried to keep them out of my mind; and I was afraid I should speak out, and my companion hear me swear against the mercy of God. But mercy was at length too much for satan.

“God continued opening up the abominations of my abominable nature, till I was ashamed to look up; but, like the poor publican, full of shame, I was constrained to cry, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” And I believe, if ever a poor sinner was made truly sensible of his lost condition, I was. God had now brought me low, that he might exalt me; and in proportion as sin was developed and made manifest, so in exact proportion was the compunction of my soul; and God, in due time, gave me power and liberty to tell him all my grief and woe, and gave me also such sweet rapturous views of the glorious, solemn and tragical scene of Christ crucified on the cross: that I sometimes scarcely knew where I was. But this revelation of Christ was not fully satisfying; being revealed to the soul is not enough: he must be revealed *in* the soul. Though those seasons were solemn, sweet, and blessed, I wanted more; and blessed, for ever blessed be his dear and holy name, he gave me more. One morning I went up stairs about ten o'clock, under a deep felt sense of sinfulness; and oh, what solemn and sweet communion we had with the eternal God, whether in the body or out of the body I could scarcely tell, and presently this passage, “Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee,” was applied to my soul with such light, sweetness, unction and power, that I felt persuaded there was not one sin against me; my burden was gone; my sins, though as countless as the stars in the firmament, were all forgiven, my soul was set at solemn and blessed liberty: prayer was swallowed up in praise. I jumped upon my feet, and I believe in my soul that then I was as full of bliss and heaven as any poor mortal could bear in the body. O how I blessed, praised, and adored his holy and ever blessed name; I was like a hind let loose. ‘A new song was put into my mouth, even praise unto our God.’ ‘Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.’”

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#### A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE REV. JOSEPH IRONS.

RESPECTED SIR,

A copy of your last new work, (entitled “Priscilla”) has been recently put into my hands, the perusal of which I entered upon with considerable avidity, fully anticipating a rich repast of spiritual and experimental matter, the work being professedly styled “*An Exposition of the inspired Epistle to the Church in Rome.*”

I will say nothing respecting the disappointment I experienced in the general contents of your work; but as I was constrained ou

a recent occasion to refer to, and read an extract from it; and as I did then feel myself called upon to declare that my poor protest against your assertions should, (the Lord permitting,) be carried beyond the walls which enclosed the place, in which I was then speaking, I have, after I trust, sincerely seeking direction in this matter from that God, whose I am; and whom I trust I serve; been powerfully constrained to lay before you, and so many as shall condescend to read this humble statement, a brief outline of what was then advanced.

I am fully persuaded this letter will be treated with silent contempt by yourself; and by the great mass of professing ministers and members of Christian churches; but with that I have nothing to do. What was said on the occasion referred to, was said in the fear of God, and under the fullest convictions that the most cruel and wanton insult has been cast upon the ordinance of believers' baptism; and finding that you, and your friends, are most industriously circulating that work, in which the grossest stigma, is being thrown upon the whole of the baptist ministers and churches, I have resolved in the strength of the Lord, to lift up my poor voice against the same: and therefore purpose to publish a brief outline of the discourse which was delivered previous to my administration of the ordinance of baptism by immersion.

After reading and prayer, I said—"I must be allowed to state that I enter upon the services of this evening, with a spirit deeply wounded; because that solemn ordinance which we are about to administer, as well as all the ministers and members of baptist churches are now being most wickedly and cruelly insulted by a minister of the gospel, of long and influential standing in the Christian church, by the publication of a little work, a copy of which I hold in my hand. Lest it should be thought I am perverting or overstraining this man's words, I will read a complete extract from the book itself. Referring to the matter of baptism, the author says,

'Who could have conceived that even the perverseness of human nature could have distorted the simple ordinance of baptism as modern Popery has done; that while the Holy Ghost has recorded it as an emblem of his work, they, of *two parties, reject his work for the emblem, and excommunicate those whom he has baptized with divine unction*; the one party for the want of a *little water*, and the other party for the want of *much water*; both *insulting the Holy Ghost* by placing more importance upon their own doings than upon his.

"To be consistent with themselves, both these *anti-christian parties* should reject spiritual things altogether, and confine their creed to literal things, then they may use material water, little or much, to make Christians—be literally crucified—literally planted, and literally buried for three days before they are raised up; and after all this literal process, they will be just as guilty and polluted as before; for neither sprinkling nor dipping will make them Christians, although administered by priestly hands or nonconforming functionaries."

(To be continued in Supplement: to be published in a few days.)

LINES OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF THE LATE  
WILLIAM GADSBY, MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT  
MANCHESTER; WHO FELL ASLEEP IN JESUS, AND  
DEPARTED HENCE TO GLORY, JANUARY, 27th 1844.

*"The righteous are taken away from the evil to come."*

FROM all the evil yet to come,  
Jesus hath took his servant home,  
With him in peace to dwell :  
In realms of bliss beyond the skies,  
To see him with unclouded eyes,  
And all his victories tell.

Releas'd from sin, from doubts, and fears,  
Spotless his blood-wash'd soul appears,  
Before Jehovah's throne ;  
In Christ complete, wash'd in his blood ;  
He stands, as he has ever stood,  
And knows as he is known.

No sin, the source of every grief,  
No evil heart of unbelief,  
Shall e'er disturb him more ;  
Nor darksome cloud shall intervene,  
The Saviour's face and him between,  
On Canaan's peaceful shore.

Corruption's pois'nous breath shall blow  
No more, to cause him grief and woe,  
Or vex his righteous mind ;  
Pollution's ditch, nor miry pit,  
Nor valley's clods shall clog his feet ;  
All these he left behind.

Unwearied here below, he blew  
The silver trump, and ram's-horn too,  
With true and certain sound.  
And, while he lifted Christ on high,  
Far above heavens and earth and sky,  
Laid creatures to the ground.

The dateless, depthless love of God,  
Which in his heart was shed abroad  
By God the Holy Ghost !  
The love of Israel's God Three One,  
He liv'd to preach and liv'd upon,  
This was his only boast.

The Father's love in Christ display'd,  
Ere worlds, or sun, or time, were made,  
An everlasting flame ;  
On his cleft, eternally  
Bestow'd, and from conditions free,  
Unchangeably the same.

The love of God the eternal Son,  
Made known in what himself has done,  
In cov'nant acts of grace ;  
Who in redemption's glorious plan,  
Appeared the Head and great Days-man  
Of all the chosen race.

*Stone Hill, Smeeth,  
near Ashford, Kent.*

His glorious Person, precious name ;  
Atoning blood, eternal fame ;  
And spotless righteousness ;  
His bitter pangs, and agony,  
His finish'd work on Calvary,  
His power and faithfulness.

The love of God the Spirit, too,  
In everlasting covenant, who  
For all the chosen seed,  
To bring them safely home to God,  
Through Jesus's righteousness and blood,  
Eternally agreed.

These great, these glorious truths of God,  
His soul rejoic'd to sound abroad,  
In his dear Master's name ;  
And oft with power and unction too,  
These truths distill'd like heavenly dew,  
Or set the heart on flame.

The Lord the Spirit deign'd to bless,  
And crown'd his labours with success,  
To many a heart of woe ;  
Render'd his own almighty word,  
Sharper than any two edg'd sword,  
To bring the sinner low.

His work below is henceforth done,  
His ministerial race is run,  
Finish'd his course with joy ;  
And now to bliss beyond the skies,  
Jesus hath bid his soul arise,  
Where pleasures never cloy.

He's gone to crown the Saviour's brow,  
With all immortal honours now,  
And at his feet to fall ;  
From all the sorrows of the breast,  
He's found a bed of endless rest,  
Where Christ is all in all.

Yet Israel's God is able still,  
His place among the saints to fill,  
Who sojourn here below ;  
With one who by the Spirit taught,  
Like him with heavenly wisdom fraught,  
The path of bliss to show.

Zion, your loss has been his gain ;  
From weeping and from tears refrain  
Rejoice ! no more he grieves ;  
Or while affection's tear will flow  
This sacred truth believe and know,  
Thy Jesus ever lives.

W. SKELTON, S.S.

## WALKING IN DARKNESS.

When in darkness my soul has long been,  
 And all comfort has quite fled away ;  
 No trace of my God to be seen,  
 And my soul sunk deep in dismay :

No faith to believe on his name,  
 No comfort derived from his word ;  
 Full of gloom and sad darkness I am,  
 And I mourn at the loss of my Lord.

My enemies all on the shout,  
 To see me thus plung'd in despair ;  
 All darkness within and without :  
 Sure, Jesus can never dwell here !

Such conflicts with sin, death and hell ;  
 Such wrestlings within and without ;  
 My Lord, ah, thou knowest right well,  
 What a body I carry about.

My treacherous heart's full of pride,  
 And satan will of times suggest  
 That I am cast out of thy sight,  
 And never shall reach that sweet rest.

In sad darkness like this, I exclaim,  
 " Can this be the path of the just ?  
 " Did patriarchs and prophets of old,  
 " Ever grovel so low in the dust ? "

Oh yes, they all trod the same road,  
 All mourn'd and complain'd of the way ;  
 Yet pressed on their journey to God,  
 And, now in bright realms, they can say

" 'Twas by the free grace of our God,  
 " Our Shepherd, our Priest, and our King,  
 " Who brought us thus safe on our road ;  
 " And has caused us boldly to sing,

" " Salvation to God and the Lamb,  
 " " Our Jesus alone we adore ;  
 " " Who died that he might us redeem,  
 " " We'll praise his dear name evermore. "

Fresh courage, my soul, why despair ?  
 Thy God will revive thee again ;  
 Tho' dreary the road may appear,  
 His faithfulness still is the same.

Ere long thou to glory shall rise  
 When sorrow and sighing has fled ;  
 Salvation so free thou shalt praise,  
 And glorify Jesus thy head.

## “THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY.”

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*A few Words addressed to such as know and fear the Lord among  
whom I am called to labour.*

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FELLOW TRAVELLERS TO THE HOUSE NOT MADE WITH HANDS,

It is laid upon my mind, to say a few words to you by way of encouragement and congratulation. It was on the afternoon of Wednesday, November 19th, 1845, having that evening to preach at Windmill Street, that I felt moved with a desire to beseech the Lord to write home with divine power in my own soul, a word which should be for his glory, and the real benefit of his living family. Accordingly I took the word, and on my knees before a heart-searching God, I implored him to give me to find his own word like a hammer and a fire in my own.

You must know for some days I had been troubled with a fear as to whether the Lord had not hidden his face from me for a moment, because I had been the subject of much leanness of soul. Well, while on my knees before God, the words of Samuel unto Israel of old fell into my soul—“*I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart; for consider how great things he hath done for you.*” (1 Sam. xii. 23, 24.)

With these words upon my soul I went forth, and preached from them. A brief outline I here lay before you: they are wholesome words: they are comfortable words: may the Lord make them unto you, profitable words; and his name shall have the praise.

First: notice the speaker: it was Samuel: and his origin, and his name all appear to have a bearing upon the whole course of his life.

In the origin of Samuel, you may see what great distress of



soul is found by them who are led to seek the Lord. Samuel's mother was a woman of a sorrowful spirit. She was truly a type of the real church of the living God, and of every elect and regenerated soul. Her name is significant of three features in the character of a living child of God. Hannah signifies one that is gracious; one that is merciful; one that is seeking rest: these three inward spots must certainly, in a greater or less degree, be found in all who have really passed from death unto life.

First: they are gracious souls: the sovereign grace, the free favour, the everlasting love of God is communicated to them: it is the goodness of God that leadeth unto repentance:

“ Law and terrors do but harden,  
All the while they work alone;  
But a sense of blood-bought pardon  
Soon dissolves a heart of stone.”

According to Ezra—(Ezra ix. 8.) it is grace which works deliverance for the soul: “ Grace hath been shewed from the Lord our God, to leave us a remnant to escape:” Ah, to be sure; it is grace alone which can truly work deliverance: sin, and Satan, and the flesh, and the world, and an hypocritical empty form of godliness are so many snares, and deceitful traps in which the sons of Adam are entangled; but “ they that escape of them,” (says Ezekiel) “ SHALL ESCAPE;” their deliverance shall be permanent; how solemn is the distinction! of some it is said, “ they shall not escape:” but unto the brethren in Christ, it is said, that “ with every temptation, God will make a way to escape:” although the escape may be so narrow; and the temporary injury arising from the temptation may be so great, that “ they that escape may be like doves in the valley, every one mourning for his iniquity;” yet deliverance shall be granted unto the whole election of grace.

The grace of God worketh softness, tenderness, compassion, sympathy, forbearance, and forgiveness. Hannah also signifies one that is seeking rest: and this is certainly the case with all true living souls: they want rest from sin, and rest in salvation.

Look at these two things: from all eternity God had determined that Hannah should be the mother of Samuel: but, poor soul, see what distress she was the subject of before Samuel was born. It is just so, with you, poor soul; if you are a chosen vessel, a

redeemed sinner ; God hath, from all eternity, chosen you, and ordained you in Christ : but, Oh, what grief, what bitterness, what long waitings, and buffetings have you had to pass through !

Look for a moment at the path Hannah travelled in before she got her Samuel.

First, she was brought to a feeling sense of her degradation : she was barren, she had no children. Peninnah—(that is, the false church, say some ; but is not Peninnah a type of the fallen nature of the believer?—Ah, it is ; indeed it is : and this Peninnah) has children fast enough : and she became a foe, a persecutor, an adversary to poor Hannah : the Holy Ghost says : “ her adversary provoked her sore, and made her fret ; because the Lord had shut up her womb.”

Oh, what a Peninnah is our fallen nature ! How fruitful it is in sin ; in sinful thoughts ; in sinful desires. What an adversary it is to the quickened soul ! How it makes one fret, and sigh, and cry before God in secret ; because barrenness ; a want of life, power, and holy fruitfulness is found in the soul. A deep sense of degradation, of spiritual barrenness precedes a satisfactory embracing of Christ.

Beside this, three other things are said of Hannah, which I am sure is also found by those precious souls who are brought into “ the good and the right way.” Hannah was in bitterness of soul : that is, she had real inward sorrow and grief ; her worship was not formal, nor hypocritical ; but it was in her soul ; and in her soul she had bitter grief. What was connected with this bitterness?—“ *The sorrow of the world worketh death :*” but “ *godly sorrow worketh repentance unto salvation.*” A man may have guilt on his conscience, sorrow in his heart ; but if it be only natural and legal, he will never get gospel liberty, nor real peace in his soul ; but he may get a false peace ; he may get a dead delusion ; or, by the force of temptation, he may go right out into open sin, or black despair ; as Cain and Judas did ; Cain went into an open, hardened, wicked state ; Judas into black despair : both perished in their sins : but Hannah went on weeping and praying : at length, deliverance came ; the child was born ; and she triumphed and said, “ My heart rejoiceth in the Lord : mine horn is exalted in the Lord ; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies ; because I rejoice in thy salvation.”

If then Hannah's experience may be viewed as truly setting forth the work of the Lord in bringing his children into the bond of the covenant, you will find it lays in three distinct branches : first, a deep sense of degradation, bitterness of soul, and earnest and continued crying unto God : the marginal reading of the 12th verse is strong to this point : "It came to pass, as Hannah *multiplied praying before the LORD*:" she ceased not. "Perseverance (says Francis Raworth,) is the crown of grace ; and heaven is the crown of perseverance." The Christian's course is represented by climbing a ladder ; by wrestling ; and by flying, to lay hold on the hope set before him. Experimentally, this is one of the things belonging to such as come into the good and the right way.

Secondly : Hannah's prayer was answered : this is according to the New Covenant promise : "they shall not build, and another inhabit ; they shall not plant, and another eat ; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands : they shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble." Blessed be God : he creates ; he hears ; and he answers prayer. Hannah cried ; the Lord answered her to the joy of her heart : Jacob wrestled, and he obtained the blessing : Jonah looked again, his soul fainted within him, but his prayer went into God's holy temple ; and the fish delivered up its treasure safe and sound. Simeon waited for the consolation of Israel ; and at length he saw and embraced God's salvation : a praying soul can never die until deliverance comes. Oh, my friends, I was going to say, you have nothing to fear, if God has given to you praying souls ; God speaks, (says one of old) as though he was afraid of prayer : (Jer. vii. 16.) the prayer of God's Jacobs are of such power, that God forbids them to pray for those whom he will not spare.

The third thing in Hannah's case was, a giving back to God, what God had given to her. "For this child I prayed ; and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him : therefore, also, I have lent him to the Lord." The margin is stronger : it reads "therefore have I returned him, whom I have obtained by petition, to the LORD." It is God's own work in the soul, and his deliverance of the soul, which brings back the revenue of devotion and praise to himself.

Samuel, then, being born of a praying soul; being adopted by God, and devoted to God, was found to be a man mighty in prayer, as you may read throughout the whole of his life.

Now look at the circumstances under which these words were spoken to Israel. They had sinned against God in asking of him a king: their unholy request had been granted: and terror and fear, distress, and apparent danger had followed in after the obtaining their sinful desire. All the people fled unto Samuel, beseeching him to pray unto the Lord for them.

Come here, ye ministers of God's most holy gospel! Look here, for one moment: there are plenty of you that will preach about the possibility of God's Israel desiring, praying for, and obtaining, many things which are neither for their present nor their eternal peace. And you will also declare that distress of soul, and some terror in the conscience is sure to follow an act of sin on the part of a living child of God. And that the Lord will certainly bring back such poor wanderers, with weeping and with supplication.

Now, how easy a matter it is to preach these things! But positive facts declare that although many of the Lord's own sent servants can stand up, and preach all these things; yet, they cannot, they do not practise them. I have heard a man, (great and solemn in the ministry,) declare he would get up in the middle of the night to serve a poor troubled, broken-hearted sinner; yet, when the thing has been put to the test—when a poor broken hearted sinner—(I speak not here of myself;) has sought for sympathy and instruction from this very man of God, the case, without being inquired into, has been but publicly ridiculed, and treated with contempt. Oh, we have many Eli's now, who hesitate not to tell poor Hannah that she is drunken; and is not moved by the Spirit of God, but by wine: no wonder such men's preaching is frequently in bondage; and consists much in a profuse dealing out of the corruptions of a fallen and sinful heart.

Oh, ye ministers and servants of the living God; look at this. Samuel did not treat poor Israel with disdain, and with cruel contempt, although they were so wicked in their determination to have a king. No: no. Samuel stood by them still. Verily, he was a practical man: not only a preaching man. "As for me,"

says he, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Oh! be pleased to remember, ye dear servants in God's house, that poor Israel looks for practice from the parson, as well as for preaching. If a man says a thing in the pulpit which he contradicts in practice, away goes a vast amount of confidence in his ministry.

How gloriously did Samuel typify the faithful and all-prevalent intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ! He is the "faithful Priest," which God told Eli he would raise up; and who should do, saith the LORD JEHOVAH, "According to that which is in mine heart and in my mind; and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed for ever." (1 Sam. ii. 35.) The church, the whole election of grace, is "the sure house," which the LORD of Hosts hath built for our glorious High Priest—our NEW TESTAMENT SAMUEL—who is to walk before, or in the midst of God's anointed ones for ever!

Oh, poor sighing, sin-burdened, heavy-laden sinner! get Christ on your side—let him but be your only refuge, your only resting place, and he will never forsake you; nor fail you, down to the very last. That was a strong promise, and full of consolation—"Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The Greek scholar tells you, that Christ really said, "I am with you always, even unto the very last gasp;" or struggle, or inward conflict; fully implying, that the poor soul may go gasping down to the last, but Christ standeth by, to deliver, to preserve, and at last, to present the same, justified, sanctified, and glorified, unto himself. Truly, CHRIST HIMSELF IS "THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT WAY." And of him, as the good and the right way, was Nehemiah also a sweet and holy type: and of him, that is, of Christ, as the good and the right way, (in blessed realization,) speaks Nehemiah, in the sixty-fifth verse of the seventh chapter of his book. "The Tirshatha said unto them, that they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim." Nehemiah, (whose name means "the consolation of the Lord;" and such is Christ unto the Church: this Nehemiah,) spake unto some poor outcasts, some poor polluted priests, whose register could not be found; that is, if I understand the spiritual interpretation of the word,

they had no geneological, no hereditary, no ancestral, no inherent right, title, or claim to the priesthood, or to the most holy things: and, therefore, according to the law, they were cast out as polluted: this is just the position of a poor, guilty, law-condemned sinner; he has no right, no claim to, nor any hope of ever partaking of the most holy things of Christ's priesthood, upon the ground of what he is, or ever can be.

What was the gospel Nehemiah preached unto them? Was it a gospel without a hope or expectation? Oh, no, Nehemiah, like Samuel, stuck close to these poor outcasts. Nehemiah stood over them in their pollution, and said, "I will teach you the good and the right way: there is a Priest who is to stand up with Urim and Thummim; that is, CHRIST JESUS THE LORD, having all light and all perfection; and until he is raised up in you, as the restorer of the breach; as the putter-away of your filthy garments; as the bringer-in of your pardon, peace, and consolation, it is impossible that you can eat of the most holy things." This is the Good and the Right Way in realisation—Christ must be revealed in the soul, and formed in the heart as the hope of glory, before there can be any feeding by faith upon him: for, "except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." The good and the right way; that is, the gospel which Samuel preached unto Israel of old, laid in these four things:—

First, said he, "it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." Here is the groundwork of all, laid in the sovereign choice and the eternal adoption of the whole election of grace in the Person of Christ: "Whosoever is not found written in the book of life, will be cast into the lake of fire:" (Rev. xx. 15.) This book of life is Christ himself—in him I must be written, known, and found, or sin and wrath will sink me down. But unto Israel, let it always be said. "The Lord Jehovah HATH MADE YOU HIS PEOPLE."

Secondly: Samuel preached the Immutability of God's counsel, and the eternity of his love: "the LORD will not forsake his people, for his great name's sake:" what his people may do; where his people may go; how rebellious and ungrateful his people may prove; no human tongue can tell. No; the aboundings of covenant love, sovereign grace, and eternal fulness appear to be shown forth

in most brilliant colours by the direful and naughty behaviour of the Israel of God : Samson, David, Solomon, Jonah, Peter : were these vessels of mercy ? Yes, they were—and they, with tens of thousands besides them, are living witnesses, that though the Lord will chastise, and purify, and try his people, he will not utterly forsake them, or put them away.

Thirdly : Samuel preached the good and the right way practically. “ Whatsoever ye do,” said Samuel, “ I will warn you of two things. First, let your state be as bad as it may ; still, turn ye not aside from following the Lord : let no state of mind ; let no measure of guilt on the conscience ; let no fiery temptation from the adversary ; yea, let no ‘ being overtaken in a fault,’ stop you following after the Lord.” Well done, good Samuel : this is a point that needs to be enforced : “ Christ is able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God by him.” Oh, turn not away. Secondly : Samuel said, “ let your following the Lord be with all your heart : only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart : do not serve him hypocritically ; do not follow him partially, presumptuously, or, afar off ; but let it be sincerely ; and you shall certainly succeed.” That is good again : No one can say but Samuel did indeed preach the good and the right way.

Lastly : Samuel urges the whole upon the ground of what God had done for them—“ Consider, how great things he hath done for you.”

Dearly beloved : this gospel preached by Samuel is both clean and comprehensive : it is preached to you. Begin where Samuel left off : “ CONSIDER !” What hath God done for you ? Has the Gospel come to you in power, and in the Holy Ghost ? enlightening your mind ; searching your heart : purging your conscience ; anointing your soul ; directing your steps, and giving you hope in the end ? Oh, then turn not aside from following the Lord. God help you to cleave close unto him : remembering he having made you his people, by adoption, redemption, and regeneration, will never leave you to overturn his purpose, or to lose your crown.

Vitally, experimentally, and practically, may you and I be found travelling, and labouring in this “ GOOD AND RIGHT WAY,” is the prayer of your’s, in the Lord,

C. W. BANKS.

*6. Pagoda Terrace, Bermondsey New Road,  
Southwark.*

## THE GOSPEL MINISTRY ;

ITS MYSTERY:—ITS MATTER:—ITS MEN.

## PART VII.

## THE EXPERIENCE OF DANIEL MATTHEWS,

*Minister of the Gospel, Rowley Regis.*

AN old and faithful friend, who heard Mr. Daniel Matthews, with some soul comfort, and profit, when he was supplying at Eden Street Chapel, Tottenham Court Road, has put into our hands a little work of his, just published, entitled, *The leading of the Spirit, as manifested in the Author's Experience*: to which is added some letters and pieces of poetry written by him. Daniel Matthews is one that has been "born of water and of the Spirit," and is a minister of the true circumcision. He has come up out of—and has passed through some deep, dark, and distressing places; we wish he had given us some account of his being put into the ministry; this, however, he has not done, but he has opened up a little of the way and the work by which he was savingly brought to know the Lord, the substance of which, is contained in the following extracts: he says, "I was born on the 12th of June, 1803. \* \* \* When between thirteen and sixteen years of age, I was convinced, by hearing and reading, that unless I were born again, I could not enter the kingdom of heaven, but must be lost for ever. The thought of being lost for ever I could not bear. The thought of 'for ever' was heavy upon me. Had it been only for a time, I thought I could have borne it; but 'for ever' was like a mountain upon me, and sank deeper and deeper into my soul; so that, at times, it forced from me cries and prayers to God, and filled me with such terror that I could not bear to think of eternity. I could not put it away from me, however. Then I would pray again, begging of God to pardon my sins, and promising that if he would spare me, and not send me to hell, I would be good for the time to come. But when my terror abated, I went on as before, until conscience thundered again; and then I promised as I had done before. Thus I went on. When I was in horror of soul on account of my sins, I *promised* and *tried* to do something to please God; but when terror was not felt, I broke my promises and neglected my duties.

"I know that I should have remained in such a state until this day, if God, in his mercy, had not plucked me thence. The method which he took to make me fall at his feet was this. One night, I was singing, being in a trifling state of mind, regardless of God and my own soul; for, at times, I sang to drive away thoughts of death, of eternity, and of the last day, as I could not bear to think of these things. But, at other times, I sang alarming hymns, to bring thoughts of good things into my mind; for often I longed to be saved. On the night I speak of, I was singing very thoughtlessly that hymn of Newton's, called 'Alarm to Sinners:' While I was singing this hymn, the Lord spoke these words to my soul: 'you are the sinner this hymn commands to stop.' The fear and error that immediately fell upon me I never can forget; but, awful to say, I summoned up all the courage I had, and was determined



not to give way to fear. So off I started to worldly company, that I might drown my fears as I had often done before; but vain was the attempt now. As soon as I got into their society I thought they knew what I had heard. I was ashamed to stay with them, and this added to my feeling of guilt. So I went back to the shop, and stayed there by myself. Then I thought, as I could not find rest in society, I would stand manfully against my fears, and put them away myself; but I could have affected the existence of God as soon as I could have prevented my fears. The more I strove against them, the more they prevailed; for the words 'Stop, poor sinner, stop and think,' ran through me vehemently, nor had they ceased from the time the Lord spoke them with power to my soul. I then thought I would try to sing the hymn again; but I could no more sing the hymn than a merchant could laugh and sing the tidings of the ship having sunk, which contained all the property he had in the world, or a king laugh when his crown is taken from him and he himself made a prisoner. My fears increased so fast, that I thought I saw the ground open before me, and come on opening till it came opposite to where I stood. I looked on with great alarm, and the hair of my flesh stood up. It seemed suddenly to open near my feet, and down I fell; I only remember saying, 'Lord, save me, a sinner.' Reader, I do not think that the ground really opened; it was guilt and fear in me that caused me to think so.

"From that time I began to seek places in which I might pray without any one seeing or hearing me, for I was ashamed to let any one think that I prayed. I had been a great despiser of religion, but now God's arrows stuck fast in me, and his hand pressed me sore. (Ps. xxxviii. 2; Job vi. 4.) I began to try to draw these arrows out by daily weeping, praying, vowing, fasting, and self-denial. I was now company for none, nor was any company for me. I was as one that is lost; and I was lost that I felt. \* \* \* \* \*

"Thus I went on for a long time, without any company, either religious or profane; for the law had taken me by the throat, saying, 'Pay me that thou owest.' I then said that I would keep the law, and never break it again; and then I should be sure to be saved. So I began to make covenants with myself; pledging myself never to see, or hear, or seek evil, nor go in the way of sinners, nor sit in the seat of the scornful. Thus I began, pharisee-like, to bring my goodness to the Lord; but O how astonished and alarmed I was to find that the more I strove to bring my affections to God the further I seemed to be from him! And what alarmed me more than all was that my affections were running after everything evil, nor could I keep them from fighting against Jehovah." \* \* \* \*

"After having had much labour in trying to do some good thing, and all having failed. I began to fret and cry out against God for not receiving me just as I was. Though my judgment told me it was a sin to fret against the Lord, I could no more forbear than I could create a world. I thought, how is it that other people can become as good as they like, while I get worse, and worse the more I strive to be righteous? I tried again with renewed covenants, but hedge myself in as closely as I might, the law cast me down; nor could I prevent the law from throwing down my works, though I cried with many tears. Now I see the reason, the world was in my heart, (Eccles. iii. 11,) and all my works were dead. Though they were destroyed again, I still endeavoured to do something

with which to obtain God's favour. This I could not obtain do what I might for I got viler and viler. Then satan began to trouble me about the doctrine of election, telling me the cause of my getting worse was that I was not chosen. I thought this was true, which made me hate the doctrine. Satan then told me that God had called all whom he would call in and about the neighbourhood in which I lived, and that I could not be saved unless I went fifty or sixty miles from home. O the blindness that was then upon me !

"One Lord's day I was going to hear the word of God, and was saying in my heart as I went, 'O Lord, if thou hast another sinner in this parish to call by grace, let it be *me* ; do call me, Lord ! do call me !' While thus praying in my heart, satan directed my eyes to three young men who were going to the same place of worship to which my steps were directed, and he said, 'it is of no use for you to pray to be called, for these young men are better than you ; and if any one be called, it will be one of them.' O how my heart fainted at this, and broke out into cries 'O that I might be saved ! Lord, do call me ! do call me, Lord !' I then thought if Christ were on earth, I would know whether he would save me or not ; I thought I would follow him, crying, until he told me whether he would save me or not.'

"One night, going to a prayer-meeting, I had some fields to cross. Satan met me in the fields, and told me that it was of no use for me to go to the prayer meeting; for there was no mercy for me. I stopped to consider what I should do ; and, after a short time, (without knowing that I spoke, until I heard the echo of my own voice,) I said, 'Get thee behind me, satan ; thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.' Then went on to the prayer-meeting. One man who prayed confessed his sins to such a length that I thought his sins were equal to mine. He told the Lord that he had saved him. While hearing him, I felt a hope spring up in my soul that I should be saved at some future time, and received a little comfort. When returning home, Satan met me in the fields again, and said to me, 'What hast thou done ?' I asked him 'What have I done ?' 'Done ! (said he;) thou hast sinned against the Holy Ghost. Thou saidst, Get thee behind me satan ; thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. The apostles never made such an attempt upon me ; and in so doing, thou hast robbed God of his power and glory ; therefore thou art cursed for ever. Now it is all over with thee, and thou art lost for ever and ever.' I went home ; and if ever my loins were unloosed, it was then. When all in the house beside myself were gone to bed, I bowed my knee to pray. Never, no never shall I forget that time, as soon as my eyes were shut to pray, I thought I saw the devil in the likeness of a lion, and heard him say, 'if thou do not pray to me, I will devour thee now.' I thought streams of fire were falling on me, and I durst not open my eyes to look for fear. At last I did open my eyes, but I could not see anything. I then thought some one was in the house for the purpose of frightening me. I took a candle, and searched the house all through except the cellar, where I was afraid to venture ; but I opened the cellar door, and trembling, went down a step or two, holding the candle out at arm's length. I could see all round the cellar, but no one was there. I then made my way to the fire, and sat down to consider the matter over. At last, I thought I would kneel down again ; and so I did. When I had shut my

eyes, I saw the same sight and heard the same words again: 'if thou do not pray to me, I will devour thee now.' I paused for I could not speak. Then he said 'if thou wilt pray to me first, and to God after, nothing shall harm thee as long as thou livest upon the earth; thy troubles shall all leave thee, and thou shalt have rest.' Now this was what I longed for I was ready to do anything to get rest. If I had not feared God's judgment I should have prayed to the devil; but I durst not. Then I cried, 'O Lord God, shall I pray to the devil or not?' upon which he fled away and I went to bed while I was able. A whole year passed away before I could tell God upon my knees what I feared, felt, or desired. I was daily so full of desires for the Lord that I used to bow my knees before him many times every day, and say, 'O Lord God, I will speak if thou wilt not be angry.' It would then sound in my heart, 'But he is angry; and if thou speak thou shalt be swallowed up alive.' (Read Job xxxvii. 20.) O how I longed to tell my feelings to the Lord, but was afraid to do so. I resolved hundreds of times to lay my case before him; but when upon my knees I found I could not, for the word would sound in me, 'if thou speak thou shalt be swallowed up alive.' Such was the power I had to help myself, which some men talk of. I only wish that those who talk so much of man's power to help himself were in this state for one month. I know they would change their tale about coming to Christ and taking salvation for themselves. But grace only can change the heart of a sinner."

After many solemn and severe excercises of mind, and much real trouble in his soul, he says,

"I resolved to read the New Testament through, and should nothing be applied to my soul, to cut the thread of my life. I read till I came to these words, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' I remember looking round me and saying, 'Where art thou, Lord? and how shall I come to thee? and where shall I go to find thee? I long to come to thee, Lord; but I know not how to lay hold upon thee?' I remember saying I should not mind going to London, without either eating or drinking, if I died as soon as I got there, if that would be going to Christ. Reader, invitations merely in the Bible brought me no relief.

"I went on reading the New Testament, but had no confidence until I came to these words 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.' When I read these words the Holy Ghost arrested me, and caused me to see and feel that the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus is 'the perfect law of liberty.' This feeling warmed my heart, loosened my tongue, flooded my eyes, and cleared my sight; then I could see none but Jesus that was worth seeing. I was overwhelmed with the flood of feeling, thus I saw Christ at that time very obscurely. I had more of feeling than I had of seeing; for my soul was filled with joy and love, and my countenance was for some time, no more sad. (1 Sam. i. 18.) My heart was so often filled with the love of God that I had not much to do besides letting out his love in blessing and praising him for having mercy upon me. I could not forbear telling God again and again that he was mine and that I was his. The dread of death, of judgment, and of hell, was gone; and though they passed through my heart at times, they had no holes to lodge in as they formerly had. Soul

matters were now straight, and I thought they would always remain so. I never expected to have any more trouble about it, and thought I should always love and praise God. I bought a new Bible and began to read it, and it appeared to shine with God's mercy. I beheld God's mercy to sinners in every chapter, read where I would. I could see mercy for those who felt their need of Christ, and wondered that I did not see this before. I thought perhaps Bibles varied. I got others and compared them, but found them all alike. I wondered how I could have read the Bible so long and not have seen these things before. But the cause of my now seeing them was, that the Spirit's work upon my heart had enlightened my understanding, and taken away the veil from before mine eyes. My heart was joyous for many days; and had so much happiness continued to rise up within me, I am sure that I could not have followed my daily labour. While God's love in Christ is powerfully manifested in the heart by the Holy Ghost, no man is fit for business. None will believe this unless they have known it by feeling."

Reader! you can get the book out of which these extracts are taken, at Groombridge's in Paternoster Row.

REPORT OF A MEETING OF THE  
**GOSPEL EDIFICATION SOCIETY, IN LEICESTER,**

HELD ON

THURSDAY EVENING, Oct. 2, 1845,

*Who meet to read the Word of God, and propose Questions for Discussion.*

QUESTION for Discussion, of which notice was given a fortnight previous.

*"What is the cause of dissensions and divisions, in this day, among real Christians? and, what are the best means to be devised for the removal?"*

AFTER opening the nature and design of the meeting, each member rose in succession, and addressed the Moderator and friends in the following order:—

Mr. B— rose first, whose speech was very short, but altogether to the point; he spake a volume, and it was as a text for all that spoke after him.

He rose and said,—I am no speaker, and have but little to say; but I perceive "*It is a want of love.*" He sat down.

Mr. W—, of London, rose and said,—The substance of all is, view Jesus with John in the Isle of Patmos. Jesus in the midst of the Seven Churches, read Second and Third Chapters: a description of character and their errors. Dr. Gill thought those Churches symbolical of periods, or the states of the Church of Christ, from his first coming to his second coming. What state are we in? A sad state it is evident. The Church, like the moon, should be the secondary light of the world, and a faithful witness of God's covenant goodness and mercy. She appears in the wane at this time. Is she not almost eclipsed, by the defiling, contaminating, dark spirit of the world? And to shew the inspired Paul's prediction of

the last days. (He read it.) See 2 Tim. iii. You must see the specks and black spots upon the face of the churches. Are there a few things against us?—many things against us. Are these the last days prophesied of? Surely they are. "This know also that in the last days perilous times shall come!" Here are the black spots and black works upon the churches. "Men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, &c.:" black spots visible enough to a spiritual mind; lovers of this world, the things of this world—their own praise, honour, and glory; and instead of washing one another's feet, as our Lord did the feet of his disciples, and gave us a commandment to do the same. What is it now among both ministers and people? "False accusers,"—glad to pick up something one against another, and blacken each other rather than wash each others' feet with tears of sorrow and the pure water—the pure love of Christ. Pride, self-love, covetousness, and the form of godliness without the power, are four black marks on the visible Church in this age. See the members of churches in the populous mercantile towns in this nation—what over-reaching, grasping, pride, covetousness, oppression, trickery in trade, to make themselves rich in this perishing world. "The love of money is the root of evil." What is covetousness?—idolatry, and of the worst kind I believe: but the idol is covered over—with what?—The form of godliness.

Remedy—What shall I say? The friend who spoke first has justly said, there is "A WANT OF LOVE!" Ah, love is the foundation of Christ's kingdom; and if love is absent there is no gospel church. Love is the root of everything vital: and the first fruit of the Spirit is "LOVE"—not the blossom of a few smooth words on the tongue, that wither away from the lips, blow off, and deceive the expectation of the longing soul, but fruit brought forth and ripened by heaven's holy Sun of Righteousness, with the mellow juices of the Spirit in them that can be tasted and digested to strengthen the soul—"fruit that may abound to your account:" something that can be seen, felt, handled, and tasted—something that profits us and do us real good. Love to God is a holy fire, that will break out and discover itself; love from God shed abroad in the heart will be exercised, and come out. The Lord revive us.

Mr. T. N.—, rose and said,—“Want of love.” Ah, it is wanting. Traits of character are traced out, by obedience and disobedience. The Lord gave commandment to our first parents in the garden of Eden; they were capable of obeying, but they disobeyed the command. Notwithstanding the fall of man, there are commandments to man now in his fallen state. The Lord commanded\* Noah to build an ark—he obeyed, built the ark, went into it, and was saved with his family; and the Lord appeared to him again. Abraham obeyed the command of the Lord. Moses, the servant of God, received the strict law on tables of stone, and gave the ceremonial law with curses for disobedience, and blessings for obedience, in that dispensation. But, now we are under the gospel dispensation, and those who are born of the Spirit are under his law of obedience: not to merit anything, nor to get to heaven by it; but having been blessed with grace, we obey the Lord's law, and fulfill it. “Love is the fulfilling of

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\* Ah! but it was the obedience of faith, so it is now through the Spirit—by faith Noah being warned of God, prepared an ark;—and by faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and without faith it is impossible to please God. “All men have not faith.”

the law :” for the greater the blessing is from God, the greater the obligation to obey. Really, my dear friends, I have suffered so much by chastisement from the Lord, for my disobedience, that I hardly knew how to live under it. I met a friend in the street, and told him my distress. He said, “Commit your way unto the Lord :” and really I did see the hand of the Lord so clearly in chastising me for disobedience, and his great grace and goodness in delivering me, when I called upon him, that I see we are debtors to God for his goodness, and that all sufferings and chastisement comes on us for our disobedience: and disobedience is the cause of the dissensions, distress, and division in the churches. And really I feel what Mr. B—— and Mr. W—— said, in my soul. The Lord give us grace, to walk out and work out our religion by obedience; for sinning against light and knowledge brings distress and bondage into the soul. May the Lord give us more grace, that will make us take the lowest seat in his church, and do good unto all men, and no evil. Love will put itself to inconvenience to oblige and do others good. This was the case with the Lord Jesus himself. May we walk in his steps.

Mr. K——, rose and said,—my friends, look into the subject in hand, I perceive that *pride* is the fruitful source of all divisions, strife, and contentions in the church at the present in this day. Men, through self-importance, will set up their own judgment, and condemn one another rather than judge themselves and their own motives.

These are dark times and the churches appear to be in a lamentable condition—“From whence comes wars and fightings, come they not of your own lusts ?” We see that strife and divisions in all ages in the church, originated in pride: “only by pride cometh contention;” and the chastising hand of God has always followed. See, Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses, and said, “hath the Lord indeed spoken by us.” Numbers xii. 2. Oh, great I, and great us! And the Lord heard it, and said, “Were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses ?” Read the account of it; and the plague of leprosy came upon Miriam; and Moses prayed to the Lord for her. The disease is seen among churches, ministers, and members. Uzziah, through pride, would rush into the priests’ office uncalled for. What was the consequence?—he became a leper unto the day of his death. Also, through evil surmisings, and the devices of satan, men act from false motives, from thence proceed wrong judgments, then war is declared in Israel, among themselves: as in the case of Reuben and Gad, when they built “the altar of witnesses.” Joshua xxii. 27. False motives, self-seeking, self-love, and self-glory, are dangerous. We should consider the state of the Church of Christ, and seek not our own, but the good of others and the good of the church, and the glory of God. “Then had the churches rest, walking in the fear of the Lord, and comfort of the Holy Ghost.” This text, from the mouth of our Lord, serves as a key: “I seek not my own glory, but the glory of him that sent me.” And a man sent of God to preach the gospel seeks not his own glory, but the glory of that God who sent him. Soon as our eyes turn away from seeking God’s glory, to seek our own glory, God leaves us to shew us what there is in our hearts. Hezekiah was lifted up and sought his own glory: and how much distress it cost him! It is in this day too much the case with churches, ministers, and members; and the Lord gives them up to seek honour and promotion one of another, as Mr. GARRARD preached, on Tuesday night. “Let then, us turn unto the Lord from whom the children of Israel greatly revolted.” “Set ye up way-

marks; turn again, O virgin of Israel, to thine own cities." Turn again to God as in the day of your espousals to Christ, as when you first felt the warming love of Christ warm your hearts. Where did the spouse of Christ find her bridegroom?—when she sought him earnestly sorrowing and repenting for her follies. Then came he suddenly, and unawares, and broke down and melted her heart with love. Solomon says, ("and a greater than Solomon is here.") If now, in our low estate, or in the land of captivity—if we bethink ourselves and turn, and make our prayer unto the Lord, he will hear and deliver us, even from the ends of the earth, and from the grave's mouth. If we mourn after the Lord, there is hope. Look to the old way-marks, stand in the way, and ask for the good old way; and say, we will bear the indignation (or chastisement) of the Lord, until he arise and plead my cause, and execute judgment for me: he shall bring forth my righteousness to the light, and my judgment shall be clear as the noon day.

Mr. G—, rose and said,—Mr. Moderator and friends, time forbids me enlarging much on the subject. (As only a quarter of an hour was allowed to each speaker.) I shall confine myself to two points only, and be very brief. Pride, the cause of distress and division among Christians; and love the only remedy; but Mr. K— has robbed me of some of my ideas in his speech. The first sin was pride; satan was hurled out of heaven for his pride; and he hath poisoned the whole world to death by it, and by which the regenerated true church of God is often defiled, "pride goeth before destruction:" pride, envy, and covetousness, are twin sisters, of very bad extraction. These evils are more or less, lurking in the depraved nature of the children of God; "from whence comes wars and fightings? Come they not out of your own lusts that war in your members?" When pronounced in heaven, "Let all the angels of God worship the Son," pride, covetousness, and envy, arose in the tall angel, and down he fell from wars in heaven, to make wars on the earth; and war on earth among the nations begins in the hearts of proud kings, who summon thousands together who never saw each other before, to kill one another by wholesale! and mark it—Do not the wars, divisions, and distress among christians generally, originate with the parsons, their ministers, in whose poor fallen nature, pride, envy, and jealousy works—who, if another is favoured as an instrument of usefulness in the church, and hath greater gifts and grace; envy arises in the bosoms of others against them; and in the circle of their friends they will take occasion to throw out some half-words of evil against them and if the silent snake (envy) lurk in their bosoms, and they are ashamed to bring it out, they will with a silent expression of the face, look solemn, and say nothing—as much as to say you may know by the muscles of my face what I mean—*I dont like him?* I would not wish to cherish such a dumb devil in my bosom! The Lord forbid it. If I hear a minister with greater gifts than myself; may I give glory to God, for sending such an one; yea I have heard such of the Lord's sending, and the effect hath been this, I have thought myself "the least of all saints," and have been filled with gladness, joy, and peace, with their "joyful sound." Kings keep up the strife among nations, and ministers too often among the people of God; and beside some evils arise from busybodies and tattlers in churches, minding other folks business more than their own, not walking charitably, nor conforming to the will and word of the Lord, viz.,

—*Love.* Another evil is this, men (some good men) who give no proof that they are anointed by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel, nor consecrated by the Lord to the service of the sanctuary, will rush (through pride) into the ministry, when those whom the Lord calls to that work, can but with difficulty be drawn to it; such self important mortals, like Adonijah will “be kings;” and like poor king Uzziah when lifted up, will be priests; and when rebuffed went into a rage, till the leprosy arose in his forehead, and he went out a leper, sitting alone in his house. 2 Chron xxvi. 21. Some good men (as Uzziah was) in like manner, who will be preachers, when they are rebuffed, and find themselves not accepted; the leprosy of anger rise up in their faces, and they will sit at home in their own houses, rather than hear the sent servant of the Lord; otherwise make divisions among saints. They have the preaching leprosy, and sometimes the leprosy spreads through the camp, “roots of bitterness arise, and many are defiled.” Pride is a great sin in the sight of the Lord, humility is a great grace, because it makes us reflect the image of the Lord Jesus. But, if the disciples of our Lord, knew not what manner of spirits they were of, we have great need to watch our own spirits, and their motions in our depraved nature, for “the spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy.” “ONLY by pride cometh contention.” Love the only remedy; and that must come from God; for love is of God, little children. “Want of love (as Mr B—— says) is but the negative side of the question,” but positively, “love is of God, for God is love. Law, wrath, and terrors never wins a soul nor conquers it, but hardens it. Witness Pharaoh and wicked spirits in chains of darkness. Nothing but love can conquer such rebellious wretches as we are; and the God of love conquers his people by love, and Jesus prayed for his murderers! and if such rebellious wretches as we are, who have continually rebelled against the Lord, are only conquered and overcome by his love made known in our souls, may we imitate the Lord’s example, by endeavouring to “overcome evil with good;” and overcome our enemies with love.” True love does no one any harm, then let us do good unto all men, and do no one any evil; and if we can by the help of the good Spirit, so work convictions into the minds of those who differ from us, that we mean nothing but love and good will towards them. A drop of this holy oil from heaven, breaks no bones, but melts the heart, and overcomes them with love, and we have gained our brother; “converted a soul from the error of his way, and so hide a multitude of sins.” Not that we can finally reconcile the corrupt seed of the wicked one, with the seed of the woman; nor the children of the kingdom of God, with the children of satan’s kingdom. But our question is, the best method of removing strife from among true Christians?

“Love is the fulfilling of the law.” Jesus loved us, and as a proof of it, hath fulfilled the law for us, and loves us, his poor neighbours, as himself; and we can do all things through Christ that strengthens us, even love our enemies. Ah, say some, but if men will not love me, seek me, and honour me, and treat me as a neighbour—am I compelled to do them good, if they will not humble to me, and treat me as a neighbour? On this ground, the lawyer stood up to tempt our Lord: but the lawyer, willing to justify himself, said unto our Lord, “And who is my neighbour?” Jesus related the tale of the poor man among thieves, and the good Samaritan; and asked, who was the poor man’s neighbour: the lawyer answered, “He that shewed mercy on him.” Then said Jesus unto him, “Go thou



and do likewise." As Mr. W—— has before said, Pride, headiness, high-mindedness and self-love, are black spots on the face of the church in this age, for if we love only those that favour us and honour us, it is all self-love; and pharisees, and the world of profane people do the same; love their own party and hate others. Rendering evil for evil, and good for good is man-like; rendering evil for good is devil-like; but rendering good for evil is God-like and Christ-like, and we must be made like Christ to dwell where he is. Therefore "love your enemies, bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you, that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. Matt. v. 45. This inward evidence, brought out into action, is the strongest proof in the world that we are the children of God, because it is the spirit of your father dwelling in you, and working out of you God-like actions, making you reflect the image of God. Ah! say you, I believe that is true but I cannot do it. Do you desire to do it? "The desire of a man is his kindness:" yes, says the sanctified heavenly mind in you, I wish I could do it. No, says the evils and devils in your carnal, depraved nature; I should like to see such and such an one almost starved to death, and come begging to my door. Ah, my friends, that is the old black, spirit in your poor vile nature. Read Romans xii. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him with both earthly and heavenly bread, if you have it in your house; if he thirsts give him drink, for in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head." Rom. xii. 20. Nothing but these soft melting flames, the holy fire of love from heaven shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, can melt such poor stubborn sinners as we are. But the evils and devils of our depraved nature cannot stand before the holy fire of love, they cannot live in it. Then let us pray with the good old prophet, "O that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains (pride, &c.) may flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth; the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries." This holy melting fire in your souls that cause the waters of life to boil up in your hearts, and trickle in warm streams down your cheeks—evils and devils cannot live in it: they flee, saying, it is Jesus, we cannot live in his presence. Alas! the dumb, the deaf, and stubborn devils flee at his presence; and we burn! we melt! we faint in his love! our adversaries flee! and the heathen nations in us tremble at his presence! Isa. lxvi. 2.

P.S. The subject being too great for the evening it was adjourned. The Society will be happy to receive any questions for discussion from any part of the kingdom, and if religious questions, after discussion, they will be printed in the monthly periodical, called the *Earthen Vessel*.

Questions for Discussion must be directed either to Mr. J. KELLUM, Architect, East Street, Albion Hill, Leicester; or to Mr. BANKS, Printer, 6, Pagoda Terrace, Bermondsey New Road, Southwark, London; which will have our kindest attention, discussion, and insertion in this periodical in due order.

The Questions for Discussion will be inserted in this periodical, previous to the nights of meeting; and as we are no bigotted sectarians, any one at a distance, may become corresponding members of the society, by paying one penny a fortnight, and sending their views of the given subject by post-paid letters, which will be read with attention, and printed at the Society's discretion.

THE SICKNESS OF ZION, AND THE TWILIGHT AGE OF  
THE CHURCH.

( Continued from p. 370. )

ANOTHER sign of the night is, when *mists, fogs, and unwholesome vapours begin to rise out of the earth, and Jack-a-lanterns, or the Will-o'-the-whisps, begin to dance.* These mists of error have been rising out of the earthly, sensual, and devilish wisdom of cunning crafty men for some long time; and numberless Will-o'-the-whisps, ignited vapours, and false lights, are dancing over the earth, among the mist in all directions: and many in the fogs are following the cold vapour lights into the bogs—for they lead not to heaven those who follow them, but into the earth from whence the false lights came. Jesus is the only light of the world, “enlightening the eyes of believers, in the new world of grace, with the light of life;” and saith, “He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life,” viz: being brought out of nature’s darkness into the true and everlasting light of the Gospel, shall never be in nature’s darkness any more, though they may have many “days of darkness,” and weeping nights of soul sorrow, they shall have as many mornings, until the everlasting morning of glory dawns upon their souls. “Joy cometh in the morning.” And this true light of life in the soul, and in the church, cannot finally be put out in the darkest times. “Her candle goeth not out by night.” Prov. xxxi 18. Because it is divine life in the soul, a holy spark that cannot be quenched, neither by the waters of affliction, pollution, or death itself,—because it is the light of grace, the grace of life, or the love of Christ in the soul. And he that loveth his brother abideth in the light: but he that hateth the light, hateth the truth of the gospel, hateth God and the children of God, is in this mist of darkness: and we see that the great body of mere professors hate the light of the gospel, and hate those who preach it; and with their many winds of false doctrine, are doing all they can to puff the true light out—but that cannot be done: God will always have his witnesses; and if they should be prevented as preaching-witnesses for God, they in the night coming on, will be suffering witnesses for God and truth sake. And the true light of life will be in their souls, if darkness cover the earth, and the people on the earth: and though they for a time may be only as lamps in sepulchres, or lamps in pitchers, when the Lord’s time be fully come for them to shine again, more light and glorious their lights; and the sound of their gospel trumpets will be terrible to their enemies. Rev. xi. 12. And like Gideon’s little army, they will be in the latter day glory of the church, “terrible as an army with banners.” Song vi. 10.

But the night-cloud and night-fall is upon us, and the night will be darker soon; the falling vespers of the church declare it, and her nocturnal slumbers witness against her: while her enemies are lively at their midnight revelling, making thousands and millions of converts, and nourishing their hearts with error, and enmity against the true light of the glory of the gospel of Christ: and against God’s witnesses who preach it. And these misty blind guides, “compass sea and land, to make one proselyte; and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.”

Matt. xxiii. 15. Doth not the multitude of converts, made by men in all denominations, now resist, hate, and slander the holy and glorious truth of the gospel? Have they not bewitched the people, as Paul saith to the Galatians? The ministry of the multitudes of ministers, swarming from colleges and dissenting academies, appear like witchcraft and sorcery of the worst kind, rather than the glorious ministration of the Spirit of life, in the Gospel of Christ. Are they not more like the "Sons of the sorceress, the seed of the adulterer and the whore," (Isa. lvii. 3.) than they are like the seed whom the Lord hath blessed with precious faith in a precious Christ, to preach the glory of the Gospel of Christ? Are they not in their own mist of darkness, resisting and rebelling against the light of the gospel, and those who preach it?—"calling light darkness, and darkness light?" Do they not always resist the Holy Ghost, as their fathers did? Acts vii. 51.; or the true testimony of the Holy Ghost in the gospel; as the sons of the sorceress have always done, until the mists of everlasting darkness enveloped them in endless night! And as Elymas the sorcerer resisted the Holy Ghost in Paul's preaching, so do these men resist the truth of the glorious gospel now: and, as a mist of darkness fell upon Elymas the sorcerer, a great mist of darkness is fallen upon the visible church, which appear to be full of sorcerers, and but few ministers of the Spirit, ministering in holy things; or in the light, life, love, power, and glory of the gospel of Christ. O, sad signs! O, dark days! O, mother Zion! Are there none to guide thee (in this the misty dimness of thine old age) of all the sons that thou hast brought forth? Ah, now thy cold palsied limbs are trembling, are there none of all thy sons, to take thee by the hand whom thou hast brought up? Isa. l. 18. O, mother, I could weep for thee! I now feel tears startling from mine eyes. Wilt thou take my hand? for I hope the hand of God is with me. I would not lead thee into ditches, bogs, or the quagmires of fallen nature; but, by the Spirit's guidance, O mother, I would lead thee to thine own husband, who will make thee young again, and renew thy youth like the eagle's. O, dear mother, I would lead thee to the Lamb, for thou art the bride, the Lamb's wife; and I am thine own dear son. I was born of thee in the county of Norfolk: I was born on thy sides, and dandled on thy knees; and I did suck and was satisfied with the breasts of thy consolations, and was comforted as one whom his mother comforteth. O, mother! I love thee still; and would look unto thee, the free woman, Sarah that bare me. O, mother! thy sons are fainted in the pestilential mists, and vapours of the dark night; they lay in the head of all the streets: like wild bulls in nets, they have been drinking at the old harlot's golden cup. Mother! it is enough to make us tremble, for the rebuke of our God must follow this drunkenness. O, mother! thou art not only dim-sighted in this misty night; but every limb and nerve of thy body tremble, with this cup of trembling in thine hand: and the streets are so full of drunken people, I fear that thou in thy trembling age will be pushed down, bowed down, and run over. Come, enter into thy chamber and hide thyself, until the indignation is overpast, for I fear it is coming on very fast. But, thou art in the hands of thy Husband, though he may make thee tremble with his rebukes for thy folly. "Thy Maker is thy Husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name." And he saith, "that he will take the cup of trembling out of thine hand, and put it into the hand of them that afflicted thee; that said unto thy soul, bow down, that we may

go over, and thou hast laid thy body as the ground, and as the street, to them that went over." Isa. li. 23. May thy Husband, by his own Word and Spirit, guide thee in this dark misty night! May he guide thee by his counsel, and the skilfulness of his hand; and lift up the light of his countenance upon thee—O Zion, thou mother of us all. But the sons of Belial, the proud sons of darkness, cannot bear the light of the glorious gospel; it strikes their proud reason stark blind: "These things are hid from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes." The god of this world, the mists of darkness, with the many mystified doctrines of the age, "have blinded the eyes of them that believe not," and tens of thousands of blind guides, are leading the blind; and if grace prevent not, they both fall into the ditch together. "These are wells without water, clouds carried about with a tempest, to whom the MIST of darkness is reserved for ever." 2 Peter, ii. 17. But, the Lord shall arise, and have mercy upon Zion, when the set time to favor her is come. "The morning cometh:" "A morning without clouds."

(To be continued.)

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*Mr. Greenfield's Funeral Sermon for his daughter.*—(Palmer's, Paternoster Row.) In publishing the following letter, it is but just that I should first state that some copies of a Funeral Sermon, preached by Mr. Greenfield, and lately published, having been put into my hands, one of them was given to an old disciple, who on perusing it, was instrumental in causing the same to be evil spoken of; by reason of not understanding Mr. Greenfield's meaning, respecting the righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ as imputed unto the elect. In the following letter, Mr. Greenfield has explained the matter. At some future period, if permitted, I purpose more fully to notice the sermon referred to, but find it impossible in this number.

Barnhall House, Staplefield, Crawley,  
October 13, 1845.

Edmund Greenfield, to his much beloved brother in Jesus Christ, William Whiting, and his wife. May God bless you abundantly, and comfort you. Amen. And so the whole of his *elect Israel*. Amen, and amen.

This will inform you that the whole church at Staplefield yesterday, the Sabbath, with myself, had great joy, in consequence of a redeemed young man's blessing, and the open profession of his blessedness to the seven deacons, and they to me, and myself to *the whole church*. He, some months past, having been killed and made alive by the Lord God, through the law and testimony; Deut. xxxii. 39. in the begetting power of the Father (James i. 18) with infusing grace from the Son's fulness, (John i. 16.) and the possessing, sanctifying, renewing, and quickening power and blessing of the Holy Ghost; (Eph. ii. 1, 4, 5,) abiding under my ministry in the Lord, enduring his woundings, under his blessed hand before he was healed, (Deut. xxxii. 39, Ps. xciv. 12;) having the blessing of godly sorrow for sin; repentance unto life, with the gift of faith, hope, and love; confessing his sins, and leaning upon Christ;

coming up out of the wilderness of this world, from the ungodly. See (Sol. Song viii. 5.) praying in the Holy Ghost unto the Father, in and through our exalted, *Meritorious, Ministerial* Head; Mediator, Intercessor, Advocate, Propitiation, Jesus Christ, the Lord our righteousness and strength, until he had all *he needed*; as he so preciousely declared he received in hearing the *funeral sermon for my Mary*. And to our joy, and rejoicing, he declared, that whilst he felt the need of *Christ's righteousness* to be *imputed* to him for *justification*, the *best robe*; as he believed was mystically so in the everlasting covenant, as in time "all the elect's iniquity, was by *imputation*, laid upon *Christ*"; as I spoke, and have *published* in the *funeral sermon* in page 4, unto page 8, as we read Isa. liii. 6, to Ps xxxii. to Rom iv. 5, 6. He received the blessing, like the prodigal. Luke xv. 22. And with it, the blood of Christ, by the ministry, and through the word, *that cleanseth from all sin*. 1 John i. 7. And had justification by faith, and peace with God, even the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 1. Joying in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he *then* received the *atonement*. Rom. v. 11 Thus whilst he enjoyed the *best robe*, the *imputed righteousness of Christ brought nigh* and put on by God through the ministry of the word, and the ring and the robe, 'enjoyed a sense of pardon, and blood sprinkling. Gen. iii. 15, 21. Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24. So he triumphed in the blessing of faith, and knowledge; assured that as the *righteousness of Christ* was his *justification*, and *justifying righteousness*, he, in the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 13) was conformed to the image of Christ, the Lord *his righteousness*. Rom. viii. 29. Being certain, he was called by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Thess. ii. 14. And he was convinced, that *instead* of the person of Christ being his *imputed wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, as the *notionists*, and *deluded men of this day testify*! He was feeling and spiritually seeing (Heb. ii. 9) Christ as revealed in the Scriptures; his meritorious, ministering, head, husband, Saviour, Lord and God, in his own, and his Father's will, and working, by and in, the Holy Ghost, through the *written and engrafted word* imparting to him wisdom, and the blessings of "wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption, so glorying in the Lord." 1 Cor. i. 30, 31, In which blessing for three successive days, he sung as you read, Isa. xii. So he had his father's blessing in the Lord, that is Edmund Greenfield's, and had the blessing of God's words, declaring them to other renewed brethren and sisters; saying, "and such were some of you." See 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. But "we are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." 1 Cor. 6—11. The young man's name is Leopard, from about East Grinstead. Verily in this way of God's abundant blessings, he had all that my dear daughter had before her death! So God honoured my faith, and testimony published in my *funeral sermon*, page 19 which was as follows, "May God, I pray through this funeral sermon convert some poor sinners (his elect) unto himself. And verily I am persuaded he will grant me, the desire of my heart." John xvi. 23. And now all is manifestly true, and the church glories in God.

And there is another young man, that is coming to declare what God, by that sermon did *for his soul*. And really the blessing so abounds in many! Thus I do rejoice, and in great joy, I do inform you, that the

seven deacons, myself, and all the church never had such exceeding great joy, as yesterday, the sabbath. "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will toward men." Luke ii. 14. Thus my beloved friends, and relations in the Lord Jesus Christ, I assure you Staplefield church knows and enjoys, what many scoff at, namely. "that justification in and through the *imputed righteousness* of Christ, the righteousness of God, (Rom. iv. 5, 6,) is as Cruden says: "First, justification is the abolition of a sinner from guilt of sin and death. Secondly, justification consists in remission of sins, through the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Thirdly justification is before sanctification, God only sanctifies those that are justified." Let good men seduced, read this letter, may God bless it! And mark ye sanctification as the Scriptures prove, for Christ's sake, is the renovation of our souls, by the Holy Spirit in his blessing with the word." Titus iii. 5, 6, 7. Thus, we find the Spirit in his blessing, for Christ's sake keep us from the *destroying dominion of sin*. Rom. vi. 14. And we have our fruit unto holiness, the end everlasting life. Rom vi. 22. So I testify, with all the orthodox. Oh, my dear friends and relations in the Lord, I pray you take heed of those persons who have *embraced the notion*, that the Person of Christ was, and is the election's *imputed sanctification*; for that dasheth to pieces, the doctrine of the everlasting covenant of salvation, redemption and grace; and the doctrine of the suretyship of Christ; and the doctrine of the justice of the Father, and the work of the Holy Ghost.

Now I pray you to go to your Pastor with this letter, read it to him, or let him read it to you. Give my love to him, and above all things, let not this letter be lost, for I have written as fast as I can, and have no copy. I hope you will have it after a month or two, published by your Pastor in the *Earthen Vessel*. God keep you and all his Israel. Amen.

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"MY PEOPLE SHALL BE SATISFIED WITH MY  
GOODNESS."

*Canterbury, October 14, 1845.*

My very dear and beloved Brother,

Not by flesh merely, but surely I may say by blood, even by the precious blood of our precious Christ, made manifest in the hearts and consciences of God's blood-bought family—I feel a strong desire to record the very precious manner in which the dear Lord appeared to visit my soul last Thursday at Brabourne, under the ministry of the word, through your instrumentality: before which, however, I should state to you the state of mind under which my soul had been labouring for some time past. Darkness and deadness have appeared so far to prevail over every other principle, as almost to shut me up therein, in doubt and fear respecting my knowledge of and interest in that salvation which God in Christ has provided for his chosen Israel; there has been times when my soul has been, (as I have hoped, and do still hope,) visited with the divine presence, who alone can cheer the drooping spirit, and raise the cast down soul, by a shedding abroad of his love in the heart, and those visits have been of such a nature that they have been preferred to anything which this world could produce, however costly

or valuable. I have known then what the Church meant when she said of him, "He is the sweetest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." Yes, I could say. "He is most sweet." It is then I have felt self sink into nothing before him; the world has lost its charms, and my own heart has been melted into contrition, like wax before the fire. Why me? why me? unworthy me? has been the language of my soul, and there has been a holy familiarity, such as can be better felt than described; but these seasons have fled away; I have only been able to look back upon them as a starving man would look back upon the time when he was enabled to sit down and fare sumptuously from an abundance placed before him—he knew it was food from the effect it produced, that of appeasing his hunger; and such food as imparted to the body all that nourishment requisite for the maintenance of health and strength to enable it to perform those labours attendant upon this human life; but as the body needs a fresh and continued supply of such food to maintain life: so I find my soul needs a fresh supply of faith, love, hope, and every other grace of the Spirit imparted to it, or it is sickly, it droops, faints, and oftentimes appears ready to die; but it does not die neither does it live, for there appears life enough to feel its misery and woe, from which I have struggled hard to get away, and the more I have struggled, the worse have I felt, until I have been set fast in the stocks of unbelief, and a spirit of awful rebellion: and when this continues long, it seems to convey a spirit of languour, a faintness, a giving up, a recklessness as regards spiritual things. Prayer has been only in the form—has returned into my own bosom, and there has been neither fellowship with God, or with the saints of God. Added to these trials within, have been adverse winds without, which have blown so fierce on my already impaired frame, that I have thought, surely the Lord has set his mark upon me to curse me, and that that curse manifests itself in every turn I take. In addition to all this I have had to experience some hard blows from those I hold dear to me in the bonds of eternal truth; which has so preyed on my mind, that I have wondered how it is the body has borne up against it.

It was under this weight to a great extent, with hardly a will, whether to stop at home or go, that I was conveyed to Brabourne, I arrived there in time for the morning service, and heard Mr. Pearson from these words: "This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell, for I have desired it," (Psalm cxxxii.) and although he spoke very prettily and feelingly too upon the choice the Lord made of his people, and of their eternal security, and of the desire the Lord ever has towards the redeemed family: yet it did not reach my heart; it flowed through my head, and left me to experience an emptiness, with which I have had to travel for a long time past. Now do not think that I am here speaking of anything derogatory to Mr. P——, or that I am complaining of him as a minister; no, by no means; I believe Mr. P—— is one that

is permitted to enjoy much of the divine presence, and has sweet intercourse with his Lord, and consequently he has less with the world lying in the arms of the wicked one: but, you know as well as myself, that it is not in man to open the heart, or apply the word. Men may do, and they can do, a very great deal, but it must be by the irresistible power of the Holy Spirit that he can do any essential good unto any of God's quickened family. I trust the Lord has a work for Mr. P—— to do, and I pray the Lord may make that work manifest in the hearts of some of his dear family, and if so, of which I have no doubt, no one shall be able to do that work for him; neither shall he do the work of any one else; God will work, and who shall let or hinder him?

But to return, the afternoon came, and I took my seat in the chapel, and with the rest I attempted to sing,

“He saw me ruined in the fall;  
Yet loved me notwithstanding all.”

And so on:—the words faltered on my tongue, and I felt I was using words which did not apply to me, and I verily thought I must be mocking God. I attempted to pray, but it seemed to return upon me; I felt no access, could not draw nigh, was obliged to stand afar off; and thus I sat listening to the introductory part of your discourse. Whilst thus sitting, I found almost imperceptibly, my attention was rivited upon you, the word appeared laying fast hold on me; my hard heart began to soften, and when you began to describe the work of the Spirit upon the soul, in bidding that soul seek the face (or Persons) of the Trinity in unity; the power that attended that bidding, and how that power manifested itself upon the soul, together with the willing response of the soul in seeking the face of the Lord, the opposition it met with both from within and without, the conclusion the poor soul often comes to, under these exercises, that of giving all up, but cannot: I say, when you were describing this, my heart was like melted wax; the word was the stamp, the impression was deep, my doubts and fears subsided; I looked for them, but they could not be found, and I seemed compelled to say not only that the Lord is God, but that he is my God, and that I was one of those upon whom his love was fixed before all worlds; I was obliged to weep, but I wept tears of joy: I was filled with love to the dear Redeemer. I had communion with him, and I could then say, “he is all my desire.” I found the word and did eat it, and it was the joy and rejoicing of my heart. Who could thus give? Not poor fallen man; but the Lord alone! And who could then take away? No one! Oh, what a solid peace flowed into my soul! What could be compared to it? Nothing! Its value was immense; it was a pearl of great price; and I felt I could part with all, rather than that. We arrived home in safety, through mercy, and the next



morning I felt my whole soul swallowed up in love, it danced for joy, and I did indeed make merry, but it was between the dear Lord and my own soul; no one could intermeddle with my joys. I was jealous of my own heart; I charged the vanities of time, that they rise not up nor awake my love till he please; by it my hope has been strengthened, and my soul comforted and refreshed. These visits I would oftener have, but I know they would unfit my soul and body for the post I am called to fill; I would not be chooser of the path I have to travel, but would leave all to him, who alone knows what is best for me. I want food; it is he alone can give it. I want help; it is he alone can afford it, and at a time when most needed; it is a sufficiency he gives; not an abundance, that we should have a stock in hand; but makes us dependent creatures on his bounty; happy dependence, sweet position, to be looking to, and waiting for his appearing, supplying, comforting, and strengthening the soul in time of need.

And now, my dear brother, pardon me for intruding upon your time; and may the Lord direct you, and bless you, is the prayer of your's,  
ROBERT.

#### A LETTER TO THE REV. JOSEPH IRONS.

(Continued from page 414.)

RESPECTED SIR,

We read in well authenticated history, that there were constantly a number of timid fellows surrounding Luther, who were ever crying out, "Don't go so far:" "Don't say this:" "Don't do that;" and so on: especially when he was going to Worms, he had multitudes of undecided, men-fearing creatures, who begged of him "not to speed his way to Worms;" but Luther was not to be deterred nor intimidated in the great work in which he was engaged: he shook off these fearful things and passed on: among them was the mild, but learned Melancthon, who said to Luther, "you will not surely, go to Worms?" To whom Luther replied, "Yes! though I should be obliged to encounter as many devils at Worms, as there are tiles upon the houses, yet will I go!" Do you know, Sir, that there are plenty of these soft and easily frightened persons, who are saying, "Oh, dear, how can you think of thus publicly calling in question anything that Mr. Irons has said: you had much better leave him alone: you will only make many enemies: and do the cause no good: for he will, no doubt, live and die a decided bigot against the Baptists."

I will not, Sir, call you a bigot; but as regards your most unholy attack upon the Baptists, and your false assertions respecting their views of the ordinance of believer's baptism by immer-

sion, I will dare to say to you as did Nehemiah to Sanballat—“There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart:” and therefore, I am constrained to proceed with my testimony against you.

Do you know, Sir, that some of the Lord's own faithful disciples who sit under your ministry: to whom, as an instrument in the hands of God, you have been useful, are exceedingly grieved and wounded at the unchristianlike and cruel contempt which you are throwing upon an highly honoured ordinance of God? Do you know, Sir, that even good men of your own denomination, stand aghast at the violence of your language? I tell you, Sir, this is indeed the case: believers in Christ, who worship at the Grove, are weeping with great sorrow of heart, at your false zeal; and people abroad are crying, shame! shame! shame! Who could ever have thought that such things could have come from Mr. Irons?

Read, sir, I pray you, the following extract from a letter, which I have received from a most faithful friend in the country (not a Baptist.) He says:—

“My very dear Sir, and affectionate Brother in the precious and lovely Jesus. I do feel your kindness to be exceedingly great. Most abundantly may my precious Lord bless you for it.

“I am truly grieved and pained in my soul, to find that such a man as Mr. Irons should ever let such words have escaped his lips. It was indeed cruel in the extreme. But I am also confounded with surprise. If it were not on record, I could never have believed that he had said it. What, Sir, is it possible that he made no exceptions, viz. that such was not the case with those who were taught by the blessed Spirit?—for surely he must know that they can rather cease to exist than rest in any outward form or ceremony! I believe, Sir, that the regenerated soul is never more pained than when he fears he is robbing his heavenly Father of his glory. Therefore, my beloved Sir, it is indeed utterly impossible for any heaven born soul to attribute any saving work to outward observances. ‘Not unto us,’ is his soul's breathing before the God of all his mercies.

“Oh! Mr. Irons! is it possible that you could have uttered such words? God Almighty shew you the evil of it, and lead you to confession.”

I will not, Sir, comment upon this brief, but forcible appeal unto your conscience. However hardened and determined you may be in the course you are pursuing, depend upon it the day is not far distant, when these fleshly works of your's will be burned up; and your soul made to feel that hereby you have sorely offended and afflicted many who are bound up in the bundle of life.

Before I proceed with my own scriptural testimony respecting *The Mode of Administration*, I shall lay before you some valuable letters which have reached me; but a want of room compels me to defer them until the next *Vessel* shall be launched. For the present, farewell.

C. W. BANKS.

## Notices & Answers.

The suggestions of a friend with reference to the *Earthen Vessel* are gratefully acknowledged. It is determined on to enlarge its size next number to a regular Demy Octavo page, giving twenty-four pages of matter for two-pence: and altogether to cease from publishing any more Supplements.

Thanks to "E. S." of Saxmundham, a friend at Ashfield, and others, for their kind expressions of support to the *Vessel*. To one and all, we say, that plenty of the back numbers can be had through any bookseller—but should any difficulty be found, please to address a line to "C. W. Banks, Pagoda Terrace, Bermondsey New Road, London," and every explanation and assistance will, (God willing,) be given.

We are thankful to our friend "D. M." for his offer of an advertisement: we say however, let him not be deceived: the circulation of the *Earthen Vessel* is not yet 500, while the *Gospel Standard* is perhaps above 8,000; therefore the latter publication would be of more service to him than the poor *Vessel* would be: nevertheless, we should be thankful for any assistance he can render us:—the *Vessel* has, as yet, been published at a great loss: a heavy embargo lays upon her at the present time: and nearly all the ships' crews in the river are firing at her, in the hope that she must go down: neither her faith nor her continuance stands in the wisdom of men; if it be not in the power of God, for the glory of God, and the good of souls; the sooner she sinks, or is thrown aside, the better.

Complaints have been made because so much space has been occupied with reviews, and so little with the author's own writing: please to have a little patience, and we trust full satisfaction on this head will be given. We fully expected that the testimony of living ministers would be generally acceptable.

"Gershom" is thankfully received: it is quite impossible for us to reconcile the contradiction, or to account for the strange discrepancy which he discovers in Mr. Stringer's life. If spared, Gershom's weighty letter shall be given next month: and it may be, Mr. Stringer will feel disposed to say a few words by way of explanation: Truly, truly, truly, Gershom's views of the origin and nature of many men's ministry is both searching and solemn. What can you put your finger upon, and say, "this is a certain mark that this man's ministry is of God?" Some will answer "Conversion is a sure evidence." Yes, but every minister—(whatever may be his sentiments,) has converts to his doctrines and line of things. Oh, then, for the answer of a good conscience toward God—and the testimony of *living souls*, that we have neither run nor laboured in vain.

Caleb Coates' third letter is, of necessity, deferred until our next.

"The Power of Utterance" will, at the earliest opportunity, be found in the *Vessel*.

A series of letters on "The Certainty and Glory of Christ's Visible Kingdom, by C. W. BANKS;" will shortly be commenced, and continued through the successive numbers of the *Vessel*, should the Lord be pleased to spare, uphold, and prosper him. These letters will embody the substance of an old, scarce, but truly precious work on this most interesting subject.

# A LETTER

ADDRESSED TO

THE REV. JOSEPH IRONS,

WITH REFERENCE TO

SOME BITTER & UNFOUNDED ASPERSIONS,  
CAST UPON THE BAPTISTS, IN HIS  
NEW WORK, ENTITLED,  
"PRISCILLA."

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BY C. W. BANKS,

MINISTER OF THE WORD,

*Crosby Row Chapel, King Street, Borough.*

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LONDON :

JAMES PAUL, CHAPTER HOUSE COURT,  
ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD, & PATERNOSTER ROW

SOLD AT CROSBY ROW CHAPEL, ON TUESDAY AND THURSDAY EVENINGS; AT WINDMILL STREET CHAPEL, FINSDURY SQUARE, ON WEDNESDAY EVENINGS: AT BENAIAH CHAPEL, CAMBERWELL NEW ROAD, ON FRIDAY EVENING: AT HUULAH CHAPEL, 153, HIGH STREET, SHOREDITCH, ON MONDAY EVENINGS: AT THE ARK BAPTIST CHAPEL, STRATFORD, AND OF MR. BLAKE, 2, LOWER BLAND STREET, DOVER ROAD.

HOW TO PREACH & SCRIPTURALLY TO PRACTICE  
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST.

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A LETTER,

ADDRESSED

TO THE REV. JOSEPH IRONS,

(Continued from page 388, of the "Earthen Vessel.")

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RESPECTED SIR,

It is of necessity—it being so heavily laid upon my conscience—that I now proceed to lay before you, and all into whose hands this tract may fall, the substance of what was delivered when I did so freely quote from, and so openly denounce the statement you have made respecting baptism by immersion, in your work entitled "PRISCILLA."

After reading the extract as given in the early part of this letter (see Part X. of the EARTHEN VESSEL, page 388,) I said: "I do not hesitate to declare that this is one of the most cruel, the most unfounded, and uncalled-for insults that could possibly be thrown upon that sacred ordinance; and that, too, by a man, a minister of great influence, who must well know that what he has here written and published, is anything but the truth.

It may be said that before I thus publicly witness against this work, I should have spoken to him face to face, according to the word of God: I would have done so, if it had been in my power: but it is not. I dare not to think of being allowed to stand in the presence of so great a man; but I cannot, I dare not, hold back my poor testimony against that which has wounded me, and grieved me, beyond expression.

In the first place, the author mixes up the Baptist denomination, and puts them on a level with the Roman Catholics. He says, "Who would have conceived that even the perverseness of human nature could have distorted the simple ordinance of baptism as modern Popery has done; that while the Holy Ghost has recorded it as an emblem of his work, they, *of two parties*, reject his work for the emblem?"

Is not this cruel? A more unostentatious; a more simple; yea, a more scriptural, New Testament denomination, is not in existence, than is the Baptist. With very few foppish exceptions, we have no painted windows; we have no priestly gowns and bands (the generally acknowledged shreds of Popery itself;) we set up no images, nor idols: and yet, we are here set side by side with the Romish Church. Wherein lays the similarity? Surely, this is nothing but the fruit of a mind filled with enmity against that which Christ himself observed, and positively commanded down to the end of time! (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.) Reader; read that text for yourself: and may the blessed Spirit speak it home to, and lay it open in your heart!

Secondly, the author of "PRISCILLA," declares that we do "REJECT HIS (the Holy Ghost's) WORK, FOR THE EMBLEM." Oh! what an awful sentence is this! Can anything be more contrary to truth? No—I am persuaded that the writer of this sentence would not dare to tell any Baptist minister to his face, that by the ordinance of Believer's Baptism he did virtually "reject the work of the Holy Ghost." It is a most solemn truth, that, upon the whole, there is not a denomination upon the face of the earth, among whom the work of God the Holy Ghost on the hearts of elect sinners is more fully, clearly, and experimentally, and constantly preached and insisted upon, than it is among the Particular Baptists. Ah, you may despise this; but it is an undeniable truth: it is a truth that I have heard members of Independent

Churches witness to again and again : and therefore to take the whole body of the Baptist denomination ; to set them in a line with poor popish bigots ; and withal to declare that they do reject—do deny—do cast away the work of the Holy Ghost—and substitute the ordinance of Baptism in lieu thereof—is so desperately wicked, cruel, and false, that though every friend I have, forsook me for protesting against it : yea, although imprisonment should follow—yet will I declare it to be a most extravagant, a most unjust, and false assertion.

In a carnal, temporal, point of view, there is nothing desirable in the position which the Baptist denomination is called to occupy : in point of numbers, influence, and fashionable congregations, she occupies the lowest seat : at least four of the greatest sections of the professing Christian Church, despise and reject the ordinance of Baptism ; and laugh at us for administering it. The Church of England docs this ; the Wesleyans do this ; the Presbyterians and Countess of Huntington's connection are the same. Nearly all the wealth, the literature, the influence, and the professions of Christendom are against us in this solemn New Testament ordinance. But, blessed be God, we have the Bible still ; we have the ordinance still ; we have men and ministers fearing God, who are bold in defending, and faithful in administering it still. With all the mighty phalanx of witnesses against us—we have Joshua and Caleb for us ; we have the Lord Jesus Christ on our side ; and the answer of a good conscience toward God : ten out of every twelve who are going into the gospel land, are (as regards the solemn ordinance of believers' Baptism,) bringing a false report : thanks be to God, we have a few Calebs yet ; who, being brought to love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, do also love to keep his commandments. Ah, and range London and the country through ; and in nine cases out of every ten where you find naturally gifted, elegant and eloquent minis-

ters (such as are described in Ezekiel xxviii. 14—18) ; where you find large, fashionable, overflowing congregations ; among whom may be found members, who, though professed followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, and members of Calvinistic churches, openly declare that “there is no harm in billiards and chess,”—as I can produce a witness to prove to be the case in the day in which we live—in the great majority of these worshippers, I say, this ordinance is despised, and a false, unscriptural, popish form and ceremony instituted in its stead. Oh, ye professors of Christianity in England, surely, to you the Lord is saying : “Remember, from whence thou art fallen ; and repent ; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place.”

But again, the author of “*PRISCILLA*,” declares that we “*insult the Holy Ghost*, by placing more importance upon *our own doings*, than upon *the work of the Holy Ghost*.”

Surely, the man is to be pitied, who is either so ignorant that he knows no better, and yet withal, dares deliberately to write and to publish so glaring a falsehood ; or so wanting in an honest principle, as to allow his overheated zeal so dreadfully to violate his own conscience ; and so awfully to pervert the truth ! Can the author of “*PRISCILLA*” take up this his book, which he calls a “testimony for Christ against Antichrist ;” and peruse the 82nd and 83rd pages thereof, without feeling condemned in his conscience ? If he can, I pray ever to be preserved from such a state of soul ; for verily, it is bad.

Mark you, my reader ; before you condemn me for thus writing : the author of “*PRISCILLA*” deliberately declares that we do insult the Holy Ghost, by placing more importance upon Baptism by immersion, than we do upon the work of the blessed Spirit. Is the author of “*PRISCILLA*” ignorant of the decided way and manner of proceeding in the admission of persons into the communion



of Baptist churches? No; he is not. He knows right well, that no Baptist minister, who is worthy of the name, will administer this ordinance to any person, until that individual has honestly and openly given "a reason of the hope that is in him," that the Holy Spirit hath convinced him of sin; given him repentance towards God, and wrought a living faith in his soul. The work of the Holy Ghost is the very first thing that the ministers and members of Baptist churches look after; so far from placing more importance upon immersion in water, than they do upon Baptism by the Holy Ghost, they will not give the right hand of fellowship, nor hold out any inducement to an individual to embrace this solemn ordinance unless that individual can give some humble testimony, witnessing to the existence of the grace of the Spirit of life and truth in the soul.

We know there are exceptions: we know there are here and there individuals, who, for the sake of swelling the number of members in their churches, are hurrying children and servants, and, it may be, many stony ground hearers through the water; but even these ministers profess to believe that those whom they baptize are those in whom is manifested the work of God the Holy Ghost.

I do then most solemnly declare that a grosser libel upon believers' Baptism, upon real Baptist ministers and churches, has never been published, than is to be found in this book called "PRISCILLA," in which said work there is one sentence which seems plainly to bespeak the state of the author's mind: at page 94, he has written a sentence which, if true, would at one fell stroke, cut off every poor believer from having the least hope of being found in Christ: here the writer says,

"It is difficult indeed to believe that there *can be any Christianity in that professing church, or that man's heart, where CHRIST has not THE UNDIVIDED AFFECTIONS—THE EXCLUSIVE CONFIDENCE, and the entire revenue of praise for*

every part and feature of salvation." These are his own words—this is the modern PRISCILLA'S standard: but it is directly opposed to the testimony of the great Apostle of the Gentiles, who declares in his address to the Galatian church, that "the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are CONTRARY THE ONE TO THE OTHER: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Certain it is, that in his right mind, the believer desires to be entirely devoted in heart and in life, to the Lord Jesus Christ: but an "UNDIVIDED AFFECTION" is not to be found in the heart and experience of any man in this time state. The man is deceived that thinks he has it.

But I now come to the word and testimony itself: the words which have been laid upon my mind to speak from at this time,\* may be found in the eighth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the 36th and three following verses:

"And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

Without at all straining this solemn and deeply interesting portion of the word of God; without either adding to, or taking from it, there are four things plainly and positively laid before us.

First: the position which this ordinance should occupy in the life and experience of the individual, and the manner in which it is to be approached.

Secondly: the qualification essential to the observance of it.

Thirdly: the mode of its administration: and

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\* The occasion of baptizing in Trinity Chapel, Trinity Street.

Fourthly : the divine sanction given unto it.

In the first place, these words plainly point out the true, the real position which this ordinance is to occupy in the life and experience of the individual embracing it : and the manner in which it is to be approached.

“As the first covenant, or testament, (says one of the greatest writers that the Church of Christ, in these latter days hath been blessed with,) had ordinances of divine service, which are shaken, removed, and abolished ; so the New Testament, or Gospel dispensation, has ordinances of divine worship, which cannot be shaken, but will remain until the second coming of Christ.” Oh, yes, this is, indeed, a consolation to the poor, despised church of Christ, that widely spread and popular as the error of infant sprinkling has become (a practice for which there is neither precedent nor authority in the whole canon of Holy Writ)—the Baptism of believers by immersion—an ordinance plainly instituted, honoured and practised, at the very opening of the Gospel dispensation :—has been, still is, and shall be continued in the church of Christ, to the very end of time

God gave unto Moses the pattern of the sanctuary in the mount : David gave unto Solomou the pattern of the temple : Christ has given the New Testament Church, the pattern of her discipline, ordinances, and government : and while we readily enough admit that these things are not essential unto salvation ; that thousands of sinners have gone, are going, and will go to glory without them ; still, to say, “because they are not essential, I shall not observe them ;” is practically to declare that Christ has given a form of church-government, but he does not insist upon its observance : yea ; it is practically saying, “Although I profess to believe in, and to love the Lord Jesus Christ, yet I will not obey his commandments.”

There are thousands of professors who deliberately testify that it is their opinion that Baptism by immersion is the only

scriptural mode : but while they thus take it up, and countenance it with their lips ; they trample it under foot by their practice, saying, “ as I think I can get to heaven without it ; and as it is a cross I do not much like to take up : I will not be obedient unto it.”

Did not the Lord Jesus Christ himself put both faith and practice together, in that solemn declaration—“ he that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved : he that believeth not, shall be damned ?” Ah, yes, he did : and who shall dare to say, that either one or the other is to be dispensed with ? There is a dreadful looseness, as regards practicals, in our day : men are indirectly saying, “ we have got free grace ; sovereign grace ; electing grace ; redeeming grace ; and this is all we care for.”

Speaking with reference to the strict discipline of the churches following close upon the apostles' days, a learned lecturer of deep and extensive research says,—“ No one in those times, seems to have pleaded for, or to have expected initiation into the Churches of Christ without faith ; but many pleaded that faith *without baptism might be sufficient* :” these narrow-souled pleaders ; these lean and half-hearted professors—these Nicodemus followers of Christ were the very founders of that system of desiring the crown, but determined to evade the cross, which now prevails throughout the land. Oh, we think we see a few of these pleaders for faith without obedience, standing at the threshold of the ancient churches ; and being deficient or fearfully lacking in their love to Christ, and to all that he has commanded, they said,—“ We believe in the gospel as well as you, but Baptism is not essential ; let us come into your communion without it—surely faith is sufficient !” But what was the reply ?—what was the argument urged in answer ?—what was the line of conduct pursued by the old faithful churches of Christ ? Where their parsons and their deacons, and their members then so much concerned for wealth, influence, and

numbers, that they said, "Well, if you cannot see Baptism; why, we will have open communion; we will fling this solemn ordinance to the winds; and sooner than loose your membership, your money, your influence, your family, your support, we will turn traitors to Christ—make his commandments void; and make the door into the church, *not to be what Christ ordained*, but whatever you may please. We will have Baptism or no Baptism; we will have immersion or sprinkling; just as you may think proper." Was this the answer? Was this the line of conduct pursued? **NO: VERILY IT WAS NOT.** We quote the answer in the very words of the learned and able lecturer referred to.—  
*"The argument used in reply was, that HE WHO SHRANK FROM BAPTISM WAS DEFICIENT IN THE GOOD FRUITS REQUIRED BY THE REDEEMER HIMSELF: and imperfect faith was therefore REJECTED."*

Oh, ye sprinklers, and open communionists, know ye not that ye are the offspring of these rejected ones, whose faith was imperfect, because it lacked a corresponding practice? Yes: this was your unscriptural origin; these shrivelled up and lifeless gospellers of old, not being able to get into the then living churches of Jesus, went and set up for themselves: and their accommodating, half-way medium sort of Christianity has ever been found so palatable and suitable to the masses, and the great bulk of professors, that they have gone on wonderfully increasing: and of course, many thousands of the Lord's dear people have been, and still are, ensnared by them.

Here, then, was the very commencement of that multitudinous crop of errors which now rear their heads, and extend their powers to the compassing sea and land: but still, for **THE TRUTH**, doctrinally, experimentally, and practically, God has his witnesses—the little remnant is not, cannot be swamped nor entirely carried away.

"The Jews pretend, (says Dr. Gill,) that their ancestors

were received into covenant by Baptism or dipping, as well as by circumcision and sacrifice; and this is greedily caught at by the advocates for infant baptism, who fancy that John, Christ, and his Apostles, took up this custom as they found it, and continued it; but no proof is to be given of any such practice obtaining in those times, either from the Old or New Testament; nor from the Apocryphal books written by Jews; between them; nor from Josephus; or Philo, the Jew, who wrote a little after the times of John and Christ: nor from the Jewish Misnah, or book of traditions. JOHN was *the first* administrator of the ordinance of Baptism, and therefore is called *the Baptist*, by way of emphasis."

There is a great fulness and much spiritual edification to my soul in the first verse of the third chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel—"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness." "In those days,"—the opening of the door into the Gospel, or New Testament kingdom—in those days came John the Baptist. The sweet interpretation and signification of *John*, is, *the grace and gift of God*. In the very opening of this glorious dispensation, wherein the Person of Christ was to appear—the sufferings of Christ to be endured—the sacrifice for sins to be made—the righteousness of the Church to be brought in—the tidings of mercy to be proclaimed—in *those days*, came *the grace and gift of God*—the herald of Christ—preparing the way of the Lord; making his paths straight; and preaching repentance in the wilderness: and this man was emphatically called *the Baptist*: Why, men, the Holy Ghost tells you that the dispensation itself came in with that very ordinance which you despise and set at nought.

John was the forerunner of Christ, connected with, and making way for, the coming of Christ. What was his work? To preach repentance, and to baptise. Now by this you are not to understand that you must have Baptism before you can have Christ: No: but it clearly declares these

two things: first, you must have a secret, vital union to Christ: as a fruit, a manifest, declarative, and experimental fruit of this union, you must be the subject of genuine repentance towards God; and, as an expression of your faith in Christ, you must be buried by Baptism into Christ, before you can openly become united to, and stand as a member of the visible Church of Christ. Hence, Baptism is said *not to be a church ordinance*: it is an ordinance of God, and a part and branch of public worship: but it is not an ordinance administered *in the church*, but *out of it*; and in order to admission into the church, and communion with it; it is preparatory to it: it does not constitute or make a person a member of a church; neither does Baptism admit him into a visible church; persons must first be baptised, and then added to the church, as the three thousand converts were.

A multitude of professors are saying, "Well, I cannot see the ordinance." But why is it? Will such persons declare that they have prayerfully sought for the truth from the fountain head? Or, have they taken it for granted that because many great and good men who are gone home; and because many great and good men who are still on the walls, did not, nor do not, practise this ordinance, that therefore it must be wrong? Ah, sneer with contempt much as you may; it is a fact; there are tens of thousands, beside Roman Catholics, who are priest-ridden; led by the nose by pulpit declamation, by ancestral practices, and by positive falsehoods; instead of being led by the plain, unerring word of truth.

See how this divinely instituted order of things for which I am contending, runs through the whole of the New Testament! Before Christ entered upon his public ministry; before the heavens were opened; before the Spirit descended; before the divine proclamation "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; before this public inauguration of the Son of God: he came to John to be baptized of him.

Oh, the humility, the condescension, the loving example, here displayed by Jesus himself! How full to the point is this solemn Scripture! Before Jesus becomes openly manifested as the Messiah, the Messenger of the covenant, the Shepherd of the sheep, he says, "*suffer it to be so NOW—FOR THUS—THUS.*" Oh, ye despisers of this Gospel preaching, Christ-exalting ordinance, read my Lord's own words; look at the solemn sentence "THUS it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."

This (says Stovell,) our Lord calls "entering in by the door into the sheepfold." It is said by the opponents to Baptism, that "the Baptism of John had two aspects; first, as it looked to the past, and made confession of sin; and second, as it looked to the future, and had respect to the coming reign of heaven, and pledged the subjects of it to become the disciples of the coming Saviour. The question is, in which of these characters was Baptism necessary on the part of the Saviour, as becoming him to fulfil all righteousness, so that he could not be justified in taking his place in the kingdom of heaven without obeying it? In the first place, it is certain that, as regards repentance, Baptism was not necessary for Christ, and, as a symbol, had no meaning. He had no sin, and he required no repentance. But if he required no repentance, and did not profess it, then this baptism was not a symbol of that necessity, but of something else. Here therefore the question returns; if the baptism of Jesus was not received as a profession and symbol of repentance, how could it become the necessary badge of discipleship? It is true that in the kingdom of heaven, which he was about to set up, he was not a subordinate and a learner, but the sole teacher and Lord. Baptism was the badge and moral element, on which that kingdom was based. This not only applied to our Lord, as well as the subjects of his kingdom—as nothing can be more unseemly than a neglect of the laws by the supreme ruler—but in



truth, Baptism was more needful to him than to them: they were to be the recipients of eternal good—he was to be the victim of divine wrath, in order that these blessings might be communicated to them. Whatever demand was made upon them, he declared his readiness to fulfil; thus exhibiting a justification of God in his anger against sin, and submitting to become the victim of the punishment due to it. With this clue to its import, Jordan presents to us a scene of vast moral splendour. It comprises all that self-devotion to divine wrath, by which the Redeemer procured hope for guilty man, with all that glory which was required by God in his dispensation of mercy."

In Christ being baptised of John, it has been presumed by our great modern Baptist lecturer, (Stovell,) that four things are to be learned:—1. That our Lord, by this act, declared his approbation of John, and of the Baptism which he administered. This act was, in effect, to say to John, Well done, good and faithful servant. Thy ministry will be supported and extended by him who ordained it. 2. That our Lord was identified by this event. John had been told, "Upon whomsoever the Spirit shall descend, the same is he." It was in this manner that John was expressly assured of the individual; so that, pointing to the Lord, he could say, "Behold the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world." 3. The personal subordination of our Lord in the kingdom of heaven was thus both declared by himself and accepted by God the Father. He had no sins to call for repentance; but, by this act, he took upon himself the form of a servant in the kingdom of heaven. 4. The whole weight of his example is thus thrown upon the Christian life. That he was set apart as a servant, his actions showed, by the obedience he rendered in the work to which he was appointed, and by each special duty which he performed. But that which forms the distinguishing feature for the encouragement of all his followers, is the uniform fidelity which marked

the Saviour's official career. When once he began to teach the kingdom of heaven, he lived for nothing else. He took upon himself the form of a servant, and he served so that the performance of all Christian duty may be summed up in this one expression, 'Follow me.' Dr. Halley says, that he, being a Hebrew of that time, immersion was a part of the righteousness which he was bound to fulfil. The expression 'Hebrew of that time' might have been struck out by the learned Doctor; for, if Jesus had been a Gentile of any age, it would have been equally necessary, for the ministry of John was thus to be approved and shown to be of a common family with Christianity. The personality of our Lord was thus to be identified, that he might become the object of reliance on the part of all those who were baptised. The personal subordination of our Lord was thus confessed, because, without it, there could have been no justification. And lastly, if he had not submitted to this initiatory ordinance at the first, he never could have become an example to his subjects. But the observance of the right of Baptism is alike incompatible with the undeveloped faculties of infancy, and with the unreserved condition of repentance on the part of the impenitent. In the one case, it is absurdity—in the other, it is hypocrisy. Both the one and the other are condemned by our Lord; and, therefore, we conclude that the ordinance of Baptism is discriminating and confined to those whose moral principles are ascertained."

On the day of Pentecost, the same divinely instituted order is observed. What a glorious model—yea, more than a model, of the order of things in the gospel kingdom, was there displayed! Oh, that the churches, the professed churches of Christ in our day, presented such a glorious spectacle! First, there is Peter preaching Christ in all the glory of his Person, and the completeness of his work, unto the people. And who better adapted to preach the glory, the love, the mercy, the compassion, the atoning blood, and

the justifying righteousness of Christ, than Peter? Oh, I think I see that restored penitent, looking back in his soul, to the pardoning mercy and restoring grace which he had found in Christ, and then with all the sanctified powers of the regenerated man, he exclaims, "Let *all the house of Israel* know assuredly." What! Only the house of Israel? No, only the truly elected of God can ever savingly know "that God hath made that same Jesus both Lord and Christ." This was Peter's ministry. What followed? Men were pricked in their hearts; the Holy Ghost was there: they cried out, "What shall we do?" "Repent," said Peter. Was that all? No, "REPENT, and be BAPTISED, EVERY ONE OF YOU in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." What Baptism was this that Peter enjoined upon them? Certainly not the all-essential Baptism of the Holy Ghost, for this he speaks of distinctly. "Then they that gladly received his word were Baptised; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

The same divinely instituted order of things was observed in Saul of Tarsus. After Christ had stopp'd him in his mad career: after godly sorrow in his soul: after special deliverance by the instrumentality of Ananias; he arose, was baptised; and after this, when he was come to Jerusalem, "he assayed to join himself to the disciples." (Acts ix. 26.) Read also that striking verse, the 5th of the 19th of the Acts, and you see not only the proper position which this ordinance is to occupy in the life and experience of believers, but also the distinction manifested between it, John's Baptism, and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost.

While such solemn, plain, unequivocal testimonies, respecting the nature, design and order of this ordinance stand recorded in the word of God, why should men go about to establish a ceremony of their own instead of the ordinance of God? Oh, I do feel, that while it is an unspeakable mercy

that salvation is not in the ordinance, but wholly in the electing love of God ; in the finished work of Christ ; and in the personal sanctification of the Holy Ghost ; yet, I do really feel it a source of grief to my soul, that many of the highly favoured, and eminently useful servants of God are so filled with enmity and opposition against this sacred ordinance, that they hesitate not to charge its administrators with making it an idol ; insulting the Holy Ghost ; rejecting his work ; and many other false, cruel, fleshly, and unbecoming ebullitions of a distorted and carnal mind.

The position then which this ordinance is to occupy in the life and experience of the individual is plainly this, it is after regeneration, repentance, and faith in Christ have been wrought in the soul ; it is before, a visible union unto the church militant can scripturally be effected. Philip was especially sent to the Eunuch — “THE SPIRIT said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself unto this chariot.” Mark, my friend, the whole of this proceeding is under the direction of the Spirit of God : the Holy Ghost was there : let us be careful how we slight so solemn a testimony ; or look at, think upon, or deal with the ordinance of Baptism with preconceived, borrowed or infused prejudices. Philip having joined the Eunuch, preached unto him JESUS.

What is the fair, candid, and unbiassed inference to be drawn from this sentence of “Philip preaching unto him Jesus ?” Certainly, here is an implied lesson as to *how Jesus is to be preached*. Not only in his glorious complex character, finished work, and offices ; but also in the fruits and manifestations produced in such as have an interest in him. Philip preached Christ doctrinally, experimentally, and practically ; and that in the power and light of the Holy Ghost, so that the Eunuch says—“ *See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised ?*”

The approach to the ordinance is to be voluntary on the part of the believing sinner himself. I am not to come to

you, to invite you—to press, to urge upon you, to embrace this ordinance, unless specially and powerfully moved to it by the Spirit of God: you must see the ordinance for yourself: and out of love to Christ, by faith in Christ, come forward, saying, “See, here is water: what doth hinder me?”

I now pass on to the second thing—the essential prerequisite or qualification: “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.” The qualification laid not in the Eunuch being a young man or an old man; neither did it lay in his being a great sinner, or, what some call, a little sinner: neither does Philip say, “I must go to our deacons and to our members, and ask them whether I may baptise you or not.” No: he rests the whole upon the genuineness of his faith.

I speak not against the constitution, and usual mode adopted by Baptist churches in visiting und examining, and hearing candidates, when those candidates desire to be admitted into their communion; but in the matter of this ordinance, if a person comes forward, desiring to embrace it; giving such a reason of the hope that is in them, as shall be satisfactory to my soul, I ask no more; whether they shall afterwards join the visible church, or not, is not for me to enquire. Upon a confession of faith, and a declaration of the Spirit’s work in their hearts, I am, by the word of God, authorized to baptise them.

But how strong is the essential qualification! “If thou believest with *all thine heart*.”

An hypocritical heart—a dead professor’s heart, is a divided heart—not regenerated—not sincere; not decided; an undecided faith is not the faith of God’s elect. Perhaps the simplest and sweetest illustration of this faith may be seen in that description given of some who came unto David when he was at Ziklag in trouble: (1 Chronicles, xii.) The

Holy Ghost says, "Of Zebulun, such as went forth to battle, expert in war, with all instruments of war, fifty thousand which could keep rank, they were *not of double heart.*" Here are three solemn things, essential in the constitution and manifestation of a child of God: First, of the tribe of Zebulun. Zebulun signifies "AN HABITATION:" those who dwell in God, and God in them. Christ afar off—Christ in a naked, nominal, abstract faith, will not do: "CHRIST IN YOU," is the only "hope of glory," which will stand the hour of trial: I must know him: love him: have a living faith in him, for myself: by his indwelling, *my* heart must be changed: *my* mind enlightened: *my* soul quickened: *my* sins subdued: *my* pardon sealed: or, I cannot be found living a life of faith upon him: "We know that the Son of God is come; and that he hath given us an understanding to know him that is true: and we are in him that is true: even in his Son Jesus Christ. THIS IS THE TRUE GOD; and eternal life."

The second feature characteristic of the redeemed of the Lord, is, that "they could keep rank;" they are men that have been disciplined; they are men that have been chastened, and instructed; brought to know the truth, and to stand upright; men that dare not flinch, or fall away in the hour of temptation: find them when, or where you may; depressed or distressed, tempted or tried, still you shall find them in the faith, in the truth, and in the fear of a triune and covenant God: the ranks of God's elect can never be broken; not one shall finally fall away, perish, or be plucked out of his hands.

The third feature is, that "they were not of double heart." The margin says, "they were without a heart and a heart:" that is, they had not TWO HEARTS, but ONE HEART. Describing hypocrites and vain professors, David says, (Psalm xii 2) "With flattering lips and with a double heart, (or

with a heart, and a heart; that is, one heart after another heart) do they speak:" they have one heart professedly for God, and another heart really for the devil; they have one heart professedly for Christ and his salvation; and another heart for old Adam and his sins; one heart for truth, and another for error; one heart for the church, and another for the world; one heart to speak smoothly, flatteringly, deceitfully, hypocritically, approvingly, before a man's face, and another heart to reproach, villify, backbite, and slander him when his face is turned away. Well, these are not they that believe with all their hearts: these have not a decided heart against sin, against self righteousness; against dead and empty forms; neither have they decided hearts for sovereign grace, for atoning blood, for sanctifying power. Lacking in these things, they lack the essential qualification for believers' Baptism. And are these statements correct? Is it true, that no consistent, no honest Baptist minister will admit any one to the ordinance without some proof that the work of inward sanctification by the Holy Ghost has been wrought? Is it true that hereby he is but strictly following the commands of Christ—imitating the example of Christ, treading in the very steps of the Apostles, and of Christ? And is it true, that the author of "PRISCILLA" knows that such is really the undeviating practice and order of proceeding in all consistent trinitarian churches? YES—THESE THINGS ARE TRUE, and beyond dispute. Then what shall be said for the conscience of the man who can deliberately write, print, and publish the assertion, that the Baptists "insult the Holy Ghost, reject his work, and put more importance upon their own doings, than upon his?" Verily he ought to be blamed; and blamed too he is, by many who would be glad to be able to find an excuse for such — : but I forbear.

Of the third thing in the text, I will say but little, not wishing unnecessarily to enlarge. It is in the mode of administration that we are charged with carnalising, literalising

and substituting the emblem for the work. What, sir, I would ask, is the beautiful idea thrown out by one of your own most popular Presbyterian commentaries? "The preaching of the gospel (says he) and the administration of Baptism are beautifully concurrent to one end. The preaching of the gospel is the unfolding of the truth; the laying open the mystery of God: the ordinance of Baptism is the visible confirming seal of the truth!" Exactly so, Mr. Presbyterian Commentator! But why do you preach one doctrine and practice another? Preaching the gospel is throwing open the great mystery of God in the election and redemption of the church: by the power of the Holy Ghost this holy mystery is thrown into the hearts and consciences of elect sinners; and their being moved, like the Eunuch, to be Baptized, is a living expression, an open manifestation of the truth and power of the gospel. But if infant sprinkling be true, this concurrent harmony between the word and the ordinance is violated: for in infant sprinkling, God's order of things is perverted and overthrown. Infant sprinkling (which these perverters of God's ordinance call Baptism,) is placed before the preaching of the word; so that instead of it being "He that believeth and is Baptized shall be saved:" it is, "*He is sprinkled*; and IF, after this, he shall believe, THEN he shall be saved." Oh, cease your thunderings against Popery, and Arminianism, until consistency, and an agreement with God's revealed word, be found in your worship. What solemn mockery—what contemptible and empty garbage it is, for a man or any set of men, to be continually dunning the people with warnings and denunciations against those very systems, the dregs of which they are closely hugging and idolizing in their own breasts, and perpetuating in their own practice!

But to the mode of administration. Beside the certain undeniable fact, that "the translated word *baptising*"—(as



Calvin expressly declares) "signifies TO PLUNGE, into, or to dip;" beside this, it is a striking fact that the word baptism or baptising, is never used by the Holy Ghost, but the figure of immersion, washing, or overwhelming, is therewith connected. See Matthew iii. 6, and 16; Mark i. 5; Luke xii. 50; Acts xxii. 16; Romans vi. 3, 4; ("we are buried with him by baptism into death.") Most true it is, that this is spoken in the highest sense, of the solemn work of God the Holy Ghost: but it is also equally true, that as the broken bread, and the wine, are really and truly to be taken and received, as emblems of the body and blood of Christ; so the solemn ordinance of baptism is to be observed as a striking emblem of the elect sinner being, by the Holy Ghost, baptised into all the new covenant and mediatorial fulness, righteousness, and salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ. If this be true; and the whole of the inspired and plainly written word of God declares IT IS TRUE—then, I do fearlessly ask, if any insult can possibly be offered to the Holy Ghost—from what section of the professing church doth that insult proceed? "I speak to *wise men*;" let them judge and decide. But is it not naughtiness in the extreme, even to speak of "*insulting the Holy Ghost*?" Surely it can never be done. God is not mocked; Christ is not defrauded; the Holy Ghost cannot be insulted; the very idea, the very expression, is carnal, it is grovelling; it betrays a perverted judgment, a weakness of mind; and withal, a taking too great and unbecoming a liberty with the high and holy majesty of God. Oh, let us (I do intreat thee,) hear no more such wild, such unmeasured dashings of a hasty mind!

As regards the mode of administration, I stop not to comment on the plain and oft repeated testimony of Holy Writ: the Holy Spirit need not that we should hold up our farthing rush light by the side of his most refulgent and glorious orb.

There are numerous deeply interesting testimonies on record both ancient and modern, which I trust to be enabled to bring forth in a future number of the EARTHEN VESSEL. Beside these, I am in receipt of some valuable letters from beloved brethren in the Lord, which will be added.

For the present, dear sir, trusting you will forgive the liberty I have been constrained to take,

I remain, obediently and sincerely,

Your's, in the faith of the gospel,

C. W. BANKS.

G, *Pagoda Terrace, Bermondsey New Road,*  
*Southwark.*

#### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All we have to say to "M. H." is, before the Minister alluded to, comes to such hasty conclusions, let him read "THE TREE CUT DOWN; BUT THE ROOT PRESERVED." It is published by Mr. Paul.

Many striking and deeply interesting letters, historical records, &c. connected with the persecutions endured by the Baptists, will be given in future numbers of the EARTHEN VESSEL.

THE TRUTH AS IT IS IN JESUS;

BEING

The Articles

OF

FAITH AND PRACTICE,

HELD BY

The Members of the Baptised Church,

MEETING FOR DIVINE WORSHIP IN

CROSBY ROW CHAPEL,

KING STREET, SOUTHWARK.

FORMED MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup>, 1844.

LONDON:—1845.

# ARTICLES,

&c.

I. We believe in one God, who is a spirit, in and of himself infinite in being, glory, and blessedness: that he is infinitely holy, just, and righteous, existing and dwelling in three distinct persons, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, and that these three in essence, in purpose, and in power are essentially co-equal and co-eternal.

II. We believe that this almighty and merciful God, the sovereign disposer of all creatures and things, has, in the exceeding riches of his grace and mercy, been pleased to reveal and make known so much of himself and of his eternal will, in his Holy Word, as is essential (the Spirit bearing witness,) to a true and proper apprehension thereof, and which blessed and holy word, through the Spirit's working, becomes the medium by which true wisdom is received.

III. We believe that the first man, Adam, was the federal head and representative of the whole human race; that he was made upright in the image of God; that he fell, from the state in which God placed him, into transgres-

sion ; that through his fall, sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and that the whole family of man thereby became depraved in their nature, sinful in their dispositions, and totally unable to recover themselves from the curse and awful consequences due to sin.

IV. We believe that the omniscient and eternal God did from all eternity behold the awful and fallen condition of man in Adam, and that in the exercise of His mysterious, sovereign, discriminating, and unchanging love, did purpose in Himself to choose out a multitude which no man can number of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, whom he did predestinate unto eternal life, without any respect to their persons or performances.

V. We believe that Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the substantial Wisdom of God, and Word of God, who is of one substance and equal with the Father, was set up from everlasting as the Covenant Head of all the elect ; that the elect were all chosen in him, were all given to Him—and that having become their sin-bearer and surety—having undertaken to make atonement for them, He was, in the fulness of time, made of a woman, made under the law ; and being in his nature, perfectly holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, and being at the same time in God, and God in Him, he did magnify and make honorable the law of God—and did make such a perfect and eternally satisfactory atonement for all the sins

of all that the Father had given Him, that they are in Him completely justified, accepted, and saved.

VI. We believe that when the Lord Jesus Christ arose from the dead, by the power of the Father, that, virtually, all his redeemed arose in him, that He represents their persons—and lives to advocate their cause, before the throne of God in Heaven : that the government of the Church is entrusted to Him—that He has the keys of death and of hell,—and that when the whole number of His redeemed ones have been quickened, and brought from under the power of sin and Satan, then He will come the second time without sin unto salvation, to be glorified in his saints and to be admired by all them that believe : that as the Judge of all the earth, He will separate his sheep from the goats ; and that for ever : and we believe that as our Lord and Saviour is expecting to see of the travail of His soul, to behold his seed, and to be satisfied thereby, so is it the exalted and happy privilege of His people, to give him no rest, but by prayer and supplication to beseech Him to hasten the completion of His Kingdom ; and moreover, we believe it to be the sweet mercy of his adopted family, practically and spiritually, to be looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God.

VII. We believe in the distinct personality, co-equality, co-eternity, and almighty power of God the Holy Ghost ; that no man can quicken or make alive his own soul ; no man can be convinced of his sinful and helpless condition ;

no man can believe in God, nor seek for mercy through the righteous intercession of the Son of God, until the Holy Spirit has raised him, and created him anew in Christ Jesus ; and that all who are truly born again of God, will be made deeply sensible of their sins ; will have godly sorrow and repentance unto salvation, wrought in their souls ; that the Spirit of grace and of supplication will be in them, and consequently they will be the subjects of prayer, of faith in, and fellowship with God—will desire and aim to maintain a conduct and a conversation becoming the Gospel ; and that all such quickened souls, will be enabled to persevere, and to hold out to the end, through the power of the Holy Spirit, wrought within them.

VIII. We believe that the preaching of the everlasting Gospel is an ordination of God, designed principally to call in, to edify, and comfort the elect ; and to make known unto them both their eternal mercies and the privileges God has bestowed on them ; we believe the only true servants of God and ministers of Jesus Christ, are men converted, called, qualified, and sent forth by God the Holy Ghost—who leads them experimentally, doctrinally, and practically, into all essential truth ; to proclaim the whole counsel of God to His own glory, to the conversion of sinners, and the building up of the saints. We hold it to be an inestimable privilege, to be under the care of a Pastor of God's appointing ; and while we look for a firm advocacy of truth, and consistent conduct and conversation in him as the

watchman of our souls, we hold it to be an imperative duty in us, to stand by him, to pray for him, to encourage, comfort, and support him, as far as in us lies, so long as he stands in, and consistently, and scripturally proclaims God's most holy truth.

IX. We deem it right according to the New Testament dispensation, that out of our own number, certain godly men should be chosen to fill the office of deacons in the Church, to whom we entrust the temporal management and affairs of the whole body.

X. We believe the ordinance of Baptism by immersion to be an outward sign of inward grace ; and to be administered to all who can testify, and give evidence of their conversion to God, and of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; that it is both a privilege and duty of such regenerated members of the Church, who are living a life of faith upon the Son of God, to partake of the ordinance of the Lord's supper.

XI. Conscious of the infinite importance of brotherly love, and aware of the evils which arise from the absence of this god-like principle, we purpose by the grace of God, to consider it our duty to give, and our privilege to receive brotherly admonitions after a scriptural manner (in a spirit of meekness) whenever the infirmities of the flesh shall render them necessary.

XII. We resolve that no person shall be admitted to church fellowship with us, but such as give satisfactory



evidence that they are the subjects of the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit, and, who adorn their profession with a holy and circumspect life.

XIII. We resolve that no temporal affairs either of family or business matters be allowed to be brought into the church, but should any member not continue to walk agreeable to the gospel of Christ, whose conduct shall excite suspicion in the minds of any brother or sister, let such brother or sister first go and tell him or her of their faults; but if such brother or sister will not hear them, then let the same be made known to the Pastor, who with the Deacons shall investigate the matter in the presence of the accuser and the accused, and if it shall be proved that such accused member has been guilty of the offence and will not hear them, then let it be decided by the church at the next church meeting.

XIV. That a church meeting shall be held once in every month for the comfort and edification of the saints, at which no business matters shall be introduced; no temporal matters discussed. Members wishing to bring any motion of temporal affairs before the Church, shall, first lay it privately before the Deacons, who shall appoint the time when it shall be laid before the Church. The object of this article being to promote peace, it is hoped no infringement of it will be attempted.

XV. That twice in every year a full and faithful account of the Church's income and expenditure shall be laid before the Members.

*Finis.*

# THE PROPHET THAT HATH A DREAM :

OR,

## WHAT IS THE CHAFF TO THE WHEAT?

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*"But unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do, to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth? Seeing thou hatest instruction: and castest my words behind thee. When thou sawest a thief, then thou consentedst with him, and hast been partaker with adulterers. Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit."* PSALM l. 16—19.

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READER!

Art thou, by profession and practice, a prophet, a priest, a pastor, a parson, an itinerant preacher, or in any way employed in expounding the word of God—in speaking forth the glories of the Gospel—in opening the mysteries of the Kingdom—in warning men of their danger—and in building up the saints? Then, if thou art thus engaged, and have one moment to spare, I have a word or two to say unto thee.

Among the many most solemn declarations contained in the word of God: is that fearful prediction of Christ himself, who, when He sat upon the mount of Olives, said to the disciples, "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I AM CHRIST; and shall DECEIVE MANY."

Of these "false Christs;" of these "false prophets," two things are positively declared by Him who spake as never man spake.

First. *They shall come.* It is not a question: it is a fact.

And they shall come, too, in the name of Christ. They shall, either directly, or indirectly, assert that the Lord Jesus Christ, and his Spirit hath sent them. And possibly, they may be so far deceived, as really to be sincere in their delusion. Has this prediction, in any measure, been verified? Yes. Even so early as the apostles' days greivous wolves entered in; and a succession of them has continued down to the present time: England now swarms with these dreamers; these wolves in sheep's clothing, who, in a variety of forms, are leading captive the silly ones; the blind are leading the blind; and nothing short of electing love, atoning blood, and regenerating power, can prevent the whole mass from ultimately dropping into the pit.

My reader! art thou one of them? Are you feeding on ashes? Has a deceived heart turned you aside? Is there a lie in your right hand? Are you preaching of a Christ whose glory you never saw—whose voice you never heard—whose power you never felt—whose blood to your conscience was never applied? Are you preaching "another Gospel?" Are you wresting the word of

God—perverting the word of God—holding back and hiding up the truth of God? Is it so? Are you certain it is not so? Many in this land of Bibles—many in this Gospel-enlightened country are doing it. They are sacrificing unto the Lord a corrupt thing. (Mal. i. 14.) A corrupted heart—a corrupted talent—a corrupted zeal—a corrupted judgment. What saith the Lord? “Cursed be the deceiver: for I am a great king, saith the Lord of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

2ndly. These false prophets shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect.” The want of natural talent, of a fruitful mind, and of great eloquence, is no evidence that a man is not called of God to preach, no more than the possession of them proves he is called of God.

“Take this for certain,” said Francis Spira, in his dying moments, “I WANT THE MAIN GRACE OF ALL—that which is absolutely necessary.” Turning himself to certain young men that were present, he said, “Take heed of relying on that faith which works not an unblameable life. Credit me: every other faith will fail. I have proved it. I presumed I had gotten the right faith: I preached it to others; I had all places in Scripture in my memory. I thought myself sure: but I have, as it were, pulled down the ramparts behind which I might have rested in safety: and now the swelling waters come even to my soul: I am cast away.”

Mighty signs and wonders—numerous conversions *to your faith* and way of thinking—large congregations and the flattering applause of mortals! These things are not to be depended upon. There are men in England—yea, in London too—who once beguiled thousands with their great gifts, eloquence and tact; but now in degraded silence they mourn the loss of all in which their glory lay.

Of the great red dragon it is said “his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and he did cast them to the earth.” The way that leadeth to destruction is broad, and many there be which go in thereat. Look around upon the present state of things. The temples belonging to the mother of harlots are thronged—the more refined and enlightened congregations of her daughters are numerous—crowds flock to the tabernacles and Arminian houses of prayer: but, my reader, be not deceived by all the external signs and wonders that may follow. Read the testimony of that beloved and faithful servant of God, recorded in his second epistle to the Corinthian church—“Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had ~~our~~ conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward.” Is it thus with thee? I shall not labour to prove to you, my reader, the existence of these false prophets. If you have faith in the Word of God; and, moreover, if you have at all been enabled to measure the spirit manifested, and the testimony delivered by men who stand around you as ambassadors for Christ by the unerring standard which God has given in the 44th chapter of Ezekiel’s prophecy, especially the 23rd and 24th verses; if, I say, these discriminating powers have been wrought in your soul, accompanied by, and exercised in, the fear of the Lord, you need no further proof.

But, the point which I aim at in this little tract is this—Are you, either stately or occasionally, a ploughman, a sower of seed, a vine dresser; in short, are you in any way, professedly, A WITNESS FOR GOD? And are you concerned in your very soul to know whether or not your commission is divine? Then, before we part I would entreat of you to read, (with prayer before God, if you can,) the solemn account which is given you in the 23d of Jeremiah, descriptive of the character and condition of those prophets that are false and unseal of God.

**“THE PROPHET THAT HATH A DREAM; LET HIM TELL A DREAM; AND HE THAT HATH MY WORD,\* LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY.”** Here is the distinction: the whole religion and labour of the false prophet is but a dream; a delusion; a creed without life: a doctrine without power: an employment into which, by the Holy Ghost, he has never been called. Look at the features of his character, one by one, as they are marked down. First, He is guilty of “that horrible thing, adultery.” He has never, by a spiritual life and union in his soul, been married to the Lord Jesus Christ: he has no spiritual communion with Him, whom to know is life eternal to the soul: the love and affections of his heart were never engaged by, were never set upon the Lord of life and glory. This dreamer of dreams is wedded to himself, and the idols which his own hands have made: he has never yet come into possession of that power which enabled Paul “to count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord.” My reader, how stands the matter with thee in this, the greatest of all concerns? Is the heart made honest before God?

Secondly. It is declared of these false prophets, that **“THEY WALK IN LIES, and strengthen the hands of evil doers.”** I myself heard one of them declare in the pulpit of a large meeting place in Liverpool, that “the Holy Ghost was then going round that place, with the blood of Jesus Christ in a basin; asking each sinner present, if he would be washed from his sins?” What

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\* I have thought that dear servant of God, W. J. Urook, late of Brighton, does very emphatically define the term, “he that hath my word,” in the following extract which I make from a letter of his. He says—Naphthali is a hind let loose: a hind is a deer of three years old; and Naphthali signifies wrestling; and we certainly are, all of us who belong to God, the fruits and effects of much wrestling—first with God by our dear Lord, and then by the many groans, petitions, entreaties, and prayers of the church and ourselves, having fierce enemies to be delivered from, and vast difficulties to combat with, ere we can be brought into subjection to God. But then he is a hind, and a hind is distinguished as a clean beast, and surely we are all clean through the efficacious blood of the great High Priest; it is through him and by him we are washed from all our filth and illthiness. A clean beast under the law is distinguished by chewing the cud and parting the hoof. They that chew the cud are those in whose hearts the word of God is effectually lodged, and from whence it is oftentimes again and again brought up into the mouth as a sweet taste and relish, and again carried down, and again brought up, so as every time to afford some fresh nourishment to the soul. Now, hypocrites have none of this work; they meditate it is true, but the word is not in their heart or conscience, and therefore can never be brought up or carried down to afford nutrition to the soul. But what is lodged once in the heart is oftentimes brought up and fed upon by the believer when he rests in his soul.

awful lies and blasphemies are uttered under the cloak of the ministry! Some denying the eternal Godhead and atoning sacrifice of Christ: others exalting the free will and ability of dead and polluted sinners, to the exclusion of the sovereignty of God—the electing love of God—and the omnipotent energy of the Holy Ghost!

“They only consult to cast him down from his excellency;” but what saith the Almighty? “I will feed them with wormwood and make them drink the water of gall.” In opposition to this state of things, my reader, can you honestly before God declare that the gospel which is preached of you, is not after man; neither was you taught it of man, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ? We have an old dealer in gospel doctrines in London, who, without shame, tells a friend that with Dr. this, and Dr. that, and Dr. the other, he can get a sermon at any time. Oh, awful traitor! Aro you, my reader, such a character as this? Is your matter, and your ministry borrowed? Read the denunciation of the Eternal God. “Behold, I am against the prophets saith the Lord, that steal my word every one from his neighbour: that use their tongues and say, He saith, I am against them that prophesy false dreams, causing my people to err by their lies, and by their lightness: I sent them not, neither commanded them: therefore they shall not profit MY PEOPLE at all.

It is not with me, a mere theory—I have been brought to see and painfully to feel—that strong delusions are not confined to the world which lieth in the arms of the wicked one: nor to men who make no pretensions to religion; in the professing church—divided as that church now is into such a multitude of opposing sects and parties—blindness, self and Satanic delusions prevail to an alarming extent. The great aim of the adversary is, either to hurl men on in open sin and hostility against God, His Christ, and His Gospel, or, by counterfeiting the work of God, to delude them with a name to live while totally destitute of that life and power which only can bring the sinner home to God. The most signal triumphs that Satan has ever achieved, have arisen from his having first given to men a counterfeit conversion—a false profession—and a presumptuous faith. By these things he sets them, for a time, out of the world; raises them to some degree of eminence in the Church: and then alas! frequently, by the force of temptations which they have no power to resist, casts them down into that dreadful pit of which the Saviour spake, when He said, “the last state of that man is worse than the first.”

But, what do you say, my reader? Do you secretly triumph in the fact either that you have yourself stood the test of many years—or, that you are treading in the steps, following the example, preaching the doctrines, and pursuing the plans adopted by men of eminence, of talent, of usefulness, of zeal, and of great so-called piety, in the professing church? Is this your refuge? Is this your comfort? Is this the pillow on which you lay your head—the ground which stimulates you onward in your course?—I dare

not say, that either you, your predecessors, or your patrons, are essentially and eternally deficient in the one thing needful to salvation: but I say—the solemn word to which I have referred you, evidently carries this inference with great force—namely, if a prophet, a minister, a professed teacher of the people; if such an one “**HAVE A DREAM,**” if he have grown bold and confident in the telling out of his dream: God says “let him so continue.” “Let him tell his dream.” A long continuance in an evil course will never make it a right course: boldness and ability in contention for an error does by no means lessen the error. What, then, my reader, is the foundation, the life, the strength, and the fruit of thy ministry? In all things is it of Him, through Him, and to Him, to whom be glory, for ever and ever?

But on the other hand, if you are not a borrower, nor a plunderer of other men's goods—do you stand in the ranks of those who are so strikingly described by Jude—“their mouth speaking great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration?” An American reviewer, who has, (in the few following lines) most nervously and faithfully traced out the foppish character, as also the hypocritical preachments of the great majority of ministers in the present day, concludes by asking—**AND IS THIS PREACHING CHRIST?** He says:—

Of late, multitudes of sermons, charges, and essays have been written on the subject of pulpit duty, nearly all going to show that a minister's whole business there is to preach Christ, and him alone. If it be meant that Christ, is to be set forth as the only hope of sinners, his death as the mean of their redemption, his Spirit as applying the merit of that death in their actual conversion—it is well—but we fear, that the direction has been misunderstood, and that preaching Christ, or about Christ, in a loose, general way, has been found a convenient substitute for the hard duty of jeoparding one's popularity by exposing and denouncing, with becoming severity, the crying sins of the times. This is one of the worst errors of Popish pulpits. And the teaching of many Protestant pulpits on this point are scarcely more effective. A young gentleman, who nicely conforms to every punctilio of fashionable attire, ascends the desk with each hair carefully adjusted in the neatest order, as though he had just come from under the hand of a French barber. He passes through the preliminary services after the most approved models of pulpit finesse, with the addition of some new nonsense peculiarly his own. He announces his text—a text which requires a discourse on the nature and benefits of the great atonement. His hearers are all attention. He begins and rambles on until he reaches the garden of grief. But first the brook Cedron—how can he pass that by? He describes it as a silvery stream noiselessly gliding within its banks, where the violet and the rose mingled their perfumes over its sweet waters; though, by the way, that same ‘sweet-gliding Cedron’ was neither more nor less than the common sewer of Jerusalem, where dead dogs and cats, forgetting their ancient hostilities, flowed on in most amicable conjunction to the Asphaltic lake! Then follows the scene of Gethsemane. And now we hear of the damp dews and pale moonbeams, or, more classically, of ‘Cynthia's pale beam,’ that fell through the o'erhanging foliage on the paler face of the sufferer; though there is no evidence that there was not a mist upon the place as heavy as a Newfoundland fog, and in this sublime style concludes his discourse, adding faintly at the close by way of application, that all this was suffered for us. The congregation is dismissed. ‘What a fine sermon!’ says the swearer, as he goes unrebuked from the sanctuary. ‘Elegant!’ says the robber of widows and orphans, as he retires. ‘I never heard anything more pathetic in my life,’ says the

midnight novel reader. 'Most sumptuous!' exclaims the voluptuary as he hastens home to enjoy a rich dinner, and spend the rest of the day in sleep. And thus the audience retire, pleased with the preacher, and better pleased with themselves. And this they call preaching Christ.

Following upon this very correct but most awful description of mimicry, mummerly, fleshly pride, rank hypocrisy, dead deceit, and disgusting depravity of the great majority of ministers, I give you to read, if you are not already condemned and horror stricken at your condition as a priest in God's sanctuary—the following from a correspondent:— In the 44th chapter of Ezekiel the Holy Ghost by the prophet gives us an exact account of the now state of the church; many of her ministers are uncircumcised in heart and in flesh, yet they are ministers; and do minister; yea, and they shall minister, saith the Lord: but mark, in what shall their work consist? ministering unto the people; whereas the real sons of our antitypical Zadok, in whom the incorruptible seed dwelleth, minister unto God; *they* stand before him to offer the fat and the blood; and *they* teach the people to know the difference between the living and the dead, the clean and the unclean, yea and in the controversy which the enemies institute against the poor dear children of God do these priests judge; and that according to God's judgment, and they only hallow God's Sabbaths. Oh what a sabbath of rest is God's sabbaths! no creature work done in them; except blessing and praising the Lord for noticing us in our fallen state."

Having, my reader, looked at these terrible words, I ask thee again—Is thy mission and thy ministry of God? Do you stand in his counsel? Are you instrumental in causing his people so to hear His word as to turn from their evil ways? (Jer. xxiii. 22.) Although, as regards yourself, it be in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling, not with the persuasible words of man's wisdom, yet is it in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power?—Is there here and there one that believed not, brought in—convicted—humbled—enabled savingly to worship God—and honestly to declare that God is in you of a truth? (1 Cor. xiv. 23—25.) Then, art thou highly favoured of God indeed: upon your house winds may blow; the rains may descend; the floods may beat; but it shall stand; for it is built upon a rock.

The following letter was written by me in a season of calamity, without any design or desire that it should ever go into the world; being constrained to publish it, I could not withhold the few foregoing remarks, whereby I have desired to speak a word to the consciences of such ministers as stand not in the fear and fellowship of a covenant God. If I have erred, Oh, may I find mercy and forgiveness too; if in any degree, I have been taught and directed of the Lord, may His blessing accompany it. And now, dear reader, praying that we may both be found in Him; and leaving you either to peruse the following epistle, or to commit the whole to the flames, I am in sincerity and truth.

ADONIJAH.

## WHAT IS THE CHAFF TO THE WHEAT?

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Sunday Evening, June 4th, 1843.

THE Lord in mercy grant that our souls, my beloved friend, may be united and cemented together by the imperishable bonds of the everlasting Gospel. Many miles, and many mountains, many dark and mysterious and unhappy events now separate us, but I have this day in secret been talking with you and your beloved partner in life of things that have to do with the eternal welfare of never-dying souls.

As I was going to Chapel this morning, and as I returned therefrom, and at every private interval through the day, my mind has been led to reflect upon a very solemn scripture which came to me this morning. It has been secretly opened to me, I have spent some hours this day in meditation upon it, and as it led me to think much of Mrs. H—— and her state of mind, I have a desire to lay before you a few thoughts, if I may be permitted to gather them up.

The Scripture is the 23rd of Jeremiah: "*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.*"

This prophetic and figurative language is of the inditing of the Holy Ghost, and has to do with the *true* Church of Christ, with the *true* prophets of God, and with the real vessels of mercy. It opens up things which distinguish the goats from the sheep. And such distinctions are of vital importance.

In what I write, be careful to examine, be jealous in receiving, be faithful in reproof, if the matter herein contained appear to be not of God.

The first thing which struck me was the question, "*What is the chaff to the wheat?*"—I said to myself there is in the professing Church a form of godliness which is of no more value than chaff. Every atom of a false profession and an empty form will one day be blown and scattered to the winds.

But from what does this false or empty profession arise? Where does it come from?—Certainly it arises out of the *existence* of a profession *that is genuine*. The chaff is part of the covering of the wheat, and until the wheat is *thrashed* out, the chaff is closely united to it. Was there no genuine coin, there could be no counterfeit; the existence of the counterfeit proves the existence of the genuine. This, mind you, will not apply to individuals; not every one that saith, Lord, Lord!

Look at this figure; 1st, generally, 2nd, specially, 1st, generally. It is evident that in the declaration of the Gospel; in the proclamation of Jehovah's truth, in the gathering in

and leading home of the chosen Church of the Lord, so glorious, so awakening and attracting are the effects produced, that many who have neither part nor lot in the matter, are influenced by what they *see wrought in others*, and so it comes to pass that the going forth of the *wise* virgins, stirs up many (who for lack of oil are called) *foolish* virgins, to go forth also, professing to meet the Bridegroom. And these lifeless professors are so thick and so closely entwined around the true Church, as the chaff is around the wheat, that none but the Eternal Spirit can discern and separate between the two. Hence, not now, but "THEN shall ye return, and *discern* between the righteous and the wicked."

Look to it then, my beloved, that thy religion is not borrowed, is not empty, for what is the worth of ten millions bushels of chaff compared to one grain of wheat? Oh, for wheat to feed the living soul!

Look at this figure *individually*. There is not a grain of wheat grown without husk and chaff. Neither is there a grain of vital godliness in an elect soul without much that is not of God, but of the flesh, in connection with it.

My brother, think on what I am going to write, for it has been sweet to me to-day

Some men charge the children of God with folly and with being blind enthusiasts, because some of the deeply tried children of God have, in their trying moments, called their awful exercises of soul, *the work of the Holy Ghost*, that is, on referring to them, and speaking of them, after deliverance has been wrought.

Now certain I am that unbelief, darkness of soul, bondage, despair, spiritual rebellion, spiritual pride, hardness of heart, leanness and barrenness in the feelings, these things are *not* the work of the Holy Ghost: but some of the poor confused souls, in their ignorance, have ascribed all this to the agency and power of the Holy Ghost, and the worldly and fleshly wise men have laughed at and derided their error.

But depend upon this, the Holy Spirit will not be angry at this mistake made by his children, for although he is *not directly* the author of their misery, he is *indirectly*.

The Holy Spirit knows where he comes, and what effects must result.

When he comes into a sinner's soul, He comes into a dark, filthy, corrupt, and deadly den of iniquity. What does He bring? He brings life, which gives the soul to *feel* its dreadful grave clothes and deadly condition. He brings light, which gives the soul to see its filth and danger. He brings power, which enables the soul to sigh and groan, to wrestle, and to pray for deliverance from its misery.

But "*what is the chaff to the wheat*" in a spiritual sense? The chaff in a spiritual soul, may be figurative either of an *unsatisfying knowledge of gospel truth, an external observance of gospel ordinances, or the excited emotions and movements of the flesh*

I think I may say, and that from some experience too, that the clearer the truth is revealed in a living soul, the more the living soul will pant and desire a personal and a powerful realisation of its interest therein.

Men, and the flesh, and the enemy, may try to persuade and to delude the soul with a presumptive faith; they say, you must take God at his word. Ah, says the poor soul, so I would, were he to speak to *me*: to reveal his Son in *me*. Without this, a mere knowledge of gospel truth is unsatisfying. But *why* is it unsatisfying? I might assign many reasons, but let this suffice, I have a guilty conscience, nothing but an application of atoning blood can purge and give it peace. I have a poor naked, polluted soul, awfully defiled, distorted, and deranged by sin, nothing in Heaven or on the earth, but the precious robe of Jehovah's righteousness can hide and cover up my sins: I have wandered into a far country, and no arm but the arm of an Incarnate God can bring me back. Now, compared with these things, knowledge is but chaff. I may hide myself in it, cover myself over with it, for a time, but if the Lord Jesus, the heavenly wheat, be not in the soul, knowledge alone will never preserve me from the evils of the world, nor lead me into the vital secrets of a divine life. You know that though the clearest knowledge of gospel doctrines is but as chaff when compared to a vital union to, and spiritual fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ; yet, a wise man *does not*, nevertheless, think or esteem the less, these precious truths which are the foundations of his hope, and the security of his never-dying soul.

I must not here enlarge, else I should go on to show you that it is the will of the Lord that His beloved people should never rest satisfied with, nor find substance in anything short of Himself. Ho says. "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, nor the strong man in his strength; nor the rich man in his riches; but if he glory, let it be in that he *knoweth me*, saith the Lord, that I am the Lord that exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness" (Jere. 9.) Hence Moses wanted to *see his glory*, and all the patriarchs and prophets *desired* and enjoyed something more than knowledge. But I must pass on, leaving you to trace out scriptural proof should you so be led.

"*What is the chaff to the wheat?*"—I answer, there is a

two-fold sense in which Gospel ordinances are to the believer but as chaff. And here I would tread carefully, lest I blaspheme and pour contempt on that which the Lord has put honour. I remember the ordinances of the Gospel are God's ordinances, appointed and designed by him for the express purpose of making known himself to his people, meeting with, blessing, comforting, and strengthening their souls while passing through the desert. "*He loves the gates of Zion.*" In comparing Gospel ordinances then, to chaff, mark you, my friend, I speak of them, first, *not* as regards, *what they are in themselves*, but as respects what they are to the quickened soul under trying circumstances. Am I wrong, when I say, every child of God has to learn, that the Lord is not in the wind,—nor in the whirlwind, nor in the thunder—nor in the earthquake—nor in the fire? he is not confined to any of the *visible* and ordinary works and means of His own creating and appointing, but when an especial blessing is to be bestowed on his own children, he will come in the still, secret small voice of love and mercy. Yet so surely that they shall not mistake.

The living soul has to learn that ordinances cannot break a flinty heart, nor bind it up when broken; they cannot purge a guilty conscience, nor speak peace to a troubled soul. Here lies the secret. My friend, this is but the testimony of a vile, wretched, fallen man; but I think it will be well with thee if experimentally you know, that true believers want, not only the golden Candlestick, but the Saviour walking in the midst thereof; they want not only to tread in the place of his feet; but to feel the place of his feet glorious; want not only to wait at his gates and watch at the posts of his doors, but to find them to be as the gates (or open discoveries) of heaven to their souls. Ah; it is useless to multiply words, Paul tells you what it is; "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection"; it is a resurrection power in the soul; bringing the soul by faith to Jesus, and enabling the soul to venture on him; to trust in him, and to feel confident towards him; and compared with this; all else is but chaff; it is unsatisfying.

But, my beloved brother and friend, the Bible is a wonderful book; the words and the works of God are so many deep, precious and invaluable mines; and whenever the soul is led into one of these mines, they are found to be full of rich treasures; of heavenly fruits; the atmosphere is holy; the ground is solid; the various paths (which run in all directions,) are full of light; and every step in which the Holy Ghost leads the quickened soul, presents some new, some sweet, some soul-transporting view: and the thought

is precious to me; it seems to speak volumes more than I can ever express, that while *all fulness*, all *soul-satisfaction*, all *solid comfort*, all *abiding peace*; yea, I say, while it is true that the *whole of salvation* and immortal glory is *in* and *with* the Lord Jesus *alone*, there is nothing out of nor apart from Him, that is *really good*—yet, every little path that leads the soul to him is a path of sweetness; every little wind that blows the soul to him is a heavenly wind—and hence, I am led to speak a word to you, shewing that, however, Gospel ordinances, when compared with vital heart-felt communion and fellowship with the Lord are but as chaff; yet there is another sense in which these ordinances are blessed indeed.

What, then, is the *chaff* to the *wheat*? Look, my friend for a moment at this wonderful figure. The God of creation and of nature hath decreed that while the wheat stands in the field it shall be protected, covered over, sheltered, and defended by that which shall afterwards come to nought. And are not Gospel Ordinances, the means whereby the Lord gathers in, enlightens, comforts, edifies, defends, and blesses his people. How sweet, how profitable, have the ordinances of the Gospel often been to thousands of redeemed souls—They have gone to the Lord's house condemned in their consciences—cast down in their souls—dark, distressed and doubting in their minds—but *there*, the Lord has spoken to them—there the world has fallen beneath their feet—their sins have been forgotten—their fettered souls have been set at liberty—hope and faith have been brought into exercise, and truly the soul then *feels* it good to be there—for then the name of the Lord is a strong tower the righteous runneth into it, and finds shelter, safety, and consolation.

Thus, in as few words as possible I have endeavoured to give you my views derived from the words—1. As to what the believer sometimes finds the ordinances of the Gospel—and 2d. As to what those ordinances really are when blessed of the Lord to his people—And my friend, if things are right with thee, you will see with me, that this is the only safe position which the believer can occupy in this time-state—the exercises and privileges to which I have briefly referred teach and constrain the man of God *neither* to *despise* nor to *undervalue* those ordinances which are the beds or vehicles through which flow down the streams of that river which make glad the city of God. May my friend be found walking in *this* straight and narrow path as described in Micah iv. 2. And all must be well. There is another branch of experience to which I had thought of referring, but would not be tedious.

Has not past experience taught us that there is a false faith, a false hope; a false zeal and a false confidence? What a mass

of that which once moved us, animated us, seemed to comfort us, and on which we really looked as some evidence of our interest in Christ, is all turned to chaff. Beware of the false emotions of the flesh.

Just a word on the other solemn and distinguishing figure in the text: "If any prophet have a dream, let him tell his dream; but he that hath my word let him speak my word faithfully."

The Lord himself here shews you what a graceless professor is, and what a living vessel of mercy is.

The graceless professor is but a dreamer at the best. Look at his position, and then at his possession. What is his position? He is on the bed of sloth—wrapt up in the arms of death—he knows no conflict—no struggles—no change of heart—no fleeing for a refuge—no actual, operating, living, resisting, sin-conquering power has ever come into his soul—*He lays at ease.*

What does he possess? What does all his religion amount to? 'Tis nothing more than a *dream*? A visionary imagination is at work within, and he fancies he has a something which he has not—and is a something that he is not. This dream may occasionally excite and move the powers of mind and body but the light that is in him is darkness—and awful is that darkness too—Should death overtake him before he awake from his slumbers and dreams—how solemn the dissappointment he will then experience.

"*But he that hath my word.*" The grand secret is in the spiritual and actual *reception*, effect, and use of the incorruptible word.

There is more implied in "*hath my Word,*" than I can now enter upon—but one word—There is an application of the word to the minds of some who have natural convictions, they catch at the word and *rest in it*—derive a false peace from it—get puffed up with it—Such an application is to be suspected.

There is another application of the word which, like a hammer breaks down every false and fleshly prop—which like a fire, burns up self—self-conceit, pride, self-applause, and everything which would exalt the creature—and carries on this work of destruction until the soul is stripped, and carried to the Redeemer for clothing and justification—Such a soul is called to stand upright—to resist the devil—to speak faithfully to, and of the Lord. But my paper is full—The Lord make our souls honest, prays,

A PRISONER IN BONDS.