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doctrines, order, and polity
of the
Presbyterian church in the
United States

A SERIES

OF

TRACTS

ON THE

DOCTRINES, ORDER, AND POLITY

OF THE

✓
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

IN THE

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

EMBRACING

SEVERAL ON PRACTICAL SUBJECTS.

VOL. V.

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EXPERIMENTAL RELIGION

A RATIONAL THING.

ABOUT 1800 years ago a notable prisoner was arraigned before a Roman tribunal, charged with rebellion against the government. He was accused as being a most sacrilegious wretch, who profaned holy places, and led away multitudes after him: as being "a pestilent fellow," a "mover of sedition," and a "ringleader" of a most troublesome sect. Notwithstanding the enormity of his supposed crimes, and although he was in the power of his accusers, they were very irresolute respecting a final disposition of his case, and for two years he was kept in confinement, without any regular trial, though he was repeatedly examined before legal functionaries, magistrates, and kings. On one of these occasions, having no advocate to plead his cause, the dignitaries before whom he stood, as a great favour, desired him to speak for himself, when instead of criminating his accusers, as perhaps they expected, or entering into any theological controversy, he simply related his own experience of what he hoped was a work of divine grace upon his own heart. This was so unexpected that his auditory were confounded. One declared that he was almost persuaded to be a Christian, and another could not account for what he heard, but only on the supposition that the extensive learning of the prisoner, which he perceived that he possessed, had turned his brain: for "as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.

But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness." The prominent thought here is, that experimental religion is rational. Paul was thought insane, simply because he related his religious experience. But experimental religion is rational, and may be seen as the result of sober reason, and sound intellect.

Let us examine a few leading exercises.

1. Conviction, or alarm of soul for sin, is a rational exercise. The anger of God revealed against sin is a real thing. Jehovah means as he says when he declares "The soul that sinneth shall die." It is hence no more than the dictate of well informed reason to be alarmed when the wrath of God gathers blackness, and his vengeance like some mighty storm is about to descend. When a pestilence is spreading devastation and death all around, it is deemed perfectly rational for men to be alarmed, and to take all prudent precautions to prevent contagion. In such a case no one is suspected of insanity if he is much distressed, and even should he remove immediately from the infected spot. If a fire has broken out in a populous city, and is spreading in every direction, who blames men for being exceedingly alarmed, or who taxes them with loss of reason when they run to and fro calling for help, and seeking to remove their property from the power of the flames? If a hostile army has invaded our shores, and is fast approaching the place of our dwelling, scattering carnage and desolation, and putting every human being to the sword, do not men feel justified in taking the alarm, and in the greatest distress fleeing to a place of safety? Distress and anguish of spirit at a time when danger is apprehended is then perfectly rational, and is fully justified by the common sense of mankind. Now conviction of sin arises from an apprehension of danger. The Spirit of God awakens the soul to discern its exposure to wrath on account of transgression. The infinite evil of sin may not be perceived as yet, but the man will have a dreadful sound of vengeance in his ears. He will see that the law of God is broken in ten thousand instances, and

that no doings of his own can repair the breach. The penalty of the law, sacred as its precept, cannot be given up, and when the Spirit of God awakens the mind, the penalty of the law will seem most dreadful. Destruction upon destruction will be cried in the ears of the awakened soul, and he must be hardened indeed not to feel distressed. Thus conviction of sin may be explained, and may be seen to be an exercise perfectly rational, and just as much so as distress and alarm in the apprehension of any danger whatever.

2. Repentance is a rational exercise. The operations of the Holy Spirit in the soul are not stationary, and the man once thoroughly awakened very soon begins to feel the pollution of sin, and to realize something of the plague of his own heart. The light which enters his mind serves to discover somewhat of the darkness which still dwells there, and as the purity of God's character is displayed, the awful pollution of his own will become more manifest. It is this view of himself, which as far as means are concerned, produces the grace of repentance, displaying itself in deep contrition and self loathing for sin, confession of the sin, and reformation. These exercises are perfectly rational. If a man has committed an error in any transaction with a fellow being, it is deemed no more than reasonable that he should acknowledge his fault, and make restitution. If the wrong he has committed is of a defiling and polluting nature, every one expects that he will be ashamed and confounded for it, and in this way will manifest the most unfeigned sorrow. It is expected also that he will forsake his evil way, and wherein he has done iniquity that he will do so no more. This is according to the common sense of mankind, and is considered perfectly reasonable for every one to do. Repentance towards God, in its external form, is nothing more than this: the soul is enlightened to see its error; sin is found to be polluting, and the person makes ingenuous confession, and turns from it in disgust. Is there any thing irrational in this? Is there any thing which looks like insanity, or fanaticism? Surely not. The man has offended against God: the Spirit of the

Lord has convinced him of his error; he becomes ashamed of it, and turns away into a different course. Thus is repentance rational.

3. Faith in Christ is rational. The soul being enlightened to discern the Saviour, and wholly despairing of help in itself, is thereupon persuaded to renounce every self-justifying plea, and to depend alone on Christ for salvation. And is not this perfectly natural? If a man had been in difficult and trying circumstances, and some benevolent hand had set him free, would he not greatly regard him whose benevolence had done so much for him? And even when the offer was made, would not his heart leap within him, to think that any one was ready to relieve his distress? It is thus that the believing soul views Christ. Nothing on earth can relieve him. He views sin as having not only polluted but endangered his soul. He looks behind him, and nothing but destruction is there; he looks forward, and it is all darkness and conjecture; on the right hand and on the left no refuge appears, no man cares for his soul. At this moment of extremity the Saviour's voice is heard. A pardon to a condemned criminal is not more welcome, and the soul leaps up with joy, embraces the Saviour, and believes on him unto everlasting life. Is there any thing irrational in these exercises? Would not any person in trouble hail a deliverance with equal delight? And are the exercises of gratitude toward Christ, which the believer feels, any thing more than the reasonable expressions of regard which any one ought to exercise toward a kind benefactor?

But perhaps we shall be told that faith in Christ for personal salvation involves with it a belief of several things of which at present we can have no positive proof. This is admitted. There are many things received into the Christian's creed which rest simply on the divine testimony of the word of God. But is this unreasonable, and are those who embrace scriptural truths with no other evidence than that afforded in the Bible, to be accounted insane men, or branded as fanatics? Do not men receive as truths many other

things with far less evidence? For example: who knows that the stars and planets are the abodes of rational life? It is conjectured, yea, it is believed by most men of education in the world. But where is the absolute proof? We are constrained to admit that we have none. We reason on the subject, and there we stop. Take another example. We take up a number of small seeds, but they look very nearly alike. We examine them very closely, but perceive little or no difference. We analyze them, we take a microscope, and look on every fibre, but we cannot discover the plant which will spring forth, nor tell whether it shall be large or small, healing or noxious. Yet we cast these seeds into the ground, and are not surprised when from one springs up a plant, from another a flower, and from a third a majestic tree which waves upon the mountain's side. Can any of us tell how this is? Our ownselves furnish us with another example. We all believe that we have a soul within these bodies. But what is it? And where does it dwell? Is it in the head, or in the heart? When separated from the body has it any likeness to the mortal frame? And if not, what constitutes its identity? Still none of us doubt the existence of the soul.

Thus we see that men receive as truths many natural things more mysterious than those spiritual truths for which we are dependent alone on revelation. Yet the phenomena of nature are not doubted, and no man is thought insane or fanatical who believes and defends them. Is not faith in the leading doctrines of revelation at least equally rational? Indeed is it not more so? Have we not better evidence for the truth of the great doctrines of the Bible, than for many of those things which the ingenuity of man has laid down as correct? In the one case we have reasoning from analogy, and the conjectures of men of enlarged and scientific minds; but on the other we have the word of God, attested by miracles, and proved to be such by the witness it carries within itself.

4. Humility, which is another characteristic of experimental religion, is also perfectly rational. It is

often thought very strange that Christians whose external conduct is fair, and whose former lives were irreproachable, should cry out upon themselves as the chief of sinners, and take their place in the very dust of humiliation before God; and not unfrequently their conduct in this respect is ridiculed as the height of fanaticism. But what is there irrational about it? The standard by which they measure themselves is a perfect one. Jehovah has said, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and while they fall so far short of this mark, they shrink away, and cover their faces in confusion. Thus the humility of a lowly Christian is a reasonable service.

It thus appears that conviction of sin, and the leading Christian graces of repentance, faith, and humility, are all perfectly rational exercises; nor should we have any difficulty in showing that the more minute parts of Christian experience may all be accounted for, and shown to be the result of sober and correct reasoning.

Now if experimental religion is thus rational, certainly those who ridicule or oppose it, must be very unreasonable. Let the subject as now presented be soberly pondered, and we can scarcely fail to see that the prominent exercises of Christian experience are perfectly reasonable, and may be defended by fair argument; nor can we find on mature reflection that there is any fanaticism in that process of divine grace whereby a sinner is truly converted to God. If this conclusion be admitted, then to oppose experimental religion by calling it a delusion, or the reveries of a distempered brain, must be extremely unreasonable. Men readily admit truths relating to other subjects with less evidence than on this, and if those who oppose experimental religion on account of a supposed mystery attending it would be consistent, they should become sceptical on every point involving any mystery. Let them boldly deny the doctrines of modern astronomy. let them insist on it that the mighty orbs which roll over our heads, and the innumerable stars which spangle the firmament, were placed there merely for

man to gaze at, and that this globe is the sole abode of rational life in the universe. Let them ascribe the shooting forth of the blade of grass, and the springing up of the plant, the shrub, the flower, and the tree, all to mere chance. Yea, let them deny that they have souls because they cannot see them, and then we will at least give them credit for consistency when they deny the efficacy of God's grace in changing the heart, and call experimental religion all a delusion. But while they readily admit the doctrines of the philosopher respecting the phenomena of nature, they are certainly most unreasonable in denying the doctrines of experimental religion.

We remark in conclusion, that if experimental religion is rational, it is not discreditable to men of the most refined intellect. There is an idea prevalent in the world that vital religion is beneath the notice of men of refinement, or of very deep research. They suppose it may do well enough for common people, or for women, and children, or for those who are very old, or those who are sick; but for active men, for men of business, for men of science, for men of enlarged minds, this they think is degrading. Here is a mighty error. Some of the greatest men in the world have been humble Christians. Real religion does not shrink from the light. It invites investigation. It is perfectly rational. Let fair argument be taken, let sober criticism be used, and experimental christianity shall never hide its head. There is no man so great either in wealth, honour, or science, but experimental religion would be an honour to him; it would shed a mild radiance over all his acquirements, rendering his wealth, his honours, or his learning, "as the smell of a field which the Lord has blessed." Reader, from all that is taught us on this subject, have we not reason to believe that an experimental acquaintance with religion is indispensable to salvation? What shall subdue these hard hearts of ours but an experience of the power of that grace which can take the flint away? What shall cleanse our spotted souls but "the washing of regenera-

tion, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost?" What can raise us above the world but that faith which the Spirit of God alone worketh in the heart? Be alarmed then if you have never yet experienced religion. Death will soon intercept your career, and the renewing grace of God, and that alone, can prevent your eternal ruin.

THE END.

A

TRAVELLER'S HINTS.

A GOOD day to you, my friends. As I was travelling this way, I thought I would stop and have a little chat with you, if you have no objection. I was admiring the farms as I come along, and was glad to see things going on prosperously. It gives me real pleasure to know that in this happy country of ours, the industrious may always succeed in obtaining a decent livelihood. It is not so in some of the countries I have visited. Were you ever in England, or Ireland, or Italy, or France? I suppose not. Well, I can tell you that in those countries you may see hundreds of families which have not bread to put into their children's mouths, because they can find no employment. And there are many besides that labour like slaves, and yet they can barely live. As to laying up a penny, that is impossible. It is very different here. I could point out to you a hundred farmers, that had nothing to begin with, but a good character and industry, and now they have nice little farms and things very comfortable around them. Many mechanics too do I know, who have their shops in good order, and are doing a thriving business, who began the world with only a few tools. Industry is a good thing. It is better than a fortune to begin with. Many a young man's prospects have been ruined by having too much money at first. Oh you would scarcely believe, if I should tell you, how many young men I have known, that have become idle and dissi

pated sots, just because their fathers left them too much money.

For my part I am always thankful when I see people under the necessity of working in some honest way for their living. It keeps them out of a great many temptations. The devil never has so much power over a man, as when he finds him idle.

There is another thing I have observed in my travels; it is this. That when a man is moral, and virtuous, and religious, he is not only more prosperous but more happy for it. When I was quite a child, my good mother used to say to me, "they that trust in the Lord, shall not want any good thing." Well, I began to believe this, and then I tried to practise it, and now that I am old, I am very certain it is true. I reasoned the matter in this way. The great God made me, or I never would have been in this world; and if he made me, he must be willing to take care of me. Well then, shall I not ask him to take care of me? and as I must eat every day, and be protected every day, I ought to ask him every day. This led me to pray to him, and I got so much in the habit of it, that I not only prayed to God morning and evening, but my heart would go up to God fifty times a day. It did not interrupt my business, for I could have these praying thoughts every now and then, even when I was walking along the road, or when there was a dozen people about me. There is nothing like getting into the habit of praying. It is very pleasant to know that God is always ready to hear, and that he is even more ready to give than we are to ask. I hope, my dear friends, you will excuse me for asking you if you have daily prayer in your family? You love these dear children of yours, and surely you pray that God would take them under his care. Poor dear little creatures, they are in great danger of forming bad habits, and getting into bad company, and I am sure there is no better way of preserving them than by putting them under the care of God. I always take an interest in children; they are surrounded by so many dangerous influences, and they have so little sense to keep out of harm's way. It was

only a day or two since, that I met a little boy not more than eight years old, and he was swearing like an old sinner, at one of his little companions. I took him by the hand, and telling him that it was very wicked to use such words, I led him to his mother, and having told her how naughty he had been, I said to her, "my dear madam, do you pray for this little boy that God would keep him from evil?" The poor woman looked confused, and then confessing that she did not, I kindly told her, that if she loved his soul which could never die, she would certainly ask a merciful God to take care of her little boy, and keep him from sin. She burst into tears, and I hope God has taught her by this time her duty to herself and children. And now, my dear friends, this would be a happy house if you would only resolve to worship God in it. How beautiful would it be to see you all collected together every morning and evening, and after reading a chapter in the Bible, and singing a hymn, if you can sing, going on your knees to ask a blessing from God your Saviour! It would do you good and your children good also. It would keep down many an angry feeling in your heart; it would help you to bear up under many a trouble; and it would keep you out of the way of many a temptation. Do, my dear friends, try it. You know that you are not to live long in this world, and unless you love and serve God, I do not know how you are to be prepared for a better one. I hope you will excuse an old man for giving you this bit of advice, for he does it only for your good.

I hope you will not satisfy yourselves because you are as good as your neighbours. I have often heard people excuse themselves in this way, and I have thought it very foolish. If your neighbours should set their houses on fire, and not try to put out the flames would that be a good reason why you should do so too? And if your neighbours neglect their souls, and never think there is a God to judge them, is that a good reason why you should not seek for the salvation of your souls? Surely not.

Perhaps you will let me tell you how it was with

myself. I before said that my good mother tried very hard to put good things into my mind. Sometimes I tried as hard to forget them, for like all others I had a wicked heart by nature. After a time they began to work upon me, and I began to think that I ought to be religious, and my mother's death taking place about this time, made me more serious. My youthful companions laughed at me for this, but I could not shake off my feelings. I saw I was a sinner, and in the Bible I learned that Jesus Christ came into the world to save even the chief of sinners. This gave me encouragement, and I daily prayed to God to have mercy on me. One man told me I need not make such ado about religion, for I was a great deal better than many others. This did not satisfy me, for I thought if others were worse, I was bad enough, and must obtain God's favour, or I would be lost for ever. Another told me I need have no fear, for there was no hell; but my own conscience as well as God's Bible told me, that "he that believeth not, shall be damned." Well my distress continued for some time, but at length God gave me peace. I cast my soul upon the Saviour of sinners, and he smiled upon me. Oh what happiness I then enjoyed! Every thing around me looked bright, and my distressing fear of death was removed. A great many years have passed since that time, and I can now say I have never repented of the step I took. I have seen as many troubles as most people, but God has been with me to support me through them all, and I can look forward joyfully, because I have a strong hope that heaven shall be my home at last. Religion's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

Now, my dear friends, you will excuse me for giving this history of myself. I do it because I want you to try the same course. You will never be happy till you find peace with God, through Jesus Christ, who came to seek and save the lost.

You have been so kind and patient in listening to me, that I feel bold to say a few words more before we part. I may never have another opportunity.

When I was in foreign countries, I found the people

did not keep the Sabbath, and I could not help thinking that that was one great reason why there was so much vice and wretchedness. There is a great deal of Sabbath breaking in this country, and it never comes to any good. God says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," and surely people cannot prosper if they refuse to obey God's command. I went into one of the large prisons one day, and I found by conversing with the wretched creatures there, that they almost all acknowledged they had begun their downward course to ruin by breaking the Sabbath. You heard perhaps that farmer Thompson's barn was struck with lightning last week, and it and all his harvest were burned to ashes. Well, it was only the Sabbath before that he had all his hands at work getting in his grain, because he said there was a prospect of rain. When he had got all in, he was heard to say laughingly that it was better to work of a Sunday than to have his crops spoiled—the better day the better deed! God heard him, and sent his lightnings, and what has his Sabbath breaking come to? It is true God does not always thus immediately reward sinners, but sooner or later the punishment will come, if not in this world, certainly in the next. Remember that God will honour them that honour him. Have you a seat in a church? If you have not get one. No one will repent in another world that he spent his Sabbaths in church. Keep the Sabbath in your houses, and teach your children to do so too. It is a better way of resting and recruiting your strength, to serve God religiously on his holy day, than to be walking over the country, or taking excursions by rail roads or in carriages. Many a one by disregarding the Sabbath has prepared the way for the ruin of his children as well as himself.

As I came along the road, I saw a poor miserable creature staggering along, with a bloated face and ragged clothes. Upon inquiry I found that he had once owned a farm, but was now a beggar. He never intended to become a drunkard, but he took a little, and then a little more, until, before he knew where he was, he had become a drunkard. Now my friends, I

never knew a man to become a drunkard, who drank nothing stronger than water, and if you want to be safe, you had better stick to the water.

In one word, be virtuous, be religious, fear God keep his commandments, be at peace with your neighbours, avoid quarrelling and all angry feelings and words, be temperate, be industrious, attend to your souls, as the principal thing, and may God's peace rest on your household, and may we meet in a better and happier world. Farewell.

THE END.

ADVICE

TO

SINNERS UNDER CONVICTIONS.

POOR UNDONE SINNERS:—I send these truths from the eternal God to you, in love and faithfulness, unfeignedly desiring that you may be convinced of your unbelief, and of all your sins, and of your present accursed and miserable state, and that you may be taught of God to rely on Christ, who died for the ungodly. If you continue unregenerate, you will certainly ere long be the most miserable of the whole creation, and monuments of divine justice, although you now enjoy the world in its glory. Since you have been awakened, I hope that God may have thoughts of everlasting love to your souls. Therefore, as you have been warned to flee for refuge from the wrath of God which is coming upon you, and without delay to come out of this dreadful condition to Christ, who will embrace you; so I write to you, and to all others to whom these truths may be communicated, to prevent your miscarrying in conversion.

1. Seek to know and be convinced by the Spirit, through the Scriptures, that you are born dead in sin, and children of wrath, by nature without Christ and without hope, Eph. ii. 3, 12; and that you lie every moment under God's curse and wrath, in danger of eternal condemnation, Gal. iii. 10. "The wicked shall be turned into hell," Psa. ix. 17. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," Ezek. xviii. 4. Unbelievers shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on them, though they are insensible of it. The Lord saith, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God; and he that believeth not is condemned already," John iii. 3, 18, 36. Consider then seriously, each of you, I beseech you, and ask, 'What will become of me, who am not born again, nor ever had the experience of a work of grace?' O that your eyes were open to behold all the sins of your hearts and lives in order before you, which may cry aloud

continually for vengeance against your guilty souls! It were enough to make you tremble, who are now most senseless. Retire alone quickly; and reflect upon your ways as in the sight of God. Put these questions to yourselves, 'Have I not sometimes lied, or stolen, or sworn an oath? Have I not profaned the Lord's day? Was I never proud, nor wanton, nor malicious? Have I never taken the Lord's name in vain? Have I not been disobedient to my parents? Have I not a carnal, unclean, hard, and unbelieving heart? Did I never break God's laws? Am I not dead in sins to this day? I must cry out Guilty, guilty; my conscience condemns me; what will become of me, if I die in this dreadful condition? For the righteous God hath said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." He that spared not the angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell; he that spared not the old world, nor the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, but condemned them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those which should after live ungodly, he will not spare me long. Does not hell gape for me? Is there any hope that such a sinner as I have been, may be washed in the blood of Christ? God may righteously condemn me for these sins, for the least sin, Rom. iii. 23. It is of the Lord's mercy that I am not consumed, and am not now in hell, crying out for a drop of water to cool my tongue, Lam. iii. 22. Luke xvi. 24.

2. Seek the Lord in secret, for his Spirit, while he may be found, Isa. lv. 6. Cry out, each of you, for the blood of Christ, as condemned malefactors do for mercy; as they did, Acts ii. 37, or, as the keeper of the prison said trembling, "What must I do to be saved?" Acts xvi. 30. Rest not one day nor hour longer quietly or securely, till you have some hopes that faith is wrought in you by the Spirit, and that Jesus Christ will plead your cause in the day of judgment; for, without the imputation of his righteousness, there is no remission. Follow Christ, crying, as the blind men did, "Lord, that our eyes may be opened," Matt. xx. 30, &c. Pray as the leper did, Matt. viii. 2. "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Plead importunately for the Spirit, which is promised in these last days to be poured out upon all flesh, Acts ii. 17, 18.

3. If the Lord by his word and Spirit makes you sensible of your fearful, undone condition, beware of resting short of a thorough work of grace, lest you fall short of

union with Christ, through the teachings and drawings of the Father; lest you rest in a false peace, Luke xi. 21, compassing yourselves about with sparks of your own kindling, through slight wounding or slight healing, Isa. l. 11. Take heed of building upon the sand, Matt. vii. 26, 27; and lest you prove at best but foolish virgins walking with the wise, Matt. xxv. 2, 3. Fear lest you should make a Christ of duties, — of praying, weeping, purposing or reforming, for “the sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord,” Prov. xv. 8. “There is a way which seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death,” Prov. xiv. 12. “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not washed from their filthiness,” Prov. xxx. 12. A man may go very far under the awakenings of conscience, and have a zeal of God, and yet, being ignorant of God’s righteousness, go about all his lifetime, to establish his own righteousness, and get nothing at last but the hypocrite’s hope which shall perish. Thou that spinnest a covering for thy nakedness out of thine own bowels, thy trust shall be like a spider’s web in the day of thy calamity; this thou shalt have at the hand of God, thou shalt lie down in sorrow; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 2—4. By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in the sight of God, Rom. iii. 20. If ever thou find mercy, thou must be justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; by faith, without the deeds of the law, ver. 24, 28. It is true, faith comes by hearing, and it is our duty to attend to God’s appointments where the Spirit works; but if righteousness come by any work of the law, then Christ is dead in vain, Gal. ii. 21. To him that worketh not, in the point of justification, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Blessed is the man to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Rom. iv. 5, 6.

4. Look to the Lord to convince you of sin, because you believe not in Jesus Christ, which is promised, John xvi. 7—9. In your attendance on the means of grace, be willing to be convinced by the Comforter, that your hearts are so desperately wicked, that you *will not* come to Christ; and to feel your impotency, that you *cannot* believe in him, unless the Lord put forth the exceeding greatness of his power, Eph. i. 19.

5. Know assuredly, and welcome these glad tidings that

Christ is come of a truth into the world, on purpose to save sinners, and the chief of them, 1 Tim. i. 15. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. "Christ hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God," 1 Pet. iii. 18. Flee to this refuge when thou seest thyself ungodly and accursed by the law of God, and fearest thou shalt be condemned. Consider with thyself, "Though I am ungodly, yet 'Christ died for the ungodly,' Rom. v. 6. Though I am an enemy, yet Christ hath reconciled enemies to God by his death, ver. 10. Though I am rebellious, and so abominable that I fear lest the earth should open and swallow up such a wretch, and God should righteously sink me to hell in his wrath, yet there is good news and encouragement for me, that Jesus Christ when he ascended on high received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among the rebellious, Psa. lxxviii. 18. Though I am accursed, and I see evidently God threatens to condemn me, yet is there hope for such a guilty sinner, since Christ hath redeemed accursed sinners from the curse of the law, being made a curse for them, that they might receive the blessing of Abraham, and the promise of the Spirit, Gal. iii. 13, 14.

6. Believe in Jesus Christ, because it is the command of God, and pleasing in his sight; and thy duty, though thou canst see no other warrant or ground of encouragement. It is not only thy privilege but thy duty to believe. "This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ," 1 John iii. 23. "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 31. Christ tells hypocrites that sought him for the loaves and fishes, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom God hath sent," John vi. 28, 29. Apply the word thus for thyself; the righteous God who knows all my heinous sins, instead of condemning me for them, commands me to believe on his Son, and assures me that I shall be saved. The Lord give thee the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, and the obedience of faith. The voice of the Lord Jesus is very powerful, and his sheep hear it; pray earnestly, that his commands may come with power to thy soul.

7. Rejoice to hear that Jesus Christ is become an earnest suitor for thy love. The Lord that was crucified for the chief of sinners, now saith to thee, "Behold, I stand at the

door and knock ; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him," Rev. iii. 20. "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners," saith the Lord, Matt. ix. 13. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money, come," Isa. lv. 1. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17. Hearken therefore to the delightful voice of Christ. Although thou mayest judge thyself the vilest and chiefest of sinners, and mayest verily think there may be mercy for others, but none for such a great monstrous sinner as thou hast been ; yet here is the joyful sound, that the Son of man, God manifest in the flesh, is come to seek and save that which was lost, Luke xix. 10. How dreadful soever thy condition may be in thy own thoughts, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," says he, John vi. 37. Though you therefore feel hard and dead hearts, yet come as sinners unto Christ, who came to seek and save such. 'The Lord calls stout hearted sinners, who are far from righteousness, to hearken unto him, Isa. xlvi. 12, 13.

8. When your hearts are sinking under the sense of God's wrath, then resolve in the strength of Christ to rely upon him, to cast yourselves upon him, whatever be the issue : if I perish, I will perish at the feet of Christ, for otherwise I am sure to perish ; if he condemn me, he is righteous,—if he save me, it will be riches of free grace forever to be admired. Venture thus upon Christ against a thousand discouragements, as the lepers ventured into the tents of the Syrians, 2 Kings vii. 4—6. Press in upon Christ, resolving to take no denial, as the woman of Canaan did, Matt. xv. 22, &c. These had a blessed issue out of their difficulties, and thou shalt find, at length, that the bowels of Christ will yearn over thy fainting soul, lying at his feet for a crumb, and he will embrace thee with unspeakable love. Thus let the kingdom of heaven suffer violence ; press thou into it, and take it by force.

9. Never attempt to believe or repent in thy own strength, but look unto Jesus, "in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell," Col. i. 19. As thou wouldst not prove a hypocrite, beware of a dead faith of thy own forming, which is not the faith of the operation of God

Col. ii. 12. Look not for that in thyself, which is only to be found in Christ, nor for that in the law, which is only to be found in the gospel : this has been the cause of the long troubles of many precious souls. When thou fearest thou shalt die eternally because thou canst not believe, look out of thyself unto Christ, who is full of grace, and behold his glory, John i. 14. "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth," Isa. xlv. 22. Look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, Heb. xii. 2. Christ never comes expecting to find faith or repentance, but looks upon a filthy soul, polluted in his own blood, and saith unto him, Live ; and his time is the time of love, Ezek. xvi. 6, 8. The grace of the Lord is exceeding abundant to the chief of sinners, with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. i. 14. When thou turnest thine eyes inward, and fearest that the hardness and impenitence of thy heart will surely be thy ruin, flee to that reviving word, Acts v. 30, 31. "God hath raised up Jesus, and exalted him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins." The Lord hath promised in the latter days to destroy the veil of unbelief which is spread over all nations, Isa. xxv. 7. Dost thou find by experience that word true, "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him?" behold, in the next verse, what a full promise of help is made to thee, "They shall be all taught of God ; every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me," John vi. 44, 45. "Good and upright is the Lord, therefore will he teach sinners in the way," Psal. xxv. 8. Christ saith, "I am the way" unto the Father, John xiv. 6. Follow the Lord at the throne of grace with cries and groans unutterable, without ceasing : O draw me to Christ ; help me to close with, and to rely upon him. If thou findest that it is too hard for thee to believe, hear the Lord saying to thee, "Let him take hold of my strength, that he may make peace with me, and he shall make peace with me," Isa. xxvii. 5. "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength," chap. xl. 29. "Therefore trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," chap. xxvi. 4. It is my earnest desire and prayer, that this may be the time of God's special love, and the day of his power, that you may be united to Christ by faith wrought in you by the power of God's Spirit ; that you may thirst after and receive a full assurance of God's love ; and that you may have the love

of Christ shed abroad in your hearts, and may abide in Christ, being strong in the grace which is in him, which is sufficient for you in your greatest straits ; and that you may be taught of God to sing his praises, and to rejoice with trembling ; and may never lose your first love, or fall into a spirit of slumber or delusion, but may grow in the knowledge of Christ, and being planted in the house of God, may bring forth much fruit, denying yourselves, and taking up the cross of Christ, walking worthy of the Lord all your few days, to the praise of his free grace, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory. O that these lines may not hereafter rise up in judgment at the last day against any of you which slight them, and condemn you,—and that they may be the voice and call of God, his arm and power revealed to your salvation. The presence of the Comforter be with you for ever.

SOME SCRUPLES

OF

THE TEMPTED RESOLVED.

Objection. "I AM sensible that I cannot believe of myself."

Ans. 1. May not Christ rather complain of thee as of those, "And ye *will not* come to me, that ye might have life?" John v. 40. It is your natural ignorance of Christ, and your prejudice against him, which hinders your believing on him.

2. Under the sense of thine impotency, pray, and wait continually for the experimental knowledge of the power of Christ's resurrection, Phil. iii. 10, that God may put forth the exceeding greatness of his power, enabling thee to go to Christ's fulness, that grace may reign in thee, Eph. i.

3. The Spirit's end in convincing thee of thine impotency, is chiefly to teach thee to look unto Christ, who is full of grace, and in all God's appointments to wait for the drawings of the Father, who hath promised his teachings, John vi. 44, 45.

4. Jesus Christ hath purchased and promised the Spirit, the Comforter, to convince the world of unbelief, and to beget faith, John xvi. 8—10, 14. Therefore, instead of unbelieving despondency, look for the effusion of the Spirit, under the means of grace, to enable thee to believe.

Object. "What have I to do to come to Christ, who am ungodly, asleep, unprepared, the chief of sinners? Alas! I am accused by the law, and fear I shall be miserable for ever."

Ans. 1. It is the Lord who hath begun to open thine eyes, and to shew thee thy present condition. That promise may belong to thee, Isa. xxxv. 4.

2. Thou art the person called, and shalt be welcome to Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all thy guilt, and want of preparation and qualifications in thy own sense and apprehension. God doth command thee not to rely upon thy good works for thy peace, but to believe in God, who justifies the

ungodly, and thy faith shall be accounted for righteousness. Thou art to believe in God, who quickeneth the dead, Rom. iv. 5, 17. God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved dead sinners, quickeneth them together with Christ, that he might show forth the exceeding riches of his grace, Eph. ii. 4—7. Christ commands and invites sinners, and none other, to come to him; and professes plainly, that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners, Matt. ix. 13.

Question. “This rejoices my heart, that such a wretch as I may come to Christ. But may I now come to Christ, so soon after I am awakened?”

Ans. Come and welcome now to Christ. Christ gave great encouragement to Nathanael, because he embraced the first call. “Jesus said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these,” John i. 50.

Object. “The Lord is withdrawn from me,” saith a distressed soul, “and I fear my experiences are a delusion of the devil, and sparks of mine own kindling.”

Ans. Such a fear of caution, which awakens to diligent heedfulness, always should be in thee; but this servile fear of unbelief thou must beware of; therefore, when thou hast sung the praises of God, do not thus soon forget his wonderful works, as the Israelites of old did, Psa. cvi. 12, 13.

2. Cast not away thy confidence. Christ’s love tokens are pledges of his faithfulness in his absence. When Asaph was at a loss, he said, “I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High; surely I will remember thy wonders of old,” Psa. lxxvii. 10, 11. Hath not the Lamb that was slain, rent the veil of unbelief, and opened the sealed book, and showed thee plainly of the Father? Did he never seal his love in one promise? Didst thou never triumph over one lust? Hast thou not met with the smiles of God’s countenance then, when thou expectedst to be consumed in a moment, being caught as it were out of the belly of hell, and laid in Christ’s bosom? Why dost thou thus unworthily and ungratefully forget the day, when thy Lord delivered thee, not from one, but from all thy fears? Then thou didst sit under Christ’s shadow with great delight, and his fruit was pleasant to thy taste, Cant. ii. Then his banner over thee was love: then thou couldst sing, “My beloved is mine, and I am his!” Oh the height and depth, the length and breadth of the love of Christ to my soul, that passeth knowledge? Canst thou not

remember the day when Christ came leaping over the mountains, and skipping over the hills to thy fainting soul? Then thy Beloved spake, and said to thee, "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away: for, lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." Let not the consolations of God be small with thee. Reflect upon the time of thy first espousals, when Christ discovered himself, and opened the everlasting love of his heart to thee, when thou wast in a doleful and forlorn condition,—and then ravished away thy heart. Thy love then was strong as death, and many waters could not quench it. Then thy language was, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples, for I am sick with love:" then perfect love did cast out fear, and by his light thou walkedst through darkness. Call to mind the days of old, when thou restedst thy weary soul in everlasting arms, rejoicing as more than conqueror over sin and the law, death, hell, and the devil, through Christ, who loved thee. Look to a full Christ, thou empty creature. Thy Lord will turn again, "he will not cast off for ever," Lam. iii. 31. Resolve with Job, "Though he slay me, I will trust him; he also shall be my salvation," Job xiii. 15, 16. "The Lord hath appeared unto me of old, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee," Jer. xxxi. 3. What though I am now in darkness, in the deeps, in the lowest pit, like the slain in the grave, whom God remembereth no more; yet, doth he not show wonders to the dead? The Lord will command his loving kindness in the day time; "he will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness," Micah vii. 9. Though thou now goest mourning without the sun, yet abide in Christ by the power of God that raised him from the dead. The day will dawn, and the shadows flee away. Thou shalt shine forth; thou shalt be as the morning; thy light shall rise in obscurity, and thy darkness be as the noon-day; the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

3. Consider God's gracious ends in withdrawing; it is chiefly in love, to teach thee to live by faith in Christ, and not upon thy enjoyments; to lean upon thy Beloved in the wilderness. If one should have asked Paul, how it was with his soul; see the account, Gal. ii. 20. "The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God." Though thou walkest in darkness, and hast no light, yet thou art commanded to trust and stay on thy God, Isa. l.

10. "Blessed is he that hath not seen, and yet hath believed," John xx. 29.

Object. "But I am a backslider, and the Lord hath righteously hid his face."

Ans. It is very supporting to consider the heart of God and Christ towards his children under backslidings, which appear in the many gospel calls, and promises of remission and healing made to tempted souls, when gone astray, and cast out of God's sight; read Isa. liv.; Jer. iii., xxx., xxxi.; Hos. xiv.; Luke xv.

Object. "Surely it is better for me to destroy myself," saith another under temptation, "than to live only to aggravate my damnation. I am condemned already. God hath set me up as a monument of his wrath; why should I live any longer in this torment?"

Ans. 1. Take heed of soul-wounding sins, and lest thou run away from Christ by unbelief, after falls into them. Some sin against light, and then, instead of flying to the blood of sprinkling, they depart away farther by their unbelief, than they did by their backsliding into sin, and entertaining hard thoughts of God and Christ. In the pride of their hearts, they will rather attempt to take a desperate course, than submit to the righteousness of God, and fall down at the feet of Christ, whose arms are open to receive the chief of sinners.

2. If thou hadst lain scorching in everlasting burnings, thou wouldst think it a rich mercy to be on this side hell again. There are none there to sympathize with thee, or to give thee a drop of water to cool thy tongue.

3. Although thy present condition be deplorable, yet be not thine own executioner, if God will give thee a reprieve in the world. When thou art tempted to it, I solemnly charge thee to remember that God hath forbidden it, saying, "Thou shalt not kill."

4. In the hour of temptation, go not out in thine own strength. Look to Christ, and keep thine hold of him, who is able to keep thee from falling. "The Lord hath laid help upon One that is mighty," Psa. lxxxix. 19.

5. Give no place to the devil. Be not affrighted from continuing in thy calling; the Lord hath promised to keep thee in all thy ways, and his angels shall have charge over thee, Psa. xci. 11, 12.

6. Thou art grossly mistaken in thinking no case like thine; for no temptation hath taken you, but such as is common to man, 1 Cor. x. 13. Many of God's dear

children have been as vehemently assaulted with such hellish temptations, though thou thinkest thy case cannot be paralleled. They have been recovered, and their unbelief and all their sad conclusions confuted.

7. When thou art tempted to this sin, flee to that promise, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper," Isa. liv. 17. "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under thy feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20. "God is faithful, who will not suffer thee to be tempted above that thou art able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that thou mayest be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13.

Object. "I fear I shall faint in an hour of trial."

Ans. 1. This godly fear is a special preservative promised in the new covenant against all temptations to sin and apostasy, Jer. xxxii. 40.

2. Watch and pray always, that thou mayest be accounted worthy to escape all things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man, Luke xxi. 36.

3. Go not out in thine own strength; for the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God. Be strong in that all-sufficient grace, which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. ii. 1. Look to Christ to strengthen thee with all might according to God's glorious power, unto all patience, and long-suffering, with joyfulness. "The archers sorely grieved Joseph, and shot at him, and hated him, but his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob," Gen. xlix. 23, 24.

4. God's word is a tried word. Behold the great cloud of witnesses from the beginning of the world to this day, all setting their seals to the faithfulness of God to his exceeding great and precious promises.

5. Behold Christ's wonderful love, in leaving his throne of glory and his Father's bosom, and hanging upon the cross in thy nature, bearing the wrath of God for all thy monstrous sins; this will constrain thee to follow God fully, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, and to continue with him in his temptations. Look to Christ to shed abroad his love in thy heart by his Spirit. Love is strong as death; many waters cannot quench love, nor can floods drown it.

Object. Saith another, "I have been long under fearful temptations to foul and damnable sins; surely I am a hypocrite; my life hath been a hell upon earth as it were."

Caution. I would not have any self-deceived hypocrite, who allows himself delightfully in a course of secret sinning, to cheat himself with this, that his reigning sins are but infirmities, because his conscience stings him after the commission of sin.

Ans. 1. Flee to the blood of Christ, to wash away the guilt of thy scarlet sins; and the sense of God's pardoning love shed abroad in thy heart, will be one of the most effectual means in the world to keep thee from returning again to folly. It is most evident from Paul's experience, Gal. ii. 20, that looking to Christ crucified for thy sins and backslidings, is the most effectual help to be crucified together with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed. The Corinthians evidenced, that by beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they were changed into the same image, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

The manifestations of God's pardoning love to thee will constrain thee; this will be thy practical judgment. If Christ died for thee when thou wast an enemy, therefore thou that livest, shouldst not henceforth live unto thyself, but unto Him that died for thee, and rose again, 2 Cor. v. 15.

If the grace of God, which brings salvation, appear to thee, it will teach thee to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts; it will work evangelical repentance in thee; it will dissolve thy frozen heart, that thou shalt remember thy ways and be confounded, and never open thy mouth because of thy shame, when thou beholdest that God is pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, Ezek. xvi. 61—63. Therefore, after thy falls, though thy heart be dead and stupid, yet run quickly to Christ with confusion of face, who is exalted to give repentance and remission of sins, Acts v. 31. Believe stedfastly, that though thou hast sinned, yet thou hast an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, who ever liveth to make intercession for transgressors, 1 John ii. 1. Heb. vii. 25. Be looking up to him for the supply of all thy wants.

2. When thou hast sinned, run not farther from God by unbelief, than thou hast done by thy backslidings. Pluck not up the foundation. This is one of Satan's subtleties, by enticing thee to sin, to break thy peace, to torment and bewilder thee, and to take thee off thy work and usefulness for God. Many sins may cause matter of humiliation, but not of delaying concern about our salvation.

3. Go out in the strength of Christ, and thou shalt overcome at last, Eph. vi. 10, &c. One cause of our falls in the

hour of temptation, is our going forth in the confidence of received grace. Therefore live continually under the actual conviction and sense of thine inability to resist the least temptation, and abide in Christ, in whom all fulness dwells.

4. It will be distinguishing love from God, if, through the fiery darts of the devil and other temptations, thou art kept awake from lukewarmness, and from a spirit of slumber and security, the epidemic sin of this hour of temptation, which prevails exceedingly upon saints, and the world, notwithstanding all awakening dispensations, according to Christ's prediction, Matt. xxiv., xxv.

5. It may be thy temptations may continue all thy life. Long not so much for deliverance, as for strength to resist. Out of a slothful principle, we often cry earnestly for victory, therefore temptations still continue; observe Christ's answer to Paul, 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. There was no deliverance from the thorn in the flesh; but "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." Be confident of this; sin shall not have dominion over thee, Rom. vi. 14, because thou art not under the law, but under grace; and that God will give thee power when thou art faint, and will increase thy strength when thou hast no might, Isa. xl. 29. And in the faith of the full promises purchased by Christ's blood,—take courage; glory in thy infirmities, because the power of Christ shall rest upon thee. "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy. When I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me." Rejoice in Christ Jesus, by, and in whom, thou hast already overcome the world, and art raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Fight against sin, the world, the terror of the law, death, and the powers of darkness, as against conquered enemies. Pray believingly for that purchase of Christ, Rom. v. 21, that as sin hath reigned unto death in thee, grace may now reign through righteousness unto eternal life. Rejoice in hope of everlasting rest, where thou wilt more admire the power and wisdom of God, in leading and upholding a poor, weak worm through such desertions, and temptations, and inextricable labyrinths, than if thou hadst a calm way to glory. "To him that overcometh," saith Christ, "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne," Rev. iii. 21.

Now, to him, who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, be honour and dominion for ever.

CERTAIN RICH MEN.

AN ANCIENT RICH MAN.

THERE was a certain rich man who lived eighteen hundred years ago. Neither his name or lineage is given, and to distinguish him we call him Dives, or the Rich Man. The amount of his wealth is not told, yet it may be inferred to have been very large, from the very fact that it was his chief distinction. He was liberal in the expenditure of his money in procuring the luxuries of life. The costly purple and fine linen were his clothing, and his entertainments were sumptuous. The indulgence of his luxurious appetite was not only occasional, but daily; "he fared sumptuously every day." No doubt he lived in a palace, had a magnificent equipage, was surrounded by obsequious servants, and possessed every thing which could minister gratification to his taste. What hosts of admiring friends sought entertainment at his table, and how many too envied him his happiness! Perhaps hundreds had repined at their own more humble lot, as they gazed on his splendor, and thought how much happier they would be, did they possess some of his superfluities. How the world has so generally come to the conclusion that wealth and happiness are inseparable, we are not exactly prepared to say. We are sure they never learned it from the Bible, and we are just as sure they did not learn it from the experience of the wealthy. Perhaps we are not far wrong in supposing that it is one of those singular delusions which the devil so successfully plies in despite of all opposing experience. Knowing something of the nature of the human constitution, we should regard it as a very remarkable fact if

this rich man was never sick in consequence of the luxurious style of his living. His appetite was not always keenly set, and this is no trifling subtraction from the happiness of a "good liver," who did not eat that he might live, but lived that he might eat. It would be strange too, if he never found among his friends some false ones who only made a convenience of him, who, perhaps, laughed at his folly, and made his weaknesses the subject of many a joke. Property too, in those days, must have been very different from what it is now, if the management of a large estate did not cause him many anxious thoughts and cares, and subject him to some perplexing losses. Besides, this rich man must have known that he was mortal; that his pleasures might be interrupted in a moment; and we can scarcely believe that he was such a brute as not to believe that he had a soul, which was to live after his body was dead. His purple and sumptuous feasts could neither prevent nor cure the troublesome thoughts which would occasionally obtrude themselves in relation to these subjects. We think, all things considered, he could scarcely have been perfectly happy, nay, we feel very sure, his wealth was one of the principal obstructions to his happiness, inasmuch as it diverted his mind from the true sources of it. Without prying too closely into his secret history, one thing is evident—he was not prepared to die. With all the care he expended in furnishing the most luxurious articles for the gratification of his senses, he had lost sight of the dictates of reason, and we may say, common sense, in making no provision for that inevitable event which was to separate him from the scene of his earthly pleasures for ever, and introduce him into the presence of his God, who is strict in requiring of men an account of their stewardship. A day did, at length, come, when those who lived in his neighbourhood observed his palace closed, and no more resounding with the sounds of music and revelry. The rich inmate is a corpse. His friends assemble once more, not for a festival, but a funeral. His heirs are dressed out, not in purple, but in sackcloth, while, perhaps, they are really glad at heart. He was buried, and perhaps too, in a costly tomb; and that, so far as the world sees, was the end of the whole matter. One, however, who well knew, has told us the sequel of his history. It needs no exaggeration to make it more terrible. It furnishes a fearful contrast which every one can appreciate. *In hell he lifted up his eyes, pleading,*

but in vain, for one drop of water to cool his tongue, while *tormented in those flames!*

RICH BY INDUSTRY.

Such was the rich man who lived and died in ancient times. The world is older now, but not much wiser. There have been certain rich men, for the history of whose lives and deaths we are not compelled to go back eighteen hundred years; some of them rich by inheritance, others by their own assiduous labours. The images of a hundred step forth, that their portraits may be drawn, while one or two must suffice. Here is one, made rich by industry. The poor boy is smitten with the love of gold, and it becomes the absorbing object of his idolatrous pursuit. It is the waking and dreaming thought of his mind; the exclusive affection of his soul. He plods and labours like a galley slave for its attainment. He begins to accumulate. His eye sparkles with delight. Other successes follow, and the hoard seems to multiply itself. He reaches the point of his first expectations, but the feeling of avarice has grown in proportion. He has now other and higher points of achievement. The ten thousands have become hundred thousands. There is his wife, yet his love for gold is stronger than his love for her; there are his children, but the care of their health, their education, and more particularly their morals, is left for others. His busy mind is full of schemes. In the counting house, and by the way side, he is scheming. Nay, at his own fireside there is no genial flow of soul, no sweet charities of life, no domestic bliss; *schemes*, schemes of wealth, stocks, estates, mortgages, fill every cranny of the mind. He is excited to pleasure only when he is prospering in his bargains and doubling his money. The bone of his bone, and the flesh of his flesh are growing up into manhood; and yet he feels no deep wound of heart, that vice is fastening upon his sons as its victims, and vanity is eating out the sweetest sensibilities from the hearts of his daughters. Even amusements are rarely indulged by the rich man who has but one passion—to become still richer. Years pass on. His title deeds multiply beyond number; his estates spread out on every hand; beyond precedent almost, he is rich. The most extravagant expectations of his youth had never ventured to look forward to accumulation so vast. He has

in the meantime become old and infirm. Did he ever propose to himself the questions, Why do I want more? What use have I for what I now possess? He would have been puzzled to answer. It was certainly not with the intention of exercising charity towards others; for this he never had a taste. He did not seriously contemplate, in his constant exertions, the enriching of idle and worthless sons, although this is likely to be the result. It was not to supply his own reasonable wants, for a thousandth part of his gains would have done this. What then? He had laboured for money from a passion. He has esteemed it for its own sake. In his career he has made shipwreck of every gentle and noble feeling of his soul. He knows no pleasure but the pleasure of counting money; he has worshipped no God but the money-god. His whole mind and soul are converted into dollars and cents. After all what has he achieved? He totters along under his increasing infirmities, and is able to say, That pile of brick and mortar is mine. He sits in his counting room, and looks upon a shelf of musty parchments, and exclaims, There are my treasures! The world is no better for his life. None rise up to call him blessed. Bowed down with age, he has no pleasant reminiscences, no rational subjects for reflection. He instinctively fears death, yet he has no spiritual perceptions. He dares not think of God or eternity; perhaps after the wear and tear of so many years in the drudgery of the world, he could not do it if he would. It is one of the terrible effects of a worldly life, that it often deprives a man of his capabilities to learn the way of salvation. The faculties may be so stupefied as to resist every other means of arousing them, except the burning flames of Tophet. At length the worn out, useless, and abused body drops into the grave, unlamented and soon to be forgotten—the soul, ah! the undying soul of such a fool and madman, such a despiser of God and neglecter of eternity, where is it? Look at the first part of the 5th chapter of the Epistle of James!

RICH BY INHERITANCE.

We have seen the fate of the world's drudge, rich by toil: now look at one rich by inheritance. He possesses, not what he has acquired, but what has been left to him. He knows no business, or only knows to despise it. His coffers have

been filled by the toil of his predecessors, who have made shipwreck of their souls in accumulating it. His life is to be a life of ostentatious show and pleasure. He imitates Solomon in his degenerate days. He provides every luxury for the senses, and intends to tax them to the utmost bounds of endurance. Choice wines fill his cellars, music floats through his saloons, the feet of the merry dancers press his floors, and the revellers fill his hall. When others sleep, they are awake; and their weary frames only seek repose on the silken couch, when admonished by the approach of the grey dawn of the morning. In that stately mansion there is no Sabbath, no recognition of God. The eye and hand are familiar with the cards and dice, not with the Bible. Fashion may sometimes persuade the inmates to drive a splendid equipage to a church door, and spend an idle hour in listening to a formal sermon, which will be sure not to disturb their conscience. Religion, to them, is a vulgarity—a sheer fanaticism, from which they must keep aloof. The rich man again and again runs the round of pleasure. He lives by excitement. Is he never fatigued? Do his pleasures never cloy? Many are his experiences of this kind, and yet he tries them anew. Satiety comes at length; the monotony sickens him. He has drunk so deep of his sensual vices, that he begins to taste the dregs. Any thing for a change, that he may escape from scenes no longer pleasant, and faces that disgust from their familiarity. He is instructed, not made wise, and, like a poor dependent on others, he flees abroad, to try the resources of other lands. He sees what is to be seen, with little true relish; he mingles with others, who, like himself, are goading their flagging senses into activity; he settles in the gay metropolis, where a whole world is engaged in inventing and inviting to pleasures. It is some relief to engage in the rivalry to outshine others in the gorgeousness of equipages and the costliness of entertainments. Gaming furnishes another source of excitement. Lust and appetite offer themselves as obedient servitors. Such the pleasures of the rich worldling! “Exquisite!” says the tyro. “Nauseating!” responds the veteran. Physical nature, however compliant, may be driven beyond endurance. The penalty comes. Gout and dropsy are poor fruits for the purchase of wealth; and yet, by these and other means, men might be taught that the sinning members must suffer. The visits of death, too, are just as certain at the mansions of the

rich, as at the hovels of the poor. See the rich man after he has, for the last time, gone through the rounds of his sinful enjoyments, (for there is a last time,) and is now laid upon his bed to die. Reflection comes at last, and ah! how unwelcome! There are busy devils to stir up the muddy streams, which prevent one pure reflection. Imagination is under no necessity of creating new and fantastic forms to trouble; it need only embody the scenes of the past, and restore some of their lost vividness. Before the sick man's eyes the spectre troops of by-past sins pass along in array, each in its turn saying, "I will sit heavy on thy soul to-morrow." Nay, they sit heavy to-day. Busy memory exhibits its chronicle of oaths and impieties, and falsehoods and wicked flatteries that have been uttered. The Sabbath, the profaned Sabbath, has its record to exhibit. More than the shadows of many a gambling scene and intemperate revel flit before the vision. No earthly limner could so graphically draw the pictures of betrayed, ruined, and despairing females, lovely before the spoiler came, but fiends now, to torment him in anticipation. His eye glares, his bosom heaves; every countenance around him speaks, There is no hope; his heart responds, *There is no hope!* The despised cross of Christ is there only to make the weight heavier on the soul; the curse of the Almighty is there too, fixing with an iron grasp on the struggling captive. Next to the gloom of hell is the gloom of that sick man's chamber. Bankrupt, hopelessly bankrupt! His wealth mocks him, his agonies torment him; with a convulsive groan his soul is driven away in its wickedness, and in the lowest deep still finds a lower deep.

RICHES IN THE CHURCH.

The world does not claim all the rich men. Within the pale of the visible Church some of them are to be found. Wealth is no positive *disqualification* in the candidate for a celestial crown, but it is a mighty *obstruction* to his attainment of it. The great teacher has said, "How *hardly* shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" And again, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." This is sufficiently startling. It was very natural for Agur to pray, "Give me not poverty," inasmuch as it generally brings with it many hardships and privations; but,

viewed in connexion with the Saviour's words, it was incomparably wiser, that he added the prayer, "Give me not riches." The one exposes a man to perilous temptations, the other exposes him to dangers of a still more serious nature. It might be supposed that the Saviour, by his comparison of the camel and the needle's eye, absolutely affirmed the impossibility of a rich man's salvation. This is not exactly the case. He explains his own declaration by subjoining, "How hard is it for them that *trust in riches* to enter into the kingdom of God!" The salvation of such is clearly impossible. This qualification may seem to diminish the danger of riches; and yet, a little examination will show that it only lessens it to a certain degree. How few among the rich are found who do not *trust* in their wealth! Not that they trust in its power to purchase heaven, but they *repose* in it, as a sufficient inheritance, and are prevented by it from looking further. They are naturally disposed to say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years—take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry." By the influence of wealth the soul is seduced from God. It forgets its dependence on his providence, having found what it regards as a surer dependence. It becomes proud, haughty, inflated with high notions of its own superiority. It enjoys the obsequious flatteries, and even the envy, of others. It is tempted thereby into a thousand sins, to which the poor man is not exposed. It brings a multiplicity of cares, which are unfriendly to growth in grace. It binds the heart to earth, and makes all spiritual exercises exceedingly difficult. In short, it is so hard for a rich man to feel that he is "a pilgrim and stranger on the earth," that it is next to impossible that he should so believe, think, and act, as to secure the crown of glory that fadeth not away. The experience of the world most fully corroborates the declarations of God's word on this subject; and if there be a rich man, whose affections are set on things in heaven, and not on things on earth, he may thank God, with trembling, that he has escaped the vortex which has engulfed thousands.

A RICH PROFESSOR.

Now for a few portraits. There was a certain rich man, who, when he was poor, waited upon God, and delighted in his service. Seemingly, he possessed godliness, and with it,

contentment. He had food and raiment for himself and household, and little besides. Did you hear him pray, he was fervent. Did you witness his contributions to the cause of religion, they were according to the ability which God had given him, and were rendered with cheerfulness. He wished he could do more; nay, he was persuaded, that had he been entrusted with wealth, he would have consecrated it to the service of Him, whom he professed to love as his chief joy. Perhaps this very thought became an inlet to temptation. He seemed to forget that God could accomplish as much with the two mites of the cheerful-giving widow, as with the rich gifts of the wealthy. His next thought was, how he could increase the means of his liberality. The path of industrious exertion was before him. He taxed his powers more fully. Providence seemed to smile upon his efforts. With increased prosperity, he increased, for a time, his thank-offerings. Mark his progress, ye who are becoming too much absorbed in the world! His commercial transactions were gradually, yet steadily encroaching upon the limits which, in his fancy, he had fixed for them. His devotions were not abandoned, but abridged, and less fervent; his gifts to the cause of Christ were not omitted, yet sadly disproportioned to the increase of his substance. Wealth had rendered him not more, but less liberal; and he might have detected, had he examined his heart, that the cordiality and whole-heartedness which he had felt while a poor man, were exchanged for reluctance and selfishness, now that he was rich. He soon learned the art of excusing himself from the liberality which had once been his delight. His expenditures were more extravagant upon his own household, and while adding thousands to thousands, he daily became a poorer man in every thing relating to the household of faith. Sad change! Where now was his religion? Not extinguished, perhaps, but obscured. Its vital power was no longer felt. The world, which had gained access to his heart, had chilled it. "I do not enjoy religion as I once did," was his confession; and how could he expect it, when he had embraced, and was actually worshipping the god of this world? His family suffered, too. They had become fashionable and proud—nay, vicious; and although in the midst of them was an altar, it had become dilapidated, and the sacred fire on it was extinguished. Now comes the decline of life. It was like the setting of the sun in a cloud. No cheering light was

shed upon the evening's close. Faith had no supports to offer; hope had no smile. In despondency he sunk down into the grave, leaving suspicion in the minds of survivors, whether, indeed, death had been despoiled of his victory. Such was the beginning, such was the end. O, accursed love of gold, how many triumphant exits from life hast thou prevented! This rich man had made his will. Was it the *last will* of a Christian? Christ was not recognized in it; his suffering poor had no legacy by it; it never remembered that the Church of Christ had any wants. Sons and daughters were indeed remembered; and these are now expending those thousands in fashionable vice, which their *Christian* father had accumulated at the expense of his religious enjoyments, if not of his soul!

THE RICH MINISTER.

Another portrait. In sketching it, we must enter within the precincts of the sacred office. First contemplate that youth. His origin is humble, and yet in his face are the fine lineaments of one of nature's noblemen. Against the adverse circumstances of birth and station, his intellectual powers are struggling for the pre-eminence he is one day to achieve. Aspiring, and ambitious of literary distinction, he overleaps every obstruction, until the facilities of acquiring all that the schools can teach, are furnished by the liberality of others. He rapidly improves; he lays up the lore of learning, and in mid progress a higher distinction awaits him; the Spirit of all grace touches his heart, and transforms him into a child of God. His literary efforts are not relaxed, but sanctified; and with a full heart, all his acquisitions are laid upon the altar of God. At length we see him in the pulpit. How commanding his personal appearance! In every look and gesture dignity and benevolence are blended. He *prays*, and every heart seems to feel the fervour and unction of his addresses to the throne of grace. He *preaches*, and the crowded auditory is held spell-bound, as he eloquently "reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come." He has caught the ear of the listening throng, and is applauded by those whose praise might well awaken pride. The ordeal through which a popular preacher has to pass, is one so unfriendly to humility, that few bear the trial unscathed. To say that the subject of our sketch saw the

eager crowds following him, and heard his own commendations from the lips of the learned, and the lips of the beautiful, without injury to his spiritual interests, would be saying too much. He was a mortal, and the flattery found its way to his heart. Another stage, and he is married to one who was willing to lay all her charms, as well as her ample fortune, at his feet. He had suddenly become rich by marriage. "How fortunate!" cries the world. We shall see. The end must be connected with the beginning, in summing up a man's life. For a season all things seemed to smile propitiously. He was rich, and that awakened the respect of others; he had ample means, and that rendered him independent of the Church, which is too apt to regard the support they render the ministry as a gift which places it under peculiar obligation. Still he preaches eloquently. Another stage occurs. His studies are pursued less sedulously, his pastoral duties are intermitted, his associations have become more worldly. The rich and fashionable wife has not proved a help-meet; her profession of religion had nothing to do with the heart, and gradually, but certainly, her example has proved pernicious. How can two walk together except they be agreed? And in the conjugal relation, how often is the bad example more constraining than the good! The children of such ill assorted matches are almost always inclined to follow the worldly parent. So in this case. The minister of the gospel had placed himself in a situation in which he was daily tempted to relax his views. His children must be prepared to enter into that circle of society in which the wife had always moved. They must be possessed of all the fashionable accomplishments without regard to clerical strictness. Another stage follows. The minister has, in the mismanagement of his own family, lost the respect of his flock, and in fact his own self-respect. His influence declines. His ear, so long accustomed to flattery, now hears complaints, which are more afflictive, because they are just. Family religion has become a form, often interrupted by company, and often laid aside, because, with the exception of himself, none feel bound in conscience to attend upon it. Painful to his mind is the contrast between his present condition, as a rich minister, and his former condition, as a poor and pious student. And is this all that wealth has done for him? Alas! it has done more. His sons become the gay and extravagant leaders of fashion, and by a steady descent,

licentious and vicious. Beyond his control, he can only say with Eli, "Nay, my sons, for it is no good report that I hear." Family misrule ends in family misery. The father sees his own offspring absorbed in the world, and some of them wholly ruined. He is alone, without a wife to sympathize in his sorrows, and his spirit has become embittered. He begins to awake, but too late. Conscience stings him for the sins of the past. His worldly compliances, his ministerial unfaithfulness, his religious neglects, his lost usefulness, his degradation, in his own person, of the ministerial character, his deserted studies, all have a stern rebuke now to utter, and these, added to his domestic troubles, render him miserable indeed. A thousand times does he curse the gold, which glistened only to betray him; and witnessing its fruits, its present possession produces a pang, as if a sword had entered his vitals. He dies broken down in spirit, broken in heart, injured in reputation, with his last thoughts, which should be exclusively given to God, disturbed and agitated, by the sad reflection, that he is leaving behind him a family enriched, but ruined. Shall he have an epitaph? Thus it must run :

Here lie the unhonoured remains
of one
Who forgot his high calling,
and deserted a noble career of usefulness,
Being seduced by flattery,
and the world's wealth.

A RARE RICH MAN.

It should not be pretended that wealth in all cases produces the same evils to the same extent. Our portraits are designed to delineate effects by combining, in one picture, features which are often found separately. There are, almost uniformly, evils resulting from the possession of wealth, but they are not always aggregated. They lead to pride in one instance, to extravagance in another, to penuriousness and avarice in a third, to worldly conformity and coldness in religion in a fourth; and so of other consequences, while, occasionally, striking examples are furnished in which the evils are found in clusters. Wherever we turn our eyes, we see that the mass of wealth is devoted to the support and perpetuation of the depravity which characterizes the race.

Money is the chief object of pursuit, and its acquisition desired that it may be expended on men's lusts. Christians may possess it, but, as a general rule, they are not the most eminent for their spirituality and zeal. It will eat as doth a canker, if it be not closely watched, and counteracted by mighty prayer. "They have grown rich," may be said of many Christians, yet how seldom is it added, "with all their wealth, they have become more heavenly-minded!" Christians, who are in earnest for their soul's salvation, little know what they do, when striving after the world's riches. Who that would soar aloft, would suspend heavy weights to his wings? David's piety was not improved by his wealth, and Solomon's was most sadly eclipsed. Now and then, however, a "Joseph of Arimathea" may be found; a rich man, and yet truly devoted to the Saviour. Grace is mighty, and within the scope of its achievements, it may preserve a soul from injury even from this prolific source of evil. Such cases are distinguished by their rarity. It was a singularly rich and rare reply of an eminent Christian who had suddenly fallen heir to a large estate, to the anxious inquiry of a friend, "Before I had wealth I enjoyed all things in God, and now that I have wealth, I enjoy God in all things." How few can truly say this!

Plousios, to use a fictitious name, was one who remarkably escaped the hurt which a princely inheritance is apt to inflict. He had been taught in the school of Christ, who, although Lord of all, instructed his disciples not to set their affections on things below, but on things in heaven. He realized the brevity and vanity of life; he knew that his personal wants were few, and could be easily supplied; while at his large revenue he looked, not as a god to be worshipped, not as a dependence to be hoarded up, not as a means of sensual gratification, but as an instrument to be employed in works of usefulness. As a steward of God, he never forgot that his Lord, in entrusting him with this wealth, had solemnly said to him, "Occupy until I come." He was well aware, if he could multiply his ten talents into twenty by their useful application, he would hear the plaudit, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and enjoy his reward in his Master's smiles; but if he should wrap them in a napkin, and let them rust in unusefulness; or if he should squander them in sin, he would have to encounter an angry judge, and a severe doom. Such the principle with which he set out, and in

accordance with this was his practice. Plain and unostentatious in his habits, he used the world without abusing it. Losing sight of mere self, his daily inquiry was, "Lord, what wouldst thou have me to do?" He received an answer, and agreeably to it, his acts of public and private benevolence were multiplied. The drafts which the Lord's poor presented to him, were always accepted and promptly paid, for he could discern on them his Lord's signature. The cry of the heathen, perishing in their blindness, never fell on his ear without awakening a *working* sympathy, which is a very different thing from that sympathy which contents itself with *saying*, "Be ye warmed and filled." From his storehouse came help for the meritorious, instruction for the ignorant, relief for the oppressed. Many of God's ambassadors, poor in this world, found their burden lightened by his liberality, and many grateful bands of Christians, while worshipping God in company, could say, Our houses of prayer were reared by his benevolence. "His gift" was inscribed on many precious treatises which carried hope and consolation to the habitations of sinner and saint. With none of that silly and unworthy pride which can sacrifice all the sweet charities of life to achieve a posthumous fame by inscribing a name on a hospital or college, he resolved that the world should be better and happier for his wealth while he lived. His fountain was full, and it was his pleasure to make a thousand channels in every direction, by which the refreshing streams might be widely distributed. Like Job, he could say, "I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame; I was a father to the poor, and the cause which I knew not, I searched out." Most men are not prepared with their aid, when objects of charity *search them out*, and hence it is a rare merit to possess a benevolence which will run in search of objects of charity. Often was he annoyed. Many that were niggardly with their own means were officious in dictating to him the time, manner, and amount of his gifts, and others unreasonably assailed him with their importunities. This he felt to be one of the difficulties of his stewardship. He rose superior to it. He suffered it not to chill the glow of his feelings, or to arrest his hand. To please God, and not man, was his high aim. Did he glory in his benevolence? Did he rely upon it as a Saviour? Hear him in his retirement, acknowledging himself to be an unprofitable servant, and listen to his cry for mercy as a sinner. See his humble

attitude as a worshipper of God, and see his countenance, irradiated with hope, as he prostrates himself at the foot of the cross, and judge whether self-glorification is the spring of his benevolence. He is a cheerful giver, because the Lord loveth such; he is a liberal giver, because such is his Lord's requirement; he is a conscientious giver, knowing that he is to give an account. Grace has taught him the way to be happy, by contributing to the happiness of others. He has made friends of the worldly mammon by converting it to a good use, while multitudes perverting it as fuel to their lusts, shall weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon them.

A POSTSCRIPT.

To enforce and give emphasis to what has been said, we will subjoin what none can with impunity gainsay, **THUS SAITH THE LORD.**

“They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil, which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. But thou, O man of God, flee these things, and follow after righteousness.” 1 Tim. vi. 9–11.

“Labour not to be rich.” Prov. xxiii. 4.

“There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt.” Ecc. v. 13.

“The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches,

and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." Mark iv. 19.

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal—for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Matt. vi. 19, 21.

"Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. vi. 24.

"What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Mark viii. 36.

"Woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." Luke vi. 24.

"Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Luke xii. 20, 21.

"Blessed is he that considereth the poor." Psalm xli. 1.

"The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." Prov. xi. 25.

"Distributing to the necessity of saints." Rom. xii. 13.

"Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good; that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Tim. vi. 17–19.

"He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully

Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." 2 Cor. ix. 6-8.

"Freely ye have received, freely give." Matt. x. 8.

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TO AN OLD DISCIPLE.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—My heart is drawn towards you. I too am going down the hill of life, and the longer I live, the more sympathy do I feel with the aged. I have no longer the sprightliness of youth. In common with you I know the sorrow caused by the failure of hopes. A light heart carries the young swiftly along, but in us, who have passed the middle of life, the spirit is at least chastened, if not somewhat broken. Once past middle life, we seldom forget our griefs, as in youth. Indeed the memory of some sorrows never grows dim. Twenty years after his child is thought to be dead, Jacob cries out, “Joseph is not,” as if he had been missing but a day or a week. We too have lost friend after friend, not only by death, but by alienation. Very few of the friends of our childhood live to love us. One said: “I walk the streets, I go to the assemblies of my brethren, but I find none who began life with me. I stand alone like a withered tree, where once was a forest clothed with verdure.” We may have our descendants around us, and “children’s children are the crown of old men.” But sometimes children give as much pain as pleasure. Or, God may have written us childless. If so, how sad are our homes! Or, greedy heirs may be indecently hovering around to pounce upon our pelf as soon as we are gone.

Nor care they how soon we are called away. How many of us too are cut off (sometimes by our own fault) from useful employment! We lack occupation. The mind, not being drawn out in healthy action, preys upon itself. Our latter years are often spent in melancholy uselessness. Our senses are often blunted as we grow old. Sweet sounds and sweet odours and delicious flavours cannot now regale us as in our younger days. To us the blue sky is no longer blue, and the green mountains are no longer green, and the voice of birds is no longer music. Great changes have come on. Times, manners, fashions, customs, habits, opinions have all changed, nor have we changed with them. The world often seems to us to be moving too fast or too slowly, and we cry out, "what are we coming to?" One, who had long served God and his generation, seeing how things were going, thus wrote

"Prophet of ills, why should I live,
Or by my sad forebodings grieve
Whom I can serve no more?
I only can their loss bewail,
Till life's exhausted sorrows fail,
And the last pang is o'er."

The pious aged have no deeper sorrows than those, which spring from the memory of their sins. Job said, "Thou makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth." David cried: "Remember not against me the sins of my youth." The late Dr. Moses Hoge, of blessed memory, said: "I feel great need of offering the prayer of the old bishop, who said 'O God, pardon my sins of omission.'" He, who in old age feels no need of sorrow for past sins, is no child of God. Nor can we fail to see that our time on earth is short

A few more days, and our career will be run. We must bid farewell to all we have ever known; we must go to an untried eternity, and undergo the scrutiny of God. Each of us too has sorrows, unknown to men, and, so far as we know, peculiar to ourselves. We have not breathed them to any mortal, and perhaps we never shall, but the heart knoweth its own bitterness.

Yet all is not sad in our state. We have memories of joys, of mercies, and of friends, which, though tinged with a brown shade, are dear to our hearts. In general too we are treated with respect. Good men think with Solomon that "the hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." The respect paid us is well suited to smooth our way. We have also stores of experience, which wealth could not buy. We have been taught the art of walking in darkness and having no light, and yet trusting in the Lord. We know that all is not lost, which is brought into danger. We know better than the young disciple what is meant by such texts as these, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" "he that loseth his life, shall find it;" "I have meat to eat, that ye know not of." A thousand good lessons of this sort has God taught us. We know too that in his providence, as in nature, the darkest hour is just before day. Why may it not be so with us, as our sky is more and more lowering? May not eternal day be ready to burst upon us? Indeed a thousand mercies still surround us. If our hearts are right, we cannot fail to see them. Let us often count them up.

Will you permit one, who is perhaps your junior, and who is less than the least of all saints, to give you

a few words of counsel? If the advice given is good follow it; if not good, reject it.

1. As long as you can, maintain habits of bodily activity. If you cannot do much, do what you can.

2. Keep your mind employed. Many aged men review their youthful studies. President Edwards reviewed his Euclid every year. Some begin new studies late in life, as Dr. Scott and Dr. Bogue. Read something with care every day, or cause it to be read to you. The history of the aged is full of warnings against idleness of mind, and laziness of body. Your physician and pastor can both give you many reasons in favour of activity. The average length of life among retired merchants, who have given up *all* business, is said not to exceed two or three years. If you live in idleness, life will soon be a burden. Beware!

3. If you have property, retain exclusive control of enough to keep you from want. A dependent old age may be unavoidable, and, when it is, should be borne submissively. But it is a great trial. If men will treat you well without property, they will also, if you have your own means. The reverse of this is not *always* true.

4. But beware of covetousness, that universal sin. It is very apt to grow rapidly on the aged. Be ashamed to deny to those, who have a right to expect it, a share in your estate, when you can divide it. As far as you can, be your own almoner and executor.

5. Be always trying to do good by word and deed, by precept and example. Encourage the timid, warn the reckless, visit the poor, support humane and missionary institutions, teach the ignorant, be eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, make the widow's heart to

sing for joy, and do whatever will bless men and honour God. "No man liveth to himself." "As you have opportunity, do good to all men."

6. Cultivate cheerfulness of temper. Try to be pleased with your lot and your generation. Be not a murmurer and complainer. A sour old man or woman is neither happy, nor useful, nor amiable. Remember, the birds sang, the lambs skipped, and the children laughed when you were young, and they always will do it. Find not fault needlessly. "Say not thou, what is the cause the former days were better than these? for thou inquirest not wisely concerning this." Ever since Adam fell, there have been wicked men and wicked deeds on earth. I exceedingly like a common saying of a pious old English bishop, "Serve God and be cheerful."

7. Yield not to tormenting despondency about the cause of Christ. The Church is safe. She is graven on the palms of her Redeemer's hands. The cause of piety may decline in one place or at one time, but Christ's kingdom is gaining every year. The saints may lose a battle, but not the war. Christ loves the Church more than you do. "He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the earth." "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the Everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary?" "No weapon formed against Zion shall prosper." "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." Rest assured that Christ "shall see the travail of his soul and be satisfied."

8. Make yourself well acquainted with the promises

of God, especially those, which have a peculiar pertinency to you. If you are a widow, hear him saying, "A father of the fatherless and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation." "He relieveth the fatherless and "widow." See the Concordance under the word "widow." Are you childless? Thus saith the Lord unto the [childless] "that keep my Sabbaths, and choose the things that please me, and take hold of my covenant; even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." Are you poor? The promise is: "Thy bread and thy water are sure." "A little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked." Are you wearied in the greatness of your way? "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength." "The feeble among them shall be as David." And how was David? Though a stripling, he slew a bear, and a lion, and the giant of Gath. Whatever be your condition or fears, here are the promises to all the aged pious: "They shall bring forth fruit in old age." "Even to your old age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you: I have made, and I will bear, even I will carry you and deliver you."

"What more could he say, than to you he has said?"

Therefore set your hope and put your trust in God. Embrace the promises. They can never fail to those who rest upon them. Nothing but unbelief can annihilate them. Take firm hold of them and your last days shall be your best days, and as the outward man waxes weaker, the inward man shall be renewed day

by day, and God himself shall be your God. "It is one of the best sights to see silver hairs adorned with golden virtues," yea, with graces more precious than gold. Have faith in God. Hope to the end.

9. Study to acquire and maintain clear views of the riches and freeness of Christ. He is a Prophet. "Learn of him." He is a Priest. Rely on his great sacrifice and intercession. His intercession is as precious as his blood. If you wish an assurance that you shall never fall into condemnation, here it is. "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not." Christ is a King. His "throne is for ever and ever." He has all power in heaven and in earth. He is the vine, ye are the branches. Because he lives, you shall live also. He is the good Shepherd, and none is able to pluck his sheep out of his hand, nor his lambs out of his bosom. He is God, and therefore counts it not robbery to be equal with God. He is man, and therefore he is not ashamed to call us brethren. He was dead, and so he made expiation. He is alive for ever more, and so we shall never perish. If sin calls for a curse, the death of Christ calls louder for pardon. If he is the Author of our faith, He is also its Finisher. Study his character and work. You cannot know too much of him. He is the desire of all nations, the delights of the sons of men, God over all, blessed for ever.

10. Endeavour to glorify God in all your sorrows, and especially in your death. If your children give you grief, say as David in his old age: "Though my house be not so with God [as I could wish] yet hath he made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all

things and sure." If your children are cut down in a way that makes you tremble for their souls, say as Eli: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." If men revile you, say as the royal Psalmist, "Let him curse . . . It may be God will look upon mine affliction and reward me good for this cursing." If you be under any affliction which is common to men, why should you think it strange? "Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil" also? If you can say nothing to the praise of God in your afflictions, at least be "dumb and open not your mouth." If your afflictions be strange, so were Christ's. "He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin." "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him." By quietness and patience in affliction, you will be prepared to honour God in your death. It is as much a duty to glorify God in death, as in life. We may, by his grace, do more in an hour at death, than we have done in years before. Samson's greatest achievement against the enemies of God and of his Church, was in his death. Our last battle is commonly our greatest. Happy is he, who is able to shout and sing, "O death, where is thy victory?" "Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord."

There is something very remarkable in the fact that the aged seldom fall into so great a decay of their faculties as to forget those things, which have most engaged their affections. Nearly two thousand years ago, Cicero (in his treatise concerning Old Age,) said that he had never heard of a miser's memory so far failing him, that he forgot where his treasure was hid. He loved that most, and he remembered it longest. I have seen a pious man, who was said to be one hundred

and six years old. His memory was so far gone that he could no more learn any man's name. Yet he could repeat many of Watts's hymns, and give an intelligible account of the way of life. It is said that Bishop Beveridge in his old age, being near death, was visited by some of his old friends, who, by turns, took his hand and said: "Bishop Beveridge, do you know me?" His answer was, "No." His wife asked the same question, and received the same answer. At length one said: "Bishop Beveridge, do you know Jesus Christ?" "Yes, O yes," said he, "I shall never forget him. When sinking in despair under the load of my sins, Jesus Christ showed me mercy and saved me. And he has been with me ever since."

Polycarp suffered martyrdom at Smyrna in the year of our Lord 166, aged ninety-five years. The historian says that "when he appeared before the proconsul, the latter said to him, "Swear, curse Christ, and I will set you free!" The old man answered, "Eighty and six years have I received only good at his hands. Can I then curse my King and Saviour?" When the proconsul continued to press him, Polycarp said, "Well then, if you desire to know who I am, I tell thee freely, *I am a Christian!* If you desire to know what Christianity is, appoint an hour, and hear me." The proconsul, who here showed that he would gladly have saved him, if he could silence the people, said to Polycarp, "Only persuade the people." He replied, "To you I felt myself bound to render an account, for our religion teaches us to treat the powers ordained by God with becoming reverence, as far as is consistent with our salvation. But as for those without, I consider them undeserving any defence from me."

And justly too! for what would it have been but throwing pearls before swine, to attempt to speak of the gospel to a wild, tumultuous, and fanatical mob? After the governor had in vain threatened him with the wild beasts and the fire, he made the herald publicly announce in the circus, that Polycarp had confessed himself a Christian. These words contained the sentence of death against him. The people instantly cried out, "This is the teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, the enemy of the gods, who has taught so many not to pray to the gods and not to sacrifice."

As soon as the proconsul had complied with the demand of the populace, that Polycarp should perish on the funeral pile, Jews and Gentiles hastened with the utmost eagerness to collect the wood from the workshops and the baths. When they wished to fasten him with nails to the pile, the old man said, "Leave me thus, I pray, unfastened. He, who has enabled me to abide the fire, will give me strength also to remain firm on the stake." Before the fire was lighted, he prayed thus: "O Lord, Almighty God! the Father of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ; through whom we have received the knowledge of thee! God of the angels, and of the whole creation; of the whole human race, and of the saints, who live in thy presence! I thank thee that thou hast thought me worthy of this day, and this hour, to share the cup of thy Christ among the number of thy witnesses!"

Thus praying, the flame was kindled, and he went to heaven as it were in a chariot of fire.

Thus God fulfils the promises, "Even to your old

age I am He, and even to hoar hairs I will carry you.”
“I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

Aged disciple, can you not trust Him? Is he not worthy? May you not say, “I will not fear what man can do unto me;” “All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come;” “Lord, what thou wilt, when thou wilt, and how thou wilt;” “I know no will but thine;” “The Lord is my portion;” “Jesus, my Lord and my God, to thee I commit my spirit in life, in death, and for ever.”

A PRAYER FOR AN OLD DISCIPLE.

Thou God of my fathers, thou Friend of sinners, thou Judge of all the earth! in thee do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion. Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me and save me. Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort; thou hast given commandment to save me; for thou art my rock and my fortress. Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man. For thou art my hope, O Lord God: thou art my trust from my youth. By thee have I been holden up from the womb: my praise shall be continually of thee. I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled with thy praise, and with thy honour all the day long. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth. I will go in the strength of the Lord God: I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared

thy wondrous works. Now also, when I am old and grey-headed, O God, forsake me not, until I have showed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come. Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side. God, be merciful to me a sinner. Let not my iniquities prevail against me. Let not my soul perish. Apply to me the merits of thy dear Son. Bless my fellow-men. Fill the earth with thy glory. Build thou the walls of Jerusalem. Take not the Holy Spirit from me. Make haste to save me. I ask all in the worthy name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Darkness overspreads us here,
 But the night wears fast away;
 Jacob's star will soon appear,
 Leading on eternal day!
 Now 'tis time to rouse from sleep,
 Trim our lamps, and stand prepared,
 For our Lord strict watch to keep,
 Lest he find us off our guard.

Though already saved by grace,
 From the hour we first believed;
 Yet while sin and war have place,
 We have but a part received;
 Still we for salvation wait,
 Every hour it nearer comes!
 Death will break the prison gate,
 And admit us to our homes.

TO AN OLD PERSON WHO HAS NO HOPE IN CHRIST.

MY AGED FRIEND:—Your life thus far has passed rapidly away. You felt surprise, when you heard others speak of you as old. Perhaps even now you easily forget that you are no longer young. “Gray hairs are here and there upon Ephraim, yet he knoweth it not.” It seemed hard for Samson to forget the feats of former days. Even when shorn of his strength, he attempted new exploits. There is a vanity in some old persons which leads them to ape the young. Let every one act as best becomes his age. Paul says: “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” It is a pitiable sight to see old and young trying to take each other’s places. If you have passed middle life, admit the fact into your serious thoughts.

The Bible requires reverence for the aged. “Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head.” I approach you with the greatest respect. “I have a message from God unto thee.” I wish to deliver it meekly, honestly, and solemnly. I beg you to hear it. I will use neither many nor vain words.

I hope you believe the great truths of the Bible. If you doubt any of them, I beseech you to give yourself to prayer, and to the word of God itself, that you may know the truth, and be persuaded of it. An honest desire to know the truth, shown by prayer and searching the Scriptures, God will bless. He can teach you

as no other can. Cry mightily to him Wisdom comes "*from above.*"

No doubt you have sometimes said, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." But do not your actions show that, while you would die the death of the righteous, you are not leading his life? Remember, you have a soul. To save it is "the one thing needful." He, who is poor, sick, and despised, may save his soul, and so be happy for ever. He who is rich, strong, and full of all earthly good, may lose his soul, and so be eternally undone. Because it is immortal, the soul is of priceless value. Many have undervalued it. None ever thought it worth more than it is. God alone can know its full value. No man can pay a ransom for it, for its redemption is precious. To save it, God gave his dear Son. To save it, Jesus wept, and bled, and died. To save it, the Holy Spirit calls you to repentance.

If you are not a true Christian, *your soul is now in a lost condition.* So the Bible teaches: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish;" "He that believeth not, shall be damned;" "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are LOST." So righteous is God, and so holy is his law, that many an aged person has felt the power of a fiery condemnation in his conscience, before he left this world. William, the Conqueror of England, was a great king, warrior, and statesman. In his last days, he wept, he groaned, he confessed, but no comfort came. He said: "Laden with many and grievous sins, I tremble; and being ready to be taken soon into the terrible examination of God, I am ignorant what I should do. I can by no means number the evils I

have done these sixty years, for which I am now constrained, without stay, to render an account to the just "Judge." Many a monarch has died in anguish of soul. Neither greatness, nor obscurity can shield a guilty soul from the terrors of the Almighty. The aged, impenitent pauper has groaned away his dying breath in dismay on his bed of straw. Through life men often feel that they are not at peace with God, and dying they confess it. Death is commonly, though not always, an honest hour. Some hold out false signals even then, though not free from fears and terrors. At that trying moment, who would not prefer hope to fear, and peace to dismay? Yet without a change of heart, and a pardon of all our sins, we cannot be saved. We "are by nature the children of wrath," so that "he, that believeth not, is condemned already." If you, my aged friend, have not fled to Christ, you are condemned, you are LOST.

But, although your soul is lost, *it is not lost beyond recovery*. Blessed be God for that. "There is mercy with God, that he may be feared:" "With him is plenteous redemption:" "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?" I take up the words and repeat the question, Why will you die? Why will you not be saved? Will you not be saved? I trust you will. I pray you may. I know that by divine grace you can. The door of mercy is yet open, open to you. Though you have sinned long, and much, and grievously, against God, yet he says: "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." For many years you thought it was time

enough yet. Possibly this day your soul is taken in some such snare. Stop and think, I pray you. Perhaps in an hour God may say: "Thy soul is required of thee." If he should, would you not be undone for ever? You know that men commonly die as they live; that a life of sin is the forerunner of endless misery; that dying regrets are a poor substitute for a life of holiness; and that a death-bed repentance is little to be trusted. No wise man will leave to his last hours the proper work of life.

But perhaps you think it is now too late to turn to God. Through hardness of heart, you may not be in terrible despair. But the practical persuasion of your mind may be that God has no mercy for you, and that you have sinned too long to be forgiven. If so, let me plead with you to give up this delusion. No where has God drawn up more terrible charges against sinners than in the first chapter of Isaiah, yet he concludes his address to these guilty men (and through them he speaks to you) thus: "Come, now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Could words better suit your case? and they are uttered in sincerity and truth. They are the words of God. He never mocks any of his creatures.

We have in the Bible an account of the conversion of an old and very great sinner. Manasseh, the son of pious Hezekiah, was early instructed in the true religion. When he became king, he restored idolatry, which was the highest kind of offence. He insulted God to his face by defiling the temple. He formed a league with Satan, and used enchantments and witch-

craft, sins punishable with death by the fundamental law of his kingdom. He sacrificed his own children to devils. He was one of the worst of murderers. "He shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." He was obstinate and refractory under reproof. He made the nation follow his wicked practices. He seemed to be mad upon his idols and iniquities. His sin was aggravated by the example and instruction of his good father to the contrary, by his high station, by his malice and wantonness, by his stubbornness and by his long continuance in it. He ascended the throne at twelve years of age, and he lived to the age of sixty-seven. Yet when he was sixty-two years old, that is, when he had for fifty years together defiled his soul, corrupted his people, and insulted God by enormous crimes, he was brought to repentance, pardoned and saved. "Old or young sinners, great or small sinners, are not to be beaten off from Christ, but encouraged to repentance and faith; for who knows but the bowels of mercy may yearn at last upon one that hath all along rejected it?" God has vast treasures of rich mercy, in store even for old and hardened sinners, who will "cease to do evil, and learn to do well."

Even in our own day, how many aged persons have been brought to repentance! Every old minister, who has been very useful, can tell of the wondrous displays of the grace of God to such. Mr. H. was a man of good family. He was well educated, but a proud scorner. He avoided the house, the worship, and the people of God. He was profane and mingled with such. He was often intoxicated with strong drink. Yet at the age of seventy-two God's Spirit arrested

him and brought him to cry for mercy. He lived for more than two years after his change, and gave the best evidence he could in that time that he was indeed a new man.

N. D. went through nearly all the war of American Independence with honour as a soldier, but not without injury to his morals. He was honest and truthful, but for more than fifty years of his life he seldom visited a church, and he was intemperate. God was not in all his thoughts, till he was eighty-nine years old. Then he began with diligence and prayer to read the Scriptures. He went to the house of God. He sought private instruction also. After a season of great spiritual distress he was brought to settled peace of mind. I have heard his pastor say that he never saw a more lively Christian. He lived more than eighteen months after this change, and was eminently devout, humble and happy to the last. He learned to sing several hymns. Never shall I forget his appearance and voice as he sang,

“Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,
That saved a wretch like me;
I once was lost, but now am found,
Was blind, but now I see.”

“That suits me, that suits me exactly!” he often said.

My aged friend, do you seek further assurances that there is mercy even for you, if you will turn to God? Here they are: “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” “Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” “The bruised reed he

will not break, the smoking flax he will not quench." "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Say not, "It is too late." Call upon God in earnest prayer, ask others to pray for you and with you. Confess your sins to God. If you have injured men, repair the injury as far as possible. "Seek the Lord, while he may be found." Come to Christ as you are, a poor, lost, helpless, guilty, polluted sinner, and He will save you. "He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him." But if you refuse another hour, it may be too late. This may be the last call you will ever have. Any moment you may drop into hell. Will you, will you, O will you be saved?

When nailed to the tree,
 Christ answered the prayer
 Of one, who, like me,
 Was nigh to despair;
 He did not upbraid him
 With all he had done,
 But instantly made him
 A saint and a son.

The jailor, I read,
 A pardon received:
 And how was he freed?
 He only believed:
 His case mine resembled,
 Like me he was foul,
 Like me too he trembled,
 But faith made him whole.

Though Saul in his youth,
 To madness enraged,
 Against the Lord's truth
 And people engaged;

Yet Jesus, the Saviour,
Whom long he reviled
Received him to favour,
And made him a child.

A foe to all good,
In wickedness skilled,
Manasseh with blood
Jerusalem filled ;
In evil long hardened
The Lord he defied ;
Yet he too was pardoned,
When mercy ! he cried.

The death that Christ died
The blood that he spilt,
To sinners applied,
Discharge from all guilt :
This great Intercessor
Can give, if he please,
The vilest transgressor,
Immediate release.

HOW TO BRING UP CHILDREN.

I WAS dining at the house of a friend. The conversation turned upon the religious education of children. Some things said were so profound or rhetorical, that I have forgotten them. My host was a plain man, who preferred the practical to the poetical. He said: "A good religious education is rare. The whole subject is difficult. Yet our duty in the matter may be stated in few words: *teach well, rule well, live well, pray well.*" At first silence, then a few words of assent followed. The company separated to meet no more on earth. Some may have forgotten the occasion, and all that was said. But I have thought much of the eight monosyllables. I think my friend was right. I take his words for a guide.

I. TEACH WELL. In teaching the *matter* and *manner* both claim attention. He, who takes heed *what* but not *how* he teaches, or *how* but not *what* he teaches does at the most but half his duty. Teach truth and not its semblance, fiction. Teach truth and not its opposite, error. Teach the truths God has taught you. Teach the whole word of God. The law is holy, just, and good. The promises are many, sweet, and faithful. The doctrines are true, sublime, and purifying. The threatenings are wise, righteous, and terrible. The examples are striking, various, and instructive. The encouragements are great, necessary, and seasonable. The invitations are kind, sincere, and persuasive. Omit nothing, abate nothing, add nothing. God's word is perfect. He, who made the Bible, made the mind of your child, and knew perfectly what would be best for it.

Teach things in the proportion, in which God has taught them. If God is just and holy, he is also good and merciful. If he forgives iniquity, transgression, and sin, he will also by no means clear the guilty. If his wrath is dreadful, his love is infinite. If he is a Saviour, he is also a Judge. If he is

a Sovereign, he is also a Father. If he pardons, it is not because sin is not infinitely hateful to him.

Give clear ideas of the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. Show how they differ. Never confound works and grace. Let Mount Sinai and Mount Calvary be set over against each other. Sinai without Calvary will fill the mind with terrors. Calvary without Sinai will breed contempt of mercy. The angels, who never sinned, are accepted for their works. "Do and live," is a law that suits them well. But eternal justice will smite to death the sinner who seeks acceptance by his own merits. He is a thief and a robber. "By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified."

Give to the person, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, offices, and glory, of Christ the place assigned them in Scripture. He is our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, redemption, light, life, prophet, priest, king, shepherd, surety, sacrifice, advocate. We are complete in him. He is all, and in all. He is Alpha and Omega, the first, and the last.

Draw from the Bible the duties you inculcate, and the motives you urge. If you would repress self-will, stubbornness, immodesty, impatience, idleness, pride, deceit, selfishness, bigotry, cruelty, profaneness, or any vice, show that God forbids it. Always take sides with God against the sins and vices of even your own child. Explain the nature and urge the necessity of submission, patience, industry, humility, sobriety, moderation, truth, candour, honesty, justice, kindness, charity, faith, hope, repentance, fidelity, benevolence, respect for superiors, and reverence for God's name, word, Sabbath, worship, and ordinances. Take not the duty from the Bible, and the motives from Chesterfield, Rochefaucault, Seneca, or Plato. Present scriptural motives to an upright and virtuous life.

Think not to be wise above what is written: but try to be wise, and to make your children wise up to what is written. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." Mix it not up with dreams and fancies, and loose opinions. "What is the chaff to the wheat?"

In teaching, great diligence is essential. So says God: "These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine

house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates." Deut. vi. 6-9. "Be instant in season, out of season." The holy Sabbath, sickness or death in your family or neighbourhood, a narrow escape from some great evil, a time of drought or of plenty, any event that excites notice, even the common incidents of life, furnish fit occasions for dropping the precious seeds of truth in the heart. Occasional remarks are no less impressive than stated instructions. They are often more pithy, and more easily remembered.

Take not too much for granted. Children are feeble and heedless. A little at a time, and often repeated, is the great secret of successful teaching. "Line upon line, line upon line, precept upon precept, precept upon precept," is the scriptural method. Though you may have taught a lesson twenty times, it is not certain that it has been perfectly learned.

Avail yourself of the love of narrative, so common in children. God has revealed much of his will in this way. The stories and parables of Scripture are not only admirable for their plainness and simplicity, but they enforce truth with unsurpassed power. Almost every principle of religion and morals is thus illustrated and enforced in the word of God.

A good teacher must be gentle and patient. It is hardly worse not to speak divine truth at all, than not to speak it in love. Teach the same lesson a hundredth time. Upbraid not a child for its dulness. Be like Jesus, who said: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly." Terror produces agitation, and thus precludes the power of learning. Nor can any thing be more undesirable than to have religious instruction associated in the mind of a child with moroseness and harshness. The human heart is sufficiently opposed to the truth of God without our strengthening it by roughness or severity.

Do not be easily discouraged. Persevere. He has seen but little of mankind, who has not witnessed the sad failures of the precocious, and the final success of the slow. "Long patience" is even more essential to the teacher than to the husbandman.

Enter with spirit and zeal on the work of instruction. Put off all languor and sloth. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to

do, do it with thy might." A lifeless formalism is as truly mischievous at the fireside as in the pulpit.

To your own efforts add those of well-selected pious teachers, both during the week and on the Sabbath. Every school, even every Sabbath school is not well taught. Exercise your best judgment in the choice of teachers.

Know what books your children read. The world is deluged with books, which abound in error. Guard the minds of your children against a fondness for novel-reading. It has ruined thousands.

II. RULE WELL. The elements of good family government are strength, justice, discrimination, uniformity, and love. Act not the tyrant, yet be master or mistress of your own house. In your superior years, place, experience, and vigour, God has given you all that is necessary for making your government strong. Let it be a government, and not mere counsel. But let its provisions and administration be just. A child can *feel* injustice as soon and as keenly as a man. Impose no impossible tasks. Take into account all the weaknesses of childhood. In governing your children make a difference, not from partiality, but from a proper estimate of their various capacities, years, dispositions, and temptations. The varieties of character even in the same family are often surprising. Yet be uniform. Be not lax to-day and rigid to-morrow. Have settled principles, and let your children know them. Yet beware of making too many laws. They will not only ensnare your children, but destroy your government. Children may be governed too much. Do not expect perfection. In all you do, be guided by enlightened and pure affection. Never chide, nor correct in passion. If you cannot rule your own spirit, you may break the spirit of your child, but you cannot establish a wholesome government over him.

That we are bound to use authority is manifest from many parts of Scripture. Of Abraham God says: "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Behold the dreadful end of the sons of Eli, and be warned. He was a good man, hated sin even in his own children, and reprov'd it, saying: "It is no good thing I hear of you, my sons." But he used not authority, as their father, and as the high-priest, to *require* reformation. Follow not so dangerous an example.

With reproof God has united the rod. When it is necessary, use it. It commonly is necessary in cases of wilful and deliberate disobedience. "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." Never use the rod to gratify a feeling of anger, nor without being sure that it is deserved. I have some where read the following story, which well illustrates the matter. Two stages, belonging to opposition lines, left the same place at the same hour every day for London. Both drivers had orders to make the distance in the shortest time possible. One driver mounted the box, with whip in hand, excited, spoke angrily to his horses, and alternately relaxed and jerked the reins, at the same time using his whip freely. In a few miles his horses gave signs of distress, and before he reached London some of his team was usually broken down. The other driver coolly took his seat, spoke gently to his horses, held a steady rein all the time, and seldom even cracked his whip. He was often hindmost for a few miles, but while the horses of the other team were in a foam, hardly a hair of his horses was moist. The last few miles, his team not being jaded, he took the lead, and seldom even distressed a horse. The reason of the difference was, not that one driver had a better team than the other, but one was a better driver than the other. One held a steady rein, and never used the whip unless it was necessary. The other constantly used the whip, fretted his team, and wasted both their spirit and strength.

Who has not seen this precise difference in the government of families? The first driver would have done as well, perhaps better, without a whip. And many a family would not have been in a worse state, if a rod had never been in it. Family government is always a failure when it does not secure prompt obedience and sincere affection from the child to the parent.

Parents should be agreed in the government of their children. If they do not support each other's authority, it must fall. A divided house cannot stand. Nor should they permit grand-parents, aunts, or any person whatever to weaken their authority.

III. LIVE WELL. Set a good example in all things. "Tinder is not more apt to take fire, nor wax the impression of the seal, than the young are to follow example." If your child may in his heart say: "Physician, heal thyself," your

influence for good in that matter is at an end, at least until you reform. He, who delivers good precepts, sows good seed. He, who adds good example, ploughs in that seed. Children are the most imitative creatures in the world. The different species of ape excite the laughter of fools by their powers of mimicry, but children excite the admiration of wise men by their powers of imitation. Quintilian rightly says that nurses should not have a bad accent. The reason is that children will soon acquire it. And Dr. Watts well says, "it is far less difficult to learn than to unlearn." In his Ode to the Romans, Horace says: "Brave men are made by brave men." Nor is there any other way of making men brave. Precept, eloquence, and poetry cannot do it. Cowards breed cowards. The same is true of all the virtues and vices.

The power of good examples above bare precepts is threefold; *first*, they most clearly show what the duty is; *then*, they prove that it is practicable; and *lastly*, they awaken a more lively desire to perform it, by arousing the imitative principle of our nature. I have known two men, by precept and authority, without example, to try to restrain their sons from intemperance and profanity. They both failed. I have known many a parent, whose precepts were few, and whose use of the rod was sparing, to raise a family to virtue and honour chiefly by a blameless example. It is as true of parents as of preachers, that a bad example will destroy the good that might be expected from sound instruction. "Do as I say, and not as I do," is a sentence that converts the best teaching into poison, and dreadfully hardens the heart. Precepts give the theory, but example instils principle. Words impart notions, but example carries conviction. One plain man of blameless life and good sense, will more enforce the obligations of true piety than a hundred orators of godless lives. A heathen once gave as a reason for his guarded behaviour in the presence of the young, "I reverence a child." If you deceive your child, break your promises to him, or practise any sin before him, you cannot fail to teach him to do the same.

IV. PRAY WELL. "Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." "Pray without ceasing." Pray in the house of God, in your family, in your closet, in your daily walks. Ask others to pray for you and your children. This should

not be a mere formal, but an earnest request. You need special wisdom and grace to preserve you from error, and sin, and folly. The heart of your child is corrupt, and all your culture will be lost without God's blessing. You cannot change the heart, renew the will, or wash away the sins of your child. God alone can impart to him a love of the truth, or give him repentance. You may use your best endeavours, but all will be in vain without God's Spirit. Sails are necessary, but a thousand yards of canvass will not carry forward a vessel, unless the wind blows.

Be fervent in your supplications. Monica, the mother of Augustine, said she "had greater travail and pain that her son might be born again, than that he might be born." God answered her prayers, and that too at a time when he seemed to be utterly lost. John Newton tells of a mother of eleven pious children, who, being asked how she came to be so much blessed, said, "I never took one of them into my arms to give it nourishment, that I did not pray that I might never nurse a child for the devil." "Elijah's prayer brought down fire from heaven, because, being fervent, it carried fire up to heaven." It is as true now as in any former age of the world, that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Never despair of the salvation of a child. While there is life, there is hope. Wrestle with God like Jacob, and you shall prevail like Israel. Never by unbelief deliver over a child to sin, and to the wrath of God. Pray on. Hope on.

CONCLUSION.—For your encouragement take the promises of the covenant of peace: "I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee." "The promise is to you and to your children." "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." More precious promises could not be made. Believe them. Plead them before God. Richard Baxter has said, that if pious education, family worship, parental instruction, and a holy example were properly regarded by parents, even the *preaching* of the gospel would not be the most common means of conversion. The best encouragement to effort is found in the hope of success. In this case that hope is well founded. God's word and providence both prove it. The great mass of the pious now on earth is made up of those, who from childhood have been

taught the ways of God. Many foolish things have, no doubt, been said concerning the religious impressions of children. Yet there have been many well authenticated cases of early piety. Our children cannot too soon begin to live to the glory of God. He, who is old enough to sin against God, is old enough to love God. Whether your children shall be early or late converted, yet if they shall obtain salvation at all, they will be kings and priests unto God for ever and ever. Does a sweeter hope ever visit the parental mind than that of standing before God in the last day, and saying: "Behold, I and the children, whom the Lord hath given me?" "A whole family in heaven" will for ever be matter of greater wonder and louder praise, than can be found in all the works disclosed by microscopes and telescopes in the boundless dominions of God.

But if you neglect the religious education of your children, dreadful will be the consequences. "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." Parental love is often blind and foolish.

"A parent's heart may prove a snare;
The child she loves so well,
Her hand may lead with gentlest care,
Down the smooth road to hell."

Trust not your heart. Trust God's word. Give not place to evil tempers and ways in yourself or your child. It is not many years since a young lady thus addressed her parents: "You have been the unhappy instruments of my being. You fostered me in pride, and led me in the paths of sin. You never once warned me of my danger, and now it is too late. In a few hours you will have to cover me with earth, but remember, while you are casting earth upon my body, my soul will be in hell, and yourselves the miserable cause." If you would escape the scourges of a guilty conscience, the reproaches of a lost child, and the rebukes of an angry God, do your duty to your children. Only when the heart of the fathers is turned to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, may we hope that God will not come and smite the earth with a curse. As a town without walls, as a house without a roof, as a garden without a hedge, and as sheep without a shepherd, so is a family, whose thoughts and affairs are not moulded by the fear and love of God.

JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

“Thy beauty was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God.”—EZEK. xvi. 14.

GIVE me leave to ask you one question: Can you say, The Lord our righteousness? Were you ever made to see and admire the all-sufficiency of Christ's righteousness, and excited by the Spirit of God to hunger and thirst after it? Could you ever say, My soul is athirst for Christ, yea, even for the righteousness of Christ? O when shall I come to appear before the presence of my God in the righteousness of Christ! Nothing but Christ! nothing but Christ! Give me Christ, O God, and I am satisfied! my soul shall praise thee for ever.

Was this ever the language of your hearts? and, after these inward conflicts, were you ever enabled to reach out the arm of faith, and embrace the blessed Jesus in your souls, so that you could say, “My beloved is mine, and I am his?” If so, fear not, whoever you are. Hail, all hail, you happy souls! The Lord, the Lord Christ, the everlasting God, is your righteousness. Christ has justified you, who is he that condemneth you? Christ has died for you, nay, rather, is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for you. Being now justified by his grace, you have peace with God, and shall, ere long, be with Jesus in glory. For there is no condemnation to those that are really in Christ Jesus. Whether Paul, or Apollos, or life, or death, all is yours, if you are Christ's, for Christ is God's. My brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you! O think of the love of Christ in dying for you! If the Lord be your righteousness, let the righteousness of your Lord be continually in your mouth. Talk of, O talk of, and recommend, the righteousness of Christ, when you lie down, and when you rise up, at your going out and coming in! Think of the greatness of the gift, as well as of the giver! Show to all the world, in whom you have believed! Let all by your fruits know that the Lord is your righteousness, and that you are waiting for your Lord from heaven! O study to be holy, even as he

who has called you, and washed you in his blood was holy! O think of his dying love! Let that love constrain you to obedience; having much forgiven, love much. Be always asking, What shall I do to express my gratitude to the Lord, for giving me his righteousness? Let that self-abasing, God-exalting question, be always in your mouths, "Why me, Lord? why me?" why am I taken and others left? why is the Lord *my* righteousness? why is he become *my* salvation, who have so often deserved damnation at his hands?

But I must turn a little from congratulating you, to invite poor Christless sinners to come to him, and accept of his righteousness, that they may have life. Alas, my heart almost bleeds! What a multitude of precious souls are now before me! how shortly must all be ushered into eternity! and yet, O cutting thought! were God now to require all your souls, how few could really say, The Lord *our* righteousness!

And think you, *O sinners*, that you will be able to stand in the day of judgment, if Christ be not your righteousness? No, that alone is the wedding-garment in which you must appear. O Christless sinners, I am distressed for you! the desires of my soul are enlarged. O that this may be an accepted time! That the Lord may be *your* righteousness! For whither would you flee, if death should find you naked? O think of death! O think of judgment! Yet a little while, and time shall be no more; and then what will become of you, if the Lord be not your righteousness? Think you that Christ will spare you? No, he that formed you, will have no mercy on you. If you be not of Christ, if Christ be not your righteousness, Christ himself shall pronounce you damned. And can you bear to think of being damned by Christ? Can you bear to hear the Lord Jesus say to you, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Can you live, think you, in everlasting burnings? Is your flesh brass, and your bones iron? What if they be? hell-fire, that fire prepared for the devil and his angels, will heat them through and through. And can you bear to depart from Christ? O that heart-piercing thought! Ask those holy souls, who are at any time bewailing an absent God, who walk in darkness, and see no light, though but a few days or hours; ask them, what it is to lose a sight and presence of Christ? See how they seek him sorrowing, and go mourning after him all the day long! And, if it be so dreadful to lose the sensible presence of

Christ only for a day, what must it be to be banished from him to all eternity?

But this must be, if Christ be not your righteousness. For God's justice must be satisfied; and unless Christ's righteousness is imputed and applied to you here, you must hereafter be satisfying the divine justice in hell-torments eternally; nay, Christ himself shall condemn you to that place of torment. And how cutting is that thought! Methinks I see poor, trembling, Christless wretches, standing before the bar of God, crying out, Lord, if we must be damned, let some angel, or some archangel, pronounce the ordinary sentence: but all in vain. Christ himself shall pronounce the irrevocable sentence. Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, let me persuade you to close with Christ, and never rest until you can say, "the Lord our righteousness." Who knows but the Lord may have mercy on, nay, abundantly pardon you? You need not fear the greatness or number of your sins. For are you sinners? so am I. Are you the chief of sinners? so am I. Are you backsliding sinners? so am I. And yet the Lord (for ever adored be his rich, free, and sovereign grace!) the Lord is my righteousness. Come, then, *O young men*, who (as I acted once myself) are playing the prodigal, and wandering away afar off from your heavenly Father's house, come home, come home, and leave your swine's trough. Feed no longer on the husks of sensual delights: for Christ's sake arise, and come home! your heavenly Father now calls you. See, yonder the best robe, even the righteousness of his dear Son, awaits you. See it, view it again and again. Consider at how dear a rate it was purchased, even by the blood of God. Consider what great need you have of it. You are lost, undone, damned for ever, without it. Come then, poor guilty prodigals, come home; indeed, I will not, like the elder brother in the gospel, be angry; no, I will rejoice with the angels in heaven. And O that God would now bow the heavens and come down! Descend, O Son of God, descend; and, as thou hast shown in me such mercy, O let thy blessed Spirit apply thy righteousness to some young prodigals now before thee, and clothe their naked souls with thy best robe!

And what shall I say to you of a middle age, you *busy merchants*, you *cumbered Marthas*, who, with all your gettings, have not yet gotten the Lord to be your righteousness! Alas! what profit will there be of all your labour under the

sun, if you do not secure this pearl of invaluable price? I see, also, many *hoary heads* here, and perhaps the most of them cannot say, The Lord is my righteousness. O grey-headed sinners, I could weep over you! your grey hairs, which ought to be your crown, and in which perhaps your glory, are now your shame. You know not that the Lord is your righteousness: O haste then, haste ye, aged sinners, and seek an interest in redeeming love! Alas, you have one foot already in the grave, your glass is just running out, your sun is just going down, and it will set and leave you in an eternal darkness, unless the Lord be your righteousness: Flee, then, O flee for your lives! Be not afraid. All things are possible with God. If you come, though it be at the eleventh hour, Christ Jesus will in no wise cast you out. Seek then for the Lord to be your righteousness, and beseech him to let you know how it is that a man may be born again when he is old!

But I must not forget the *lambs* of the flock. To feed them, was one of my Lord's last commands. I know he will be angry with me, if I do not tell them that the Lord may be *their* righteousness; and that of such is the kingdom of heaven. Come, then, ye little children, come to Christ, the Lord shall be *your* righteousness. Do not think that you are too young to be converted. Perhaps many of you may be nine or ten years old, and yet cannot say, The Lord is our righteousness; which many have said, though younger than you. Come, then, while you are young. Perhaps you may not live to be old. Do not stay for other people. If your fathers and mothers will not come to Christ, do you come without them. Let children lead them, and show them how the Lord may be *their* righteousness. Our Lord Jesus loved little children. You are his lambs; he bids me feed you. I pray God make you willing betimes to take the Lord for your righteousness.

[Extracted from one of Whitefield's sermons.]

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

WORDS OF WARNING.

' *Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him.*'—ISA. iii. 11.

" *To whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.*"—2 PET. ii. 17.

UNCONVERTED SINNER, thy state is sad, and thy misery is great! No tongue can tell how sad is that state—no soul can conceive how great is that misery. Thine heart may well meditate terror, for thou art still unpardoned, uncleansed, unsaved! Thy feet are just about to stumble upon the dark mountains; and woe, woe, yea, ten thousand times woe to thy poor soul, if this night it were required of thee. Poor forlorn soul! Thou hast no God, and therefore thou hast no happiness! Thou hast no Christ, and therefore thou hast no pardon, no peace! Thou art without a father, without a friend, without a hope, and without a home! This earth is truly to thee "a wilderness and a land of darkness." Thou walkest through it a houseless, homeless wanderer; no arm to lean upon, no chosen companion of your secret thoughts and feelings; no friend to soothe your griefs or share your joys! Thou mayest have what men call a father, a brother, a home, on earth; but thou canst not call God thy father, nor Jesus thy brother, nor heaven thy home above! Thou wanderest on from day to day, a houseless, homeless outcast, seeing nothing around thee but trouble and sorrow, and nothing before thee or above thee but the blackness of darkness for ever! Jude 13.

Thou art an enemy to God! Rom. viii. 7. And who has ever hardened his heart against Him and prospered? An enemy to the blessed God! An enemy to Him that made thee,—to one that has never wronged thee in ought,—to one that has loved thee with a love so true and tender as to give for thee His only begotten Son! Yea, thou *hatest* Him! John xv. 24. Thou treatest Him as if He were some hateful and hated fellow-worm, whose company thou couldst not endure. Job xxi. 14. O what vile ingratitude, what desperate malignity, thus to return enmity for friendship, hatred and scorn for gentleness and love! The most lovable object in all the universe is the object that thou hatest most! O what madness, what enormous wickedness!

Thou art a child of wrath. Eph. ii. 3. And O, what words can express, or what mind can conceive, all that is

meant by this! Every thing threatens wrath to thee. Thou dost not yet, indeed, gnaw thy tongue for pain, or gnash thy teeth in agony, but thou shalt shortly do so, if grace prevent not. I dare not call thee a "vessel of wrath fitted for destruction," Rom. ix. 22; for who knows but thy God may yet pluck thee as a brand from the burning; but at least I know that, so long as thou remainest unconverted, thou art treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath. And if to be a child of wrath be so awful a thing, even when seen afar off in this place of mercy, O what must be the horrors of that wrath throughout eternity! A child of wrath!—that is, all made up of wrath—whose very being is wrath! The air thou shalt breathe in shall be wrath—burning wrath! The light in which thou shalt dwell shall be scorching wrath; how different from the pleasant sunshine of earth, and the cool fresh air of morning! Wrath shall be within thee and around thee, above thee and beneath thee: wrath shall throb in every pulse and flow in every vein! And it shall be FOR EVER! O that word which sums up all despair! For ever! The eternal wrath of the eternal God; the unchangeable wrath of the unchangeable God! Poor child of wrath, wilt thou not turn and flee?

Thou art a child of the devil! Matt. xiii. 38; Acts xiii. 10. Satan is thy master, and thou art his willing slave. Poor miserable soul, canst thou be content with such a master and such a bondage? Remember! thy bondage is eternal, thy chains eternal, thy prison-house eternal, thy torment and thy tormentors are eternal! If thou diest out of Christ, hell must be thy habitation for ever. O what an abode!—amid flames and wrath; echoing eternally with wailings of woe that might melt the very mountain-rock! It is called "a lake burning with fire and brimstone," Rev. xxi. 8; Psal. xi. 6; that is, with the hottest, fiercest, most penetrating, most tormenting of all flames. It is called a lake. Not a river, whose waters of burning anguish might be dried up or pass away; nor a sea which ebbs and flows, and whose wide extent or perpetual change, or wind-swept surface might furnish some respite some cooling relief. No; but a *lake*—still, stagnant, gloomy, and unchangeable! But more than this—thy soul itself shall be its own hell. Even were there no flames without, the furnace within shall be torment beyond endurance. Thy passions, thy unsatisfied desires, thy conscience, will be thy worst tormentors, worse than all the fiends of darkness—

tormentors from which thou canst not flee. All that thou mightest have gained, all that thou hast lost for ever, shall curse thee with their bitter memory. Earth *lost*—friends *lost*—possessions *lost*—time *lost*—the soul *lost*—heaven *lost*—eternity *undone*! Poor sinner, why wilt thou not live? Precious immortal, why wilt thou die? Prov. i. 23; Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

Poor Christless soul, what a bitter lot is thine! What a doom of wrath and woe! To be tormented day and night for ever, in presence of the holy angels and in presence of the Lamb! The bottomless pit incloses thee for ever, and seals thy everlasting despair. Ah! the most distant and lonely hill of immortality would be welcome in comparison with this; aye, the gloomiest wilderness of earth would be Paradise when compared with this! There joy is a thing unknown. Love is a thing forgotten; or remembered only as a part of the once familiar scenes of earth, now gone for ever! No peace nor hope in all the God-forsaken regions of the damned! No Saviour troubles you now with his offers of life. No God wearies you with his messages of love. Life and love belong only to heaven: and thou art in hell. Thy portion is the second death. Who shall undo your prison-bolt, or unbind your chain? Who shall fetch water to pour upon the unquenchable fire, or obtain even one drop to cool your burning tongue? Who shall dig the worm that never dies, out of your tortured marrow? Who shall soothe your hopeless wailing, or dry up your everlasting tears? No friends now; no companions now! The mirth of the world is over, and all its glory is departed. The song and the dance are over. Job xxi. 12, 13. The revelry of midnight is hushed, and the pleasant sunshine of earth has been exchanged for the blackness of darkness for ever. With all these certainties in view, O! what is this world to a dying creature? What are all its pleasures or its business to a being formed for immortality? Poor dying sinner! dost thou not know that Jesus died that he might deliver you from the present evil world? Poor child of sin and dust, wilt thou not become an heir of endless glory?

Sinner as thou art, still there is hope—hope for *thee*; for thou art in the place of hope. This is the acceptable year of the Lord, and God willeth not that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 1 Tim. ii. 42; Peter iii. 9. He has no pleasure in your death. He lays his solemn *com-*

mand on thee that thou shouldst believe and be saved; so that the highest act of iniquity, is to refuse salvation, to refuse the free gift of life! He entreats thee to turn and live. He yearns over thee with a father's tender love. Yes! the love of thy God is a true and sincere love. It is no mere idea, it is reality. The words in which he has declared this to thee are not the language of mockery; they are not mere words of course. They *do* mean all that they seem to do: only they come infinitely short of the sincerity, the warmth, the tenderness of his paternal affection. They are but rays from the Sun of love. They are but the scattered drops from the ocean, the measureless ocean of the Father's love!

No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns like thy God's to make thee blest.

Poor sinner! if thou diest, it is not because of any want of love in God or any want of sufficiency in Christ. It is not because God would not be reconciled to thee, but because thou wouldst not be reconciled to God. His heart is toward thee; his desires are toward thee. He longs to welcome thee again to the family-mansion, and to place thee again at the family-table. Your sins and iniquities have not made him cease to care for you. His interest in your welfare is still as sincere as deep. Not that he palliates your sin, or excuses your continuance in it;—no; but that he longs to deliver you from it; and so warm and tender is the interest which he takes in you, that he seeks to compass this deliverance by every means. Do not suppose that there must be something good about you before he can feel kindly towards you. His thoughts towards you have always been, and still are, thoughts of unutterable compassion. In your misery, in your blindness, in your forlorn state of sin and danger, there is something which calls forth the affectionate interest of Him who made you. O, despise not, deny not, distrust not, love so infinite, so divine. Do not wait, do not delay. Do not say, "I must try to prepare myself for coming to God." No! Come *at once*: come *as you are*: come *this moment*! As the Lord liveth, there is but one step between you and life; one step between you and peace! Take that one step! Believe what thy God hath made known regarding his well-beloved Son, "that, believing, ye may have life through His name."

N O W !

‘*To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.*’--Ps. xciv. 7
 ‘*I have long known that unbelief was my misfortune,—but, O sir*
until to-day, I knew not that it was my GUILT.’

MY dear fellow-mortal, whoever you are, I now, in the name and presence of God, and in Christ’s stead, lay before you my message; even this record, “God giveth you eternal life, and this life is in His Son,” (1 John v.) The free, the full, the sincere gift of eternal life through Christ Jesus, is at this moment held out to you whose eyes now rest upon these words. Trifle not with it—put it not from you, I entreat of you—you have to answer for this very offer—your accepting of it will from henceforth make you eternally happy—your refusal may be the signal for the door of mercy to close for ever! Hear me, O hear me then, just as if you saw the gate of heaven moving in its portal about to be eternally closed—“Be reconciled to God!” Behold in the sorrows and death of his Son a perfect atonement for sin, and a pledge that He is reconciled to *your* salvation. O why then will you not come to him? Did you but know how sweet it is for a mourning, heavy-laden soul to rest itself on the finished work of Christ—and in assurance of hope to look forward to a peaceful, perhaps a triumphant death—to a glorious resurrection—to an eternity as full of bliss as an infinite God can make it to be—to look thus forward, and in the exercise of faith to say, “All, all is mine! for Christ is mine and I am his!” if you could know the sweetness of this even in a faint degree, readily would you say, “I will go with him!”

But, sinner, if we part as we met—if you lay down this little messenger as you took it up, unbelieving and having no desire to believe—then must I tell you what remains for you: “He that believeth not shall be *damned*,” Mark xvi. Nay, it is not only a “shall be,” but at this very moment you are in a condemned state: “He that believeth not, is condemned *already*, because he hath not believed in the only begotten Son of God.” (John iii.) This *one act of unbelief* is enough to sink you into everlasting misery. And wherefore? Because it is downright *blasphemy*. “He that believeth not God, *hath made him a liar*—because he believeth not the record that God gave his Son.” (1 John v.) Is not that blasphemy, and yet you who receive not with the heart the message of salvation, are guilty of it.

Immediate *repentance*, immediate *faith*, immediate *conversion* to God through Jesus Christ crucified, are your immediate *duty*; and not to perform this duty is your immediate *guilt*. It is of no use to say, that you “cannot do these things without the grace of God.” Grace does not create duty; for duty exists before grace, and is independent of it. You are bound to repent and be converted, because God requires it, although there had been no Saviour and no salvation. He that pleads the want of grace as an excuse for not submitting, shows that he is one of those that “*will not*” turn, and the death of such he must die, without remedy.

Are you not a *sinner now*? This you will not deny. Are you not under sentence of *condemnation now*? Is not the anger of God as present as sin is? Are you not then already in danger of the judgment? and is there a moment in which you may not perish eternally? Are not your blessings cursed now? Do you not feel now in the blindness of your eyes, the hardness of your heart, the forerunners of eternal death? Why then delay?

Is not the *Lord Jesus Christ a Saviour now*? Is not his sacrifice finished and his intercession begun? Does he not live now? Can he not save now? Will he not receive you now? Is he not actually saving multitudes of sinners on this earth now? Whilst you are delaying, are not others coming to Him, even now? and will not many more come to Him, to-day, to-morrow, and every day hereafter, until the last sinner come, and every *now* is occupied? and why then do *you* delay to come to Christ?

Is not the *gospel*, which is the message of Christ’s love to you, *true now*? Can it ever be more so? Is it not perfect and fixed? What it ever was to others, is it not that now to you? What it shall be to the end of the world, is it not that to you at this instant? Can it ever be more gracious or free than now? Can it ever come nearer to you than at this present time? Can it ever be of greater authority than now? Can there ever be more of God in it, more of Christ in it, more of the Spirit in it, than now? Can it ever have a more individual application, a more personal offer to you than now? No—never—were you to live a thousand years:—the gospel never changes: then why delay to receive it?

Is not *faith* the same *now*, that ever it can be? Is it not the same truth that must be believed? Must not the same soul also now as hereafter perform that act of faith? Must

not the same understanding discern, the same heart receive, the same conscience submit, the same very person be converted, now as then? Present truth demands present belief: present grace demands present acceptance; even as present law demands present obedience, and a present judge demands present judgment. Is it not so? If you propose believing and being converted a year hence, must it not be in that very way which is your duty now? Why then delay to believe and repent?

Is not present *delay*, present *sin*? If a thing be my duty now, then not to do it now, is not to do my duty now, which is sin. If a thing is not my duty now, then in not doing it now, there is of course no delay, and therefore no room for sin: it is the presentness of the duty which constitutes the sin of delay. If I ought to believe now and repent now, and do not, then am I guilty now. A resolution as to the future is no substitute for present action; it is in fact a refusal to perform duty until that time come which we have selected; and he that delays for a time, does wilfully sin during that period. To resolve to be converted, shows that you hold it to be a duty for which you are accountable; to put it off, declares, that you prefer continuing in an unconverted state: thus you are your own judge, and convict yourself of present sin. If you are a sinner, you ought not to advance one step further, but now to turn and believe in Christ with your heart unto salvation. Why add the sin of present impenitence to that of past iniquity? why delay, of purpose, when delay is sin?

Present *unbelief* entails present *condemnation*—for, “He that believeth not is condemned already,” but delay is unbelief and therefore entails condemnation every time it takes place. As long as a man returns not to God through Jesus Christ, he is sealing up his former sentence of death, by taking out a new sentence of death in addition to it. A man’s curse therefore as a sinner is heaping up every moment; and his damnation doubling without end, whilst he puts off coming to Christ and closing with Him as his Lord. O that men would then consider, what account they can give of themselves, even to themselves, at death, in judgment, and above all in eternity, when they find that by the poor device of *delay*, they have brought themselves into the lowest perdition of Hell! Then must the past pleasures of delay become the present agonies of the eternal dying!

And what *excuse* can you plead for such delay? The

gospel is sent to you as now you are; not as you once were or may hereafter be:—the only condition is *acceptance*, free acceptance, present acceptance, personal acceptance, cordial acceptance. “Hear and your soul shall live!” What you *are* is what the gospel respects in you; what you *need* is what the gospel offers:—to wait, therefore, on the plea of not being good enough, and of wishing first to become better, is self-deceit, and a lie against the gospel. The best work you can now perform is to believe now, and to turn now; and, without this, all intended preparation is but condemnation. Nay, so far from gaining or becoming better by delay, you lose and become worse. Your heart becomes harder, your mind darker, your sin greater, your time shorter, your burden heavier, your love less, your terror more, heaven further, hell nearer, God more angry, the Spirit more grieved, the Saviour more dimly seen, the gospel more powerless, ministers more faint, friends more despondent, prayer less importunate, providence more unfelt, the world stronger, the flesh sweeter, Satan mightier, and the drowsy slumber of the second and eternal death now at hand more frequent and irresistible! Then shall that word be fulfilled, it may be: “I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh upon you! Ye shall call unto me but I will not answer!” Reader, is that meant for *you*? What know you but it may!

Arise, flee—the way is before you—hold on straight before thee, but make speed—haste thee, haste thee! Behold that Throne of Grace. Behold that Mediator, with the blood of sprinkling, before it. See, He is an Advocate—an Intercessor for transgressors; go up to Him now in thine heart—put the catalogue of sin into His hand—see how He smiles over thee with love inexpressible—receive the sprinkling of His blood on thy conscience. Now lift up thine eyes. He who sitteth on that Throne unseen is the eternal Father! He who led thee to this Throne is the Blessed Spirit, the Comforter! He who now holds thee with a kinsman’s hand before the throne is Jesus, the “Suffering Saviour!” and that blessing which is now issuing from the throne unto thee is a free, full, present, and everlasting “Salvation by Him!”

O Lord God, do thou grant unto the readers of this little book such grace unto life eternal! Let my beloved reader pray, saying, “Amen! and Amen!”

LUTHER'S CONVERSION.

“He sent from above, he took me, he drew me out of many waters.

—Ps. xviii. 16.

“Their righteousness is of ME, saith the Lord.”—ISAIAH liv. 17.

LUTHER, the great Reformer of the Church from Popery, was born of poor parents in Germany in the year 1483. When he was eighteen years of age he began to study at one of the colleges; but it was not till he was twenty that he ever saw a Bible! After he had studied two whole years, he was one day in the library of the college, turning over one book after another, to read the names of their authors. At last he came to one which fixed his attention. It was a Bible! With eagerness and delight he read page after page, and book after book. “O,” thought he, “if God would but give me such a book for my own!” He soon returned to the library, and read again and again the wonderful pages of the new-found volume. A deep impression from that day remained upon his soul. But still he knew nothing of the gospel of Christ.

Some time after this he became a monk. He thought he would thus separate himself from the world. He did not then know that there was more wickedness among the monks than in the world. But while in the convent, he found a Bible! It was fastened by a chain to a particular place, so that he could not carry it with him to study it in secret. But every day he came to this chained Bible to read the words of eternal life. At first it was dark to him; he did not understand its meaning. It was not only a *chained* but a *sealed* book to him. Yet he continued to study it with the utmost eagerness, and to meditate upon it night and day. The word of God “was precious in these days.” It was very precious to the anxious soul of Luther. But yet he was miserable. He felt he was a sinner, and knew not how he was to be forgiven. His soul was in chains like the Bible that he read. As yet he knew not the liberty of the gospel. He knew not the power of the blood of Jesus, nor did he understand the free forgiving love of God.

One of his friends tells us that about this time he was often under great terrors when he thought of the wrath of God against sin. Once and again deep anguish took hold of his soul, and it seemed as if he would sink under it. On one occasion he had been conversing with a friend upon the things

of God. No sooner had the conversation ended, than the truths of which they had been speaking, struck home with awful power to the tossed soul of Luther. He left the room and sought the nearest chamber to give vent to the feelings of his bursting heart. He threw himself upon the bed and prayed aloud in agony; repeating over and over again these words of the apostle, (Rom. xi. 32.) "He hath shut them all up in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." Reader! Have *you* ever felt what SIN is? Have *you* ever known what the law of God is? Do you remember that the wages of sin is death? Have you considered what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God?

Luther now began to try to make himself holy. He fasted for days together. He shut himself up alone in his cold cell. He passed many nights, sometimes for weeks, without sleep. He read, he studied, he prayed, he wept, he watched, he strove, but all in vain! He found himself as far from holiness and peace as ever! If ever any one could have gained heaven by his own merits, Luther would have gained it. To those around him he seemed the holiest man alive. But the light of the law showed him that within all was vile. His soul cried out for rest, but he found it not, for he was seeking it not in God's way, but in a way of his own. He wanted to be sure that his sins were forgiven him, for he felt till he knew this he could not have peace. But his fear increased upon him, and he knew not what to do, nor which way to turn. He saw every thing that he thought and did to be *sin*, and how could he rest till he knew that all was forgiven? His friends told him to do good works and that would satisfy the justice of God. Miserable comforters!

"What good works," said he, "can proceed out of a heart like mine? how can I with works like these stand before a holy Judge?"

The terrors of the fiery law compassed him about and consumed his soul. His "sore ran in the night and ceased not." He saw nothing in God but an angry Judge. He had not yet learned the riches of his grace through Jesus Christ.

His bodily health gave way. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" He wasted away. He became thin and pale. His eyes, which were peculiarly bright, looked wild with despair; and death seemed just at hand. In this state he was visited by an old priest. His name was Staupitz. He pitied the dying monk, and all the more so when he was told the cause of his suffering, for he had himself passed through the same

conflict. But he had found the peace of Christ in his soul, and was therefore well fitted to give counsel to Luther.

“It is vain,” said Luther to him, “that I make promises to God; sin is always too strong for me.”

“O, my friend,” said Staupitz, “I have often made vows myself, but I never could keep them. I now make no more vows; for if God will not be merciful to me for Christ’s sake, I cannot stand before him with all my vows and works.”

Luther made known to him all his fears. He spoke of God’s justice, God’s holiness, God’s sovereign majesty. How could he stand before such a God?

“Why,” said his aged friend, “do you distress yourself with these thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus, to the blood which he has shed for you; it is there that you will see the *mercy* of God. Cast yourself into the arms of the Saviour. Trust in him,—in the righteousness of his life, in the atoning sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink away from him. God is not against you; it is only you who are averse to God. Listen to the Son of God. He became man to assure you of the divine favour.”

Still Luther was dark. He thought he had not repented properly, and asked, “How can I dare believe in the favour of God, so long as there is in me no real conversion? I must be changed before he can receive me.”

He is told that there can be no real conversion so long as a man fears God as a stern Judge. “There is,” said his friend, “no true repentance but that which begins in the love of God and righteousness. That which some fancy to be the end of repentance is only its beginning. If you wish to be really converted, do not try these penances. Love Him who has first loved you.”

Luther listens and is glad. The day breaks,—new light pours in. “Yes,” said he, “it is Jesus Christ that comforts me so wonderfully by these sweet and healing words.” *In order to true repentance we must love God!* He had never heard this before. Taking this truth as his guide, he went to the Scriptures. He turned up all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion; and these two words which were formerly his terror, now become precious and sweet. The passages which used most to alarm him, now “seemed to run to me from all sides, to smile, to spring up and play around me. Formerly I tried to love God, but it was all force; and there was no word so bitter to me as that of repentance. Now there is none more pleasant. O how

blessed are all God's precepts when we read them not in books only, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour." Thus he learned that we are not forgiven because we love God, but we love God because we are forgiven. We cannot repent, we cannot love, till we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Weary souls, who are trying to repent, and trying to love God in order that he may love and forgive you, look at Luther, and learn the more excellent way! It is the free love of God to us that melts the heart,—that fills the eye with tears,—that constrains the soul to love in return! Trembling sinners, hear this and be glad. Careless sinners, hear this and turn!

Still Luther's darkness at times returned. His sins again went over his soul, and hid the face of God.

"O, my sin! my sin! my sin!" cried he, one day, to his aged friend.

"What would you have?" said Staupitz. "Would you like if your sin was not *real*? Remember, if you have only the *appearance* of a sinner, you must be content with the mere *appearance* of a Saviour. But learn this, that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who are real and great sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation." "Look at the wounds of Christ," said he, on another occasion, "and you will see there shining clearly the purpose of God towards men. We cannot understand God out of Christ." How true! It is only when we feel that we are *real* sinners, that we prize a *real* Saviour,—one who really "made his soul an offering for sin." It is only when we see sin coming between us and God that we find the preciousness of Him who "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." It is then also we see the face of the true God in the face of Jesus; and learn to read the love of the Father in the love of the Son.

But Luther's peace sometimes gave way, and his fears returned. He was taken ill and brought down to the gates of death. Terror again took hold on him. Death seemed full of gloom. It was a fearful thing to meet a holy God! An old monk visited him on his sick-bed, and in him God gave him another comforter and guide. Sitting at his bedside he repeated this sentence of the creed, "I believe in the forgiveness of sins." These words, thus simply and sweetly brought to mind, were like balm to the soul of Luther. "I believe," said he to himself, the forgiveness of sins."

“Ah, but,” said the old man, “we are not merely to believe that there is forgiveness for David or Peter : the command of God is that we believe there is forgiveness for our own sins.” Luther’s spirit was revived. He found on this rock a sufficient resting-place, and his soul rejoiced in the forgiving love of God. Believing in the name of Jesus, he found the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, and whose sin is covered. He saw himself at once and completely forgiven,—at once and completely reconciled.

In one of his letters he thus refers to the struggle which had taken place in his soul. It was long, and made up of many parts. It was the struggle of a soul, seeking to get rid of sin,—groping after light,—fighting its way to God. “I had, in truth,” says he, “a hearty desire to understand particularly the Epistle to the Romans. What kept me from understanding it was that single expression, ‘the righteousness of God,’ in the first chapter, (verse 17.) To this righteousness, as I understood it, I had a great aversion. I thought it meant God’s character as the righteous judge. Now, though as a monk I had lived a blameless life, I still found myself a great sinner before God, and I did not dare to think of pleasing him by my own works. On this account I did not love this just and angry God, because he punishes sinners. I hated Him, and felt incensed against Him. Still, however, I studied the beloved Paul, that I might find out the meaning of that passage, for I thirsted greatly to know it. In these thoughts I spent day and night, until, through God’s grace, I observed how the words are connected together in the following way, ‘the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, as it is written, ‘The just shall live by faith.’ Observing this connection, I have become acquainted with this same righteousness of God, in which the justified person lives, only through faith. I saw that the apostle’s meaning was this, that by the gospel is made known that righteousness which avails with God ; in which God, out of grace and mere mercy, makes us righteous through faith. Upon this I felt immediately as if I was wholly born anew, and had now found an open door into paradise itself. The precious holy Scripture now at once appeared quite another thing to me. I ran quickly through the whole Bible, and collected all that it says on the subject. Thus, as I had before hated this expression, ‘the righteousness of God,’ so I now began dearly and highly to esteem it as my beloved and most comfortable word of Scripture ; and that passage became to me the very gate of heaven.”

Thus his weary soul found rest. He was now like a vessel that has reached its haven. No storm can reach or harm it. He was like the dove in the clefts of the rock. He was like the man who had reached the city of refuge. He found himself safe and at rest. *Jehovah his righteousness* was his song, and his joy. It was what he saw in Christ that gave him hope and confidence toward God, and not what he saw in himself. It was what he knew of Christ and his righteousness, that took away all fear, and filled his soul with peace. He believed and was forgiven. Nor did he reckon it presumption, to count himself a forgiven soul. He gloried and rejoiced in this. He counted it one of the most grievous of all sins to doubt it. He saw that the gospel was intended to bring us forgiveness, and to assure us of it. He saw that whenever we really believe the gospel, then that forgiveness is as completely and certainly ours as if we were already in heaven. This was the very life of Luther's soul. It was this that made him so bold in the cause of Christ, in all his future life. He was assured of the favour of God, and that took away all fear of man.

There was one text of Scripture which seems to have been greatly blessed to him. It was very frequently on his mind during his many struggles. It was the text which Paul quotes from Habakkuk, to prove that we are justified by faith alone, "the just shall live by faith."—Once he was sent to Rome on some business, and he thought that good works done at Rome were better, and had more merit than those done any where else. He was told that if he would crawl up a very long stair, called Pilate's staircase, on his bare knees, he would acquire a great stock of merit. With great earnestness he set himself to do this miserable penance. While he was crawling up the steps, he thought he heard a voice like thunder, saying aloud to him, "the just shall live by faith." Immediately he started from his knees, and stopped in the middle of the ascent. The words went to his soul like the voice of God reproving him for his folly. Filled with shame, he instantly left the place. He saw that it was not by his works that he was to save himself at all, far less by works such as these. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but by his mercy he saved us."

At another time he was appointed to lecture on divinity. After explaining the Psalms, he came to the Epistle to the Romans. In studying this he took great delight. He used to sit in his quiet cell for many hours with the Bible open before him, meditating on that Epistle. The 17th verse of the first chapter fixed his eye, and filled his whole thoughts.

“The just shall live by faith.” In this he saw that there was another life than that possessed by man in general, and that this life was the fruit of faith. In the midst of much darkness these simple words were “a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path.” Clearer light soon dawned upon his soul, and through him the bright beams of the gospel shot forth upon the benighted nations of Europe. The conversion of Luther was the dawning of the Reformation.

Some of Luther's Choice Sayings.

1. The law saith *Do this*, and yet it never will be done; but grace says *Believe on Him*,—and behold it is already done!

2. Nature will feel, and be certain before it believes; but grace will believe before it feels.

3. It is impossible for a man to be a Christian without having Christ; and if he has Christ, he has all that is in Christ. What gives peace to the conscience is, that by believing, our sins are no more ours, but Christ's, upon whom God has laid them all; and that on the other hand all Christ's righteousness is ours. Christ lays his hand on us, and we are healed. He casts his mantle over us, and we are clothed; for He is the glorious Saviour blessed for ever.

4. Within my heart Christ reigns alone! He only is the beginning, the middle, and the end of my thoughts day and night.

5. He who doubts of God's mercy, sins in so doing, quite as much as he who trusts in his own works.

6. Learn to know Christ and him crucified. Learn to despair of yourself, and sing to him such a song as this, “Lord Jesus, thou art my righteousness, but I am thy sin: thou hast taken to thee what is mine; and given to me what is thine; thou hast taken upon thee what thou wast not, and given to me what I was not.

7. In order to be justified, we must do nothing at all, but only receive the treasure, which is Christ, and take hold of him in our hearts by faith, although we feel ourselves to be ever so full of sin.

8. I have used many words, to declare that a Christian must assure himself that he is in the favour of God. This have I done that we may learn to cast away that devilish opinion of the whole kingdom of the Pope, that a man should stand in doubt of the great favour of God towards him. If this opinion be received, then Christ profiteth nothing. This monstrous doctrine of doubting of God's grace, passes all other monsters.

9. What! are we then to do nothing? are we not to work for the obtaining of this righteousness? I answer—No;—nothing at all. For this is perfect righteousness, to do nothing, to hear nothing, to know nothing of the law, or of works; but to know and to believe this only, that Christ is gone to the Father, and is not now seen; that he sitteth in heaven at the right hand of his Father, not as a judge, but made unto us of God, wisdom, righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

10. Moses with his law is a hard taskmaster. He requires that we should work and give. On the other hand, the gospel giveth freely, and requires of us nothing else but to hold out our hands, and to take that which is offered.

11. This we must needs learn, that forgiveness of sins, Christ, and the Holy Spirit, are freely given to us by the hearing of faith alone, (Gal. iii. 2.) notwithstanding our horrible sins and demerits.

12. A man is made a Christian not by working but by knowing. Wherefore, he that will exercise himself to righteousness must first exercise himself in learning the gospel.

13. All our doing, that is, all our endeavour to know and apprehend God, is to suffer God to work in us.

14. Faith is nothing else but the truth of the heart; that is to say, a true and right opinion of the heart as touching God. Truth, therefore, is faith itself which judgeth rightly of God, namely, that God regardeth not our works and righteousness, because we are unclean; but that he will have mercy upon us, look upon us, accept us, justify and save us, if we believe on his Son whom he hath sent to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world. This is a true opinion of God, and in very deed nothing else but faith itself. I cannot comprehend, nor be fully assured by reason that I am received into God's favour for Christ's sake: but I hear this to be purchased by the gospel, and I lay hold on it by faith.

SIN OUR ENEMY, AND GOD OUR FRIEND.

“ Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God.”—JER. ii. 19.

Act but the infant's gentle part,
Give up to love thy willing heart,
No fondest parent's melting breast
Yearns like thy God's to make thee blest.

LUTHER.

MY DEAR READER!—You have perhaps at times wished to know who were your enemies and who were your friends,—whom you might trust and whom you were to shun. I have to tell you, that you have one great enemy, and that is sin;—one real friend, and that is God. O, reader, have you ever thought on this? Sin is your soul's enemy, and God is your soul's friend. That sin which you have delighted in is your bitterest enemy,—that God whom you have forsaken is your truest, tenderest friend! You have none in heaven or on earth like God; not one who takes such a deep and sincere interest in your welfare! You have forgotten Him, but He has not forgotten you. His thoughts towards you are still most tender and kind.

Perhaps you think that the very reverse of this is true. Or at least, if you do not *think* so, you act as if it were so. You *act* as if God were your greatest enemy, and sin your peculiar friend. You do not love God. You hate God. You suspect God. You turn away from God. You distrust God. You discredit all his words and professions of friendship and goodwill. You forget Him days without number. Could you do more to Him were he your bitterest enemy? On the other hand, you follow sin; you cling to sin; you delight in sin; you will part with heaven, with God, for sin; you will sell your soul for sin. Could you do more, were sin your best and truest friend? Your thoughts, your words, your feelings, your actions every day of your life, show that you really in your hearts think sin to be your real friend, and God to be

your worst enemy. How fearful a state to live in! Haters of God! Rom. i. 30. Lovers of sin!

Reader, believe me,—it is SIN that is your real enemy! It is an evil thing and bitter to forsake God. Jer. ii. 19. The way of transgressors is hard,—O how hard! Their cup is gall and wormwood. It was sin that first drew Adam from God and drove him out of Paradise. It was sin that brought the flood of waters upon the earth. It was sin that called down fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrha. It is sin that has filled the earth with misery and pain,—with sorrow and sighing,—with weeping eyes and broken hearts. It was sin that dug the grave and kindled hell, and brought man under the power of the devil. O, then, must not sin be the worst enemy of man? It is sin that separates us from God, and unfits us for enjoying Him. It is sin that robs our souls of peace, that spoils us of happiness, and fills us full of misery. It is sin that poisons the soul,—that lets loose our fiery passions and inflames our lusts. It is sin that disturbs and defiles the conscience, making us a terror to ourselves, and pressing us down with a burden too heavy to be borne. It is sin that grieves, and vexes, and quenches the Holy Spirit. It is sin that takes away our relish for spiritual things; our power of realizing God and holding fellowship with him. It is sin that darkens the mind and hardens the heart, till we become past feeling, and hate the light. O, then, must not sin be our real enemy? Could we have a worse enemy than this?

Reader, believe me,—it is God who is your soul's true and real friend. His thoughts towards you are most gracious and compassionate. He is the enemy of your sin, but not the enemy of your soul. You admit that he has the power of befriending you, and that all fulness of blessing is with him; but perhaps you doubt his willingness to bestow his gifts. You suspect his heart. You will not believe that he has any friendly thoughts or wishes towards you, till you can bring a price in your hands, and prove that you are not altogether unworthy of his friendship. You think that he is the enemy of your soul, and will remain your enemy till you have made yourself fit for becoming the object of his regard. Now, let me ask, has God deserved this at your hands? Has he deserved to be doubted, and to be suspected thus? Are all his professions of friendly concern for us insincere? Are they mere random declarations,—mere words of course? No,—my friend,—no. God is your real, your true, your only

friend. His interest in your welfare is unfeigned and true. In clinging to sin, you are cleaving to your worst enemy; in turning away from God you are forsaking your truest friend.

God did not send you to hell when first you sinned; he still keeps you out of hell, and gives you time to repent; he pities your misery and has no pleasure in your death. What greater proof of his tender mercy could he give, than in sparing you even for an hour? "Account that the long-suffering of our God is salvation." 2 Pet. ii. 9, 15. He waits to be gracious to you; he longs for the return of all his prodigals,—of all his wandering sheep. Does not this wear a most winning aspect towards you, even as you are? He sends his gospel to you,—the glad tidings of great joy,—he "publishes peace" to you through the blood of the cross; he makes known to you the work of his Son, in whom there is redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace;—he throws open to you the "new and living way" into his presence, a way in which there is not one stumbling-block, one hindrance;—he proclaims to *you* the infinite fulness of Jesus, that out of that fulness *you* may receive, and grace for grace! What could he do more? If he be not a friend, who can be? Has any one, either in heaven or in earth, done so much as this, or showed such good-will to you, such an interest in your welfare? He strives in your heart by his Holy Spirit, awakening strange desires after himself and after heaven,—or filling you with terrors as you think upon eternity and the judgment to come. He knocks at the door of your heart; he knocks unceasingly, day and night, that he may persuade you to open and admit him, that he may come in and sup with you, and you with him? Would an enemy do this? Would any but a real friend show such long-suffering love,—such tender concern for you? He longs to make you holy; to renew you in the spirit of your mind; he cannot bear your unholy ways, and he would fain have you made holy and blessed. If you but allow him, he would do this for you; he would give you his Holy Spirit to take old things away, and to make all things new. Would an enemy do this? He would rejoice over you if you would turn and seek his face. It is said of the prodigal, that when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him, welcoming him back to his house with joy and singing, "this my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

Would an enemy do this? Are not these the actions, the feelings of a true and tender friend,—a friend whose love has been sore tried by your neglect, and coldness, and hatred but who yet has never ceased to care for you, never ceased to yearn over you with the bowels of tenderness and compassion? Did not Jesus pray for his murderers, and was not that the prayer of a friend,—of one who really cared for their souls? Did not Jesus weep over Jerusalem;—and were not his tears, those of real and tender pity? Did not Jesus say, “ye will not come to me that ye might have life;” and did not that show that he really wanted to give them life? O, reader, have you any reason for saying that God is your enemy, and desires your death? Has he ever been to you a wilderness or a land of darkness? Have you any reason for thinking God’s thoughts to *you* are not thoughts of tenderness,—the thoughts of a real friend?

Reader, God is making proposals of friendship to *you*! The Most High God is asking you to become his friend! These proposals are *sincere*! He is really and truly seeking your friendship, and offering his own in return! Precious offer! To a worm of the dust! To a sinner, a rebel, a hater of himself! He asks no price, no gift, no bribe! All he asks is that you would take his offer,—accept his proposals, and become his friend! It matters not how far you have strayed, or how guilty you have become! Only take his offer! Only return! The gate is wide open to *you*. The welcome is sure. “Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers, yet return again to me, saith the Lord.” Jer. iii. 1, 4. “Wilt thou not, from this time, cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?” Be *thou* reconciled to God!

* “Could we single out one hopeless and impenitent sinner, we are warranted to tell him, that he is pitied at the very moment he is forsaken, that he perishes not because God would not be reconciled to him, but because he would not be reconciled to God.”—*Dr. Gordon’s Preface to Howe’s Redeemer’s Tears over Lost Souls.*

THE ANCHOR OF THE SOUL.

“Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.” HEB. vi. 19.

“There is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet.”—JER. xlix. 23

“He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still; then are they glad because they be quiet, so he bringeth them unto their desired haven.”—PSALM cvii. 29, 30.

Roar on ye waves, our souls defy
Your roaring to disturb our rest;
In vain to impair the calm ye try,—
The calm in a believer's breast.

THIS world is a sea of perpetual storm; yet there are many souls in it who have found “peace and safety.” All these have at one time heard the fearful howling of the tempest of wrath, and have been tossed with its fury;—but yet they have not suffered shipwreck,—they have escaped it all. They *hear* the tempest still, and its ground-swell often heaves them in their safe anchorage; but their security is never shaken. There are sinners who have fled to the hope set before them, “which hope they have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.” The world dislikes and despises these souls. For they were earnest in fleeing from the storm, and the careless world is sore galled by their unfeigned earnestness. They cast away all unnecessary lading, “counting it but dung” that they might win Christ, and having so done they found Christ an anchor, “sure and steadfast.” But the world is not possessed of this, and therefore hates those who declare it to be their only security in the time of storm. And while the sinner who has betaken himself to this hope proclaims the safety of the anchorage he has found, they who will not flee to it decry his confidence as presumption, pride, vain-glory! The world feels that if *he* be completely safe, then *they* are altogether wrong: if his hope be real, then they have no hope at all.

But come and examine the anchor, and the shore on which it is cast. There is a hope set before you,—a hope of escape. The voice of God in the storm urges you to flee to this hope. It is spoken of fully in Hebrews vi. 19, 20. It is a hope which is an anchor of the soul. This anchor is itself sure and strong. It will not break nor let go its hold. The shore on

which it is cast is so solid and firm, that the anchor fixed therein will remain steadfast in spite of storm, and wind, and dashing wave.

The anchor of the soul is the glad tidings concerning Christ. The awakened sinner's question is, Will the holy God pardon my sins? He is tossed up and down till he gets this question answered. He feels as if he were the chief of sinners, and as if it were more difficult for God to pardon him, than to pardon Manasseh, or Paul, or Magdalene, or any other sinner in the world. There seems to be the black gloom of wrath, the frown of severe displeasure, on the face of God. O who can tell the anguish of that soul! It wishes to be at peace, yet knows not how. It looks around for rest, but knows not where to find it.

Hear then, "O thou afflicted, and tossed with tempest!" Behold, it is written concerning the Lord Jesus, "thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves." Ps. lxxxviii. 7. This is the voice of one who has been cast like Jonah into the waves; and now he is in the lowest deep. The floods compass him about, and the billows pass over him! Is this a shipwrecked sinner? No,—it is *Jesus* allowing the tempest to dash the billows of wrath against his own person. And this he submits to in order that he may show to all that sin deserves nothing less than this storm of the Almighty's burning wrath. This he submits to in order that it may be seen how the Holy One abhors to the uttermost every sin of every form,—deed, word, or thought. But glad tidings now! Jesus, who sank into the depths of his sea, and was buried under its mountain load, reaches the shore, and stands there declaring that "whosoever believeth in him shall not come into condemnation." Whosoever will agree that this Saviour shall be his surety, shall not need to plunge into these waves himself, but shall be treated by God as if his sins had been already punished in that fierce storm that spent its violence on Jesus. O is this not rest to your soul! It shows you how justly and holily God may turn his anger from you; how he expresses his utmost displeasure against your sins, and yet saves you! Is not this quieting to your anxious conscience? Is it not an *anchor*?

Jesus is the anchor. He has been at the bottom of the depths of wrath, and his strength was tried and found perfect. Nothing can keep your souls steady but this only; for nothing else resists the storm of God's wrath. Your *duties* are not

the anchor: will they endure the fierce blast of Divine displeasure? *Your feelings and frames* are not the anchor: can they stand the sudden dash even of one wave from the world, far less from the Holy God? *The Spirit's work in you* is not your anchor; it is only the cargo, or the vessel-stores, which the sure anchor preserves from damage. Some mourn and say, Ah, if I had sinned less I should have had less difficulty in finding peace. Now, are you not making an anchor out of your supposed goodness? If you could put so many acts of holiness in the place of those many sins, you would straightway form an anchor out of these. Others say, O if I could only see that I had faith, I should then be at rest. Now you are just trying to make your *cable* your anchor; for faith is the cable that connects the anchor with the soul. Instead of distressing yourself about your own faith, *be occupied with observing the soundness and steadfastness of the anchor*, and your soul will be no longer tossed.

The anchor must be something out of ourselves: not our duties nor our saintship, nor our walk with God, nor our evidences of the Spirit's work within us, nor our strength of love;—not any, nor all of these together! The anchor of a ship is something that lies without, and by being without secures it. That which quiets and assures the uneasy conscience and troubled soul of a sinner, is what he hears in the glad tidings. It is something said or showed to him by God. It is something that tells him, not of the feelings of his own heart, but of the heart of God. It is something that shows him the face of God that he may read there, "God is love." The work of Jesus in this way becomes the sure "anchor of the soul."

The anchor is SURE. That is, it can never fail nor break, for its nature is divine. It is also *STEADFAST.* It remains fixed whatever storms assail, because it is fixed "within the veil." Let us survey the shore on which it is cast. This shore is the region within the veil. This adds to our grounds of faith, and brightens the confidence of our hope. This Saviour on whom our hope rests is an *accepted* Saviour. He is within the veil. The anchor has entered into that within the veil, that is, into the holy region within. The Father examined his work and found it faultless; and as a token of his well-pleasement received him within the veil, and placed him at his right hand in all power and glory. O how great is the consolation here! Our anchor rests, not on shifting

sands, but in the bosom of the Father. It is "hid in God." Col. iii. 2. Sure anchor, and firm ground on which it is sunk! What storm will drag it up from that mooring! O my soul keep to this anchor, and neither earth nor hell shall ever move thee from thy safe station on the shore of heaven! True, the vessel is worthless;—my vessel with all its freight is worthless;—yet nevertheless it is safe! He bringeth me to my desired haven, and I am glad because all is peace. Psalm cvii. 30.

Poor sinner, the night is near, and appearances are very gloomy on the face of sea and land. The sea and its waves are roaring. Men's hearts are beginning to fail them for fear. Luke xxi. 26. The whirlwind which the Son of man is to send over the earth, as the herald of his coming, seems ready to burst forth. At present there is an ominous stillness;—the stillness that precedes the thunder-storm. Are you meditating to flee? Is your hope this, that the storm will blow over at last? Alas! alas! it never will: for the living God will never die. Is it your hope that perhaps you may be drifted on the shores of heaven, though you were not directing your sails thitherward? This, too, is vain; for this storm is sent forth in order to drive vessels to the shoals of hell. Do you hope that you may brave it out, because you are not so heavily laden as others? Ah, but it is too true that one sin attracts the lightning, and one stroke of the thunderbolt will make way for the rushing flood. O flee to the hope set before you! Flee from the wrath to come! Anchor on the sheltered shore! Rest on the Saviour, who rests on the Father's bosom! Return through Christ to God, and then, returning sinner, you will be welcomed to the Father's bosom with the very welcome that met the returned Saviour!

DO YOU GO TO THE PRAYER-MEETING?

“Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name.”—MALACHI iii. 16.

“These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication.”—ACTS i. 14.

“Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is.”—HEB. x. 25.

READER! is there a prayer-meeting in your neighbourhood? If there is, do you attend it? If you do not, have you good reasons for staying away? Perhaps there is one just by your door, or at least within a few minutes' walk of your dwelling. Do you go to it?—I have known people walk many miles every week to a prayer-meeting. They did not grudge the distance. The way seemed short and pleasant. No wonder.—*They were in earnest about their souls!* And if you neglect or despise such meetings, it is to be feared that you are altogether unconcerned about eternity and the kingdom to come. If you were thirsty for the water of life, you would be glad of such opportunities of drawing it out of the wells of salvation.

I ask then again, DO YOU ATTEND THE PRAYER-MEETING? If not, what are your reasons? If they are good reasons, you need not be ashamed of them either before God or man, and they will serve you at the judgment-seat of Christ. If they are not, the sooner you give them up, the better. Very soon the last sermon will be done, the last Sabbath will close, the last prayer-meeting will be over, the last message of salvation delivered, the last warning sounded, and the last invitation given! Then, what bitter regret and agonizing remorse! What will you think of your excuses then? O, you would give the wealth of worlds for another prayer-meeting, another day of hope. No more making light of such precious opportunities, nor scoffing at those who prized them! The follies and vanities of earth are all over then and

invisible realities are seen to be all in all. Will the memory of your days and scenes of pleasure or sin be soothing to your soul when they have passed away like a vision of the night? Will the remembered hours of carnal levity, the idle word, the thoughtless jest, the gay smiles of companionship, the halls of gaiety, or the haunts of sin, (all of which you once preferred to the prayer-meeting,) will these breathe comfort to your dying soul, or bear you up when giving in your account before the Judge of all? Laughter shall then be exchanged for burning tears; nights of *harmless* merriment for ages of endless woe. O, waste not then one precious hour,—one precious moment! Thy eternity may hang on it! It may soon be too late to think of prayer. Up, sleeper, up! Turn, sinner, turn! Thy days are but an hand-breadth;—flee! O, flee from the wrath to come!

Let me speak to you, with all kindness, for a little, about your reasons for not attending the prayer-meeting. Let us weigh them in the balances of the sanctuary; and may the Holy Spirit, in this respect, convince you of sin!

1. *Do you not care for the prayer-meetings?* Do you not like them? Do you count them a weariness, or do you call them fanaticism? Is this your reason? If so, can your soul be in a right state with God? Can that man be a child of God who dislikes either private or social prayer? Can there be real or living religion in that soul that does not relish such meetings? Is it not strange and sad that you should relish the things of the body, the things of time,—and yet turn away from the things of the soul, the things of eternity? Is it not awful that you should love the society of sinners, the friendship of the world; and yet dislike so much the companionship of saints, the fellowship of God? If you prefer worldly company or pleasure to a prayer-meeting, this shows beyond all doubt that you are not a child of God, or a follower of the Lamb.

2. *Have you no time to attend prayer-meetings?* Is this your reason? Ah! think for a moment; is it really true that you have no time to spare for them? Can you say so honestly before God? Will you be able to plead this with the Judge in the great day of account? Do you never attend other meetings which take up more of your time? Or do you not waste more time idly or in foolish company, than would be spent at the meeting? What! have you time to eat, and to drink, and make merry, *but none to pray!* Have

you time for business, for company, for folly, for pleasure, for lusts, for sin, *but none for prayer?* Have you time for the shop, the market, the ball-room, the card-table, the public house, the political club,—*but none for the prayer-meeting?* You can spare days and weeks for these things of time, can you not spare *an hour* for the things of eternity?

3. *Are you ashamed to go to a prayer-meeting?* Would your companions laugh at you? Is this your reason? What, ashamed to pray! afraid to be laughed at! You are not ashamed to be seen in idle, foolish company, yet you are ashamed to be seen in the society of the people of God! You are not ashamed to saunter about the streets, nor to “stand in the way of sinners,” nor to “sit in the seat of the scornful,” (Ps. i. 1) yet you are ashamed to be seen at a meeting for prayer! Perhaps you are one of those who are not ashamed to be seen in a public house,—who are not ashamed to swear, nor to get drunk,—yet you are ashamed to attend a prayer-meeting! Ashamed of God’s service, but not ashamed of the devil’s! ashamed to pray, but not ashamed to sin! Will God accept such an excuse at your hands in the day of your reckoning? “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.” (Mark viii. 38.)

4. *Do you think it is being too religious?* Now let me ask you what you mean by *religious*? Does it not mean loving and serving God? And can a man love God too much? Can he serve him too constantly or devotedly? Was the apostle too religious when he said “whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God?” Or was he too religious when he commanded us “to pray always,” (Eph. vi. 18;) to “pray without ceasing?” (1 Thes. v. 17.) Was David too religious when he praised God seven times a-day? (Ps. cxix. 164.) Are the angels and the redeemed saints in heaven too religious, who “serve him day and night in his temple?” (Rev. vii. 15.) With such a feeling as you have about prayer-meetings, it is plain that there is far too much religion *in heaven* for you ever to think of going to such a place, or even to *wish* to be there. The man that has no relish for a prayer-meeting, could have no relish for heaven. He is utterly unfit to be there. He would be wretched there. An eternity of prayer and praise, would be hell to a man who is wearied with an hour of a prayer-meeting on earth.

5. *Are you better employed at home?* Can you honestly say so before God? If you can, I leave you to answer to God for the time thus spent at home or elsewhere. He will take a strict account of those hours. If you are one who read your Bible and pray at home, I am sure you will not object to a meeting for prayer. If you are not, can you really say that you are better employed, or even half so well? O no.—You cannot be half so well employed as in preparing for eternity, in praying with God's people, in hearing of his "dear Son,"—in making ready for the coming of the Lord.

Reader, are these your reasons? Then I ask you, are they sufficient? Does your conscience say they are? Or do you not see that the real reason is just your "carnal mind, which is enmity against God?" You do not love to pray, therefore you do not like the prayer-meeting. You do not love God, and therefore you do not desire fellowship with him. You do not love his saints, therefore you do not wish to join them in prayer. You do not care about forgiveness of sin, and therefore you do not go to hear how "in him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace." You have no relish for the things of Christ, and therefore you do not desire to join his people in singing the new song,—**WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN!**

"The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." 1 Peter iv. 7.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Col. iv. 2.

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit." Eph. vi. 18.

NIGHT, DAY-BREAK, AND CLEAR DAY.

“Awake, thou that sleepest.”—EPH. v. 14.

“Let us put on the armour of light.”—ROMANS xiii. 12.

READER, are you one of “the *people who sit in darkness?*” And do you love the darkness, because your deeds are evil? Has a ray,—even one ray, from the glory of God, in the face of Jesus, ever gladdened your soul? Come and let us reason together. Perhaps you do not know *whether you have passed from darkness into light.* Come, then, and be not afraid to examine and decide.

1. *If you are addicted to gross sins, you are a child of darkness, and therefore a child of the devil, and an heir of hell.* If you practise any thing which you would not for the world that others saw you do, you are a child of darkness, for you feel a desire that these doings of yours may be *hid in night.*

2. *You are a child of darkness if you do not perceive how the world lieth in wickedness.* If the world is very pleasant to you; if its frolics, its gaieties, its dance, its song, are sweet to your taste, then, alas! all is night with you. If you are never grieved at observing forgetfulness of God in the world’s business; if you are never made uneasy when reading the profane and ungodly attacks made in public newspapers on the cause of God; if you never feel shocked in hearing the oaths and seeing the covetousness of a market-day, or a fair; if your heart was never made sad by the thought, that these multitudes are on the way to hell, then “the darkness has blinded your eyes.”

3. *You are a child of night if you reckon all points of doctrine very much alike.* There are some doctrines which are essential to salvation. Thus it is essential to salvation to lean on Christ Jesus alone, and to know your lost state as a

sinner. But if you see no greater importance in these truths than in a correct moral walk, and think that men may be safe if only they be sincere, you are a *child of darkness*. The equalizing gloom of darkness rests on you, for, like a man at midnight, you cannot distinguish the relative importance of the objects around you.

4. *If you do not work for God, you are a child of darkness*, for you are sleeping in inactivity; and “they that sleep, sleep in the night.” Do you ever deny yourself for God? Do you give up this or that pleasure to prevent your mind being distracted or unfitted for his service? Do you rise a little earlier to obtain time for prayer, when otherwise you would be deprived of it? Do you redeem time? Do you visit the sick, send the gospel to the heathen, speak to your friends, and all *for his sake*? If not, then you are not a child of light.

5. *If you let convictions slip, you are a child of darkness*; for you act as sleepy men do when roused during night. They awake at the loud knock, rub their eyes, move themselves, then fall back into their sweet slumber, and wish to be left undisturbed. You say like Felix, “Go thy way for this time;” and Felix was truly a child of the night, though awakened at the moment by Paul’s loud appeal.

6. *Though you love believers, and approve of their holy life, yet still you may be of the night*. Perhaps you are one of many in our land who love their pious parents and friends, but do not love their *picty*. You respect good people, for they are kind. But in all this, you are not loving *Christ in them*. You like to see the stars shining in the dark night, but you do not yourself seek the light they possess.

7. *You are a child of darkness, if you do not see Christ as the chief object presented to the sinner*. A man during night may see meteors, falling stars, many flashes of light, yet all this proves the more that it is not day. He admires these, because all is darkness round; were it day-time, they would all disappear in the flood of glorious light from the sun. And thus it may be with you; you may have had your convictions of sin, and your flashes of joyful hope; yet unless your soul has seen and felt Jesus, and his finished work to be the source of all a sinner’s hope—his SUN,—you are still in night. Whatever discoveries you have made in Scripture; whatever errors you have escaped from; however many sins you have given up; whatever sacrifices you have made.

all this proves nothing regarding *daylight* in your soul, if the *Sun* has not filled it with his surpassing glories.

8. *If you have not seen your vileness, and the filth of your garments, you are a child of night.* An Ethiopian cannot see his own or his neighbour's blackness, if all is dark about him; and it is even thus with the sinner. If he sees not his own corruption, and his fancied robe of righteousness, to be loathsome before God; if he think proudly of himself, have a good opinion of his heart, and trust that there is at least something worth in his deeds, he is in gross darkness.

9. Once more. *He is a child of midnight who is unalarmed at sin.* He is like a man in the depth of a sound slumber; there may be death at hand, a sword may be hanging over his sleeping form; the earthquake or the fire may be levelling his dwelling, still he is *unconscious*. O *unconscious sinner*, you are a child of hell! the less you feel your sin, the more evidence you give of being asleep; and "they that sleep, sleep in the night." Awake, thou that sleepest! Perhaps not the rising sun, but the lurid glare of hell may give thee warning that thy time of rest is gone!

Come, then, and inquire how it is that *day* begins to take the place of *night*. Be not deceived. Remember the Son of man cometh as a thief in the night, and the surprise and remorse of the sinner overtaken in his darkness then, will never, never end! There are souls passing into light, who were once as dark as you. There are sinners now become children of the day who once were as you. Are *you* beginning to desire a change? Like the shipwrecked crew (Acts xxvii. 29) are you wishing for day? Look around and cry, even in the midst of your gloom, "*let the day break!*" There is a day-spring from on high that visits souls and guides their feet into the way of peace. (Luke i. 79.)

Let us see a man on whom the light is dawning.

1. *It is near the day-break with a sinner, when his conscience is awakened to feel sin.* His sleep is done. He cannot rest quietly in sin any more. Perhaps, like Peter, his conscience was awakened by the cock-crowing—by some recollection of impressive warnings which he despised at the time, or it may have been some providence, some Jonah-storm, that sounded in his soul, "What meanest thou, O sleeper! arise, call upon thy God." Or it may have been a minister's voice proclaiming the Lord's call, "Awake, thou that sleepest!" Eph. v. 14. But remember, reader, this

awakening is not itself the dawn of day, though it generally precedes it. For there are cases where convictions are strong and continued, and yet the convinced sinner remains a child of darkness. Rest not, then, in mere convictions. They are hopeful appearances; but go on and see if there be other signs besides.

2. *It seems to be near the dawn with a sinner, when his past days look like a dream, or a vision by night.* Now his pleasures, company, songs, and even his lawful business seem trifling and utter vanity, compared with the new realities that are opening on his view. His past enjoyment in them, he reckons "as when a hungry man dreameth, and, behold he eateth; but he awaketh and his soul is empty;" (Isa. xxix. 8.) their folly, their rapid flight, above all, their debasing power, make the man feel, "What fruit had ye then of these things of which ye are now ashamed?" (Rom. vi. 21.)

3. *New objects begin to appear, and former things assume a new aspect.* He sees the preciousness of his soul; the holy justice of God; the disgusting features of sin. As yet the greatest truths may be indistinctly perceived by him, as at early dawn when the morning is still grey, even hills and stately forests are dimly seen. Yet here is a beginning; the *world* seems far less attractive than before; its pits, and marshes, wherein so many fall, are seen and dreaded. God, as revealed in his word, through the cross of Christ, begins to engage his whole soul. The people who know God become the objects of his love, (Psal. xvi. 3) as in the case of John Bunyan, when just emerging from the shades of night—"how lovely now was every one in mine eyes, that I thought to be converted men and women! They shone, they walked liked a people that carried the broad seal of heaven about them."

4. *He is expecting light from above.* He does not expect that the light that is to show him the way to the Father's open arms, will come from himself,—no; he believes that it shines into the heart by command of him who at first said, "Let there be light," (2 Cor. iv. 6.) This day-spring is from above, (Luke i. 78.) Is it, reader, your convictions, or repentance, that gives you comfort, and makes you imagine that you are a child of light? Then, it is not yet dawn with you; for it must be *Christ*, the day-spring, that gives true peace. If your feelings are the grounds of your hope, instead of the full Saviour, beware lest you be satisfying yourself

with the sun's reflected rays; or if your holy life, as you fancy it to be, is the ground of your hope, you are preferring the beautiful scenery which the sun paints with his brightness, to the Sun himself. But a soul that is really coming on to the full day, is satisfied with nothing short of that ray from the face of Jesus which fell on the face of ransomed Abel, and faithful Abraham, and all the saved, (Rev. xxii. 4, 5.) He might possibly kindle a torch for himself, but he knows that this would drop out of his hand when he came to pass through the dark valley. He will be satisfied with nothing but what the Holy God himself will be satisfied with. The light that the Father sheds on Immanuel's face is the light he seeks for.

5. *There is a gradual increase of light.* There is no going back; no returning to the world. Impressions are not effaced; truths are not forgotten; anxiety does not decay. A soul really led by the Spirit out of darkness can no more go back than the sun once risen. Difficulty after difficulty is cleared away; cloud after cloud breaks up. The soul now feels an increasing anxiety for Christ, and sees more than ever that the reason why his wants are unsatisfied is his imperfect acquaintance with the work of Jesus. He can now distinguish between *justification* and *sanctification*; he sees that he has first to do with the former, and that a sinner must be washed with clean water before the Spirit will abide in him.

6. *The Sun appears through the cloud.* The full work of Christ appears to him to be the very remedy he needed for his soul. He sees *the Sun of righteousness*, and all is day. He lets that glorious Sun pour its rays over his uncomely soul; and, lo! he is now "altogether lovely." Mists still linger, but they are gradually dissolving; dark clouds float at times over his sky, but at such times he keeps looking to the quarter whence he knows light will break forth again. He obtains assurance of his salvation. As in the case of the natural sun, if the eye be in the line of the ray of light, then, of course, the shining ray will be perceived—so, he gives a steady, direct look to the Sun of righteousness, and feels that his free beams are shed even over his own vile soul.

It is now CLEAR DAY. The shadows of the dawn have passed away. He lives, expecting another rising of this same Sun in sevenfold brightness, when grace shall be changed

into glory. He is searching much into God's character and ways day after day; but all his discoveries are dim, compared with those that he looks for at his Lord's second coming. "To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise," (Mal. iv. 2.) Yet, strange as it may seem to the world, the child of light is not gay, nor does he feel any tendency to levity in his joy. The reason is, the bright sunshine he enjoys is *the face of God; and he stands ever in his presence*. The rays of favour are all from sovereign grace! He is humbled, therefore, under a sense of the enormous load of benefit conferred upon him; the weight of grace and glory bends down his soul. Holy awe regulates his communion with God, while, at the same moment, he possesses the joyful confidence of a child. He has reverence, like the seraphim, while he has a joy that sometimes springs up almost as high as theirs; and it is in such a moment of mingled reverence and rapture that he fully realizes heaven.

And many times, his God and Father deepens this awe and reverence, by giving him personal afflictions to bear. The child of light is despised by the world, that he may learn to bathe yet more in the fountain of life alone; and that, when one earthly comfort after another withers, he may take all his light from the Sun that never sets. At other times, the Holy Spirit leads him to such awful views of his remaining corruption, and such deep insight into the mystery of sin, as would confound, and crush any soul whose confidence was not fixed on Jesus *alone*, and on Jesus *to the uttermost*. Or, it may be, he is oppressed with anguish, not through fear of his own condemnation or suspicion of his personal safety, but by what he sees around him;—the contempt poured upon his God, and the hastening perdition of unconverted souls. Like his Master, he feels "the reproach wherewith they have reproached thee is fallen upon me;" and, like David, he looks into the pit and cries, "O Absalom, my son, my son!" He has hours of painful wrestling with his God in their behalf; his bitterest hours on earth are the hours wherein these sorrows of his God, and of perishing men, rush into his soul! Indeed, his joy would never return, were it not that he sees in Calvary how his God has been glorified to a degree that swallows up all the contempt of men and devils; and how, when Jesus comes again his glory will burst forth even from hell, and hallelujahs ascend to his name even over the smoke of the everlasting burnings. At present

it is a painful blessedness he lives in; the very joy of his Father's face often creating new sources of anguish; but then he knows that thus he is to be refined as gold. And instead of these trying moments causing him to doubt his Father's love, they rather tend to assure him of it the more; for his Father lays these burdens on him just because he has first given him the *joy of the Lord* as the *strength* in which they are to be borne.

O sinner, child of darkness, and of the devil, and of hell, come and be a *child of light*! Will you lie with fallen angels in the blackness of darkness for ever? Will you love darkness, until it become your only portion? Will you indulge your dark deeds, secret sins, black desires hidden in the heart, and black clouds of anger, Sabbath-breaking, uncleanness, pride, covetousness, envy, evil-speaking, discontent, selfishness? O come and be a *child of light*. Let the Sun shine on you; let his beams burst into that dark cave of your heart! This is God coming, in the person of Jesus, into the view of his creatures, like the sun after the gloom of night. It is God coming into the sight of his fallen and hell-deserving creatures! It is God coming in an aspect that invites and speaks holy love to you! For he comes to show you, how he may now be "just while he justifieth the ungodly." The various rays of his attributes are combined to form this "*Great Light*" that shines on those who sat in the valley and shadow of death. Shall it shine on you? or have you made up your mind to "sleep on and take your rest"—to love darkness now, and dwell in darkness for ever—to be a sinner now, and a companion of devils hereafter? Is there nothing terrible in hell,—the devouring fire, the everlasting burnings? Is there nothing bitter in "the dregs of the cup of trembling,"—the vials in which is filled up the wrath of God? Is there nothing sweet in the light of heaven,—the glory which God hath prepared for them that love Him? Is there nothing desirable in the joy of the Lord,—the peace that passeth all understanding,—the rest that remaineth for the people of God? Is guilt better than pardon? Is wrath better than love? Is death better than life? Is damnation better than eternal blessedness? Are the burning flames as pleasant as the cool waters of the fountain of life? Is the lake of fire and brimstone as safe and peaceful as "the sea of glass like unto crystal," on which the redeemed are standing in triumph? Is your father the devil, (John viii. 44,) who deceiveth the

whole world, more to be regarded than the word of Him who is the faithful and true witness? Lie down, then, in thy shame, and let thy confusion cover thee! But soon a bright gleam of glory, seen afar, from the children of the light and of the day, shall tell thee what they have received from the Sun of Righteousness, and what thou hast lost for ever! "Yet a little while the light is with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you, for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light believe in the light, that ye may be the children of the light." John xii. 35, 36.

H Y M N .

Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend,
Life and health and peace possessing
From the sinner's dying Friend.

Here I'll sit for ever viewing
Mercy's streams, in streams of blood;
Precious drops! my soul bedewing,
Plead and claim my peace with God.

Truly blessed is this station,
Low before his cross to lie,
While I see divine compassion
Floating in his languid eye.

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

Love and grief my heart dividing,
With my tears his feet I'll bathe;
Constant still in faith abiding,
Life deriving from his death.

May I still enjoy this feeling,
In all need to Jesus go;
Prove his wounds each day more healing,
And himself more fully know.

WHO SHALL DWELL WITH THE DEVOURING FIRE?

“The sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?”—ISAIAH xxxiii. 14.

THERE is a day coming when sinners shall be afraid, and when terrors shall overtake them as a flood. They are not afraid just now; they eat and drink and make merry, as if they had no eternity to prepare for, no danger to alarm them. But it shall soon be different. What is now far off shall then be near, and sinners shall realize too late the horrors of that wrath from which they refused to flee. In the agonies of despair, when the flames are kindling round them, they will burst forth in such bitter outcries as these, “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire, who among us shall dwell with the everlasting burnings?” O that shriek of agony! O that awful outcry of surprise and despair! Careless sinner! that cry shall soon be yours; these words shall soon be the very language in which your wretched soul shall give vent to its hopeless anguish, when it sees itself shut up within the flaming walls and feels damnation sure! O, then, flee from the wrath to come! Make haste to escape from the devouring fire!

1. *There is such a thing as devouring fire.*—It may appear a shadow now, but it shall soon be reality,—and O what a reality! It is *fire*, the most torturing and excruciating of elements. It is *devouring* fire; not merely fire that can pain or scorch, but *devour*, swallow up the wretched sinner in its undying flame. His abode is a prison-house of fire,—a lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. Rev. xix. 20. Hear how God himself speaks of this, and learn that it is no mere dark imagination of cruel men to torment you before the time. “A fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell.” Deut. xxxii. 22. “Upon the wicked he shall rain quick burning coals, fire and brimstone, and a burning tempest.” Psal. xi. 6, margin. “Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger, the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them.” Psal. xxi. 9. “Behold, the name of the Lord cometh

from far, burning with his anger, and the grievousness of flame ; his lips are full of indignation, and his tongue as a devouring fire." Isa. xxx. 27, margin. Ah! sinner, these are awful words, and they shall soon be realized in you, except you turn and flee !

2. *It is everlasting fire*; burnings that shall never grow less intense or die away. They are kindled by God's own breath, Isa. xxx. 33. and he who kindled them alone can quench them. But this he will never do. They must burn on for ever and for ever. It is called "unquenchable fire," "everlasting fire," whose smoke goeth up for ever and ever. It shall be kept alive, fanned, increased, watched over, but it shall never go out nor abate ! Nor shall there be any thing to make it tolerable,—not a drop of cold water to cool the sinner's scorching tongue. Long custom shall never make it less tormenting or more easy to be borne. A vain dreamer of earth might say, "This horror will grow mild, this darkness light ;" but it shall not be. There shall be nothing to mitigate it, or render it less intolerable throughout eternity. That horror shall never grow mild ; that darkness shall never grow light ; that fire shall never abate ! O what a dungeon, what a furnace ! It is not called eternal *solitude*, though that would be awful ; neither is it called eternal *darkness*, though that would be insupportable. It is called *everlasting fire* !

3. *It is prepared for the ungodly*.—It is said to have been at first prepared for the devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41 ; but it is also to be the abode of all who neglect the great salvation. It is for them that forget God. Psal. ix. 17. It is for them who have refused to turn to the Lord, and slighted the blood of sprinkling. Shut out of heaven and shut into hell ; this is their doom. They turned away from God, and now he turns away from them ! They rejected love, and now wrath comes on them to the uttermost. They obeyed the devil on earth, and now they are handed over to his company and his abode in hell for ever. They would not believe that God was holy, and did not care whether he was gracious ; but now they are compelled to feel how holy he is, and at the same time to feel how he has forgotten to be gracious ! For them grace is past. They might have had it once, but they despised it ; and now it is gone. It is all wrath and indignation now. Rev. xiv. 10.

4. *They must dwell in it*.—They cannot flee. Escape is hopeless, for it is the Judge of all that pronounces the sen

tence, "Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire." The sinner may shrink, but he cannot flee. He may struggle, but it is all in vain. The command is given; angels hasten to see it executed, and devils seize him for their prey, and drag him along to his eternal abode. As the sentence falls on his ear, "Depart, ye cursed," his spirit sinks within him, and he exclaims, "Who shall dwell with the devouring fire?" As he is hurried away from the judgment-seat, with the sentence ringing in his ears, he cries out, "Who shall dwell with the devouring fire?" As he nears the gate and sees the flaming walls, he cries out with a yet more bitter cry, "O who shall dwell with these everlasting burnings?" As the gate is opened, as he is thrust in, as it closes behind him, as he looks round upon the whole flaming circle, as he hears the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth on every side, as he takes his place among the damned, those "spirits in prison" who shall go out no more, he shrieks out the piercing exclamation, "O who shall dwell with this devouring fire; who shall dwell with these everlasting burnings?" Yet dwell he must, and that for ever. No opening of the gates, no scaling of its walls, no loosing of the chain, no ray of hope, no respite, no Saviour, no mercy now! His eternity is sealed. He has reached his everlasting dwelling-place, where all is "lamentation, and mourning, and woe."

Sinners of every class, especially *sinners in Zion*, to whom these words are spoken, listen to these warning words! You are sinners *in Zion*, not sinners among the heathen; yet this only makes your case more awful, and your doom more inevitable. You profess to be Christians, but have never been born again. You do many things like God's people, pray, read, hear, speak, observe ordinances, yet still one thing is lacking. You are not born again! Surely, then, it is time to search yourselves. It is time to be alarmed. The Judge is at the door. Your hypocrisy will not serve you then. You will be detected and unveiled, and all your hollow pretensions to religion laid bare. The day of his coming will be a terrible one to you. He comes with his fan in his hand, thoroughly to purge his floor, gathering the wheat into his garner, and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire. He comes with his sieve to sift you, and can you stand his sifting? He comes with his touch-stone to try and to detect you. He comes with his balances to weigh you, to see what is the real value of all your professions,—whether after all you may not

be found wanting. He comes with his lighted candles to search you in every part. He comes with his flaming eye to penetrate at one glance your inmost soul, and to discover all its hidden abominations. With such a prospect before you, would it not be wise to take immediate alarm, and inquire whether all be well with your souls, lest you perish at the rebuke of Him who is a consuming fire?

Why should wrath be your portion? It was the portion of Jesus once, just that it might never be yours. The pains of hell took hold on him, Psal. cxvi. 3; just that they might never take hold of you. He was forsaken of the Father that you might not be forsaken. In enduring the fire of that wrath for sinners, he was constrained to cry, "My heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." Psal. xxii. 14, 15. Seeing that He has passed through all this that you might not pass through it, why should you reject such a substitute as this? The burnt-offerings and sin-offerings under the law, in all of which consuming fire was employed, tell us what the great sacrifice had to undergo when iniquity was laid on him. When these offerings had been duly presented, then Israel was forgiven. In our case no question can arise as to the due offering of the sacrifice. We know that it has been duly offered once for all, and has been accepted of the Father. The one sacrifice has been offered, and now the worshippers once purged thereby have no more conscience of sins. Heb. x. 2. Do we consent to take that sacrifice for sins? We do not need to offer it anew. It has been already offered. But are we willing that it be reckoned to us as a substitute? If not, then we must bear that wrath in our persons,—the fire which otherwise would have passed over us, will descend with devouring fierceness on our heads. We must either take refuge under the wing of the substitute or bear the wrath eternally ourselves. Which is the wiser safer way for a helpless sinner?

WITHOUT GOD.

“*Having no hope and without God in the world.*”—EPH. ii. 12

“*Be astonished, O ye heavens? at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord; for my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.*”

—JER. ii. 12.

WITHOUT GOD! What a fearful condition of soul! What a state of misery, of gloom, of solitude, of dark and dismal *emptiness*. A wilderness at midnight is nothing to this. A world without a sun is nothing to this. It is the summing up of all that is forlorn and sad in a sinner's lost estate. It can scarcely be called *a picture*, for it consists but of a single stroke, yet it conveys to us as full an idea of utter desolation and despair, as could have been done by a thousand touches.

How awful the condition of an immortal being, of whom it can be said, that it is “without God.” His presence is peace, his love is bliss, his fellowship the fulness of joy. There is no sunshine like the sunshine of his countenance, and no warmth like the warmth of his affection. What a dreary void, then, must that soul be that is “without God in the world,”—without God in such a world as this! Men feel this, though they will not own it. Hence they run from one occupation to another, from scene to scene, from pleasure to pleasure, in order that, by keeping their minds incessantly engaged, they may drown the consciousness of the dread emptiness within. Hence they prefer to be burdened with cares and toils, to be annoyed with the over-pressure of business, rather than be left to the feeling of this dreary void within the soul. They are like children afraid to be alone in the dark. All without is lonely, for God is not there, and all within is still more lonely, for God is not there.

But, then, even when brought to see this, even when brought to see, or at least to suspect, that all this uneasiness arises from the absence of God, they shrink from the idea of becoming *religious*. They cannot bear the thought of his near presence, of his coming in to fill and possess their souls. An absent God, no doubt, they felt to be the source of their misery, but still a near, a present God they cannot bear to realize.

Why is it thus? Whence this dread of God? Whence this unwillingness to re-admit him into their hearts? Because they are afraid of Him, and think that they can neither be safe in his hands nor happy in his presence. They feel uncomfortable at the thought of his coming so near. They willingly go through a form of religion, because its whole design and effect are to *keep out* God. Strange as the statement may seem, still it is true, that the religious observances of all mere professors are gone through with the express end of keeping God at a distance. By paying Him the compliment of their devotions, they think to bribe Him to keep at a distance from them and not break their repose by coming too near. This preference of forms which create a sort of fence between the soul and God, and this dislike of a religion that would bring us into personal contact with Him, plainly arise from an aversion at his holy character, and a distrust of his intentions toward us.

It is awful to think that there should be such estrangement between the soul and the God that made it, and that there should be any jealous suspicion of Him in man's breast, or any unwillingness to have Him for our friend and father. No conduct can be more unnatural than this, no ingratitude more monstrous and inexcusable. When a son hates his father, shuns his company, and leaves his house, we call his conduct unnatural and abominable. But what is this in comparison with the sinner, who has ill-treated the God that made him? The early ties of blood, the closest, dearest, relationships of men, are as mere threads of air when compared with the bonds which unite the creature and Creator together. Dislike of God, then, must be a thing so hateful and monstrous as to stand at the very top of human guilt, the sum of nameless crime! Surely He, whose offspring we are, in whom we live and move and have our being, is our nearest and ought to be our dearest relative of all in earth or heaven; nearer far than father or mother, brother or sister, husband or wife. These, no doubt, are names of tenderness and affection. They are relationships both close and dear. Yet how weak are all of them together, to convey even an idea of the near and tender relationship that subsists between the Creator and his offspring! The love and endearment with which these beloved names are associated, are but as shadows when compared with the love, the tender, the profound, the unutterable love which ought to overflow in us towards Him

who is so infinitely better, kinder, nobler, truer, tenderer, more *lovable* than all. If their love be so deep and warm, what must His be? If their sympathy be so sweet and pleasant that, without it, earth is a blank, and even home a desolation, what must His be? If their character be so endearing and attractive, what must His be who constituted all these relationships as emblems of the one blessed and absorbing relationship between Him and his creatures? If the things of earth, even of a *fallen* earth, be so very beautiful, what must He be who clothed them with all that loveliness, and who is himself the birth-place of all beauty, the centre of all perfection, and who scatters abroad all this goodness as a drop out of the infinite ocean of divine excellence and glory? How awful, then, must be the guilt, how desperate the misery of those who neither know nor love this Being of Beings, the ever-blessed, ever-glorious God and Father of all!

WITHOUT GOD! How awful the doom were such a sentence pronounced against any region of God's dominions! How awful when such is the state of the human soul!

Sinner! such is your present state. Is it not truly sad? You do not yet know what it means in all its reality, but there is enough in what you do know to make you feel how fatal to your peace is the existence of that aching void within. Terror is not yet revealed. Wrath is still in reserve. The sword still slumbers in its sheath. But there is something even now eating, like a canker, into all your enjoyments, and poisoning all your pleasures; something which makes life a weariness and death a terror. You feel that all is not right, that there is a dreary blank in the midst of all that you enjoy. That secret undefineable want which you feel is the want of God's friendship. Nothing else will remove that sense of hollowness within, which casts a shade over your life. You are without God and, therefore, without peace. You cannot be happy so long as He is absent. There can not be any true enjoyment so long as you enjoy nothing in him, and him in nothing.

But if such be the secret of your unhappiness, then you see where lies the secret of your peace. You see whence your joy is to flow. It must be from having the friendship of God;—from having his love shed abroad in your heart. Nothing but the knowledge of that love can remove the uneasiness that preys upon you, or put you in possession of that which will fill up the dreary void within and dissipate

all your gloom. "Acquaint thyself now with God, and be at peace, and thereby good shall come unto thee. If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up, thou shalt put away iniquity far from thy tabernacles; then shalt thou lay up gold as the dust, and the gold of Ophir as the stones of the brooks. Yea, the Almighty shall be thy defence, and thou shalt have plenty of silver; for thou shalt have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God; thou shalt make thy prayer unto Him, and He shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows; thou shalt also decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee, and the light shall shine upon thy ways." Job xxii. 21-28.

Perhaps you are saying, "Who will show me any good?" You are looking round for some one to point out to you the way to rest. Well, Jesus stands before you, and says to you, what He did to the blind man in the days of his flesh, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" Is your answer the same as that of the blind man? "Lord, that I may receive my sight?" Like him, perhaps, you may know little of Jesus, little of what the light really is, little of what true joy consists in; but are you putting your soul into the hands of Jesus? Then shall you receive your sight and be made altogether whole. As a sinner, blind, naked, miserable and vile, draw near to Him. He refuses none. He will open your eyes. He will relieve your weariness. He will bless you with the fulness of His own free love. He will fill up the aching void within. He will give you rest. He will satisfy your weary soul. He will lead you to the Father, and, in the fulness of the Father's love, you will learn to bury all your griefs and cares. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness, and assurance for ever."

THE FALSE PEACE AND THE TRUE.

"They have healed the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace."—JER. vi. 14.

HAVE YOU PEACE WITH GOD? I do not ask, do you hope to have peace, or do you think you shall one day get peace, but have you, at this moment, peace with God? Perhaps you have not. Well then, is all right? Do you feel no uneasiness within you? Is there not a secret voice which says, there is something wanting still, and, until that something is supplied, I cannot be happy? The world may smile or frown, still I cannot be happy. Riches may come or go, still I cannot be happy. It may be storm or sunshine, still I cannot be happy. There is a blank within, a feeling of dissatisfaction, a consciousness that all is not right with this soul of mine. It is to this feeling that the prophet Jeremiah refers when he speaks of "the HURT of the daughter of his people."

Israel was "hurt." She was smitten and wounded. Her sins had wounded her. God's chastisements had wounded her. There was a breach between her and her God. The whole land lay bleeding under the fearful wound. Her false prophets tried to heal it. They prophesied smooth things. They tried to persuade her that her case was not so bad, and that God was not so angry. Thus they skinned over the wound. They healed it slightly. It looked as if it were healed, but that was all. It soon broke out again, and brought the nation to utter ruin and death.

So the sinner is "hurt." He is wounded to death by sin. It is no slight bruise, no partial or transient sickness. No, the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint, from the sole of the foot unto the head, there is no health in any part. It is a desperate and deadly wound; incurable by the skill of man. When a limb is out of joint or wrenched from the body, there is a "hurt,"—there is pain most grievous and agonizing; so, when the soul is torn asunder from Him that made it, there is a still more terrible wound. The separation of the soul from God is our deadly hurt. It is this that puts the soul out of a condition for enjoying anything, just as when a limb is dislocated, the body is unfitted for any kind

of enjoyment. It is not *possible* that the sinner can be happy so long as this wound remains unhealed. And, besides, this alienation from God is in itself misery. It is the misery of being at enmity with God. It is the misery of having His wrath abiding upon us. It is the misery of being severed from the fountain of all blessedness, and of having no prospect before us but that of the everlasting vengeance of Him who is a consuming fire. What a deadly wound is this! It is surely enough to make every sinner tremble when he thinks that this is the hurt under which his soul is pining away,—that this is the secret source of all that present misery which he feels and of all that future misery which is in reserve for him throughout eternity. The sting of the second death is in his vitals already. The worm that never dies is wreathing and tightening its folds around him even now. The fire that shall never be quenched is already kindled within him and sending forth its intolerable heat.

There is a *slight* way of healing the sinner's hurt,—“Saying Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” Israel's false prophets healed her hurt slightly by prophesying smooth things, and uttering “false burdens;” so there is a way in which false teachers heal the sinner's wound slightly, or in which the sinner himself heals it slightly. It is sometimes said, your sins are not so great, and there are many excuses for you. But this is unavailing, for conscience tells that our sins are great and that all excuses are vain. Or, it is said, the state of your soul is not so bad, not so corrupt as is represented, and you can amend when you like. This, too, is unavailing. The sinner feels that his state of soul is really bad, and that he cannot improve himself. Or, it is said, God is not so angry and His law is not so strict. But this, too, is vain. It may soothe the soul for a little, but conscience tells that God does hate sin, and that his law is “exceeding broad.” Or, it is said, future punishment is not so terrible as it is supposed to be, and there will be multitudes in the same condemnation. But neither does this bring peace. Still the soul hears the voice of God asking, “who can dwell with the devouring fire?” and it feels that no amount of companionship can make the flames of hell more tolerable. Or, it is said, do good works, give alms, live well, and this will pacify the soul. Alas, no! Still it is felt that no good works, or alms deeds, can ever make God forget that we have sinned, or blot out that penalty, “the soul that sinneth

it shall die." In all these ways there may be a temporary relief, a transient ease, but that is all! There is a covering over of the wound, but nothing more. The hurt is still unhealed. The wound is still there, as deadly and as desperate as ever. And why is it so? Because all these different methods of cure still leave the root of the malady the same. They do not touch the seat of the disease. They do not replace the severed limb in its original position. They do not bring back the soul to God. They all stop short of perfect reconciliation with God. Unless this is reached, all is vain. Any method which leaves the soul still uncertain as to its relationship to God and friendship with Him, is vain. It is a slight healing of the hurt. It does not go deep enough. It does not embrace the whole disease. It says Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

But there is a *true* way of healing the sinner's hurt. There is a sufficient and suitable cure provided. There is balm in Gilead and there is a physician there. The false cure was saying peace when there was no peace. The true cure is saying peace *when there is peace*. Right peace, in a right way, is the cure of the soul. Nothing will heal it but this. Peace with God, forgiveness, reconciliation, friendship, the assurance of his love, these are the means by which the wound is thoroughly and eternally healed. This is the removing of all distance, the bringing back the soul to its original state of blessed relationship to Him who gave it being. This is the reunion of the soul with that God in whose favour is life, and whose friendship is the sunshine of eternity.

There is ground for this assured peace. Not because we are less than the chief of sinners, but because Christ died for the chief. Not because we can make peace for ourselves, but because God has made peace for us through the blood of the Cross. It is the Cross of Christ that heals. "By his stripes we are healed." From his wounds there flows a healing virtue, so that as many as touch them are made perfectly whole. His blood has opened a fountain whence the waters of life pour themselves, in healing streams, through this diseased world. Israel was healed in the wilderness, by looking to the brazen serpent. So, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

"Acquaint thyself now with God and be at peace, and

thereby good shall come unto thee." It is simply acquaintanceship with God that brings peace, and that peace draws after it every good. It is what the soul sees, in the character of that God who has given his Son, that relieves the troubled conscience. It is this that unburdens the spirit and eases the heart. It is this that makes us feel at home with God and assures us that there is forgiveness with Him. It is this that makes us feel that He is just such a God as we can perfectly trust, just such a God as a sinner may flee to. This knowledge of what God is, and what God has done in sending his Son into the world that we might live through Him, removes our suspicion and dread. It shows us how unkind and unjust it was in us to eye him as a hard master, whose presence could only disturb our peace. And this goes to the very root and seat of the disease. It says Peace, peace, *when there is peace*. This is the very health of the soul. This peace with God, through the knowledge of the blood that has been shed, acts like a new well-spring of life to the soul. It pours new joy, new energy, new strength into the whole man. It makes the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing.

Why, then, so many doubts? Has God not done everything to take all these utterly away? Has he not told you of his love to sinners, and of that love pouring itself freely down through the channel which righteousness has made for it? Has he not sent to you the message of love by the lips of incarnate love, his own Son manifest in flesh? Why, then, still doubt? You are hindering the healing of the hurt. Every such doubt is hindering this. For all these doubts cherish the disease and check the cure. They have their root in unbelief. They show the tendency of the soul to recur to the false methods of healing, and its unwillingness to receive the true. They are just so many attempts to mix up the false with the true, and so many grievings of that loving Spirit who is seeking to lead you at once into the free, full grace of God, as the fountain of all health and joy.

GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE.

*“To make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God; according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus, our Lord.”—*EPH. iii. 9--11.

*“According to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.”—*2 TIM. i. 9.

“THE FALL” is a word with which we have become so familiar, that the event itself has lost its appalling magnitude of evil in our eyes. Yet what an infinite calamity was it in reality! What a triumph of the evil one! What dishonour to Jehovah! What desolation to this earth! The flood-gates of iniquity had been burst open, and who could close them again or stay the overflowing waters? The torch which God had lighted upon earth had been extinguished, and who could rekindle it or dissipate the gross darkness now brooding over the desolate region, which had so lately been pronounced “very good?”

To the unfallen creation how fearful the disaster must have seemed! God's purpose appeared frustrated, his power baffled, his wisdom defeated, his very throne assailed. Who could now deem himself secure? Who might not in like manner fall? The highest creature-throne in heaven was no longer safe; for who could assure himself that this flood of evil now broken loose might not swell up till it left nothing but the throne of God untouched? What region, what station could be reckoned safe when this new creation had given way? What angel could feel secure, when man had fallen? Every thing created seemed on the edge of ruin, and it was as if even the Creator's arm had lost its hold over the work of his hands, and was unable to arrest the universal collapse of

creation into its former non-existence, or rather into a state far worse and more terrible than that,—SIN!

For scarce had God finished his six days' work, fashioning man in his own image and providing for his habitation a world of beauty, than man revolted, and this rejoicing earth began to sink back into its former chaos. Scarce had the morning stars concluded their glad song over the new-formed earth, than they were called to weep over its ruins. Scarce had the sons of God done shouting for joy over their new-born fellow-immortal, than they were called to mourn over his untimely and disastrous fall. The event seemed like a death-blow to the hopes of the universe; and if some new-lighted star had suddenly gone out, it could not have left the circle which it enlightened in such hopeless gloom as did the apostasy of man. The former rebellion (of the angels) had indeed broken in like a flood upon the region of blessedness above, and carried off with one sweep a whole host of God's happy creation; and fearfully strange seemed that dark event which thinned the ranks of heaven's rejoicing myriads, which first made a portion of God's universe acquainted with sin, and disturbed the unbroken harmony of heaven. But then by the formation of man that breach seemed to be repaired, and harmony restored, never to jar again. A barrier seemed placed immovably against any future invasion of a like desolating flood. When, however, this was swept away,—when the recovered harmony was marred again, the case might be deemed desperate. Each creative movement seemed only to end in more signal failure. Especially when this strange reverse was not the operation of ages or years, but the work of a moment, the case seemed doubly hopeless. What God occupied six whole days in building, was overthrown in the twinkling of an eye! It looked as if evil had the entire mastery over good, and the creature over the Creator,—and as if all things must be left to fall inevitably to wreck, the universe to drift away from the control of the hand that formed it, and sin to prove omnipotent.

But the Creator was still upon his throne, and his sceptre unwrested from his hand. He was still the King eternal, immortal, and invisible, GOD ONLY WISE, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things. The time had now come for the forth-putting of his power, and the exhibition of the riches of his unsearchable wisdom and knowledge

That very event, so appalling in itself and apparently so

unforeseen, soon began to assume a very different aspect. Light broke, though but in a faint streak at first, yet sufficient to proclaim a blessed dawn and a glorious day. The creature's ruin, instead of appearing the result of accident, or as an irreparable disaster, began to develop itself as the first indication of a marvellous purpose of manifesting the character of the Creator, and laying far deeper and broader than before, the foundations on which a holy creation might be immovably based. The darkness was permitted, not only that it might furnish a contrast to the light, but that it might afford an opportunity for bringing forth that light into sevenfold brightness and beauty. God's mighty, original, eternal design now began to unroll itself. It became evident that the fall was no unforeseen occurrence, and its remedy no *afterthought*, no sudden expedient devised for the purpose of arresting an unexpected calamity. The permitted entrance of sin, through man's apostasy, was seen to be part of an everlasting design on the part of God for accomplishing ends which could not have been fulfilled, had sin not been allowed to enter.

When the angels kept not their first estate, they were at once consigned over to the judgment of the great day. There was no deliverance for them. Chains and darkness were their portion and inheritance. Once fallen, they were fallen for ever. Once condemned, they were for ever doomed to lie under wrath. In their case God showed himself a consuming fire. Nothing of his character was displayed save his displeasure against sin, and his swiftness to avenge it on all the workers of iniquity. Righteousness shone out in this prompt act of recompense, but no further light was cast upon his character, no further discovery made of his infinite mind. He had spoken out once, and let the universe know how he hated iniquity. But that was all. There was manifested no mercy, no pity, no love, no grace. It had been seen how "glorious in holiness" he was in punishing; it had not yet been known whether he could be glorious in love by forgiving. The infinite dimensions of his heart had not yet been seen. Neither had any security been given that sin should not infect the whole creation like a universal pestilence, seizing upon every creature that either had been or might be brought into being. Now, however, by the second grand revolt, a scheme was to be introduced, which, while it was to unfold the character of Jehovah in a way which could not

have been done before, was also to afford security against all future inroads of the dreaded pestilence, and establish in holy peace for ever that universe whose very foundations seemed to be giving way.

In the creation of man, no more of God's perfections were displayed than in the creation of angels. Mercy had not yet been shown forth, nor, indeed, could be to an unfallen creature, for mercy is love to the miserable, and therefore could go forth to none but the fallen. Thus, the very goodness of the new-born creation appeared as if it would impede the display of the Creator's glory. Man, therefore, was permitted to fall. And then began the full display of God's character, by the manifestation of his infinite love; and then it was that sevenfold lustre began to be shed upon every other perfection, by the manner in which this love secured the deliverance of the object loved. The power, the wisdom, and goodness, the justice of Jehovah, rose up into new and awful grandeur, borne up by mercy, and with mercy crowning all. It was not the magnifying of one attribute at the expense of another—love at the expense of holiness; it was glorifying all the perfections of the Godhead together. It was a stupendous display of God's character. It was a marvellous insight into the bosom of the Father.

The *grace*, that is, the free love of God was the centre round which all this glory gathered. In redemption, we have the unveiling of this free love to sinners. In creation, it was seen that he could love the holy; in redemption, it is declared that he can love the unholy, and yet be holy himself; yea be glorified in holiness; that in the very act of loving the unholy, he could manifest more holiness than in punishing them. The infinite dimensions of his paternal heart now began to disclose themselves. Until now, his character had only been partially revealed. But now in redeeming man, its hitherto undiscovered depths were displayed to view. Before the fall, the question was, Can God love the sinner? At the fall this was answered by himself, and it was declared that he could; that there was love in him, even to those who had entirely forfeited it, and stripped themselves of every thing that could have attracted love. This was the dawn of day for a dark world. In this there was hope for the guilty. But the next question was, What will this love do for these worthless objects? Will it content itself with mere compassion? God's first promise proclaimed

it to be a love that would rest satisfied with nothing but the salvation of its object. It was love that could not rest till it had replaced the fallen creature in its former condition of blessedness and favour. But is it a love that will encounter obstacles, that will incur sacrifices in order to accomplish its end? The answer to this was God's gift of his well-beloved Son. God so loved the world that he gave his Son. Thus it was proved that there was nothing too costly for this love to part with in order to get vent to itself in the salvation of the beloved object. This unspeakable gift is alike the pledge and measure of the love. What infinite depths of undiscovered love were thus laid bare! But, is it a love that can survive contempt and rejection? Is it a love that can love on, even when it meets with nothing but hatred in return for all this lavish kindness,—malignant enmity in requital of friendship so glorious, so amazing? The history of this world's six thousand years attests this. It has been proved that it is patient, unwearied, long-suffering love,—love which many waters cannot quench, neither can the floods drown.

It is thus, that through the fall of man, God's character has been opened up to us, and his name revealed in a way which otherwise could not have been accomplished. The exceeding riches of the grace of God have thus been displayed to us by means of the utter worthlessness of the object on which that grace was fixed. Grace can only show itself in connection with an object in which there is absolutely "no good thing." Let there be one good thing about it,—one part not utterly naught,—and grace has no room to show itself. Grace steps in when every other attribute retires. Grace takes for granted not that we *have* any thing, but that we are destitute of every thing; that "the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint." With the righteous, grace has nothing to do. It hands them over to righteousness to be dealt with according to its decree. With those who can produce even one lingering remnant of goodness, one trace or token of holiness, it can have nothing to do. It has to do with the lost, the guilty, the hopeless, the undone. These are its objects. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

From the beginning, God's dealings with fallen man, have been such as to bring out the riches of his grace. At man's first sin, grace came forth. It does not matter whether the scene recorded in Genesis, at the first giving of the promise,

took place one hour, or many hours after the sin had been committed. The moment the sin was committed, grace stepped in to suspend the stroke of vengeance from the transgressor's head. Nothing but grace could have kept Adam one moment out of hell, or obtained for him the respite of a single hour. From that moment to this, grace has been flowing out to this fallen world; and in God's treatment of the sinner, its fulness has been displaying itself. One sin and one sinner were not enough for its development. It is "the manifold grace of God;" and hence, there must be sins innumerable, and of every various form and name, as well as sinners in number countless, in order to show forth its manifold nature, as well as its infinite dimensions. In every variety of situation man has been placed, and sin of every shape allowed to develop itself, in order that grace yet more abundant might be brought forth to meet it. Man has been permitted to wander to the utmost lengths to which it is possible for a creature to go, in order to show what resources of grace there are in God to meet the utmost extremity of sin. At each successive outburst of human wickedness, grace has come in and taken new occasion to display itself; and the more that sin has abounded, the more has grace "overabounded." The higher that the tide of iniquity has swelled, the higher has grace risen, far surmounting the utmost heights of sin. The wider that wickedness has spread its hideous circle, the wider has grace stretched her far ampler compass, proving that there is not one spot on this ruined world, even "the ends of the earth," nor one being of the fallen race on this side of hell, to which in its boundless reach it cannot extend.

Nor is it enough to say that every sinner is a monument of grace, and every sin an occasion for the display of grace. This is true, but it is not all. Each sinner is so in a way *different from any other*; and hence there is a different development of grace in each. Each case is quite peculiar, and hence each case is a new, distinct, peculiar manifestation of grace. It is grace seen in a new aspect, and in a new light, such as it has in no other case ever been presented to us. It is not merely true, that the history of the ransomed multitude is a history of the "reign of grace;" but the story of each individual of all that glorious company forms of itself a distinct and peculiar history of the same. It is not as if we were merely called to contemplate and admire

one dazzling blaze from one great central planet; it is the form and lustre of ten thousand resplendent orbs that we are summoned to gaze upon; learning from each a different story, and gathering from each a peculiar display of the infinite power of God. Thus, each saved sinner is a trophy of grace in a way such as no other sinner is or can be. Each has a wondrous story to tell of the grace that sought and found him; and each has a story of his own, such as no other has or can have. It is of grace that all have learned to sing; but one has one thing to say of it, and another another; all marvellous, yet all different! And then each single sin of each of these redeemed ones has been the occasion of a separate display of grace! What a history of manifold grace, then, does the life even of one ransomed sinner furnish! What, then, must be that manifestation of it brought out by the whole history of the great multitude that no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation!

But how far has this grace come? It has come the whole length of a sinner's distance from God. It did not wait till the sinner sought it, ere it came forth. It came unbidden and undesired. Nor did it wait till some of the distance had been removed, or some of the hindrances surmounted by the sinner himself. It traversed the whole distance itself, and over-leaped, or rather leveled every barrier. It burst forth spontaneous from the bosom of eternal love, and rested not till it had removed every impediment, and found its way up to the sinner's side, swelling round him in full flow. It does away the distance between the sinner and God, which sin had created. It meets the sinner on the spot where he stands, and it approaches him just as he is. It does not wait till there is something to attract it, nor till there is some good reason in the sinner for its flowing to him. No; unattracted, and without any reason in the sinner, it pours itself forth in all its fulness towards objects whose only title is their utter worthlessness, and their possessing nothing for the holy eye of God to delight in.

But what does grace expect from the sinner? Simply that he be a recipient of its boundless fulness. It asks no recompense *afterwards*, just as it sought no recommendation *before*. It does not calculate upon receiving an adequate requital in order to compensate for its freeness before. No. It never supposes anything in man but unworthiness, nor could it do

so without losing its character as *grace*. No doubt, when once it comes into contact with the sinner, it flings and fastens round him bonds of resistless love; it sets the whole soul in motion towards the God of grace, but this not as a matter of recompense, but simply a necessary and inevitable result. It is *grace* entirely from first to last. It was grace when it first thought of the sinner; it was grace when it found and laid hold of him; and it is grace still when it hands him up into glory.

But what is the *extent* of this grace? It is boundless. Like the heart of which it is the gracious out-flowing, it is altogether infinite. No amount of sin can impede its course, or arrest its resistless flow. Transgressions of scarlet and crimson dye, in a moment disappear before it, and become like snow or wool. Mountains of iniquity are leveled at its touch as the small dust of the balance. An ocean of guilt evaporates as a drop before its glowing warmth, and becomes as if it had never been. No number, no extent, no enormity of abominations can withstand grace so free, so abundant, so omnipotent. Where is the sinner on this side of hell that is beyond its reach? What mountains of sin can it not level; what valleys of iniquity can it not exalt, till the highway between the sinner and God is made straight and plain, so that none need mistake it or stumble upon it, or imagine that it is not for him?

But how has the distance been removed? How have these mountains been swept away? How have mercy and truth met together? How have righteousness and peace kissed each other? The apostle answers, "he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And again he tells us, "him God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past." It is by the blood of sacrifice that the channel has been opened up through which grace might find its way to us. Nothing but propitiating blood could effect this. Grace was from eternity in the Father's bosom, but it was, if we may so speak, pent up, and could find no vent to itself till the death of God's own Son opened up a righteous way. It is then through blood that grace reaches us, the blood of a sin-bearer, a substitute; blood that proclaimed God's infinite love of holiness, and infinite abhorrence of sin; blood whose shedding proclaimed to the universe that not one jot or tittle

of God's inexorable law had fallen to the ground. It is by this accepted sacrifice that grace now flows freely down to the chief of sinners. It is thus that the distance between the soul and God is done away with. It is thus that God can speak peace to the unrighteous and be righteous still; yea, be more righteous than before,—be glorified in every holy perfection. The law has been magnified, and its uttermost penalty exhausted by another as our substitute, and thus the lawtul captive is permitted to go free, and in his freedom God is glorified.

But how does this grace become connected with individuals so as to save them? It is free in itself, but may not its coming to the soul be a matter of merit or purchase? No! The link that binds it to the soul is as free as itself. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." It is by believing God's declaration concerning the grace that a way is opened for its entrance. And this believing is the result of the Holy Spirit's teaching,—the effect of his almighty power. In believing it we become recipients of it, just as by our unbelief we were rejecters of it; and this change, this reversal of our attitude in reference to grace is through the mighty power of God. There is nothing that the natural man is so unwilling to admit or so unable to comprehend as grace. In our dealings with each other, equity, law, justice are supposed to mingle, but grace is not admitted. Hence we are far more ready to introduce the former than the latter into our dealings with God, and we more easily understand principles of legal right and claim, than principles of simple grace. The natural *mind* is as much a stranger to the very idea of grace as the natural heart is opposed to it. Hence unbelief of this grace is our besetting sin. It is the rock upon which sinners stumble and are lost. They will submit to any thing for salvation but grace. They would do any thing to be saved, but take it freely they will not. They prefer to perish. Hence the necessity of the Spirit's taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to the soul.

And what, then, is the effect of grace, believed by the sinner? Peace with God and a holy walk with him through this wilderness. Being justified by faith we have peace with God. The perception of God's gracious character, the belief of his forgiving love, removes the gloomy dread of him which the awakened conscience entertains, and we see in him a

Being such as we can rejoice in, such as we can hold fellowship with, even in the full consciousness that we are the chief of sinners. Acquaintanceship with God produces peace as its immediate and sure result, and the soul being at peace with him delights to walk with him in holy fellowship and filial trust, seeking to be entirely like him whom he loves, and to spend and be spent for him who has removed his sins from him as far as the east is from the west.

But there are "riches of grace" in God, which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard;" riches of grace which, for their full development, are reserved for the ages yet to come. (Eph. ii. 7.) We are told of the "grace that is to be brought us at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter i. 13.) Eternity alone will unfold these unsearchable riches, and disclose all their unfathomable depths. What openings up are yet to be made of God's marvelous grace! What a reserve of rich discovery is in store for the ransomed multitude, when out of the bosom of eternity new treasures of grace shall unroll themselves, as if all that is past had been as nothing when compared with what is still to come!

If such be the "exceeding riches of the grace of God," past, present, and to come, what ample encouragement is held out to sinners! There is grace enough in the bosom of the Father for the chief of sinners. His love flows freely out like a full river, and all may come. **WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE OF THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY.** This love is *free*, and no amount of sin in us can straiten it, or make it insufficient to meet our case. It takes us just as we are, and brings to us its message of peace.

True, many refuse, but this does not alter the invitation or diminish the grace. Nay, *all would refuse*; not one would listen, or believe, or turn, were it not for the forth-putting of that mighty power of the Father, by which he wrought in Christ Jesus, when he raised him from the dead. (Eph. i. 19.) It is the resurrection-power of God alone that can raise the dead in sin. And it is this that brings out the hidden depths of the love of God. It is this that shows us yet deeper riches of grace than could have been conceived. For it brings to light that deep purpose of eternal love which resolved to bear with all rejection and refusal; which resolved to put forth an overcoming power, and take possession of the very hearts that had resisted and scorned his love. The riches of grace seen in the glad tidings of great joy are

unutterable ; but the riches of grace brought out in subduing the very souls that had for years rejected these, are deeper—vaster still. And every soul that has been drawn by the Father owns and feels the amazing grace that sent from above, and took him, and drew him out of many waters. He owns the deep love that at first sent the message of peace ; but he also owns the deeper love that made that message effectual,—that won his heart,—that subdued his whole man,—that wrought love in him in whom there had been nothing but enmity before. Take, for instance, a people to whom some faithful messenger of God has for many a Sabbath preached the glad tidings of the kingdom. Each message that he brought proclaimed the free love of God. Long it was rejected. At length the Spirit was poured out, and the Father drew many sinners to himself. Was not this a new store of love that had hitherto remained unopened ? Was not this a fuller gushing forth of the fountain of love ? There was love manifested before in the message, even when not a soul was converted ; but the conversion of so many souls was an additional manifestation of love. This was bringing into view an inner circle of love,—the love that led not merely to the opening of a way of salvation, but of actually saving,—the love of the Father in “drawing,” John vi. 44, 65 ; the love of the Son in “quickenings,” John v. 21, and the love of the Spirit in “renewing.” Titus iii. 5.

O, surely the God in whom there are such “riches of grace” is just the very God for a sinner to go to. The grace thus manifested is just the very thing that he needs ; and the knowing this grace must be enough to dispel his fears. To know this free love, to go with assured confidence to that God in whom it is, as soon as we have heard that it is there, and to sit down among his children simply as those who have believed his love,—this, this is blessedness,—this, this is the foretaste of being for ever with the Lord.

To this we are invited. To this the gospel calls each weary child of Adam. It is into our Father's house, and into the fellowship of our Father's love, that the Spirit fain would lead us, knowing that there is enough and to spare. And, O, who would not enter in and rejoice for ever ? **WHO-SOEVER WILL**, is the word that salutes the ear of the far-off wanderer, and beckons him home. **WHOSOEVER WILL**, is the inscription above the gate. **WHOSOEVER WILL**, is the

word of welcome that greets him as he enters the long-forsaken dwelling.

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blest us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.”—Epn. 1. 3-5.

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THE SIN-BEARER.

“*Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree.*”—
1 PETER ii. 24.

CHRIST bare our sins! The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all. The words of Peter here are very expressive in the original language. They imply that He carried *up* our sins with him to the cross, and bare them there in all their weight alone. He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

Let us consider, first, the load He bore,—our *sins*. When speaking of this burden in the Book of Psalms, he speaks of it as a “burden too heavy to be borne.” Both in regard to the number and the weight of these sins they were intolerable. “Innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold of me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head, therefore my heart faileth me.” (Psalm xl. 12.)

There had been *sin*. That sin must be borne either by the sinner or by one in his room. The penalty must be exhausted. The sinner could not bear it, so as to bear up under it. He must sink into perdition. Nor could he exhaust the penalty, for it is eternal. None but Christ could meet the demand and exhaust the penalty. None but He could bear up under the load, so as to endure the full amount of punishment due. And He has borne it. He himself bore our sins in his own body on the tree.

Yet even He groaned beneath the intolerable weight. He who could uphold all things by the word of his power, was bowed down to the earth with the burden of sin,—sin not his own! He who could with infinite facility sustain the stupendous weight of worlds upon worlds innumerable; He upon whose shoulders rested the mighty burden of the universe;—was pressed even to agony and death, with the load

of our transgressions! It was this that in the garden wrung from him the great drops of blood : it was this that made his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death ; it was this that nailed him in agony to the accursed tree ; it was this that wrought the death of him who was the Prince of life, who had the keys of hell and death, and covered him who was "the light of the world" beneath the darkness of an earthly tomb. Hear, how in the Psalms he continually breathes forth the groanings of his wounded spirit beneath the pressure of our iniquities ; "thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. . . . I am feeble and sore broken, I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." (xxxviii. 2, 8.) Again, in that Psalm, which we know was designed to express his feelings under the pressure of our sins, when bearing them upon his own body on the tree, hear how he groans under the awful burden, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" &c. Such was the awful burden which he bore on his own body on the cross. Such was the way in which it crushed and bowed him down to the earth ! (Psalm xxii. 1.)

The feelings of the trembling sinner, when awakened under the terrors of the divine law, and made alive to the hell of sin within him, may help to give us some faint idea of the way in which the burden of our sins pressed upon Christ. It is true he had no sin ;—not the shadow of sin upon him, for he was the Holy One ; yet he speaks always of our sins as if they were his own, as if he had committed them. He felt under them just as if they were his own. He was perfectly holy, yet so closely were our sins bounds upon him by God, that he felt the pressure just as if they were his own. Being our substitute, God dealt with him as such ;—as if the sins he bore had really been *his*, not *ours*. Being thus in the eye of the law identified with those whose sins he bore, he was made to feel what they would have been doomed to feel, had God left them to reap themselves the fruit of their own transgressions. This awful burden he bore alone. He had none to aid him ;—none to relieve him of any part of its overwhelming pressure. There was none that *could* assist him to sustain its load. None could have borne it even had they attempted ; but none that really knew what the burden was, would have for a moment thought of attempting it. They would have shrunk from such a perilous undertaking. They would rather have taken upon themselves the burden

of upholding the universe, than attempted to bear even one fragment of that load of transgression which Christ bare on the tree. He therefore bore it alone. There was none to divide the burden with him; nor to uphold him under it. "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore, and my kinsmen stand afar off." "They all forsook him and fled."

And, as he bare it *alone*, so he bare it *fully* and *completely*. Though he was alone, yet he bore it *all*; he left no part *unborne*. Though alone, he was sufficient to bear it *all*; his being alone did not make his sacrifice less perfect, or its effects less complete. By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. It was an infinite work, but he accomplished it all. It was an infinite burden, but he sustained it all. It was an infinite penalty, but he *exhausted* it all. Not a stroke was left behind. Not one drop of the cup of judgment put into his hands was left behind. Observe, then, that in bearing our sins he really *exhausted* the penalty. The penalty was not warded off and prevented reaching us merely; it was *exhausted*. He bore the punishment which we should have borne, and thereby not merely prevented the law from arresting us with its claims and penalties, but actually *satisfied* the law to the full. "Christ," says the Apostle, "has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.)

The work, then, of bearing our sins is a *finished* work. It was in every jot and tittle accomplished by Christ, when he bore our sins in his own body on the tree. No part remains *for us* to do before we can obtain its benefits. No addition can be made to it in any way by us. "It is finished." It is not as if God had given Christ so much of the work to do, and left it for us to work out the rest in order to be saved. "'There is no more offering for sin,' now that He, by his one offering, has perfected for ever them that are sanctified, and purchased eternal redemption for us. "He has by himself purged our sins." He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: the chastisement of our peace was laid on him: he has finished transgression and made an end of sin: he has brought in everlasting righteousness, and made reconciliation for iniquity. Thus He is the end of the law, for righteousness to every one that believeth. There has been, once for all, offered a sacrifice such as the sinner needs, and such as God delights in,--

absolutely perfect and infinitely precious,—the sacrifice of the Lamb without blemish and without spot; the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. Here is a sacrifice which has abolished and superseded all other sacrifices, and by that very fact proved itself more perfect, more glorious than all. Here is a sacrifice, which, unlike the legal offerings of old, has never been, nor needs to be repeated, and by that very fact is proved to be more efficacious than all,—to have completely attained its end in providing a ransom for the sins of many. Here is set before us a finished sacrifice, and in that sacrifice a finished work; and in that work a finished atonement, a finished righteousness, the righteousness of God,—“He was made sin for us though He knew no sin.”

O, what an infinite treasure-house is here displayed, of all that a guilty soul, a burdened sinner can require! Here is an infinite provision for pardon, in Him who was named Jesus, because he came to save his people from their sins. Here is an infinite sufficiency, the sufficiency of him who was the Christ, the anointed of the Father, full of grace and truth. Here is infinite fulness, the fulness of Immanuel, God with us. The whole work is done,—all things are ready. The Lamb has been slain, atonement has been made, the rock has been smitten, the serpent has been lifted up, the ransom has been paid, the enemy has been vanquished and spoiled, captivity has been led captive, the year of jubilee, the acceptable year of the Lord has come! The new covenant has been fully completed, sealed, and ratified; and this is the declaration of Jehovah founded upon it, “I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more!”

But, more fully to illustrate the perfect character of this sacrifice,—and the completeness of that propitiatory work which is built upon it,—let me endeavour to contrast this work with some of man’s devices for putting away sin, and securing acceptance with God: let me show you how Christ has borne our sins in his own body on the tree, in opposition to those self-righteous ways in which blinded souls oftentimes seek to bear their own sins; or at least to assist Christ in bearing them.

1st, then;—*Christ* has borne our sins in opposition to our own *duties*. To be saved by doing something ourselves, and to be saved by believing what another has done, are surely things so totally at variance with each other, that we are at

a loss to discover how they could ever come to be confounded, or how any one professing to look for salvation from what Christ has done, could ever lean upon himself at all. Yet, as it was with the Pharisees of old, who, while most zealous for the sacrificial observances, yet trusted in their own works to make atonement for sin, so it is with many amongst ourselves. They name the name of Christ, yet make a Saviour of their duties, their good deeds, their honest or charitable doings, the excellence of their character, their zeal for the public welfare, their integrity, their honourable name among men! These are made to occupy the place of Christ in the bearing of their sins. Or if they are not sufficiently self-righteous to lay the whole weight and stress of their sins upon these, yet they persist in laying at least a large proportion of the burden upon them, as if it were the design of the Saviour's work, to lay part of the foundation, and leave them to finish it by their own exertions!

One would think that if we really knew what it is to bear the weight of sin,—even of *one* sin—we would shrink from the very idea of having any share in this. Yet we seem as if anxious to take some part in this awful work; as if covetous of a share in this awful honour. We seem solicitous to try our strength in bearing this tremendous burden, which none but God manifest in flesh could undertake, and whose pressure bowed even Him to the dust. We seem as if afraid lest Christ should not have done enough,—afraid lest we should be denied the privilege of bearing that which cost him the strong crying and tears, the agony of the garden, the shame of the cross, the abasement of the tomb. But all this burden has been borne already by him, and cannot in any way be borne over again by us. We can neither bear it in whole nor in part. It was not left for us to begin, neither was it left for us to finish: nor in any way to assist Christ (if we may so speak) in finishing it. Ours is to build upon a finished foundation, to keep the fabric separate from the foundation, and not to add any stones of our own to the sure, the perfect, the precious stone already laid. How common is it with many to conceive and speak of the work of Christ, as if the manner in which it was made available for us was by its imparting a meritorious, or at least an acceptable character to our own deeds! As if Christ saved us, not by doing anything for us, as our sacrifice or substitute, not by bearing our sins for us; but by giving such a value to all we do our-

selves, as to procure our acceptance with God! What is this but to make Christ the minister both of self-righteousness and sin? It is not to believe in Christ as bearing our sins, but merely as enabling us to bear them ourselves. In opposition to such self-righteous attempts to share with Christ both the burden and the glory of redemption, it is said that Christ *his own self* bare our sins. The expression is made very strong and particular, just in order to show that it was Jesus and none but Jesus; that it was Jesus and not our duties; that it was Jesus alone, and not partly Jesus and partly our duties, that bare our sins. Our duties then can bear no part of our sins at all. They cannot bear the weight of even one transgression of the law. However numerous and however goodly and excellent these duties may seem; and however few and small our sins may appear; yet still the best and holiest duty that ever a saint performed, cannot bear the weight of even the smallest sin! It is Jesus, none but Jesus, nothing but Jesus,—who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. He saves entirely himself; he does not, as some imagine, assist us in saving ourselves; nor does he allow us, as others imagine, to assist him in saving us.

Secondly, Christ bare our sins in opposition to all outward ordinances and privileges. How much stress do some lay on ordinances as if they were actually our Saviours! These seem all the mediatorship to which many are trusting for removing God's anger, and securing his favour. They are strict and frequent in the observance of ordinances, and having been so, their idea is that it would be unfair and unjust in God to lay their sins to their charge. That is to say, they substitute *ordinances* for the sacrifice of Christ. They lay their sins upon these, as if they were sufficient to bear the weight of one single transgression of a soul! They do perhaps admit, that in the observance of these they are defective; nay, perhaps, that ordinances themselves are weak and unavailing; but then they consider that the object of Christ's death was to give ordinances a value and efficacy which they had not in themselves, by which they are rendered capable of bearing the weight of their sins. That is to say, they imagine by these ordinances to *assist* Christ in bearing the weight of their sins. And when they find this does not bring any peace to their consciences, nor relieve them of the burden and sense of guilt, they are ready to say with Israel, wherefore have we fasted, and thou seest not? wherefore

have we afflicted our soul, and thou regardest not." Thus they deny the great truth that the bearing of our sins is a thing already past and perfected 1800 years ago;—that Christ only, Christ wholly bare our sins in his own body on the tree. If trusting to duties for the remission of sin, may be called an attempt to *bribe* God to forgive us: trusting to ordinances may be called an attempt to *flatter* God to forgive us. True, ordinances are of God's appointment. True, they are to be diligently observed, and we can expect no blessing when we neglect them. But then they are available only for the purpose for which God has set them up, and for no other. And seeing God has appointed them not for *procuring remission* of sin, but for *proclaiming remission* through another, even through Christ, it is an insult to the God by whom they were established to use them for an end for which he did not ordain them. It is an insult to that Saviour whose finished work they thus supersede. It is a miserable delusion of hell in the worshipper to take refuge in these as a sacrifice for sin. And this is true of all ordinances, even of that most sacred of all "the Lord's Supper." Even this ordinance, solemn as it is, glorious as it is, is not for the bearing of our sins. It has no more power than the most common rite of all to bear one single sin! It tells of sin already borne; borne by another; borne by Jesus in his own body on the tree. The bread and the wine are placed upon that table, not that they may bear our sins, or any part of our sins, but that they may testify of sins already borne. They are witnesses of sin already atoned for by another, and not to be again atoned for by us. They *seal* our *pardon*, but they do not purchase it. They *seal* our *peace*, but they do not procure it. They tell us of sin, whose weight has been already borne. They point away from themselves altogether. They point to Calvary; they point to the Cross; they point to Him who there bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and who by that one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Thirdly, Christ bare our sins in opposition to our own repentance and convictions of sin. How much and how often are sinners tempted to make these bear the weight of their sins. The formalist does this when he exalts repentance into the place of Christ, making *it* his atonement; when he imagines repentance to have of itself any power to procure remission. But I do not speak of the mere formalist; I

speaking of those in whose souls there is a deeper work going on; in whom there is much real anxiety and earnestness in the matter of religion. They are apt to lay upon conviction of sin, and mourning for sin a weight which they cannot bear. These are in themselves precious fruits of the Spirit's work in us; but be they ever so precious, they can never be substituted in room of Christ's work *for* us. They can no more bear the weight of sin than duties or ordinances can. Nay, their very end is to show you that sin is so awful a thing, its guilt so infinite, and its burden so intolerable, that you cannot bear any part of it yourself; and that if one fragment were to be laid on you it would sink you to the lowest hell. Convictions then are only precious when they lead you away from themselves to Christ; the law is still our schoolmaster, as it was Israel's to bring us to Christ. Yet how often is an anxious soul led to say—O! if I but had convictions I should have peace. Alas! alas! brethren, you know not what you say. Convictions are precious things, but they bring no peace of themselves, but war and storm and trouble. Convictions are precious things, but they are not salvation; they are not the Saviour. It is well to be awakened from sleep when danger is hanging over us; but to awake from sleep is not to escape from danger. It is only to be sensible of danger, nothing more. In like manner to be convinced is merely to be made sensible that your soul is in danger. It is no more. It is not deliverance. Of itself it can bring no deliverance; it tells us of no Saviour. It merely tells us that we need one. Yet there are many who, when they have had deep convictions of sin,—strong terrors of the law, congratulate themselves as if all were well. They say, "Ah! I have been convinced of sin: I have been under terrors; it is well with me, I am safe." Well with you?—Safe? Is it well with the seaman when he awakes and finds his vessel going to pieces upon the rocks amid the fury of the whelming surge? Is it well with the sleeper when he awakes at midnight amid the flames of his dwelling? Does he say, "Ah, it is well with me,—I have seen the flames." In this way sinners are not unfrequently led to be content with some resting-place short of the appointed one. Anxiety to have deep convictions, and contentment with them after they have been experienced,—are too often the means which Satan uses for turning away the sinner's

eye from the perfect work of Jesus, who himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree.

In like manner, many are led away from the sure foundation by the stress they are disposed to lay upon their own feelings and frames of soul. Most of us have doubtless felt the tendency of the mind to count much upon these, as if our whole forgiveness and peace with God depended upon these,—as if we could have no forgiveness, or at least no sense of forgiveness, save when our feelings were of a certain cast, or of a certain degree of warmth and power. But it is most manifest that if Jesus has indeed borne our sins himself, then nothing *in us* at all can avail in aught to this end. Nothing can be more dishonouring to Christ than thus to divide the work of atonement with him. Nothing can be more perilous to the soul than thus to conclude favourably or unfavourably of our good estate, or our acceptance with God, because of the possession or the want of certain joyful emotions of soul. The work of Christ remains perfect, and the foundation of God standeth sure, notwithstanding all the fluctuations and uncertainties that may roll over us. We change: it changes not. Our feelings vary, He varies not. His love and favour toward us do not depend upon the warmth or the steadfastness of our love toward him, but remain ever the same. Our changeful feelings may often times abate our joy, but our peace ought to abide unmoved, our conscious reconciliation ought never to be interrupted. Our peace with God, our forgiveness, our reconciliation flow wholly from the sin-atoning sacrifice of Jesus; and that has no variableness. A conscience once sprinkled with blood will whisper peace even in the darkest hour,—when new discoveries of corruption are rising up to alarm and amaze us, and our iniquities seem a burden too heavy to be borne. A soul that realizes and keeps in view the perfect efficacy of that sprinkled blood to purge from dead works, will still possess itself in peace and patience even when all sensible experience of delight has fled, and insensibility and deadness weigh it to the dust. It is not our feeling towards God that is our ground of peace, but his feeling towards us. It is not what we feel in ourselves, but what we know of Him, that produces and maintains the serenity of the soul. He is our rock. He is our peace. He is our all; and we are complete in Him!

Fourthly, Christ bare our sins, in opposition to our own faith, our own graces, and to the work of the Spirit *in us*.

It is not our faith or our holiness that bears the burden of our sins. To make a Saviour of our faith is as utterly subversive of the gospel as to make a Saviour of our works. To trust in our works is self-righteousness,—to trust in our faith is the same. There is no merit, no virtue in believing, which we can build a claim upon. To feed upon the consciousness of faith, is not to feed upon the bread of life;—to rest upon our act of faith is to lose sight of Him who bare our sins in his own body on the tree. Our forgiveness and peace do not rest upon the work of the Holy Spirit in us,—nor upon the graces and fruits which he calls forth and ripens in the soul. It is Christ's work *for* us, and not the Spirit's work *in* us, that is the ground of our peace. Being justified by faith we *have* peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. The work of grace within us cannot bear the burden of our sins; it cannot come in the room of the finished sacrifice and the sprinkled blood, by which, being once purged, "we have no more conscience of sin." It is not upon our growth in grace and in holiness, that we are to rest our peace. It is not thus that a guilty conscience is made clear, or a burdened conscience relieved. No. Christ is our propitiation. Christ is our peace. Christ is our righteousness. We are *complete* in Him; not in ourselves,—not in our holiness,—not in our love, but *in Him*. At all times, and in all conditions, complete *in Him*, so long as we hold fast our confidence in his name, and rest upon the glorious truth, which, in spite of all fluctuations in us, remains for ever the same; that He, his ownself, bare our sins in his own body on the tree. Besides, our graces never will grow, the fruits of the Spirit never will ripen, so long as we hang our forgiveness upon them. It is only when forgiven that we begin to grow in grace. It is not till we are at peace with God, that we can begin to be holy. And it is by constantly realizing that forgiveness, and taking it in the same way to the end, as we received it when first we believed,—that we can make any progress in grace at all. The more we grow in grace, the more shall we see of the infinite sufficiency of Jesus, and our perfect completeness in Him, however poor and empty in ourselves; the more shall we be led to throw ourselves wholly upon Christ; so that our iniquities may be all borne by Him, and none left for ourselves to bear. Let us beware of resting upon our grace instead of resting upon our Saviour. Grace is indeed a most precious treasure,—an inestimable gift; and in the

conscious possession of such a treasure, you may with all safety take up the Apostle's rapturous song—"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of His abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope." But still remember that it is not and cannot be our Saviour! It cannot bear the burden of our sins; it cannot purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. It cannot be our advocate, it cannot be our mediator, it cannot form the real ground of our hope and peace and confidence toward God. Christ has borne our sins in his own body on the tree, and that is our hope, that is our peace, that is our confidence and joy.

While thus there is nothing that can give us peace but the sight of Jesus bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, there is nothing that can *humble* us but this. An unforgiven soul is always self-righteous and proud. It is the free, the complete forgiveness of the Cross, that humbles the soul and melts the heart. A partial forgiveness, that would keep us in suspense, would only harden and irritate the soul. But a complete forgiveness prostrates at once the rebellious spirit,—disarms its suspicions,—dissolves it in penitence and love! "They shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn!" So long as we conceive of the forgiveness as partial, so long as we are afraid to search into the depths of iniquity within, we are afraid to know the worst. Till the conscience is thoroughly purged by the blood of sprinkling, we shrink from the full and unreserved scrutiny of our hearts. But when once the conscience is made clean, then we dread no longer even the fullest exposure in the clearest light, for we already know the *worst* of ourselves, that we are the chief of sinners, and we know the *best*, that we are completely forgiven! In these circumstances, we are delivered from all temptation to palliate the guilt or lessen the number of our sins; we feel now under no necessity to vindicate ourselves, or to take any other ground of defence but just that we are the chief of sinners. It is this that humbles us, and it is this that gives us simplicity and guilelessness of heart—that delivers us from every deceitful, sinister, selfish purpose and motive. And it is to this that David alludes in the 32d Psalm, when, after speaking of the blessedness of man when transgression is forgiven, &c., he thus finishes the character, and sums up the privileges of a forgiven soul,—“in whose spirit there is no guile.” Being freely and completely for-

given,—all his former temptations to deceit and guile have fled away,—his soul becomes as a weaned child.

Behold, then, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world! See how He bare the mighty load of your transgressions, and how he bare it alone! His body was the point upon which all was concentrated,—upon which the mighty mass of sin was laid entire! In His death upon the Cross, behold the mighty sacrifice, the ransom for the sins of many! See there the sum of all His obedience and sufferings! Behold the *finished* work!—the work finished and completed in all its parts eighteen hundred years ago,—a work to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken,—a work of stupendous magnitude which He alone could have undertaken and accomplished! Behold our sacrifice, our finished sacrifice, our perfected redemption, the sole foundation of our peace and hope and joy. “He, his own self, bare our sins in His own body on the tree.” It is not said that our duties, or our prayers, or our fastings, or our convictions of sin, or our repentance, or our honest life, or our alms-deeds, or our faith, or our grace,—it is not said that these bare our sins,—it was Jesus who bare it; Jesus himself, Jesus alone, Jesus, and none but Jesus, “bare our sins in his own body on the tree.”

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

‘ And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”
—REV. xix. 6

THAT there is a God, all nature cries aloud, through all her works; and, the religious rites and ceremonies, which prevail on earth, plainly declare the general belief, that this great Being, has not retired from the scene of his creating power, but, still, as a SOVEREIGN GOD, presides over the worlds and the creatures which He has made. Of the true nature and character of this government, however, little can be gathered from the light of reason, and the researches of the learned. To obtain clear and correct information upon this point, we must look elsewhere: we must have recourse to the sacred volume, and, such are the views which *it* presents of the Divine government, that, in the contemplation of them, we shall find abundant matter for the loud and harmonious shout in the heavenly world:—Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! According to the Scriptures, the government of God, is *unique*, for, whereas the right of earthly monarchs to reign, is founded, sometimes, in conquest; sometimes, in the elective franchise; and, sometimes, in hereditary claim; the government of God is founded in none of these things, but, in principles, infinitely more sublime. It is founded,

1. IN CREATION. He, who, on earth, has founded an empire, is thought to have a right to rule the empire, which he has founded. Now, God having created all things· having brought all things out of nothing, into existence, has, in the sublimest sense of the term, *founded* the empire of the universe; and, therefore, has an undoubted right to

reign over the empire which he has thus founded. Hence the language of the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." And again: "O come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. He made us, and not we ourselves; we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

2. IN PRESERVATION. He, who originally created, still sustains all things. The whole universe rests upon his hand, and should this great Being, only for a moment, withdraw his upholding hand, the pillars of the universe would sink; the whole frame of nature would be dissolved; yea, all created existence would immediately vanish away, and leave nothing behind save the throne of God, and a boundless solitude! As all things, then, depend upon God, for their continued, as well as original existence, here of course is another firm foundation upon which the government of God is rightly based.

3. IN THE PERFECTIONS OF GOD. Certainly, it is right and proper that he should hold the reins of government, who is best qualified to rule: especially where such immense interests are at stake. And here we may ask, with the Psalmist: "Who, in the heavens, is like unto the Lord our God? and, who, in all the earth, can be compared unto Him?" Is *wisdom* requisite to manage the complicated affairs of this vast universe? God is infinite in wisdom. Is *goodness* necessary? God is supremely, unchangeably, and everlastingly good. Is *power* requisite? "The thunder of his power who can understand?" But, why speak we of single perfections? God, as one well remarks, is

"A God all o'er consummate, absolute;
Full orb'd; in his whole round of rays complete."

No wonder then, that the exile of Patmos, caught up, in the visions of God, heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying: Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! The immediate occasion of this great shout in heaven, seems to be the fall of mystical Babylon, or Papal Rome; but, no doubt, every new development of Divine Providence, will renew the shout, through all the ages and cycles of great eternity! That we may better understand

the subject; and, also be better prepared to respond to the loud and rapturous shout in glory, Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent, reigneth; let us notice some of the distinguishing features, or characteristics of the government of God. And

1. *It is supreme and universal.* The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, says the Psalmist, and his kingdom ruleth over all. There are many governments on earth; and, doubtless, there are many thrones and principalities in the other worlds, but the throne of God is high over them all! Alexander the Great was called master of the world, but there were many regions of the earth over which his sceptre was never stretched, and there were many people of whom he had never even heard! And even within the limits of his acknowledged empire—how many kings disdained his control! Not to mention the lions of the forest, and the leviathans of the deep, could Alexander the Great rule the changing seasons? Could he command the lightning? or the rain? or the hail? or the storm? Alexander's kingdom was extensive, but not to be compared with the kingdom of the God of heaven! Alexander ruled over many kings, but God OVER ALL! Yes, God hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and, literally, his kingdom ruleth *over all!* over all men, over all angels, over all worlds, over all creatures, in the broadest, sublimest sense, OVER ALL! But

2. *The government of God is not only supreme and universal, it is particular.* It not only extends to great, but to small objects; not only to the mighty whole, but to every part! Yes, whilst his power and his wisdom are employed in upholding and directing the “hosts of suns, and stars, and adamantine spheres, wheeling unshaken amid the void immense”—his wisdom and his goodness are engaged in directing and controlling all things on earth, from the revolution of an empire to the falling of a sparrow! It is even so! He that garnishes the heavens also beautifies the earth. He that numbers the stars, and calls them all by their names, also numbers the dew-drops of the morning, and the sands upon the sea-shore! That hand which bears up the mighty seraph, sustains the meanest insect, and He who bids the roaring tempest sweep the earth, directs the breathing of the softest zephyr! Stagger not at this! for, “as one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day,” so an atom is with God as a world, and a world

as an atom! As immensity cannot confound him, so minuteness cannot escape him! The fact is, with God there is nothing great! With God there is nothing small! Some persons admit the general government of God, but deny his particular providence. The idea is absurd; for what, if I should say of such a physician, he has a general practice, but no particular patient! or, of such a scholar, he is a man of very general reading, but he never reads any one book! But what says the Saviour upon this subject? It is striking: it is conclusive. "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing? and not one of them shall fall without your Father! Fear not, the very hairs of your head are all numbered!" How small is the sparrow in the lone wilderness! and how insignificant is the single hair which has fallen from your head! And yet, according to the Saviour, even such things are not overlooked in the providence of God! And what is taught as true, in the word of God, is shown to be necessarily true also by reason—for we find that in the world of nature, providence, and of grace; in all the departments of the Divine government, we find that great matters and little matters are oftentimes linked together, and who does not know that in a chain stretched across a river, the breaking of a small link may prove as serious a matter as the breaking of a great link! How many striking illustrations of this fact have we in *history*, in *observation*, and *experience*! The cackling of geese once saved the city of Rome from the power of the Gauls. Joseph's coat of many colours was one link in a chain of most surprising events! A single playful remark of Francis the First, occasioned a bloody war between France and England. The carving of a few letters in the bark of a tree led to the noble invention of printing! And, to the apparently accidental falling of an apple, we are indebted for some of Sir Isaac Newton's sublimest demonstrations in natural science; and who, of us, need to be reminded of the tremendous consequences of our first parents' eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree?

"—— her rash hand, in evil hour,
 Forth reaching to the fruit; she plucked; she eat;
 Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
 Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
 That all was lost!"

And cannot every one of us, recollect some little remark,

or incident, which has led to most important changes in our lives and circumstances? In the case of Joseph—his coat of many colours—his dreams—the envy of his brethren—his being sold into Egypt—his being falsely accused—his being cast into prison—the king's prison—his interpreting the dreams of the chief baker and butler—and also the dreams of Pharaoh, and Joseph's interpretation of them—and the advancement of Joseph to be governor over all the land of Egypt—and finally, the settlement of Jacob and all his family in the land of Goshen—here are many things, some small, some great, linked together. Each event seemed to be casual, each actor free; and had the narrative been given by one of that age, he would very naturally have said: "It happened so;" and "it happened so"—and yet, if one of these things which "happened," had not happened, then, perhaps, the grand result would not have taken place! But this leads me to speak of another distinguishing feature, a characteristic of the Divine government.

3. *The government of God extends, not only to all things, but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their actions.* I am aware that we are here launching into the deep; but the Bible is our chart. It is a good chart, and we need fear nothing.

Reader, I am a Calvinist, so called; not that I embrace all the dogmas of the great Genevan divine, but certainly those that are embraced in the standards of our Church, and the longer I live, and the more carefully I examine the subject, the more thoroughly convinced am I, that the system, usually termed Calvinistic, is firmly based upon the Bible, *and will stand the "test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time."* Nay, I will go further, and say that the system needs only to be correctly understood by all the true people of God to be received and loved. I repeat it, I am a *Calvinist*, but I am no *fatalist*! I hold to the sovereignty of God, and also to the free-agency of man, and whilst I believe that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, yet it is in such a way as "thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence done to the freedom of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." It may not be possible for me to discriminate between the human and the divine agency; nor can I tell where one colour in the rainbow terminates, and where another begins; yet do I know

that these colours are different, and both in the rainbow! I may not be able to reconcile the free-agency of man with the *fixed purposes* of God which I believe; nor can I reconcile the free-agency of man with the *foreknowledge* of God, which all must believe; suffice it to know that both doctrines are taught in the Bible, and I know that the Bible is true. Do I trample upon reason? I deny it—I have a syllogism. It is this. My heavenly Father says that these doctrines are all true. My heavenly Father never tells lies, and therefore these doctrines are all true! But can they ever be reconciled or explained? I believe they both can, and will be, *when God gives the key!* Suppose, for a moment, that you were utterly unacquainted with your twofold existence, as consisting of soul and body. Now, whilst believing yourself to be a simple, and not a compound being, suppose I should say: “You are a *mortal* man, and must soon die;” and the next moment should pronounce you an *immortal* being, and affirm that you can never die, but must live for ever! Would you not say, that I spoke very absurdly, and used very contradictory language? But, should I add, wait a little, and you will have the key, and then all will be plain, and you will see that all is true, and there is no absurdity, no contradiction whatever; methinks you would reply, “No, sir, no key will answer, none can reconcile things so perfectly contradictory, ‘*mortal,*’ and yet at the same time ‘*immortal!*’ *must die!* and yet, will not, *cannot die!* the thing is absurd. It cannot be! But when you are let into the secret of your twofold nature—O, now! there is no difficulty at all! Even so, in relation to the sovereignty of God, and the free-agency of man, we find it difficult to reconcile these things *now, because the key is wanting.* In a future state the key will be given, and then there will be no difficulty at all. In the mean time let us remember, that the Bible is suited to our probationary state. We need our faith tried, as well as any other grace, or virtue. And now our grand inquiry is, What does the Bible teach? for

“This is the judge that ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail;
My guide to everlasting life,
Through all this gloomy vale.”

That the government of God extends, not only to all things but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their

actions. In other words, that the providence of God is, in some way or other, concerned with all that is done or transpires on earth, is manifest from very many passages of Scripture. The strongest, I think, are those which asser' the providence of God in cases where, least of all, it might have been expected.

Thus, in the 127th Psalm, we find it thus written: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." And again, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof, is of the Lord." But there is another passage of Scripture, perhaps, yet more remarkable; inasmuch as it asserts the providence and purpose of God in a case *involving sin*, dreadful sin! The passage referred to is found in Acts ii. 23: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." The crucifixion of Christ, by envious and wicked Jews, was certainly a crime of great magnitude; and yet the apostle Peter tells us expressly that it was "*according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.*" The explanation of the matter is simply this: God knowing all things, foreknew what evil passions would be waked up in the bosom of the Jews by the life, and doctrines, and reproofs of our Saviour, and he also knew full well to what a murderous deed those evil passions would lead, *if not restrained*. For wise and benevolent purposes towards our race, God determined, not to restrain those evil passions, but to leave the Jews, (as of course he justly might) to the freedom of their own will—leave them to act out their own depravity; purposing, as I have said, to overrule the whole matter to the accomplishment of great ends. God was certainly under no obligation to exercise a restraining influence upon those wicked Jews; and if He foreknew what crime they unrestrained would commit, his "foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, which had proved no less certain unforeknown;" hence the apostle Peter, at the very time that he speaks of the crucifixion of Christ as being according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, charges home all the guilt thereof, upon the wicked Jews. Observe his language! "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, *ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.*" The case of Joseph also,

is precisely in point. He was hated by his brethren, and by them sold into Egypt. This was a great sin; and afterwards, when in trouble, they freely confessed it. "And they said, one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress upon us. And Reuben answered, saying, Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear, therefore, behold also, his blood is required." Thus, all who had a hand in selling Joseph, acknowledged, and *felt* that they had acted freely, and they writhed under the stings of an accusing conscience. Yet, when Joseph made himself known unto them, and they were greatly troubled at his presence, what said Joseph unto them? "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive." There needs be no difficulty. The case is simply this. God being infinitely wise, knows how, in perfect consistency with the perfections of his character, to make use of all instrumentalities, good and bad, for the accomplishment of his wise and benevolent purposes. Certain things God *brings to pass* by a positive agency. Other things he *simply permits* to come to pass. And, let it be remarked, permission and approbation do not, by any means, mean the same thing. Napoleon Bonaparte, when a child, wished to go to a certain place, but was forbidden by his mother. Being headstrong, he persisted in going. "Well, my son," said his mother, "you may go, but remember! it is not with your mother's approbation." And thus God oftentimes *permits* things which, so far from commanding, he forbids, and highly disapproves. He permits sometimes because he would not interfere with the free-agency of the creature. He permits, sometimes, because he purposes (as in the cases already mentioned) to overrule the evil intended for good; and sometimes he permits, in a judicial way as a punishment for sins previously committed. Hence the language of Paul in reference to the heathen and their abominations: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God *gave them over* to do things which are not convenient." And now let it not be forgotten, this is all that is meant by a certain passage in our Shorter Catechism, which has been

much caviled at, viz. "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." In other words it may be stated thus: By the decrees of God, we mean no formal legislative enactment, (as, "Thus it shall be," and "thus it shall not be,") but, simply *the calm and settled purpose of an infinitely wise and gracious God, to bring to pass; or permit to come to pass whatsoever does come to pass, for the glory of his name.* Does any one ask, what is the difference between *bringing* to pass and *permitting* to come to pass? I answer, God brought to pass the incarnation of his Son; He permitted to come to pass his crucifixion. The difference is as wide as the east is from the west. Our doctrine, then, is simply this: By positive and permissive decrees, God, in wisdom and in love, manages the affairs of the universe, directs and controls all things, and all events, all creatures, and all their actions. It must be so, for suppose an event to take place without the divine permission; for example, then, it must be either because God is not aware of it, or cannot prevent it. If not aware of it, He cannot be omniscient; if He cannot prevent it, then he is not omnipotent; and then, of course, in the last case, "there must be a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself," which thought would be frightful! No, our doctrine is true, that the government of God extends not only to all things, but to all *events*, not only to all creatures, but to all their actions. In other words, that a Divine providence is concerned, in some way or other, concerned "in all the good and ill that checker human life." Is further proof demanded? Permit me to quote a very remarkable passage found in Isaiah xlv. 7: "I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." What! the Lord create *evil*? Yes! but in such a way as casts no stain upon his moral perfections; but, on the contrary, will furnish new matter for admiration and praise. Hence, the language of joy and gratulation which immediately follows. "Drop down ye heavens from above! and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation. Let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it." But *how* does God create evil. As he does darkness. The *first* sentence explains the *last*. Observe the language: I form the light, and I create darkness. How does God form the

light? By a positive influence, pouring radiance around How does God create darkness? By withholding this radiance. Even so, by a positive influence, God makes peace, and by withholding that influence, creates evil, that is, *permits* it. In this, is God the author of sin? No more than the sun is the source of darkness, although its absence occasions that darkness. But this leads me to notice another distinguishing feature, or characteristic of the government of God.

4. *It is absolute.* There is no doctrine more plainly taught in the Scriptures than this. "Our God is in the heavens," says the Psalmist, "he hath done whatsoever he pleased." And again: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven and in earth; in the seas and in all deep places." Paul confirming the doctrine, positively asserts that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. And Elihu, knowing that some would be disposed to contend against the doctrine, says: "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." As God is indebted to none for his crown, He is amenable to none for his government. Being the Creator and Preserver of all things, he is in the sublimest sense of the term, the Proprietor of all things; and, therefore, has a right to do all his pleasure, in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and being infinitely perfect, it should be a matter of boundless joy and gratulation, that he is, and ever will be, **THE REIGNING GOD!** He giveth not account of any of his matters, and why? Because the policy of his government, and his reasons of state cannot be comprehended by any finite mind. Sufficient for us to know, that He is infinitely wise and good, and does all things well. As a sovereign God he gives and withholds the fruits of the earth, and the rains of heaven. As a sovereign God he commands the hail and the tempest; the lightning and the storm; and, at his command, also fierce diseases go and come. Yes, when it seems good in his sight,

"—— He involves the heaven
 In tempest! quits his grasp upon the winds,
 And gives them all their fury, bids the plague
 Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
 And putrefy the breath of blooming youth!
 He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
 Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
 And taints the golden ear!"

The Lord, says Hannah, in her song of thankfulness, "the Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich. He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor up out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory! for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." The idea is this. The Lord is the proprietor of all things, and therefore a sovereign God! Yes, my reader, as a sovereign God, he has not only fixed the bounds of the sea, but he has also fixed the bounds of our habitations; the bounds of our possessions, and the bounds of our lives. ALL things are under the full control of a wise and powerful God! If, then, some are rich and some are poor, some are honoured and some despised; if some have great prosperity, and some have great affliction; if this child is an idiot, and that has good sense; if this child is born a cripple, and that in the full exercise of all its limbs, it is, "*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*" And this reminds me of the case of a poor little mute in one of our Institutions for the Deaf and Dumb: "Child," said a visitor, (the conversation was in writing,) "child, can you tell me who made the world?" "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," replied the mute. "Very well, and can you tell me who Jesus Christ is?" "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God," was another beautiful answer of the mute. "All very good," said the gentleman, "and now, one question more. Can you tell me, child, how it comes to pass that you are deaf and dumb when others can both hear and speak?" "*Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight,*" replied the child with great meekness! Where did this child of affliction learn this lesson? At the feet of the blessed Jesus. You recollect the Saviour had sent out his disciples, two and two, to preach the gospel, and when they returned with joy, and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," it is added, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Our Saviour, when on earth, often wept, but so far as I can recollect, only on this occasion, is he said to have rejoiced! And in what did he rejoice? IN THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD! I thank

thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because *thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. This is the more remarkable as it has reference to the sovereignty of God exercised in *spiritual* matters, in giving to some what was hidden from others. And we find the same spirit animating Paul, and in relation to the same matter. Hear his own words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The doctrine of God's sovereign and electing love is here plainly taught. And observe! It is not a *national* election that is spoken of, for Paul says, who hath chosen us? Not *us Gentiles*, for Paul was not a Gentile, nor *us Jews*, for the Ephesians were not Jews. If we were addressing a company of Africans, we would not say, *us Africans!* We are not Africans, nor could we say *us Americans*, for they are not Americans. No *national* election can then be here intended, nor the *election of characters*, for those said to be chosen in Christ, were not said to be chosen in Christ, *because* they were holy, but *that they should be holy.* And this reminds me of a passage in the Acts. Luke says, "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." If the election of characters and not persons be intended, Luke made a slip of the pen, and should have said, As many as *believed* were *ordained* unto eternal life. But no! this is the way it is written, AND AS MANY AS WERE ORDAINED UNTO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED. But, as Paul, in the passage quoted, has no reference to a national, nor election of characters; neither does he here offer reference to the *apostleship* or any thing of the kind, for the persons to whom the epistle was addressed, were simply "the saints at Ephesus," and "the faithful in Christ Jesus;" besides, it is expressly stated that they were chosen, not to the apostleship nor any thing of the kind, but *to the adoption of children.* Some object to the doctrine of election. It is the *word?* It is in

the Bible, in numerous places, and cannot be expunged. Is it the *principle*? You elect your Governors, your Presidents, your generals, your judges, your sheriffs, your pastors, your partners in love and trade. No principle more common amongst men; we should not marvel, therefore, if it be common with God. Do men set a value upon the exercise of the principle? Go to the ballot-box, and tell that free-born American, that he shall not exercise the elective franchise! He will surrender his life, before he surrenders that right! If, then, *man* sets a value upon the *principle*, why may not his *Maker*? But, is the *doctrine of personal election* objected to? And what is this doctrine? I would define it thus: *It is God's plan of securing the salvation of some, of a great multitude which no man can number!* Now, why should we object to a plan for *securing* the salvation of a great multitude of the human family, which no man can number, when, without it, the salvation of *all* would be in jeopardy? And here I am reminded of the remark of a certain very pious old lady. When asked whether she believed in the doctrine of election, "Certainly," replied she, "for it is in the Bible." "What!" said the inquirer, "do you believe that you were elected before you were born?" "Yes," said she promptly, "*I have been such a poor vile sinner, if God had not elected me before I was born, he never would afterwards.*" This remark, if I mistake not, must be understood and appreciated by all who know any thing of their own hearts, and have felt the power of God's victorious grace. And here permit me to remark, that the doctrine of election was designed for the consolation of God's children; and I would appeal to the feelings of every real Christian. Is it not more delightful to think that God set his love upon us from all eternity, than that he began to love us the other day? And what is so cheering to the child of God, need not be discouraging to the unconverted, for they have the same encouragement to seek salvation now, that the Christian had before he was converted. And the fact is, the grand inquiry is, not whether we can understand every part of the scheme of redemption, but whether there is such a scheme whereby the sinner may be saved. Not whether two or three doctrines in the Bible are hard to be understood, but whether the Bible itself which contains these doctrines be the word of God. Not whether we are of the elect or reprobate, but whether we are sinners and need the

salvation of Christ; for it is very remarkable, the same Bible which tells us that "whom God foreknew, them he also predestinated;" also says, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." And again: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." *Thus there are two classes of Scripture passages, and we believe them both.* And as I have said before, so say I again, there is no more difficulty in reconciling the *fore-ordination*, than the *foreknowledge of God* with the free-agency of man, so that Christians of different persuasions should be very kind and charitable towards each other, inasmuch as (so far as regards the matter of difficulty) they are all in the same condemnation; and one thing is certain; if the system called "*Calvinistic*," be not scriptural, it looks very much like it. To prove this matter let us try it in this way. Suppose that the apostle Paul should enter the sacred desk, *disguised as a preacher*, and looking over the congregation should break out in these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Would you not suspect that this stranger was a *Calvinistic* preacher? And suppose, waxing a little warmer, he should go on and say: "Moreover, whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us." Would you not think the preacher *strongly Calvinistic*? And suppose, waxing still warmer, and rising with the grandeur of the theme, he should add: "The Lord hath made all things to himself, even the wicked for the day of evil: therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt, then, say unto me, Wherefore doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over

the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Suppose, I say, the apostle Paul, disguised as a preacher, should utter these "hard sayings," would you not pronounce him a *Calvinistic preacher of the "straitest sect?"* Ah! my reader, the case is clear. According to the Scriptures, God is a sovereign God, and doth his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and there is none that can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? As an absolute sovereign, he rules over all the worlds of nature, and of grace; and if one person is prospered, and another afflicted; if one is born in a gospel, and another in a pagan land; if one lives to an old age, and another is cut down in youth, or early childhood; and if one is converted and made the trophy of victorious grace, and another is permitted to go on in sin and perish in sin, it is, "Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"Nor Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives!"

But, 5. *The last distinguishing feature or characteristic of the Divine government, is this: IT IS WISE AND GOOD.* Infinitely wise and good! If a being clothed with such tremendous power, O! if a being invested with such absolute dominion over all things, were capricious or malignant, if he took pleasure in inflicting pain, or delighted in the death of any of his creatures, how frightful would be the condition of the universe! But joy, joy to creation; this great Being, **THIS SOVEREIGN GOD**, is no less *wise* than he is *powerful*; no less *good* than he is *great*! It is true that there are mysteries in the Divine government; and not unfrequently the paths of the Almighty are in the deep waters, and his ways past finding out. It is because God works upon a large pattern. His schemes embrace all time, and all eternity. Of course, we can see only a part, and how can we judge of the whole? Some cavil and object, because sin and sorrow have been permitted to enter our world; but who can tell, whether by the wise and overruling providence of God, these may not be made use of as the *shading of some great moral picture?* One thing we know, a dark ground is best for gilding, and precious stones set in ebony, shine with more brilliancy! There are, moreover, providences in relation to *nations, families, and individuals*

which, to such short-sighted creatures as we are, appear very mysterious, but, in the *winding up*, we shall, no doubt, all have to say, He has done all things well. You recollect the case of Jacob. In a dark hour he said, “Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also. All these things are against me, and ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave.” But mark the winding up! Joseph is taken away, it is true, but it is only for a season; and lo! Joseph’s wagons are come! Joseph is made Governor over all the land of Egypt; he has provided corn for the patriarch and all his household; and lo! Joseph’s wagons are come to take them all down into Egypt, to nourish them, and keep them well provided for in a time of famine! And see, too, those silvery locks of his which the patriarch, in a dark hour, said, should go down with sorrow to the grave. Only see how they fall upon the neck of his beloved son, Joseph!

“Shall little haughty ignorance pronounce
His works unwise? the smallest part of which
Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?
As if upon a full proportioned dome,
With swelling columns heaved, the pride of art,
A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads,
An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
Should dare to tax the structure of the whole!”

“A thing, says Eliphaz, was secretly brought unto me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts, from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, fear came upon me, and trembling which made all my bones to shake! Then a spirit passed before my face! The hair of my flesh stood up! It stood still, but I could not discern the form thereof. An image was before mine eyes! There was silence, and I heard a voice saying, ‘Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and he charged his angels with folly.’ Child of the dust, enter into thy nothingness! Creature of yesterday, put thine hands to thy mouth, and listen to the loud and harmonious shout of the heavenly world: Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!” Now, my reader, we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now, we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known. O when all darkness

shall be removed, and the plans of heaven shall be fully developed, we shall then see that every thing permitted and done on earth, was permitted and done in wisdom and in love. *Here is a piece of embroidery.* It is some great master-piece of art. You look upon the wrong side. You see nothing beautiful or distinct! Turn the right side, and you exclaim, "O what a beautiful piece of embroidery this is! The colours, how brilliant! The figures, how distinct!" *Here is a celebrated painting stretched over the wall.* It has many figures, and they are so arranged that, to the eye, that takes in the whole design of the artist, it appears most admirable; but there is a curtain hanging over a part of it, and you are perplexed! Remove the curtain; then comes admiration, and you laud the artist, and pronounce the painting the most beautiful and perfect that you have ever seen. So it is with all the plans and providential dispensations of heaven. When the curtain is removed, then will they appear in beauty and glory far transcending all our conceptions now! "What I do, says the Saviour, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!

Christians! here is matter of joy for you! O how delightful to think that it is *your God and heavenly Father* who fills the throne and sways the sceptre, and rules *over all!* And joy upon joy! He will never abdicate the government, but will reign for ever! In what rapid succession do the kings of the earth succeed each other! but **OUR KING** is one, and there is no other! The alone monarch of the universe. None before him! None after him! Through all the ages of time, through all the cycles of eternity, One and alone! The Lord shall reign for ever and ever, says the Psalmist, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord. *He reigns over the world,* and, although wickedness abounds, and sorrows now prevail, yet the world is in good hands, and all its affairs are under the control of a wise and powerful God. Aye, and the time is coming, when great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world *are* become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!" *Moreover, Christian, your God reigns over the Church.* Aye, and "Zion enjoys her Monarch's love." God is in the midst of her. God will help her, and that right early. "Look upon Zion! the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a taber-

nacle that shall not be taken down. Not one of the stakes thereof, shall ever be removed; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the GLORIOUS LORD will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby!" But God not only reigns over the *world* and the *church*. He *reigns over all things!* Then, believer, remember, He reigns over you and yours! All your interests are safely lodged in his hands! Has sorrow entered your dwelling? Has deep affliction come upon you? O, remember! He who notices the falling sparrow will not forget the children of his love. Fear not, in the sight of your heavenly Father you are of more value than many sparrows. All your trials are known to him. Your sighs are heard. Your tears are in his bottle; and the promise is, All things shall work together, for good to them that love God. Yes, thank God!

"There is a day of sunny rest,
For every dark and stormy night;
And grief may hide an evening guest,
But joy shall come at morning light!"

Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen.
Alleluia!

A MESSAGE FROM GOD.

The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?—AMOS iii. 8.

THE Lord God hath spoken; what hath he said? Listen to him who speaks from heaven. None can refuse to listen and be innocent.—HEB. xii. 25, 26.

No prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. The prophets were not self-appointed; they spake not of themselves. They were appointed by God to do his work; they must speak what he willed; they must declare what he communicated to them. When he made known to them his will, they felt it their duty to speak; they could not then keep silence; and if any opposed, or expressed surprise, they might say, as does Amos, The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy? Amos iii. 8.

The same may be said of the ministers of Christ at the present day. No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. Heb. v. 4. They are appointed of God. They are sent by him. They are to do his bidding; preach what he teaches; preach the preaching that he bids them. Jonah iii. 2. Saith Paul, We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 2 Cor. iv. 5. And again, Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. 2 Cor. v. 20. In another place he declares, For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel! 1 Cor. ix. 16. Peter and John, when commanded by the rulers not to preach at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus, answered, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. Acts iv. 19, 20. And when on one occasion the apostles were imprisoned, the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life. Acts v. 19, 20. And when they were again

threatened by those in authority for obeying the charge given them by the angel, Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. Acts v. 29. This is the spirit which every minister of Christ should possess. He should not fear the face of man. He should feel that he is commissioned by Heaven to declare Heaven's *message to men*; and that message he should faithfully declare. These words of Amos should be deeply impressed upon his heart,—The Lord God hath spoken it, who can but prophesy?

Reader, here is A MESSAGE FROM GOD. But, you ask, WHAT SAITH THE LORD? I answer,

1. The Lord God hath spoken in regard to *the fall and ruin of man*. The works of God, as they came from his hand, were pronounced very good. Gen. i. 31. Man was created in the image of God, with a heart to love him, and with powers to serve him. Gen. i. 26, 27. There was no conflict then between the passions and the judgment; no subjection of the mind and the conscience to the mere animal propensities of his nature. But how do we see him now? The image of God is obliterated from his soul; he has no heart to love his Maker and no disposition to serve him; the passions ruling over the judgment; the animal propensities enslaving the mind and stifling the voice of conscience. If man was made upright, he is not now as God made him. He is fallen. So God's providence declares. He deals with man as a fallen and rebellious creature. What mean those afflictions through which he is doomed to pass, if he be not a sinner? What mean the judgments with which he is visited? What mean the calamities which distress the nations, the wars, the pestilences, the famines? Could God in his providence declare, more unequivocally than he does, his hatred of sin, or teach more plainly that man, because of his transgressions, is the enemy of God? But we are not left to infer from the teachings of providence, what man now is. We have only to open the volume of inspiration and read *what the Lord God hath spoken*. Our first parents fell; and their "fall brought mankind into an estate of sin and misery." In Adam all die. 1 Cor. xv. 22. Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Rom. v. 12—19. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God. Rom. iii. 23. And God hates sin. He is angry with the wicked every day. Ps. vii. 11. And he has declared, The wages of sin is death: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. Rom. vi. 23; Ez. xviii. 20. Now, since the Lord God hath thus spoken, *who can but prophesy?* It is not left optional with us whether we shall speak of your sinfulness or not. We must bring against you a charge of criminality—of rebellion against God—of treason against the King of kings. Nor are there any circumstances to mitigate your offence. It stands out in all its blackness, without excuse, and without a parallel. You live upon the bounty of God, and yet you sin against him! You are exposed to his wrath, and yet you rush on without a thought of what is before you! Your feet are pressing down to death, and yet you inquire not for a way of escape! Your immortal nature is in ruins; a fiery doom awaits you; and yet you are at ease! And who can refrain from speaking? Think you we are beside ourselves? Ah, no; we speak words of truth and soberness; and if Christians were not asleep, they would give you no rest while you remain unreconciled to God. We speak to you God's truth when we declare that you are exposed to his wrath; we utter only what God hath spoken, when we announce to you that you are condemned because of your sins, and are in the road to everlasting woe. A sinner? You confess it! Condemned? You feel it! At ease? How wonderful! Your very security—your indifference—is alarming; and it should cause a warning voice to arise in your ears from every tongue that can speak of sin and of the Saviour.

2. Again—The Lord God hath spoken respecting *the way of recovery from sin and ruin*. Easy is the descent to misery, but not so easy is the return; to retrace our steps is the labor and the difficulty. Man has involved himself in difficulty, but to extricate himself exceeds his wisdom and his power. There must be deliverance, or he is lost; there must be salvation, or the threatened penalty of the law will be executed, and they who are now dead in trespasses and sins, must suffer the horrors of the second death. And where shall we look for deliverance? Nature speaks of our misery, but it says nothing of relief; it teaches our sinfulness, but provides no Saviour; it tells of our guilt, but offers no expiation. The schemes which human wisdom has devised, serve only to aggravate our case; they tantalize us

with hopes which they can never fulfil, with promises which they can never perform, with expectations which they can never gratify. But the Bible unfolds the way of life. Here God speaks; and here it is written that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. John iii. 16. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Rom. v. 6, 8. Here, then, is the hope of the sinner; here is the way of deliverance and escape. Our iniquities were laid upon Jesus Christ; he bare our sins in his own body on the tree; in him the law was honoured, the claims of justice satisfied, and full atonement made. Isa. liii. 3—6; 1 Pet. ii. 24. While, therefore, we remind you of the fall, and endeavour to impress upon your heart a sense of your sin and misery, it is also our privilege to preach to you salvation through atoning blood. The Lord God hath spoken concerning a Saviour, Christ, the Lord; and how shall we refrain from speaking of him? A message from God concerning Jesus Christ! He is a precious Saviour; he is an all-sufficient Saviour; he is able and mighty to save, able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him. Heb. vii. 25. He is just the Saviour you need; he is ALL YOU NEED; and through him there is offered to you a gratuitous pardon. In him there is life; and without him you must die the second death. How, then, can we cease to point you to him, and say, Behold the Lamb of God? John i. 36. And yet how you treat this Saviour! He is the only begotten and the well beloved of the Father; he is God's dear Son; he speaks of him in the most endearing terms; and he is the only foundation on which you can build a sure hope of heaven; and yet you will not come to him that you may have life! John v. 40. You receive him not when he is offered to you; you will not have him to reign over you and rule in you; and you seem determined, rather than embrace Jesus Christ, to perish in your sins! Poor dying sinner, what has Jesus done that he should be thus slighted by you? What are your hopes for the eternal world, that you can afford thus to turn your back upon the Son of God? *The Lord God hath spoken*, and though you close your eyes to your danger, and shut your ears to the voice of mercy, we will yet *prophecy*

of Jesus ; and if you perish, the last accents which fall upon your failing senses as you go down to the chambers of death, shall be the accents of entreaty, calling you to the cross of Christ. You may deride our earnestness, yet we will speak ; we will deliver our souls from your blood ; and you shall know your duty, though you do it not. The Saviour rejected ? Oh, think of his bloody agony, and his dying groans ! The soul lost when Christ has died ? Oh, sinner, what desperate wickedness in your heart ! And yet you dream of heaven ! You hope to dwell forever with the blessed ! How vain the hope ! While Christ is rejected, there is no hope of heaven for you ! How then can we cease to speak of Christ ? and if we should, would not the very stones cry out, and reprove you for a rejected Saviour, a God dishonoured, and the Spirit grieved ? Jesus rejected is the ruin of the soul ; shall this be the ruin of yours ? Will you longer reject him ?

3. Again ; the Lord God hath spoken concerning *the necessity of repentance*. Repentance is necessary because men are sinners ; and though Christ has died, he did not die to save men in their sins, but from them. But how can men be delivered from their sins, if they do not repent of them ? or, how can men be forgiven if they do not repent ? Repentance includes confession ; and this is necessary in order to forgiveness. Repentance includes sorrow for sin ; and how can we expect the pardon of that for which we feel no regret ? To repent of sin is to forsake it ; and how can we look for pardon while we continue in our transgressions ? And evangelical repentance is always connected with faith in Christ : there can be no repentance without faith, and no faith without repentance. And as Jesus Christ is the only way of access to the Father, it is impossible that the impenitent man should be forgiven, because he has no faith in the Saviour. He cherishes the sins which put the Redeemer to the shameful death of the cross ; he lives on in open transgression against God ; and he manifests no disposition to avail himself of the Scriptural way of pardon and life. As God hath spoken of the sinfulness of men ; as he speaks of the Saviour who died for our sins ; so he speaks of the necessity of repentance. Repentance, or perdition, is the alternative which he sets before us. Whatever else is neglected, this must be done, or the soul is undone. The sinner must repent or perish. Yes, sinner, you must

repent or perish! I stop not now to inquire how the work is to be done. My business now is with the duty which God requires at your hands, and which you must do, or die! John the Baptist preached repentance; when Jesus came, he preached repentance; and he has commanded us to preach in his name, repentance and remission of sins among all nations. Luke xxiv. 47. From infancy upward this duty has been urged upon you, and yet it is not done! Sabbath after Sabbath, year after year, has the duty been enforced, and yet it is not begun! Your soul is soon to stand before the judgment seat, and yet you have not begun to prepare to meet your God! And, sinner, would you have us be silent? Would you be let alone, that you may make your destruction sure? But the Lord God hath spoken, and who can but prophesy? You may refuse to hear, and yet we will speak; you may turn away from our message—the message of God—and yet we will cry after you, *Repent!* **REPENT! REPENT!** for we know that except you repent, you must perish. Luke xiii. 3. Perish! Sinner, did you ever think of it? You have often heard the word—the sound is familiar to your ear—its accents may have been often on your tongue—but have you ever devoted a serious thought to the thing itself? It is not a mere name—not barely a sound—it is a stern and fearful reality. To perish! O, who can tell what it is? Yet if repentance be neglected, this must be your doom. Repentance? God requires it at your hands! Repentance? God gives you space for repentance; he has given you days, and months, and years; and he commands you to repent now! Acts xvii. 30. This is the time to begin. Every moment of delay is a moment of rebellion and disobedience! Every moment of delay is a moment of peril to your soul—a moment of suspense to the angels that wait to rejoice over you—a moment of rejection of the Saviour, who says, How often would I, and ye would not! Matt. xxiii. 37. There is danger, sinner, danger; and would you impose silence on us? But God has spoken, and we must speak. God cries after you, *Return;* and we will cry **REPENT! REPENT!**

4. Again, the Lord God hath spoken of *the necessity of faith*. Faith receives the testimony of God, the record which God hath given of his Son; and he who believes not makes God a liar! 1 John v. 10. Faith receives and rests upon Jesus Christ for salvation; and how can they be saved

who reject the only Saviour? Without faith it is impossible to please God; without faith there is no salvation. Heb. xi. 6. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life. 1 John v. 12. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. John iii. 36. Such are the words which God hath spoken concerning the necessity of faith; and it is also declared, He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned. Mark xvi. 16. Faith is connected inseparably with repentance; and as unbelievers never repent, how can they be saved? Jesus Christ has died; he has shed his blood for the remission of sins; he has brought in an everlasting righteousness; he offers full and free pardon; but the blessings he has purchased are suspended upon our faith. It is by faith that we are justified; by faith that we are saved; we must believe to the saving of our souls. Rom. v. 1; x. 10; Heb. x. 39. Through Jesus Christ forgiveness of sins is preached; and all that believe are justified from all things. Acts xiii. 38, 39. This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent; this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ. John vi. 29; 1 John iii. 23. Here, then, is the alternative before you,—Faith or damnation. You must believe or be damned! You must come to Jesus, accept of Christ, kiss the Son, or perish. Ps. ii. 12. This is the work before you; and it must be done, or you are lost! I pause not now to ask how you are to do it. My business now is only with the fact—the duty—and I only declare to you what God hath spoken, when I say, you must believe in Jesus Christ, or your destruction is as certain as if you were now in hell! Yes, you *must believe*; there is no rest for your soul short of faith in Jesus Christ; and there is nothing without yourself, nor within yourself, which should prevent your reception of Jesus Christ by faith now—nothing to justify a moment's delay—nothing but your own wicked heart to hinder your coming to Christ and committing your soul to him now! Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation; now you should believe. 2 Cor. vi. 2. You can have no hope and no rest until you embrace Jesus Christ by faith. Sinner, the cross stands between you and perdition, and you must flee to the cross, if you would live. The cross stands between you and

heaven, and you must embrace it or die. How often has the necessity of faith been urged upon you! And still you believe not. How reasonable the demand of faith! and yet how reluctant your heart to the duty! Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. liii. 1. And shall we cease to testify repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ? Acts xx. 21. Would you have us be silent, when your salvation is at stake? But the Lord God hath spoken, and who can but prophesy? Yes, sinner, we will continue to prophesy, while God spares us and you, and while you live you shall hear of Jesus, and be entreated to believe in him! Believe, and you shall be saved. And did you ever think what salvation is? You have dreamed of heaven; you have hoped for heaven; but have you given a thought to what heaven is? It is a place of purity; there is no sin there. It is a place of happiness; there is no sorrow there. It is a place of praise; there are everlasting songs. But, sinner, there is no heaven for man without faith in Jesus Christ; there is no heaven for you, unless you believe! That your soul may be saved—that heaven may be yours—we will continue to press upon your acceptance the Saviour of sinners; living, we will point you to the Lamb of God; and dying, our broken accents in death shall be, Look unto Christ and be saved! Believe and live!

5. Again, the Lord God hath spoken in regard to *the necessity of regeneration*. Think how much evil there is in your heart; what forgetfulness of God; what love to the world; what reluctance to duty; what aversion to holiness; what disregard of the gospel; what unbelief; what impenitence; what unholy desires; what evil thoughts and base imaginations: and can that heart be fit for heaven? Is that heart which resists the Holy Ghost, fit to be his eternal habitation? Is that heart which rejects the Saviour prepared to dwell with him forever? Ah, that heart must be made new, or take up its abode in the world of darkness. God hath spoken by his Son, and said, Ye must be born again. That which is born of the flesh, is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit. Ye must be born of the Spirit, or ye can never enter the kingdom of God. John iii. 3—8. Yes, reader, you must be born twice before you can die once, or it had been better for you never to have been born. Born again! This necessity lies upon you—

God's word places it there—I speak only what he has spoken, when I say, YOU MUST BE BORN AGAIN! And God having spoken, it is not for us to be silent. This necessity has often been testified to you; it is now testified again; and the testimony will be continued while you are this side the grave! You must become a new creature in Christ Jesus, or be excluded from the paradise of God; you must experience the washing of regeneration, or receive your portion with the unholy and the unclean. You must be born again, for you resist the Spirit of God; born again, for you grieve the Holy Ghost from your heart! He will not always strive. Oh what infatuation to resist his influences! Can we be silent? No, sinner: you are ruining yourself; you are plunging a dagger to your heart; and we can but cry, Do thyself no harm! And we will cry till the suicidal act is done, and you are lost; or till you yield your heart to the Spirit of grace, and become a follower of the Lamb!

6. Finally, the Lord God hath spoken concerning *the certainty of future rewards and punishments*. There is a heaven of glory for the righteous, and a hell of misery for the wicked. These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46. Life and death are set before you; and it is for you to choose between them. The way of life is pointed out; it is through faith in Jesus Christ. To walk in it, you must repent and obey the gospel. The way to death is the broad way in which you are already travelling. Continue in that way, and you shall soon reap the wages of sin. If you would live, you must enter the strait and narrow way. Enter it, and you shall receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your soul. There is no uncertainty here. The judgment is coming, and heaven or hell will follow. Thus God has spoken, and thus we speak. We are bound to eternity. There is no time for trifling; every thing is solemn as the judgment and the retributions which follow. Pause, then, and think what lies before you. Heaven or hell, eternal happiness or eternal misery! Pause and think; and let this moment be the turning point in your destiny. Turn now to God and live! Flee from hell! Press for heaven!

This is what God hath said. This is the message which comes from him to you. It speaks of sin and the Saviour, of faith and repentance, of regeneration, of heaven and of

hell. It concerns yourself, reader, for time and eternity; and you refuse to hear it at your peril. It is God who speaks; and you are soon to stand before him. Death is near; death and the judgment. The judgment, sinner, the judgment! The hour hastens; are you ready? It is coming; will you prepare? Or will you "slight the message sent in mercy from above?" Oh, slight it not! Hear the voice of God; hear it and obey; believe and live! Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of men. O ye simple, understand wisdom; and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore, get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding. Prov. viii. 4, 5, 11; ix. 10; iv. 7. Be wise unto salvation; wise for eternity. And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. 2 Tim. iii. 15—17; Jas. i. 5; iii. 17.

HEAR WHAT THE LORD GOD HATH SPOKEN; BELIEVE AND OBEY.

EXTRACT

From an old and scarce Sermon of the Rev. Samuel Rutherford.

ALL you into whose hands this little book shall come, O let me beg you to consider how your hearts can endure to think of being shut out of heaven, out of blessedness for ever! Ask your heart these questions. Can I burn? Can I endure the vengeance of eternal fire? Will a glowing oven, a scorching furnace, be an easy lodging for me? O why, my soul, wilt thou not be persuaded to repent? Is there too much pain in that? Talk to thee of crucifying the flesh, or parting with thy worldly companions, of entering in at the strait gate; O these are hard sayings, who can bear them? But how wilt thou dwell with devouring fire? How wilt thou dwell with everlasting burnings? Think on hell, O poor soul, and then think on Christ; and consider if a Redeemer from such misery be not worth the accepting of. Think on hell, and then think on sin, and carnal pleasures; consider how thou wilt relish them in the everlasting fire! Are these the price for which thou sellest thy soul to hell? O bid these lusts and pleasures be gone! bid your companion-sins be gone; and though you loved them well, and have spent your time sinfully with them, yet tell them you must not burn for them: that you will not damn your soul to please your flesh. Having thus briefly laid down the use of terror, to awaken some poor souls out of the depth of carnal security, I shall proceed to encourage poor sinners to lay fast hold on Christ before it be too late.

O poor soul! Hast thou kept Christ out a long time, and art thou not yet resolved to open thy heart to him? What shall I say to thee? Let me say this—Christ waits still for thee; Christ is still willing to receive thee! Why, then, wilt thou undo thyself by neglecting so great a salvation? Think what message He sends to thee, what errand he comes on; it is no dismal message, it is no dreadful errand. If Christ had come to destroy thy soul, could he have had less welcome than thou hast given him? O for thy soul's

sake receive Him! O ye fools, when will ye be wise? Come unto Jesus and he will have mercy on you, and heal all your backslidings, and love you freely.

But some poor soul will say, I have a desire to come to Christ, but I am afraid Christ will never receive such a wretched sinner as I am, who have stood out so long against him. In answer to this, let me give you some directions.

1. Ah poor soul, art thou willing to come to Christ? Then will Christ in no wise cast thee out, if thou comest to Him poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked. O sinner, come not to him in thine own strength! but come thou and say, O Lord, here is a poor soul not worth any thing! O Lord, make me rich in faith! here is a miserable soul, O Lord, have mercy on me! here is a poor blind soul, O Lord, enlighten me from above! here is a poor naked wretch, O Lord, save me, lest I perish, for I cannot help myself.

2. Come to Christ by believing in him. Yes, when thy poor soul is sinking into hell, and sees no way to escape the fearful wrath of God, O then at such a time seize fast hold on Christ! O apprehend and apply all his benefits to thy soul! Come and grasp him in the arms of thy faith, and say, I believe in thee, Lord; help my unbelief. And the answer which thy Lord will give thee, will be this—Be it unto thee according as thou wilt. Let Christ be in your hand, and the promise in your eye, and no doubt, though thou hast been a rebel and a traitor, yet Jesus Christ, having received gifts for the rebellious, will shew mercy to thee, and receive thee.

3. Come to Jesus Christ by repenting and forsaking all thy sins. Thou canst never come to the wedding without the wedding garment; the old man must be done away, before all things can be made new. “O Jerusalem, wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayst be saved; how long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?” Jer. iv. 14.

S T O P !

“Stop, poor sinner, stop and think
 Before you further go;
 Will you sport upon the brink
 Of everlasting woe?”

IF a man on a journey is in uncertainty whether he is pursuing the right road, he naturally stops to consider and examine his position, and decide upon his future route. If you, my reader, were to see me going towards a precipice, to fall from which would be certain destruction, but of which I was ignorant; or you knew that I was not, at the time, in my right mind, you would not only call upon me to stop, but would use every endeavour to arrest my attention, and turn me from the danger to which I was exposed.

You, and I, reader, and all mankind, are travelling to eternity. The Bible expressly teaches that we are journeying upon one of two roads; the one, a strait and narrow way, leading to life eternal,—the other, a broad way, tending to everlasting death. It is a settled, solemn truth, that we are upon one or the other; and is it not a matter of infinite importance to us to know which? Be persuaded, therefore, to stop and inquire whether you are upon the former or the latter.

The Bible lays down the characteristics, or distinguishing traits displayed by those upon these roads. The former, it assures us, is found by few, while the latter is thronged with the multitude. The travellers upon the narrow way, are they who have been renewed in heart by the Spirit of God, and have renounced the world with all its vanities; and depending on the grace of God promised to all who seek it, are following in the footsteps of the meek and lowly Jesus. They have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. They have renounced the world. They are “seeking a better country, that is an Heavenly,” where Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for them that love Him.

The character of those who throng the broad way is exactly the reverse of this. These are living in sin—haters of God—disobedient—profane—Sabbath breakers—neglecters of religion. They are living for this world *alone*,—its pleasures—riches—honours. They have no thoughts,

no desires, no hopes beyond the present life. They may at times have a passing thought of death and judgment, but they strive to banish it and generally succeed. They may even have been under the strivings of the Holy Spirit, but they have bid Him depart until a more convenient season.

Reader, which of these characters is yours? Have you never considered the subject? Then is it high time for you to stop and consider it now. Is it wise, is it acting as a rational, accountable being, to disregard so momentous a matter? Life is speeding away. You are hurrying on to judgment and eternity, but in what state? A state of preparation? Certainly not, if upon examination, you decide that you are in the broad road. How, then, will you meet that Judge before whom you are so soon to appear?

STOP, I beseech you. Your soul is worth more than all worlds. What can redeem it? Nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ, which was freely shed for the redemption of sinners. Blessed be God, there is redemption through His blood, and for *you*, if you will *now* come to that fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. It is a free salvation which the gospel offers—"without money and without price." Most of our comforts and luxuries are obtained through the influence of money; but God requires no other offering but that of a broken and a contrite heart, and even this he will bestow. This salvation is all of grace; the free gift of God, purchased by the death of his only and well beloved Son. Will you continue to slight it? Will you turn away, despising the blood of Jesus?

How reasonable is the request for you to stop and consider! To comply, will expose you to no harm, but on the contrary, may secure for you the highest good attainable by mortals. To be a child of God, is to be desired above all things mind can conceive, or heart can desire. Surely the interests of your soul are of sufficient importance to justify the postponement of the most important business of this world, until they are attended to.

Many are called away suddenly. How do you know that you may not be thus taken? If not, you will find a death-bed a poor place and time to attend to the great business of life. The gospel assures you that *now* is the accepted time—*now* is the day of salvation. It nowhere calls upon sinners to repent to-morrow, but its command is, "*to-day*, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."

“For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little season, and then vanisheth away.”

If you refuse to stop, I warn you of the consequences. Your soul will be *lost*,—FOREVER LOST. Awful thought! Lose your soul! Be a companion forever of devils and damned spirits! Shut out forever from hope of mercy! Yes! such *must* be the everlasting portion of all those who reject Christ. Now you are exhorted to flee to Him. *Now* the Saviour calls, Give me thy heart. He will receive it—will cleanse and purify it, and will dwell within you by his Spirit. He never rejected any that came to him, no matter how great had been their crimes and iniquities. But in that world of woe, you will never hear a friendly voice calling you to come to that Saviour. There will be no sound of mercy there,

“For darkness, death, and long despair
Reign in eternal silence there.”

If hell is your everlasting portion, whose will be the blame? You will have the awfully bitter reflection of having wickedly refused the proffered salvation, and cast away your soul. The entreaties, prayers, and exhortations of pious kindred and friends in your behalf, will never be forgotten by you, but will serve to aggravate the torments of your ever-condemning conscience. How will you then curse the objects which now delude and induce you to postpone repentance!

Are you young in years? Is the dew of youth yet upon you? Then to you does the call to stop and consider, come with peculiar suitableness. Not to bid you enter upon a life of austerity and solitude, as the young too frequently picture the life of a Christian. Not to abridge your happiness. Not to check the outgoings of joy from your young and buoyant heart; but to direct your joys, and desires, and affections, to the only object worthy of your soul's esteem. You have entered, it may be, upon the active duties of life. Temptations are on every hand. Wickedness is in your path. It bears a charmed aspect. Youth are ever slow to believe that the dangers to which they are exposed are so great, and are willing to make the trial. Alas! how many in so doing, are ruined forever! *You* cannot hope to escape, unless God's grace keep you. Be exhorted, then, ere you become ensnared in the toils of the deceiver, to give yourself to God. Honour him by consecrating to his ser-

vice the prime of your days. It will be much easier for you to stop *now*, while you are upon the threshold, than to do so, after ten, twenty, or thirty years' indulgence in worldly, sinful passions and pursuits.

“*Now*, in thy youth, beseech of Him
 Who giveth and upbraideth not,
 That His light in thy heart become not dim,
 And His love be unforgot;
 And thy God, in the darkest of days shall be,
 Greenness, and beauty, and strength to thee.”

Are you old in years and in sin? Is it so, that having enjoyed the mercies of God's providence, and the opportunities of the sanctuary, even until grey hairs, you are yet walking in the way of the ungodly? Oh, by how many providences has God called upon you to stop, during your past life—by how many mercies—by how many chastisements! and yet you have gone on hardening your heart, and departing further from Him. Listen, I entreat you, to the present call. There is mercy to be obtained. Will you not seek it *now*? *You*, surely, can never hope to have a more favourable season. *You* cannot count, as you did in your youth, upon the future. You feel that you are near the end of your journey. Your sands may be almost run out. **STOP AND CONSIDER.** Consider those providences, those mercies, those chastisements. Do you not see how by each and all of them, God called upon you to love and serve Him? Do you not see that your ingratitude and unbelief must be very offensive to Him who dispensed them?

Will you not, repenting of your misspent life, and neglected opportunities, come to the Saviour now, and consecrate to Him the remainder of your days, be they few or many?

Reader, if the arguments here presented fail to arouse you to the importance of the subject of personal religion, yet hear what the Lord saith: “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at naught all my counsel, and would none of my reproof; I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh;”—“then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.” Prov. i. 20—28.

THE
 BLOOD UPON THE DOOR POSTS;
 OR
 MEANS OF SAFETY IN THE TIME OF PESTILENCE.

For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.—EXODUS xii. 23.

—*The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.—*
 1 JOHN i. 7.

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.—HEBREWS ix. 27, 28.

READER, whoever you are, whatever your rank, age, or sex; there is not an event connected with your existence, more absolutely certain than death. You must die some time; it may be soon, and it may be suddenly. Have you ever seriously thought of this event? You have looked upon the dying, perhaps, or upon the dead; at least, you have often seen the funeral procession, and gazed upon the graves of the departed. The departed!—and did you ever seriously ask whither they had gone; and how soon you must also follow? If you have not attended to this solemn subject before, be entreated to bestow a few minutes upon it now. And *now*, when the judgments of God are upon the earth, and a fatal disease has invaded our land, hurrying, day after day, its hundreds to the grave,—*now*, while you are in health and able to think calmly and clearly upon the subject,—*now*, is a favourable time for serious reflection, and prompt decision.

As certainly as that you must die, you are a sinner; for death is the wages of sin. If you were sinless, you would never die. God is perfectly holy, and perfectly just: therefore, he cannot but hate sin and punish the sinner. If you examine your past life, and compare it with the law of God—a law which requires perfect, pure, and perpetual love and obedience to God, you must perceive in your actions, words, thoughts, and feelings, innumerable things contrary

to the demands of that holy law. By that law you are condemned; and unless you can escape condemnation in a way that is consistent with the law of God, you are lost forever. If, then, you are living in this sinful and condemned state, and death should overtake you, whither will you go? To heaven?—what would *you* do in heaven, who have no relish for religious and holy things on earth? How could you stand in the presence of God, whom you have lived only to disobey, or of that Saviour whose gospel you have never heartily believed, and whose grace, proclaimed as the only sure refuge of the guilty, you have always slighted?

Carelessness respecting any thing that nearly concerns our happiness, is folly; but carelessness about death and its eternal consequences, is worse than folly—it is madness. And, reader, have you been living unconcerned about your latter end, and unprepared to meet God in judgment? If you had a cause depending in an earthly court, which, if you lost it, would involve your whole earthly happiness; and if the day of trial were at hand, would you be inactive about preparation to meet it? You would not. But you are hastening forward to the judgment bar of God, to be tried; from his decision there is no appeal, and the happiness or misery of your whole eternity of existence depends upon his final sentence; and are you without thought, without care, without preparation? What! unprepared for the summons, when the messenger of justice is on his way to meet you; when numbers are daily hurried away to their last account; when you know not but that the next victim of disease or accident that falls, may be yourself!—O, if you die in your present state of unbelief and sin, you die to all peace, and hope, and happiness, forever!

Do you inquire what you shall do to escape eternal death, and obtain everlasting life? No inquiry of greater importance to your well being can be made, or even imagined. Then be attentive to the answer; and look up to God in fervent supplication, that you may be assisted to understand and obey.

Jesus Christ died, the just for the unjust, that he might bring them to God. None can come to God, or partake in his saving mercy, except through Christ. He died to atone for sin, and procure for all that believe in his name, eternal life. His people confide in his power and his willingness to save them; they commit to him the keeping of their souls;

they have no other trust. As they depend on him to be saved from the guilt and punishment of their sins, through his atonement and intercession; so also they depend upon him for deliverance from sin itself, by his sanctifying Spirit. They seek to be made holy, and to be fitted for the everlasting enjoyment of God. This cordial and exclusive trust in Christ, as their only and all-sufficient Saviour, is **FAITH**: by this faith they are united to him, in a spiritual, holy, and intimate relationship; their sins are blotted out: they are, for Christ's sake, received into divine favour, and constituted children of God, and heirs of everlasting life. They are endued with the disposition of his children, so that they hate and avoid sin, and love and seek holiness. They live no longer for themselves, but for Him who redeemed them with his own blood, and who shed upon them his own gracious and sanctifying Spirit. They cannot die: their clay tabernacles may drop into the grave, but *they* live, and will forever live in the presence of God, and enjoy his love.

You see here the path in which the flock of Christ have trod, in every age; it is a well tried and plain path. A description of it is summed up in the words, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Into this path, reader, you must enter; and press forward in it, regardless of all temptations to the contrary, if you would ever be prepared for death, or be animated with a well grounded hope of heaven. Look earnestly to God, through Jesus Christ, your Advocate with the Father, for the enlightening, renewing, invigorating operations of the Holy Spirit. Depend wholly upon Him. Feeling your guilt, your proneness to evil, your poverty and helplessness, lay your case before God, and entreat him to save and strengthen you. But remember, he does not save those that remain in sin; he does not strengthen those that lie down in sloth and inactivity. You must not only *confess*, but also *forsake* your sins; and, trusting to receive strength in answer to your prayers, you must act as if all depended on your own exertions. The man in the gospel, whose hand was withered, could as soon have moved a mountain as have stretched out his hand by his own power. But believing in Him who bade him stretch it out, he obeyed—and the performance of this act was evidence of his faith. To plead want of ability, therefore, as an excuse for neglect of duty, and continuance in sin, is to make one sin an apology for a thou-

sand others. What God has required of you, he has promised you strength to perform. Relying on his faithfulness and truth, go forward humbly but confidently, diligently, and perseveringly, in the path of duty. No soul ever perished in this path; and no soul ever entered it, without being led by the Spirit of God. Whosoever is found therein, with a broken spirit and a contrite heart, has the testimony of God's Spirit, witnessing with his spirit, that he is a child of God.

Reader, will you go to Christ, and be saved from sin and death? Or will you lay down this paper, forget the subject, persevere in sin, and perish forever? Be entreated to answer the question *immediately*—to answer it as if you expected this day to be your last. Going to Christ in the way that has been explained to you, and receiving the pardon of your sins, you need not fear the cholera, or any other disease. For if you should die at any moment, your soul would be safe. And at the day of judgment, when God sends the impenitent to everlasting punishment, he will “pass over” you, as he did the houses of the Israelites, because the blood of Christ has been applied to your soul.

THE SAINT'S SECURITY.

He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall 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 shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and the adder: the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation.—PSA. xci.

PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION.

TO A YOUNG DISCIPLE.

MY YOUNG FRIEND:—I rejoice with your other friends in the change, which has taken place in your views and conduct. Though it is too soon to pronounce it a *saving* change, yet I am willing to *hope* that it is such. The day will declare it. I do not know whether a tree full of fragrant and beautiful blossoms, or the same tree laden with ripe fruit, gives the most pleasure. So, I am not able to say whether a young Christian, full of simplicity, eager for instruction, and ardent in hope, or the aged child of God, chastened in all his desires, deeply versed in the knowledge of his own heart, and richly laden with experience, is an object of the greatest interest. Older Christians commonly hope that those who come after them will avoid the errors, into which they have fallen, and so accomplish wonders in the cause of Christ. At least, they have good hopes, even if they have fears also respecting those who promise well, and so they desire to be useful to them. I venture to say some things, which may do you good. They are said in love. I feel sure you will not despise them.

1. It is *not* an easy thing to be a Bible Christian. “The righteous are scarcely saved.” None but the “violent take the kingdom of heaven by force.” To lead a Christian life is to run a race; it is to wrestle with principalities and powers; it is to fight with legions of foes. Running, wrestling and fighting are all hard. Of all errorists, none are more wild than those who teach that it is easy to obtain the prize. “Strive to enter in at the strait gate.” “Thy work will not be done, till thou hast got thy crown.”

2. Obtain clear views of religious truth. To be clear, they must be both definite and extended. Be not satisfied with a few vague notions. “Be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” The word of God is the food of all true Christians. If they would grow and be strong, they must know it. “Search the Scriptures.” The Bible is the richest mine ever worked. There is no danger of your reading it too much, or of your being too much controlled by it.

3. Settle it now and forever, that whatever puffs up your mind, and makes you feel secure or self-satisfied is adverse to piety. To the humble alone does God give grace.—Nothing, positively nothing, can be a substitute for deep self-abasement before God. Those thoughts, books and

sermons, which awaken in you sentiments of self-abhorrence, are the best.

4. Adopt, as your standard, the word of God, and nothing else. There is not a more dangerous practice than that of comparing ourselves with men and not with God's word. It is the adoption of a forbidden rule. Besides, when we have begun to lower the standard, we continue to lower it, until we get it so low as not to condemn us in our own eyes. This was the great error of the Scribes and Pharisees.— Paul says: "We dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." Will you "*dare*" to do what Paul did not venture on? Your life, your heart, your faith will all be judged in the last day by the Bible, not by other men's attainments.

5. Beware of becoming a mere professor of religion. The pious Scougal speaks of some, who were "mere talking and walking skeletons" in the church. "He, that boasteth himself of a false gift, is as clouds and wind without rain." Never express more feeling than you have.— Let your life, even more than your words, declare your real principles.

6. While it is very desirable that you should, by firm reliance on the atoning blood and precious righteousness of Christ, get rid of that "fear, which hath torment;" yet some fears are salutary. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." You cannot fear God too much. Sanctify him and make him your dread. Nor can you be too much afraid of sin. Nor can you be too fearful of being left by God to the deceitfulness of your own heart. Many of our fears are the means of our preservation. "Be not high-minded, but fear."

7. Never trifle nor jest with sacred things. It is profaneness. It must harden the heart. It cannot fail to induce a sad confusion of mind. You cannot be too solemn and reverent when you speak or think of divine things. Never smile at a witticism on divine things. Some wits are madmen.

8. Try to do something every day for God; nay, live to him every hour and moment. Be always trying. He who never fails will never succeed. There is no good horseman, who has not been often thrown. There is no good swordsman, who has not been often disarmed. There is no good Christian, who has not often wept at the failure of his de-

vices for the glory of God and the happiness of man.—Keep trying.

9. Beware of superstition, fanaticism, melancholy and a morbid conscience. All these are foes to piety. I mention them together, because they are often united. If any thing be not sin or duty in God's word, make it not such in your creed. Beware of sleepless nights and nervous prostration. "Be not righteous overmuch." Nature is feeble. Lay not upon her heavier burdens than the Lord has done. Fanaticism is a wild-fire, that will destroy intelligent piety.

10. Think much of the goodness of God, and especially of his mercy to you. Christ is full of grace and truth. Do not forget the bright view of things. This will furnish one of the best means of estimating your responsibility, and one of the best stimulants to exertion in behalf of a perishing world. If you have no pity for the heathen, you are no child of God.

11. If favoured with high religious joy and seasons of sweet communion with God, boast not. Vain-glory is the bane of communion with God. When Moses' face shone, he covered it with a veil. Some things in religion are best known only to God and our own hearts.

12. Avoid all conduct of a doubtful kind. Many consciences are defiled by yielding to fashion or importunity, not only against convictions, but even against doubts. God never shuts us up to the necessity of doing a doubtful deed, whereby guilt may be incurred. We always sin, when we do an act, the lawfulness of which we are not clear about. Go not into the twilight. Live in the sunlight of Bible truth.

13. Waste not your time in idle fears and thoughts of the future in this world. To you the future may be very short. The things you most fear will probably never disturb you. If evils come, they will probably be such as no foresight of men can anticipate. "Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. 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. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him."

14. Love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Love them tenderly. Bigotry and a narrow mind are great sources of misery, and great sins also. No man is more to be pitied, no man is in greater danger, than he who rejects those whom Christ receives, or who says to any child of

God, "stand by thyself; I am holier than thou." You have joined the church you prefer. That was right. But remember that there are *some* people in all branches of the true church of Christ, who please the Lord better than *some* in the branch to which you belong.

15. Be ever ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear; but avoid angry controversy. It is unfriendly to growth either in knowledge or in grace. Friendly discussion of religious doctrine is often useful. But you are yet a private and feeble Christian. You are not now "set for the defence of the Gospel." A feeble defence is often worse than none. Be sure that you understand a matter before you decide upon it. "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."

16. If you shall fail of eminence in a life of piety, it will probably be as with most others, by inattention to comparatively *little* duties and *little* sins. It was the "little foxes" that "spoiled the tender grapes." All defections begin with little things. Nothing is positively of little importance, which affects the honour of God and the safety of the soul.

17. Be steadfast. A miserable changeling, in the days of bloody Mary, said that he was a willow, not an oak. I hope you will be an oak, not a willow. He, whose heart and purpose have no stability, is not fit for the kingdom of God. The Bible often says as much. If you are naturally firm, still remember that grace alone can make you spiritually so. If you are naturally fickle, be doubly on your guard.

18. Get and maintain clear views and deep impressions concerning the glorious doctrines of salvation by *grace alone*. Human merit is nought. Ever say, "What I am, I am by the grace of God." "What hast thou, which thou hast not received?"

19. Come to Christ daily for cleansing and salvation by his blood. Come as you came the hour you first fled to him. Come naked, guilty, defiled, poor, helpless and lost. He is all your salvation.

20. Often think how soon your toils and tears and temptations will be over, and how sweet and pure and unfading the bliss of heaven will be. "To be spiritually-minded is life and peace." To be heavenly-minded is eating the grapes of Eshcol before we enter the promised land. Another day and you may be forever with the Lord. At most, "a little moment" will end the warfare, and open heaven to all believers.

WILLIAM AND HIS MOTHER;

OR,

WHAT IS TRUE REPENTANCE?

WILLIAM was the youngest of his mother's children. When he was eleven years old she was taken very sick. The physician feared she never would be well again. This was soon known in the family, and made all the children sad. To William it was like vinegar upon nitre. He heard it early in the morning. He was at first agitated and then sorrowful. He went alone. He tried to pray, but could not. He then tried to be gay, but his heart said "of laughter, It is mad." He went to school morning and afternoon, but he could not learn his lessons, nor fix his mind on his books. He never spent a more unhappy day. He had the best of mothers. The thought of soon seeing her face no more doubtless affected him, and under some circumstances, would have deeply moved him. But this was far from being his most pressing grief. He also dreaded another visit of death to the family. Once only had death taken away one of their number. That sad event was still remembered. Yet William thought he could brace his nerves to see even his mother die. Perhaps he was mistaken. He had no

fear concerning her eternal happiness. He had seen her walking with God ever since he could remember. He knew how tender was her conscience, how consistent was her life, how firm was her faith. It never occurred to him as possible that she would not be saved. Yet he spent a day of anguish. His conscience and his heart were in fearful conflict. Do what he would, go where he might, he was miserable. Do you ask what troubled him? I will tell you. One thing alone, or at least chiefly, made his heart sink like lead. His trouble was this: Conscience told him in terms too clear to be misunderstood, and in tones too loud not to be heard, that he had been a bad boy, that he had often disobliged and disobeyed his good mother, and that if she should now die, he should go through life with a deep sense of base ingratitude to her. Yet he was too proud then to ask her forgiveness. Conscience said, "you must ask her pardon." His high and stubborn spirit said, "I will not." Many pleas and excuses did he frame, such as that he was quite young, and that he was no worse than many others. Sometimes for a moment these satisfied him. He found considerable relief for perhaps half an hour in remembering that he had not disobeyed her for some months past. But conscience returned to the charge with renewed vigour, and filled him with shame and horror. He saw nothing but self-reproach and misery before him through life, unless he humbled himself, and that speedily. Not a tear had he shed, not a pleasing tender emotion had he felt, all day long.

As the sun was going down, he made up his mind to do as conscience bade him, whatever might be the result. He felt that his mother's forgiveness might be rightfully withheld. But he knew she had a mother's heart. Knowing that she was commonly alone about twilight, he quietly stole to her room. She was lying placidly. Holding out her hand, she tenderly said: "How are you, my son?" He made no reply, but sat down and buried his blushing face in the cover of the bed. He was greatly agitated, but his

heart was hard and proud. Conscience, not a right state of heart, had brought him there. Seeing his distress, she said, "What is the matter, my child?" After another terrible conflict he succeeded in saying that he feared she might not live long, that he knew he had often grieved her by his misconduct, that he was greatly ashamed of it, and that if she should die without expressing her forgiveness to him, he should be miserable through life.

At this she pressed his hand, and said: "My child, I have nothing against you. If you ever disobeyed me, I do not remember it now. If you did wrong, I reproved or corrected you at the time as seemed right. I always loved you. I have nothing now to forgive you. But I give you a mother's, perhaps a dying mother's blessing." Now William's tears flowed in torrents. He was ingenuously sorry. His heart was all dissolved. He never had seen the baseness of disobedience to parents as he saw it then. Yet he loved his mother as he never had done before. He partly raised his head and saw her face. It was radiant with benignity. He was happy in the favour of such a mother. He was full of joy, and yet he wept on.

For a long time his feelings remained subdued and tender. He determined that he never would disoblige her again, and, although she lived till he was nearly eighteen years old, he never did again act counter to her known wishes, but once. That one act grieved him greatly.—With many tears he asked and obtained her pardon for it. Though she has been dead nine and twenty years, and though William is now a grey-haired man, I have recently heard him say he was ashamed of it. Yea, though he has hope in Christ, and glories in his cross, I often hear him praying: "O God, remember not against me the sins of my youth." He has never been sorry, but a thousand times has he been glad, that he sought his mother's pardon.

This little scrap of personal history illustrates the nature of true repentance. I do not mean that when William went

to his mother, and sought her forgiveness, he had true repentance *towards God*. He had no hope in Christ for nearly seven years afterwards. It would be a great error to suppose that his repentance *towards his mother* was an *instance*, but only an *illustration* of repentance *towards God*. The points illustrated are these :

1. True repentance causes sorrow for having sinned against one, to whom very different treatment is seen to have been due. William ought always to have pleased his mother, and he now saw it. She had a right to govern him. She used that right wisely and kindly. He had wickedly opposed his will to hers. This grieved him. He feared not her rebuke or correction for past offences. He feared not the dislike of his family for his conduct to his mother. They knew little of it, and had never reproached him with it. He felt that he had sinned against his mother, and he sought his mother's love. So God has a right to govern us. He has made known his will, he has given us his word. His law is holy, just and good. We have all sinned against him, and are become vile. We have broken his law. If we truly repent, it is not so much hell as sin that makes us grieve. We may have just and terrible apprehensions of wrath, but our chief sorrow will be that we have sinned *against God*. Hear David: "O God, against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Saul, who had no true repentance, said to David, "I have sinned." But David, whose repentance was genuine, said to Nathan: "I have sinned *against the Lord*." Pharaoh, Balaam, and Judas, each said, "I have sinned," yet their repentance was worthless. But the prodigal said: "I have sinned *against heaven and in thy sight*." David said, "Wash me thoroughly." Job said, "I am vile." God is too good, too great, too holy, too kind to be sinned against, and the true penitent sees and feels it to be so.

2. In true repentance we are not afraid of humbling ourselves too much. William had never seen any thing more

odious than his conduct to his mother. Every view of her character, especially the memory of her tender love to him, deepened his abhorrence of his errors. So if we truly repent, it is because the "goodness of God leadeth us to repentance," as nothing else does. A proper view of God's character will make any man say as Job: "I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes," or as Isaiah: "I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips." True humility is not easily offended. It rather seeks than shuns a low place. When Christ spake to that woman as if she were but as a dog, compared to others, she said, "Truth, Lord." And as God's greatest glory and love and justice shine forth in the cross of Christ, so nothing makes a sinner grieve and humble himself, like a view by faith of Christ crucified.— "They shall look on me, whom they have pierced, and mourn." Nor shall this mourning be slight, but as "for an only son," or "for a first born," or "as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon," when good king Josiah was slain.

3. In true repentance there is shame. William could not look his mother in the face. His face has often burnt with shame as he has since thought of his faults. So the true penitent says as David: "Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I cannot look up;" or as Ezra: "O my God, I am ashamed, and blush to lift up my face unto thee." Nor does this shame cease with a hope of pardon. It rather increases. God says that such shall be the effect of his mercy. Hear him: "I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee for all that thou hast done." If "the thief is ashamed, when he is found," why should not sinners be ashamed, when their sin finds them out?

4. True repentance is ingenuous and candid. It freely confesses all, or is willing to do it. William did not say all

that he intended to say, for his mother stopped him by her kind words. The prodigal did not say all he wished to confess, till his father said to the servants, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." When a sinner comes to God, he confesses all, even the worst. Hardly any portion of Scripture describes the experience of God's people better than these words of David ; "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring [tumultuous and unhumbled grief,] all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me ; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." God has truly said : "He, that covereth his sins, shall not prosper ; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy." "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If we wish God to be *kind* to us, we must be *honest* with him. The beggar who will not tell his wants cannot expect to have them supplied. If William had simply told his mother that he was grieved at the thought of her dying, he would never have gained such assurances of her love. O be honest with God. Tell him all, even the worst.

5. True repentance ends in reformation, not perfect, perhaps, at once, but sincere at first, and perfect in the end. William afterwards fell once into the same sin, but he deeply repented. After his conversion, David was once guilty of great sins, yet the habit of his life was to "hate every false way." In vain do we blush and weep, if we do not "cease to do evil and learn to do well." It is the sorrow of the world that leaves men as bad as ever. It works death. Judas repented and did worse: he committed suicide. But "godly sorrow works repentance not to be repented of." It reforms a man because it transforms him. Peter wept

bitterly, and “strengthened his brethren.” To repent of sin and repeat it is bad.

6. True repentance lasts. It is not a fit, a mere compunctious visiting. It is not temporary.

7. There may be true repentance *towards man* without a new heart; but repentance towards God, if genuine, requires a change of heart, a change of nature. It is the gift of God, and is the fruit of a saving change. No man can hate sin, as sin, unless he is born again. No man can bring forth fruits meet for repentance *towards God*, unless he be engrafted into Christ. Then he can die daily unto sin, and crucify the affections and lusts of his evil nature. Look to God for a new heart. Repentance and forgiveness both come from him. William had a natural affection for his mother, which under the circumstances produced genuine sorrow for his disobedience to her. But no man has by nature any right affections towards God. On the contrary “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” “Ye must be born again.”

And now, dear reader, will you not come to God through Christ, confessing and bewailing your sins? You have seen how kindly William was treated. He obtained forgiveness and a blessing too. Yet his mother was a finite creature, whose compassions easily failed. But God is rich in mercy. His compassions are boundless. He loves and pardons like a God. He invites you, he warns you, he beseeches you, he commands you to return. “God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent.” Jesus Christ is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. Fall at his feet and beg for mercy.—Forsake your evil ways and your evil thoughts. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. Repent or perish.

Nor can you repent too soon. Delays are dangerous. I have read an affecting story of one, who wished to get an expression of his mother’s forgiveness and her blessing, but he put it off until it was too late. She died and he described

his anguish as dreadful. How much more dreadful will it be to put off repentance towards God, until the door of mercy is shut. "If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in." "There is no day like to-day. Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow is God's." Only to-day is yours. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." An hour's delay may shut you up in hell.

A Sibyl came to Tarquin the Second, and offered to sell him nine volumes at a very great price. He refused. She burnt three of them, and asked the same price for the remaining six. He again refused, and she burnt three more, and offered him the remaining three at the price first set. So religion makes her demands in youth. They are often rejected. She renews them without any diminution to those who reach middle age. Even then they are often rejected. Sometimes she renews them to the aged, but still without abatement. Happy is he, who then accepts the offer. Happier would he have been, had he accepted them in middle life. Happiest would he have been, had he accepted them at first. Though Tarquin finally accepted the offer, yet he never ceased to regret his refusal of the first and most advantageous offer. And though it is unspeakably wise for even the aged sinner to accept God's terms, yet how much wiser would it have been to accept them at first. The aged man, when truly converted, never ceases to regret his refusal of mercy for so many years, and his loss of excellent opportunities to become wise and humble, and holy and useful. The terms on which salvation is offered, are such as these: "My son, give me thy heart." "Deny thyself, and take thy cross." "Repent." "Believe the Gospel." "Yield yourself to God." Nor will Jehovah, even to save a soul from damnation, abate aught of these righteous demands. He cannot do it without denying himself.

SCARCELY SAVED.

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?—1 Pet. iv. 18.

SAVED! and what is it to be SAVED? Salvation is *deliverance*—deliverance from sin, from its guilt, pollution, and power. To dream of salvation without a separation from sin, is an absurdity. Yet some are cherishing this delusion. They are hoping for heaven, and yet following their corruptions. Such hopes are vain. They must be relinquished, or the soul is lost. For to be saved, is to be delivered from sin. Salvation in sin is a contradiction. “And thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS.” Matt. i. 21.

SAVED! Salvation is *preservation*—preservation from the fearful consequences of sin, from the horrors of the second death, the eternal miseries of hell. They who are delivered from sin, shall also be preserved from its sad consequences in the world to come. On them the second death shall have no power. Rev. xx. 6. But where sin remains, there its sad and awful consequences must be felt for ever. Deliverance from the effects of sin, and yet not from sin itself, is an impossibility. Deliverance from sin secures preservation from the punishment which it deserves.

SAVED! Salvation is *eternal glory*; not eternal being merely, but *eternal well-being*. They who are delivered from sin, and preserved from its punishment, shall be received to the rewards of heaven. That world of glory is prepared for all who love God. There are mansions in readiness for the followers of Christ. John xiv. 2. To be

saved, is to be received into those mansions, cleansed, purified; and to spend eternity in the presence of God and the Lamb. Salvation begins on earth; it is completed in heaven;—and where it is begun, it shall be perfected—they who are justified shall also be glorified. Rom. viii. 30. Some shall be saved—the righteous.

THE RIGHTEOUS! But who are *righteous*? Not such as have never sinned, for there are none such among the family of man. All have sinned; and in the sense of entire freedom from sin, none are righteous, no not one. Rom. iii. 9—23. The righteous are those who, through divine grace, have become interested in the provisions of the gospel; who, by faith, have embraced Jesus Christ as their only hope and refuge; and who, believing in him, are pardoned, justified, sanctified. They not only trust in the righteousness of Christ, but in consequence of their trust in him, they have that righteousness imputed to them, or reckoned to their account. They are justified by faith in Christ's righteousness, and are therefore accounted righteous. Men are not justified because of any inherent righteousness, nor for any thing done in them, for them, or by them; but solely on account of the righteousness of Christ, received and rested in by faith alone. Salvation is not of works, but of grace; righteousness is not by the deeds of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Eph. ii. 8; Rom. iii. 20—28.

THE RIGHTEOUS, therefore, are not such as are natively, nor inherently, righteous; but such as, having embraced Christ by faith, are accounted righteous for his sake. They are renewed by the Holy Ghost, and so are delivered from the power of sin; they are justified by faith in Christ, and so are delivered from its guilt; they are sanctified through the truth and by the Spirit of our God, and so are delivered from its pollution. In reference to the work of grace on their hearts, they are saints; in reference to their interest in the work of Christ—their justification by his righteousness through faith, and their humble endeavours by divine grace to live in obedience to the gospel—they are righteous.

Now the righteous shall *certainly be saved*. There can be no doubt about this, for the Scriptures unequivocally declare it. The righteous shall be received into life eternal. Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36. Saith Jesus Christ, "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand."

John x. 27—30. Their salvation does not depend upon their native goodness, nor upon their own fidelity apart from the grace of God, but upon the immutable purpose and promise of Jehovah. Eph. i. 4—12. It is his plan that they who are once united to Christ by faith shall never be permanently separated from him; that they who are once justified by his righteousness, shall never be brought into final condemnation; that they who are sanctified by his Spirit, shall never be driven away in their wickedness, to suffer the pains of hell for ever. John xiv. 3, 17, 24; Rom. v. 8, 10; viii. 1; 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14; 1 Pet. i. 3—5. The righteous were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love, Eph. i. 4; and being made holy by the operation of the Spirit of God upon their hearts, and being justified by faith, and entitled to the rewards of innocence by the imputation of Christ's righteousness unto them, they shall surely be saved. If one is a real Christian, there can be no doubt of his salvation. He may himself be in doubt, because of the obscurity of his views; he may doubt whether he *is* a Christian; but if one *be* a Christian, his eternal salvation is sure—as sure as if he were already in heaven—for the righteous shall be certainly saved.

But though the righteous shall be *surely saved*, they yet shall be *scarcely saved*. “And if the righteous *scarcely be saved*.” CERTAINLY SAVED, YET SCARCELY SAVED!—how is this? and why is it?

SCARCELY SAVED? Why? It is not because of any defect or deficiency in the provision made for the salvation of men. There is no such defect or deficiency. The plan is perfect; the provision all-sufficient. The way of salvation is open to the world; the invitation is to all; and if any perish, it is not because of any insufficiency in the work and satisfaction of Christ. So if the righteous scarcely be saved, it cannot be because of any narrowness or scantiness in the provisions of the gospel. There is sufficient merit in Christ's blood to atone for the sins of ten thousand worlds; of course an abounding sufficiency for the justified believer, though the chief of sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

SCARCELY SAVED! It is not because of the insufficiency of divine grace. The grace of God is sufficient to subdue the hardest heart, and conquer the most obstinate corruptions.

This is able to give the victory to every saint, and to bring them off more than conquerors over all that resists their heavenward course. My grace is sufficient for thee; as thy days, so shall thy strength be; my strength is made perfect in weakness. 2 Cor. xii. 9; Deut. xxxiii. 25.

SCARCELY SAVED! And why? Because of the trials through which they must pass. We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. Acts xiv. 22. There are many trials to which the righteous are subject in their pilgrimage to heaven. The time has been when they who would live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution; and such times may ere long come again. 2 Tim. iii. 12. They were at hand when the apostle wrote. Hence he speaks of fiery trials—of being partakers of Christ's sufferings—of being reproached for the name of Christ—of suffering as Christians—and of suffering according to the will of God. 1 Pet. iv. 1—3—12—19. The time was come that judgment must begin at the house of God. Those times would try the church, sift out the unworthy, and render the path of the righteous difficult, so that they should be scarcely saved—saved with difficulty. There are trials now for the righteous; these often set their path with thorns; render their course difficult; and make it true that they are scarcely saved—saved with difficulty, or, as some say, with much ado—through much tribulation.

SCARCELY SAVED! Because also of the many temptations to evil with which they are surrounded. This is a world of temptations as well as of trials; and from these the righteous cannot hope to escape. Indeed these temptations are intended to try their faith, and patience, and fortitude; and being addressed to their own evil hearts, which are sanctified but in part, they often find it difficult to resist and overcome them; and sometimes, it may be, they are themselves overcome and fall into sin. At all events, they must be engaged in a constant warfare; and this renders their progress difficult, and they are in consequence scarcely saved. When they would do good, evil is present with them. Though they delight in the law of God after the inward man, they see another law in their members warring against the law of their mind, and bringing them into captivity to the law of sin which is in their members; and they exclaim, O wretched men that we are, who shall deliver us from the

body of this death? Rom. vii. 22—24. The world too has its allurements. Not that religion interferes with innocent and rational pleasures: it does not; it befriends them. By enabling us to estimate them truly, it prepares us to enjoy them properly. Nor does religion conflict with necessary worldly business. It requires no man to neglect his worldly affairs; nay it condemns and censures those who are not diligent in business. So much is needed now to send the Gospel over the world, that every man should make it a part of his religion to be diligently devoted to his worldly affairs, that he may be able to afford efficient aid to the various schemes of the church which have in view the conversion of the world to God. But, while we may partake lawfully of lawful pleasures, and while we should engage diligently in our necessary business, we should beware of worldly conformity. This is a great danger to which the righteous are exposed,—especially at the present day. They are too prone to conform to the world in its business, amusements, and pleasures; to be governed by a worldly spirit, and fail to cherish and exhibit the spirit of their Master. There is not that difference visibly manifest between the professed followers of Christ and the world around them, that there should be. Too often the light of the church is obscured, or hid under a bushel, or extinguished amid the dust and rubbish of worldly business and earthly pleasures and amusements. In these things, the righteous seem too much like the world, and hence are scarcely saved, even so as by fire; and there is need of the caution, Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. Heb. iv. 1; 1 Cor. iii. 13—15. Thus we see why the righteous, though *certainly saved*, shall yet be *scarcely saved*.

Now if *the righteous*, though certainly, shall yet be *scarcely saved*, what shall become of *others*? What is the prospect before those who are not righteous? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear*?

THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER! Such are all, while in their natural state, while unrenewed by the power of the Holy Ghost, and destitute of faith in Jesus Christ. Hence the ungodly and the sinner are those who have *no part in Christ's righteousness*. Not that that righteousness is not

sufficient for them, nor that it has not been offered to them, but they have *not sought an interest in it*. If any thing can augment the guilt, condemnation, and misery of men, it is the rejection of Christ—the neglect of the great salvation. When men have wilfully refused the offer of eternal life, and said by their conduct that they would not have Christ to rule over them, it may well be asked, Where shall they appear? If those who have accepted offered mercy, availed themselves of the provisions of the Gospel, become interested in the righteousness of Christ, endeavour to live to his glory, to overcome their corruptions, and to do good in the earth; if these scarcely be saved, where, O where, shall the ungodly and the sinner—the rejecters of Jesus Christ and his salvation—appear?

Not even scarcely saved, *where shall they appear?* There are some places where they **MUST APPEAR**. They must appear upon a *dying bed*. They must die. So Heaven has decreed. Dust we are, and unto dust must we return. Gen. iii. 19. However men may wish to banish the thought of death, they cannot flee from the reality. In God's appointed time, the messenger will come, and, reader, you must fall before him! You cannot flee from death. You must die! On a dying bed, and in the grave, all must appear.

WHERE SHALL THEY APPEAR? They must appear at the *judgment seat of Christ*. There all must stand. 2 Cor. v. 10. Many may wish to escape from that tribunal, but there is no escape. Not one of the human family can be absent from that solemn reckoning. Reader, **YOU MUST BE THERE!** Whatever may be your character, you must stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

APPEAR! The ungodly and the sinner cannot appear at the right hand of the Judge. When all nations are gathered before Christ in judgment, a separation shall be made between the righteous and the wicked—the godly and the ungodly. The righteous shall be placed upon the right hand of the Judge, the wicked on the left. Matt. xxv. 31—33. **THE WICKED ON THE LEFT!** On the right hand, then, the ungodly and the sinner cannot appear. They cannot stand in that day among the righteous, because they are not righteous; they must stand with all the wicked, and receive their sentence, **DEPART, YE CURSED!** Matt. xxv. 41. There is a curse now hanging over every unbeliever, and remaining

so, that curse will be eternal! John iii. 18, 36; Gal. iii. 10; 1 Cor. xvi. 22. To appear on the left hand of the Judge, is to appear where mercy is unknown, and where every lingering hope expires.

Where shall they appear? Not in heaven. No unclean thing shall enter that blessed abode. None but the righteous can have a place in the paradise of God. And if the ungodly and the sinner cannot appear at the right hand of the Judge, nor in heaven, **WHERE SHALL THEY APPEAR?** They have no righteousness to shield their souls; they have no wedding-garments with which to go in unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb; they have no oil in their lamps, no grace in their hearts, no preparation for eternal glory. Having rejected the only Advocate of sinners, and refused a part in his spotless righteousness, they cannot be acquitted in the judgment; they must be condemned; they must abide for ever under the curse of God, and be doomed to the miseries of the world of darkness and despair for ever. For if the righteous scarcely be saved, there can be no hope in the case of the ungodly and the sinner, who die unrepenting and unforgiven; and the *doctrine of universal salvation can find no place for the sole of its foot!* That represents salvation as *so easy that all shall obtain it*; whereas the scriptures represent it as *so difficult that even the righteous are scarcely saved!* Therefore strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke xiii. 24. And if not able to enter into heaven, what other abode is there for ruined man but the prison of eternal despair? These shall go away into everlasting punishment. The wrath of God abideth on them. Matt. xxv. 46; John iii. 36. And oh, to be shut out of heaven, and shut up in hell! Sin remaining, and the wrath of God without mixture of mercy for ever inflicted, while every sense of the body and every faculty of the soul is an avenue of pain! This is hell! Awful doom! There must the ungodly and the sinner appear; there must they abide for ever! Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Who among us shall make his doom in hell? Reader, art thou the man?

The righteous *scarcely saved!* The ungodly and the sinner **LOST!** Then let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. 1 Cor. x. 12. Let no one boast of his

own strength, nor trust in his own heart. Dangers beset the path of the righteous; they have need ever to be on their guard. Let them live near to Jesus, be engaged in his work, and trust only in his grace. Let them show their attachment to Christ by their devotion to his cause; and let it be their great aim to be useful, and so to live that an abundant entrance may at last be administered unto them into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. i. 11.

The ungodly and the sinner LOST! LOST! Then let the reader ask, "What am I? Am I righteous? Am I united to Christ by faith? Have I an interest in his atoning blood? Am I justified? Have I peace with God? If not, I am yet ungodly, in my sins, and cannot be saved at all! Dying as I am, I too must perish,—I too must be *lost for ever!*" LOST! Reader, is there nothing in the SALVATION of the Gospel to render it an object of intense desire? And is there nothing in ETERNAL DESTRUCTION to excite your fears, and to raise the inquiry how you may escape so fearful an end? You are hastening to eternity; soon you must stand before the bar of God; and are you ready? It is a question of solemn moment; give it a serious thought, and begin to seek the salvation of your soul? Prepare to meet thy God. Repent of your sins. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Cry unto God for mercy and pardon, that you may be with the *righteous*, who shall be *surely*, though SCARCELY SAVED, and not with the *ungodly* and the *sinner*, for whom there *is no hope, and NO SALVATION!* Ponder the words of inspiration,—“And if the righteous SCARCELY BE SAVED, WHERE SHALL THE UNGODLY AND THE SINNER APPEAR?” 1 Pet v. 18.

That awful day will surely come,
The appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge
And pass the solemn test.

No. 85.

SIN MUST DIE

OR

THE SOUL MUST DIE.

BY

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SIN OR THE SOUL MUST DIE.

FEW men know or care for the evil of sin. It is strange that they should be so blind and so reckless. To be in sin is worse than to be in rags, in pain, or in prison. To some this will sound strangely, but it is every word true. Just think :

I. All sin is against God. God is the greatest and the best being you ever heard, or read, or thought of. It is very wrong to offend against a father or mother. But it is far worse to sin against God. He is over all. There is none so high, so holy, so great, so good.

II. He who sins does the greatest wrong to his own soul. Sin is a kind, the worst kind of self-murder. It is the death of the soul. So the wicked are said to be "dead in trespasses and sins." The more they sin, the more dead they are. The Bible says some of them are "twice dead."

III. But those who live in sin, sin all the time. It is their trade, and they work hard at it. They love it, and have pleasure in those who practise it. "They weary themselves to commit iniquity." "They sleep not except they have done some mischief." "They draw iniquity with a cart-rope." "They love death." "They dig up evil." They "fill up their sin always." They "do always resist the Holy Ghost." They never for one hour love the Lord their God with all their heart, nor their neighbour as themselves. They are always sinning.

Two things are required to make an action right. One is that it be lawful in itself. The other is that it be done with a right motive. If the thing done be itself wrong, no motives can make it right. To steal, or curse, or murder, or despise the poor, or hate the just, can never, under any circumstances be right. To do evil that good may come is

the doctrine of none but devils, and the worst of men. On the other hand the thing done may be right in itself, but the motive which governs us may be wrong, and so the act may be sinful because the motive is sinful. Bad motives in good actions are like dead flies in sweet ointments. They corrupt the whole. The heart is every thing. Most men of the world in Christian countries do many things which are very proper, but not from love to God. No man, who has not been born again, ever does any thing with holy motives. His life is better than his heart. Indeed his heart is the worst part of him. It is all wrong. It is hard, and proud, and selfish, and unbelieving, and without any love to God. It is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Jer. xvii. 9. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." Matt. xv. 19. So far from pleasing God, all men, who have not been born again, offended him all the time. Their very best works are but "splendid sins." "Every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts is only evil continually." Gen. vi. 5.

There are reasons found in human nature which render it certain that unrenewed men will do nothing but sin. They are blind and see no beauty in holiness. They have no spiritual discernment. "They have eyes but they see not." "They know not what they do." If they do not see the beauty of holiness, how can they love it? No being can love that, which does not seem to him good or comely.

The man who is without the grace of God never fully approves the law of God as holy, just and good, or adopts it as the rule of his life. He does some things which it requires, and abstains from some things which it forbids, not because he loves God or his law, but because it promotes his health, or wealth, or honour, or quiet, to do so. God is not in all his thoughts. He would live very much as he does if the law of God were not known to him. Ask him, and he will tell you that he does not aim with a single eye to honour God in every thing. He does not frame his doings to that end at all. All the lines of his conduct meet and end in himself. He is without God in the world. He serves the creature more than the Creator. Nor is his heart without objects of love. He loves the world and the things of the world. When he prospers in the things that perish he counts himself happy. He is greatly pleased with gold and

silver, and objects of sense, and works of art. These are his gods, because he sets his heart on them. He thinks of them ten times as much and a thousand times as eagerly as he thinks of God.

What makes his case worse is that he is commonly much at ease. He is well pleased with himself. He is not sighing over his failures and lamenting his sins. He thinks he is nearly good enough. Rivers of water never run down his eyes for his own sins or the sins of others. He seldom cries, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and when he does, it is rather a form than a hearty prayer. His real belief is that God could not righteously and for ever condemn him; at least he says, "If I am lost, I know not what will become of many others." Would it not be strange that one, who cares not to serve God, should do it? that he, who tries to please himself and wicked men, should, as by accident, please God? that he, who seeks the honour that comes from man, should find the honour that comes from God only? Surely there is no such confusion where God reigns. He does not put darkness for light, bitter for sweet, sin for holiness, and vice for virtue.

Nor should men be offended at this doctrine. It is not new. It is not of human invention. It is not the doctrine held by a few only. It is not a mere theory. It is very practical, very important. No truth concerns any man more than this. It is the very doctrine of the Bible in many places. Paul says: "They that are after the flesh [who are unrenewed by God's Spirit] do mind the things of the flesh. * * To be carnally-minded is death. * * The carnal [or unregenerate] mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Rom. viii. 5—8 Could words be plainer or stronger? Until God shall be pleased with a heart that is *enmity* against him, and with a mind that "*cannot be subject*" to his law, until he shall cease to be a holy God, he cannot be pleased with any thing done by a man who has not the Spirit of God, and whose heart has not been thoroughly changed.

Ploughing is itself a lawful act. If there be no ploughing, there can be no bread. Yet God says: "The ploughing of the wicked is sin." Yea, he puts it down with other sins that greatly offend him. The whole verse reads thus: "An high look, and a proud heart, and the ploughing of the

wicked is sin." Pr. xxi. 4. If God had intended to teach that every thing, even the most common and necessary thing done by wicked men, was sinful, could he have chosen more fit words?

But here is a passage which shows that all the religious services of sinners are defiled with sin. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." There are but two classes of men known in the Bible. They are called saints and sinners, the just and the unjust, the righteous and the wicked, men of the way and men of the world. Their end will be different because their characters are different.

This is the common doctrine of the great body of Christians in the world. Hear the Church of England and the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.—"Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God; forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say) deserve grace of congruity: yea rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin." 13th Article.

The 5th Article of the Church of Ireland contains the same words without alteration. It holds also this language: "We have no power to do good works, pleasing and acceptable unto God, without the grace of God preventing [going before] us, that we may have a good will, and working with us when we have that good will." It also incorporates these words from the Lambeth articles: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn, and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith, and calling upon God."

The Reformed Churches generally fully agree with the above testimonies.

The Synod of Dort says: "There is indeed remaining in man, since the fall, some light of nature, by the help of which he retains certain notions concerning God and natural things; concerning the difference of things honourable and shameful, and manifests some desire after virtue and external discipline: but so far from his being able, by this light of nature, to attain to the saving knowledge of God, or to turn himself to him, he does not use it rightly in natu-

ral and civil things: nay, indeed, whatever thing it may at length be, he contaminates it all in various ways, and holds it in unrighteousness, which, when he does, he is rendered inexcusable before God."

The French Confession says: "Although man can somewhat discern between good and evil, yet we affirm, that whatsoever light he hath, it straightway becometh darkness, when the question is of seeking God, so that by his understanding and reason he can never come to God. Also, although he be endued with will, whereby he is moved to this or that, yet in so much as that is altogether captivated under sin, it hath no liberty at all to desire good, but such as it hath received by grace and the gift of God."

The Augsburg (or Augustan) Confession, which is the standard of Lutheran Churches in Germany and America, says: "We condemn the Pelagians and all such as they are, who teach that by the only powers of nature, without the Holy Spirit, we may love God above all, and fulfil the law of God, as touching the substance of our actions. We do freely and necessarily mislike these dreams; for they do obscure the benefits of Christ. For therefore is Christ the Mediator set forth, and mercy promised in the gospel, because that the law cannot be satisfied by man's nature, as Paul witnesseth when he saith, Rom. viii.—"The wisdom of the flesh is enmity against God. For it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." For albeit that man's nature by itself can after some sort perform external works (for it can contain the hands from theft and murder) yet can it not make those inward motions, as true fear, true faith, patience, and chastity, unless the Holy Ghost do govern and help our hearts. And yet in this place also do we teach, that it is also the commandment of God, that the carnal motions should be restrained by the industry of reason and by civil discipline, as Paul saith, ** "The law is given to the unjust." And again: "Albeit that men by their own strength be able to do outward honest deeds in some sort, and must also perform this civil obedience; yet so long as men are void of faith, they are in the power of the devil, who driveth them to shameful sins, occupieth their minds with wicked and blasphemous opinions, for that is the kingdom and tyranny of the devil. Moreover, nature is weak and cannot, without God's help, strengthen itself to any spiritual works."

The Moravian Confession says: "And since through faith the Holy Spirit is given, thus also the heart is made fit to do good works. For before that, as long as it is without the Holy Spirit it is too weak; and besides it is in the power of the devil, who impels the poor human nature to many sins. * * * Without faith and without Christ, human nature and ability is far too weak to do good works; as to call upon God, to show patience in suffering, to love one's neighbour, diligently to discharge offices entrusted to us, to be obedient, to avoid evil lusts. Such noble and truly good works cannot be done without the help of Christ, as he himself speaks—John xv. "Without me ye can do nothing."

The Heidelberg Catechism, which is the Confession of the Reformed Churches of Holland and Germany, and of the German Reformed and Reformed Dutch Churches of America, has these questions and answers:

Ques. What doth the love of God require of us?

Ans. Christ teacheth us that briefly, Matt. xxii. 37—40: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first and the great command; and the second is like to this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commands hang the whole law and the prophets.'

Q. Canst thou keep all these things perfectly?

A. In no wise; for I am prone by nature to hate God, and my neighbour.

Q. Are we then so corrupt that we are wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness?

A. Indeed we are, except we are regenerated by the Spirit of God."

The Westminster Confession says: "Works done by unregenerate men, although for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God, they are therefore sinful and cannot please God, or make a man meet to receive grace from God. And yet their neglect of them is more sinful and displeasing unto God."

This article is found without alteration in the Confessions of all the Presbyterian bodies of Scotland, Ireland, and Canada, and of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. It was incorporated entire into the Savoy Con-

fession, into the Saybrook Platform, into the London Baptist Confession, into the Philadelphia Baptist Confession, as well as into the Confession of numerous smaller bodies in this and other countries.

The eighth article of the Methodist Episcopal Church, of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, and of the Protestant Methodist Church in the United States, is in these words.

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God : wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have that good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.”

The Confession of Seuveland says : “Good works (which are good indeed) do proceed from a lively faith, by the Holy Ghost, and are done of the faithful according to the will or rule of God’s word.”

The Confession of Basle says : “The Lord himself saith, ‘Without me ye can do nothing.’ John xv. 5 : that is, nothing that may please God and be for your salvation. * * Faith and love are the fountain and square of all virtues and good works, according to the testimony of the apostle : ‘The end of the commandment is love, out of a pure heart, and a good conscience, and faith not feigned.’ 1 Tim. i. 5. And again : ‘Without faith it is impossible to please God.’ Heb. xi. 6.”

The Confession of Belgia says : “We are justified by faith in Christ, yea, even before such time as we could bring forth any good work : for our works before faith can no more be good, than the fruit of a tree can be good, before the tree itself be good.”

The Confession of Saxony says : “External discipline, even where it is most honest, is not a fulfilling of the law. * * But all this discipline is an external government, such as it is ; like unto the leaf of the fig tree, wherewith our first parents, after their fall, did cover their nakedness : neither doth it any more take away sin, and the corruption of nature, and death, than those fig-leaves did.”

The Confession of Wirtemberg says : “We confess and believe that to do and practise such righteousness as is acceptable to God, these virtues be necessary ; faith, hope, and love : and that man cannot of himself conceive these virtues, but doth receive them of the favour and grace of God.”

These extracts from the standards of different bodies of Christians might have been much more extended. They are, however, sufficient to show that the doctrine set forth in this tract is not novel ; is not the doctrine of a few extreme writers, but is the common doctrine of the purest and most zealous churches. The fair arguments used and the texts quoted in these Confessions do mightily strengthen the arguments and proofs before quoted. It is not too much to say that it has been fairly and scripturally proved, that unregenerate men do sin always, and that none of them do any thing but sin against God. If this be so, it follows :

1. That the misery of an unregenerate state is indescribable. I wonder not that awakened sinners deeply lament their misery, and cry out in agony, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "What must I do to be saved?" "God be merciful to me a sinner." Nor do I wonder that pious men have such overwhelming emotions, when they contemplate the state of the unregenerate. David said : "Horror hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked that forsake thy law." "Rivers of waters run down mine eyes because they keep not thy law." "I beheld the transgressors and was grieved ; because they kept not thy word." Ps. cxix., 53, 136, 158. For a time Ezra "did eat no bread, nor drink water because of the transgression of them that had been carried away." Ezra x. 6. Jeremiah says : "Hear ye and give ear ; be not proud : for the Lord hath spoken. * * But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride." Jer. xiii. 15, 17. Even Daniel "was astonished for one hour and his thoughts troubled him," when he foresaw even the temporal calamities that would come on the tyrant of Babylon for his sins. Even the Son of God, in the midst of the triumph, which prophecy had decreed to him, was bathed in tears, when he thought of the sins and the doom of the city, which was about to shed his blood. God himself is twice spoken of as wondering at the ruin of man, and the utter helplessness of the whole race. Isa. lix. 16, and liii. 5. It is not very difficult to over estimate the evil of many crimes against man or society, but no man ever exaggerated the evil of sin against God. And the unregenerate are all dead in sin. They sin more and more. They do nothing but sin. If for a little while they seem to reform, they soon return to it, as the dog to his vomit, or as

the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire. Their goodness is as the morning cloud; and as the early dew, it passeth away. They sometimes return from outward acts of sin; but they return not unto the Lord. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man and returns again, "the last state of that man is worse than the first." Matt. xii. 45. Neither mercies, nor judgments, nor promises, nor threatenings, nor hopes, nor fears, without the grace and spirit of Christ, will or can ever cure the love, or arrest the practice of sin.

2. How justly deserved will be the sentence of exclusion from the presence of God and his powerful glory! No sentence will be more holy, more righteous than that. All heaven, all earth, and all hell will see and feel how just it is. O man of the world, can thy hands be strong, or thy heart endure when God calls thee to account? "What wilt thou say when he shall punish thee?"

3. No wonder that men must be born again.

To hold that man in order to be saved must be born again may be mysterious. But to hold that man can be saved without regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absurd. The doctrine of a spiritual renewal is fundamental. The fact of regeneration is essential to salvation. Can the Ethiopian change his skin by an act of his will, by the use of snow water and fuller's soap, by any thing he can do? No more can he, who is accustomed to do evil, learn to do well, until God gives him a new heart. Regeneration is as much a fruit of infinite mercy as free pardon. We need a change of heart as much as we need a change of state. We need deliverance from the power of sin no less than from the curse of the law. The plague of an evil heart, if it be not cured, will as certainly destroy us as the wrath of God. The fountain must be made good, or the streams will for ever be bitter. Heaven without a change of nature will be as impossible to us as it now is to fallen angels. We "must be born again, born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Either sin or the soul must die. Both cannot live. Sin is a mortal enemy.

4. How vain is the hope of pardon and acceptance with God by our own merits! Where are our merits? All our works are stained with sin. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." Every man of the least spiritual discern-

ment will say, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified." Ps. cxliii. 2. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." 1 John i. 8. What we all need is pardon, not justice; forgiveness, not equity. If God accepts us, he must be moved thereto by his love, not by our obedience; by his mercy, not by our deservings; by the *blood* of his Son, not by our *tears*. "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Rom. iii. 20. "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Luke xix. 10. If you are not a *lost* man, Jesus Christ can profit you nothing. The great Physician came to heal the sick, not the whole. By denying your guilt, and misery, and helplessness, you declare that you have no part in the plan of salvation wrought out by Jesus Christ. Salvation is by grace without human merits. It is all of grace. It is by grace alone. This way of salvation suits us all. It suits us exactly. O that it pleased us all and pleased us well. Such a Saviour, such mercy, such love ought to charm us, would charm us, if we were not blind, and vile, and proud, and unbelieving. The worst of sins is the rejection of gospel grace. I had rather answer for the guilt of murder and treason, than for the guilt of neglecting so great salvation.

5. Will you not say: "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son?" O that you would. "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil." Dan. ix. 9, 10. There is none like him. He pardons like a God. What you do, you must do quickly. If *you* linger, *death* does not, the *judgment* does not. Are you halting? Cease to hesitate. If *you* decide not soon, *death* will decide for you. There is but a step between you and death. The very fact that you live, and that you are reading these words of mercy and entreaty, shows that you may yet be saved. But an hour's delay may close the door against you for ever. O cry after knowledge, and lift up your voice for understanding; seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures. Turn at God's reproof and he will pour out his Spirit unto you, and will make known his words unto you.

“Seek the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near.” Cry as Bartimeus, “Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” And if your sins, and habits, and errors, and friends, would hinder you, “cry a great deal more earnestly, Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me.” Beware how you make light of these things. Beware, “lest thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, How have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!”



A PRAYER.

O thou blessed God! I am as nothing before thee. But in mercy, for Christ's sake, hide thy face from my sins; and blot out all mine iniquities. Let the precious blood of thy Son, which saved the dying thief, avail for me. Clothe me with Christ's perfect righteousness; make me thy child by adopting me into thy family; and never let me seek any other Saviour but Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. I need no other Saviour besides him.

Heavenly Father! Pour out upon me thy Holy Spirit. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Grant to me that new birth and that holy nature, without which no man can see thy face. Uphold me by thy free Spirit. Thou desirest truth in the inward parts. In the hidden parts make me to know wisdom. Help me to put off the old man, which is corrupt, and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

I ask nothing in my own name. I ask all in the name of Him, in whom thou art ever well pleased, even Jesus Christ, the righteous. AMEN

THE END.

THOU MUST DIE.

YES, READER, THOU MUST DIE. I cannot tell what will be the day or hour of your death, but I do know from revelation, observation, and inward conviction, that you and I are shortly to lie down in the silent grave. And the conviction of this solemn truth has at times been felt by you; perhaps, as you stood by the side of some dying friend, or as you lay upon your own bed, tossing to and fro in pain. He must be blind indeed, who, walking over and among the graves of his kindred and friends, indulges the idea that *he* is to be exempt from the common lot of all. Yet with all around us tending to decay, how prone we are to put off thoughts of death as a personal matter! Let me ask your attention to the subject for a brief moment.

DEATH IS A CERTAIN EVENT TO ALL. The consequences of sin are as extended as the human family. None can escape, "for it is appointed unto men once to die." Did we, like the beasts, lie down and turn to dust, no more to live, death would even then be regarded with terror. Were there no hereafter, earthly, sensual man might and would revel in all the excesses of his depraved nature, and be content to know that soon he would be no more for ever. While some would persuade themselves that man has no higher destiny than the beasts that perish, no one is willing to die in this belief.

You can speak of the past with certainty. It is marked by varied events and scenes. It is impressed upon your mind by joyous or sad remembrances. You can also speak truthfully of the present, though, while you speak, it is gone. But of the future—of the dark, unexplored future, what can you say? You may plan—you may hope—but your plans may never be accomplished; your hopes may be disappointed. It is yet in the bosom of eternity. All that you can know or assert respecting it is, *I shall die.*

DEATH IS THE DECIDING POINT IN YOUR DESTINY. As death finds you, such will your condition be throughout eternity. Your day of grace will then cease. The time allotted by a gracious God for preparation for the eternal world will have ended, and your soul will enter upon its reward, or go away into everlasting punishment. While life remains there is hope: but the dark waters passed, your state is fixed beyond the possibility of a change. O! if you are postponing repentance from day to day, think of this. It is a solemn thought. If your salvation be not yet secured, beware lest you fail of eternal life; for

DEATH MAY BE NIGH. Have you attained to twenty years? Then you have a short ten ere you reach the average duration of life. But look at the bills of mortality. See what numbers die just at your age. Have none of your companions been cut down by your side? Are you fifty or sixty years old? Then have you nearly passed the allotted time of man upon earth. I know that time flies quickly with you. The future, to which you looked forward in the days of your youth and prime, what has it yielded you—what has it profited you, if you are yet unprepared to die? You may have made a good use of it in heaping up wealth, or in securing the honours of the world; but if no preparation has been made for the immortal spirit, how sad is your condition! What will you do when the destroyer comes? Think you, riches or honours will comfort you in the hour of trial? Death

may be nigh. The bow may even now be bent, and the arrow poised which is to pierce your vitals, and you unprepared! You cannot afford to postpone the consideration of the subject; for

DEATH MAY COME SUDDENLY. You may be stricken down at noonday; yea, in your full strength. There is no certainty that you will live another day or hour. And if the enemy should make a protracted siege, will you be in a condition to prepare for eternity when his terrors are upon you? Have you ever stood by the bedside of a dying sinner, who, as life ebbed away, gave utterance to mournful cries of despair at his neglect of preparation for death and the spirit world? Have you ever read of the last hours of such? Think you, that amid the anxieties and cares incident to a separation, to be eternal, perhaps, from those you love, you will be able to seek the salvation of your soul? You will not. If you resolve to postpone repentance to your death-bed, you will, most probably, never repent.

“Millions for an inch of time,” was the exclamation of a dying Queen, as the realities of the eternal world dawned upon her sight, and the consciousness of her lost condition agonized her soul. “I have lost my soul,” was the sad testimony of a dying sinner, who had been warned and entreated to seek salvation, but had turned a deaf ear to the voice of mercy and of God. Will *your* dying hour be spent in giving utterance to such heart-rending accents of despair? Are you willing to stake your all on the uncertainties of a to-morrow, which may never come? Will you deliberately lie down upon your bed to-night, with the full conviction in your mind that if you do not wake again in time, your eternity will be one of unspeakable woe?

The great question to be decided, and at once, is, ARE YOU PREPARED TO DIE? Not, is your will made, the disposition of your family and property arranged, in case you are called away suddenly from them, but are you prepared to meet your God in judgment—te

render the account of the deeds done in the body? These are questions which reach in their bearing beyond the limits of this brief life: they relate only to the imperishable spirit. Are they not worthy a candid consideration?

Do you ask, What must I do to prepare for death? Ah! if you never asked the question before, you have much to do. You must instantly attend to the concerns of your soul. This ought to have been the great business of your life hitherto. But there is yet hope. Go to the word of God and learn what your character is in his sight. It tells that you are by nature corrupt and unholy, that you are under sentence of death as a sinner, and that there is no way of escape from death eternal but by the blood of the cross. If you go to that word with earnest and prayerful desire to know what you must do to be saved, you will there find light and direction. It teaches that you must repent of your sins. "*Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.*" Not a moment is to be lost. You must repent now. If you are treading the broad road that leads to death, you must at once turn about. Go not a single step further in it, lest you fall into the flames of hell. Turn from your evil ways unto the Lord who will have mercy, and to our God who will abundantly pardon. Look back over your past life. See how ungrateful, how rebellious you have been; what goodness you have abused—what mercy despised—what grace slighted—what a Saviour rejected. Ask your conscience if your sins are not great. Pray God to give you a broken, contrite heart. Cast yourself on Jesus. He can pardon, he can save. You cannot approach unto, nor have peace with God except through him. Your sins can be blotted out only through his blood. You can be justified only through his righteousness.

Many men, when conscience alarms them, resolve that they will reform; that they will seek by acts of philanthropy and benevolence, by honest, upright, and moral conduct, to atone for their past sins and propiti-

ate an angry God. They seek not to be saved, but to save themselves. Alas! that so many thus deceive themselves, and resting on their morality, lull their consciences to rest, and perish miserably at last. Do not deceive yourself thus. What can a guilty, ruined sinner offer to a holy God, that is worthy his acceptance? All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in his sight. True, you must reform; but all you can do is unavailing without divine grace. If your heart is renewed, right actions will follow, and nothing short of a renewed heart will answer. To be prepared for death, you must be reconciled to God, else the king of terrors will be a fearful messenger when he comes to call you hence.

What multitudes deceive themselves with the hope of long life and a protracted illness! Can any course be more foolish? What is lost by being prepared to die at any moment? There are few unconverted men who do not shudder at the contemplation of death. I know men are bold, and that they will utter sentiments in company which they imagine betoken great moral courage; but alas! when the call to die comes suddenly, they find no comfort in the very opinions which they so vauntingly professed when in health. Ah! how often does the secret monitor within make itself heard in the quiet of retirement, by those who laugh at conscience when in the company of scoffers.

You must live the life of the righteous, if you would die the death of the righteous. Many who have, when upon what was supposed to be their death-bed, professed to have experienced a change of heart, have on the return of health gone back to their former wickedness. A death-bed, as before remarked, is a poor place for preparation for eternity. *Now* is the time to prepare. Now, while you are in the enjoyment of health, of reason, and the means of grace; while you may calmly attend to the soul's mighty interests—while mercy calls and love divine invites. Do not, under any pretext whatever, postpone the

matter. The writer remembers to have stood by the bedside of a dear youth, who, though religiously trained, had neglected the concerns of his soul until his last moments. In conversing on the subject of embracing Christ, he remarked, "There appears to me something so mean in coming to Jesus just at the last moment, when I have wasted my life away." He deeply and bitterly regretted that he had so acted, and died earnestly beseeching his friends to seek the Saviour at once. And is it not, dear reader, the extreme of ingratitude and guilt to confess your need of a Saviour, and yet neglect to seek him? To hope to love Jesus, and to believe in him *just before* you die—*just in time* to be saved from eternal death! Is it not, I ask, the veriest trifling with the blood of the everlasting covenant?

No longer delay. You see that nothing is to be gained, but that much, yea, every thing, is risked by postponement. *You must die. You may die soon. You may die suddenly.* BEWARE, LEST YOU DIE ETERNALLY. Jesus waits to be gracious. Salvation is now offered. If you will at once accept the proffered mercy, death may come as soon and as suddenly as God may be pleased to send it, and you will have nothing to fear;

"Death cannot make our souls afraid,
If God be with us there."

It will but open the door to joys eternal. But if it finds you unprepared, your soul will be hurried away to blackness and darkness for ever.

There is a death whose pang
Outlasts the fleeting breath;
Oh! what eternal horrors hang
Around the second death.

“TO DIE IS GAIN.”

A PREPARATION is needful, that it may be gain to die. What constitutes this preparation? Not indifference, not thoughtlessness, not forgetfulness of God and of eternity. There must be *regeneration* by the power of the Holy Ghost. The corrupt nature must be changed; the depraved heart must be renewed. The image of God, having been lost by the fall, must be restored by a new creation. There must be a likeness to God in order to the enjoyment of God. And there must be *faith* in Jesus Christ. This, so to speak, is the natural breath of the new creature. In regeneration, or effectual calling, the Spirit works faith in us, and thereby unites us to Christ, as the branch is united to the vine. As sin corrupts us, so does it condemn us; and as we need regeneration and sanctification to deliver us from its corruption, so we also need justification to deliver us from its guilt and condemnation. And as regeneration is by the power of the Holy Ghost, so justification is by faith in Jesus Christ. He has been made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. He has borne the curse of the law, that we by faith in him might be delivered from the curse, and be accounted and treated as righteous. Where there is no conversion, the soul remains under the power of corruption; and where there is no faith, the soul remains under the sentence of condemnation. The power of corruption must be broken by the regenerating Spirit of God. The sentence of condemnation must be removed by faith in Jesus Christ, in order to any right preparation for death. These are needful—regeneration and faith: regeneration, because we are sinners by nature and practice; faith, because we are condemned by the violated law of God. Regeneration changes our nature; faith changes our relation to the broken law, because of what Jesus Christ has done and suffered in our stead. He who

is born again, and has faith in Jesus Christ, is a Christian, and it is gain for him to die.

Death delivers him from all anxiety, pain, and suffering. Even amid the anxieties which surround the Christian here, amid the darkness which may envelope the future of those whom he loves, and from whom he is about to separate—there is a sweet satisfaction in committing all to God, the Friend of the friendless, the God of the widow, the Father of the fatherless. This may calm the troubled bosom, and quiet the anxious fears of the departing saint. Though God has promised to place underneath him the everlasting arm of his strength, and to make all his bed in his sickness, and even to strengthen him on the bed of languishing, he has not promised exemption from pain and suffering any more than he has from death. But when his work is done, then pain is done; then suffering ends; then there is no more sorrow, no more tears; what is earthly is then done away; what remains is heavenly, pure, peaceful, eternal.

And to die is gain for the righteous, because it introduces them to the happiness of heaven, to its joys, its society and employments, to the full possession of the purchased and prepared inheritance. “To-day,” said the Saviour to the dying penitent upon the cross, “To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;” and after Paul had said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain,” he adds, “for I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better” than to continue here. From all which it is evident that the soul does not lie in an unconscious state between death and the resurrection; but as soon as it is absent from the body, it is present with the Lord. It is in the society of angels and of redeemed spirits, and of Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. It is with friends and loved ones, who have gone before to glory, and it begins the song of Moses and the Lamb. Rev. vii. 9—12, and xxi. 4. And this is gain; yes, to die is gain.

P R E F A C E .

THOSE who are acquainted with the writer of this Tract must know, full well, that he is no bigoted sectarian; that, whilst he is conscientiously a Presbyterian, he is by no means disposed to confine all the sweet charities of heaven to any one sect or denomination. He loves his brethren of other communions too much, to make a single unkind remark; and thinks that if "Michael, the archangel, when disputing with the devil concerning the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee,"—much less does it become a Christian of one denomination to speak harshly of those of another; especially if, although they differ in some points, they agree in all matters of vital importance. All, therefore, that the writer here intends is, in a calm, argumentative manner, to vindicate the Standards of his own church; and all he requests of his brethren who differ with him is, a candid consideration of the matters herein presented; and he indulges a pleasing hope that this unpretending Tract, so far from gendering strife, may, by the divine blessing, serve, at least in some measure, to correct misapprehensions, remove prejudices, and strengthen the bonds of fraternal affection amongst those who have one common Master, and who are commanded to love one another with pure hearts, fervently. Looking upon the different denominations of Christians as so many companies which compose the

grand army of Emanuel, "the sacramental host of God's elect," and bearing in mind the tender thought, that *real* Christians, of every communion, are all bought with the same precious blood—all sanctified by the same divine Spirit, and "all passing through one beauteous gate to one eternal home"—the writer, although Calvinistic in sentiment, can, in sending this Tract abroad, very sincerely say, with the Apostle Paul,—Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Reader, have you any prejudices against the Calvinistic creed? Are you disposed to say, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Permit your brother very respectfully to reply, "*Come and see!*" READ, and PONDER, and PRAY.

D. B.

THE

STANDARDS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

A FAITHFUL MIRROR OF BIBLE TRUTH.

By the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, we mean the Confession of Faith, together with the Larger and Shorter Catechisms of our Church. These, we verily believe, are, in every particular, based upon the Scriptures. As a faithful mirror presents, with great exactness, all the features of the object which it reflects, even so, in these Standards, may we all behold, as in a glass, that system of divine truth, which is taught in the Bible. And if the image reflected be the exact counterpart of the original, why should the *mirror* be blamed for its fidelity? *It* creates nothing. *It* is responsible for nothing, but the accuracy of its reflecting power. This being the case, if there be any thing in the image reflected which we do not like,—in condemning *that*, do we not really condemn the original? And would it not, indeed, be more candid and just, to find fault with the original, and spare the mirror? Marshal Suwaroff, we are told, was in the habit of dashing to atoms every mirror into which he happened to look, because he was not pleased with the image there presented. But what did this avail? Did not every feature in the image owe its existence to some corresponding feature in the original? and should he break a thousand mirrors, or substitute some other kind of reflecting medium which could make smooth that which was rough, or beautiful, that which was homely, would not every feature of the original remain still precisely the same? “What, if some did not believe?” says Paul. “Shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect? God forbid! Let God be true and every man a liar.” If some things in our Standards are “hard to be understood,” it is because they, with great fidelity, present the very image of the things “hard to be

understood," in the Bible. Yes, our Standards derive their existence solely from the sacred Scriptures. They are bound fast to the Bible, as with iron clamps, or a threefold cord, which cannot be broken; and that power which can bend or straighten one, can bend or straighten the other also. If there be any controversy, it is to be settled, not with *us*, but with the *sacred writers*, in whose wake we are found. The Bible is their shield and hiding-place; and the arrow which pierces one, must pierce the other also! And now, in order that the reader may, at one glance, see that the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, are, indeed, a FAITHFUL MIRROR OF BIBLE TRUTH, we will place one immediately over against the other, and it will manifestly appear that the language of our Standards is not a whit stronger than the language of the Bible—but is its very *echo, image, and counterpart* :—

*The Standards.**

1. All things, in Scripture, are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all.

2. Yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed, and observed, for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened, in some place of Scripture or another, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them.

3. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his Providence, that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all

The Bible.

1. Even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you, as also in all his epistles, in which are some things *hard to be understood*. 2 Pet. iii. 15.

2. The entrance of thy words giveth light: It giveth understanding unto the simple. Psa. cxix. 130.

3. The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Psa. ciii. 19. I form the light, and I create darkness: I make peace, and I

* Controverted and unpopular doctrines alone are noticed.

other sins of angels and men.

4. And that, not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering and governing of them, in a manifold dispensation to his own holy ends.

5. Yet so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy, and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

6. God from all eternity did, by the wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass.

create evil : I, the Lord, do all these things. Isa. xlv. 7, 8.

4. And God came to Balaam at night, and said unto him : If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them ; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. Num. xxii. 20. Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain. Psa. lxxvi. 10. Shall the axe boast itself against him that heweth therewith ? or shall the saw magnify itself against him that shaketh it ? Isa. x. 15.

5. Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and, *by wicked hands*, have crucified and slain. Acts ii. 23. And Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron and said, *I have sinned*. The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Ex. ix. 27.

6. For of a truth, Lord, against thine holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, *for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done*. Act iv. 27. Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning. Acts xv. 18.

7. Yet, so as thereby, neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence offered to the will of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.

8. Although God knows whatsoever may, or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it, as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions.

9. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life.

7. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted *when he is drawn away by his own lust*, and enticed. James i. 13, 14. And they said one to another, *We are verily guilty* concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear. Gen. xlii. 21. The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works. Psal. cxlv. 17.

8. For the children, being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God, according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto her that the elder should serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this cause have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared through the earth. Rom. ix. 11, 12, 13, 18.

9. According as he *hath chosen* us in him, before the foundation of the world. Having *predestinated* us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure

10. And others pre-ordained unto everlasting death.*

11. These angels and men, thus predestinated and pre-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed.

of his will. *Being predestinated*, according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Ep. i. 4, 11. Moreover, whom he did *predestinate*, *them* he also called; and whom he called, *them* he also justified; and whom he justified, *them* he also glorified. Rom. viii. 30. The *elect* angels. 1 Tim. v. 21.

10. The Lord hath made all things for himself, yea, *even the wicked for the day of evil*. Prov. xvi. 4. There are certain men crept in, unawares, who were *before ordained to this condemnation*, ungodly men. Jude 4. Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and *another unto dishonour*? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction? Rom. ix. 21, 22.

11. *All* that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. John vi. 37. *No man can come to me*, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him. John vi. 44. And *as many as were ordained* unto eternal life, believed. Acts xiii. 48. I pray for them. I pray not for the world, but

* For their *sin*. So teaches our "Confession," just after the manner of the Bible.

12. And their number is so certain and definite, that it can neither be increased nor diminished.*

13. Those of mankind who are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory, out of his mere grace and love.

14. And those thus saved in Christ are chosen in him without any foresight of faith, or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any

for them which thou hast given me. John xvii. 9.

12. The Lord knoweth them that are his. 2 Tim. ii. 19. And *as many* as were ordained unto eternal life, believed. Acts xiii. 48. *All* that the Father giveth me, shall come to me. John vi. 37. *No* man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him. John vi. 44.

13. According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world . . . having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, unto himself, *according to the good pleasure of his will*. Being predestinated, according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things *after the counsel of his own will*. Eph. i. 4, 5, 11. Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters. Job xxxiii. 13.

14. Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, *not according to our works*, but according to his own purpose and grace which

* And does not the *fore-knowledge* of God (which all must admit) make the matter as certain as his *fore-ordination*? If, for example, God *foreknows* that A. B. will live in sin, and die in sin, is not the *event* just as certain in the one case as in the other? And if God *foreknows* that precisely nine hundred thousand billions of the human family will be saved, and *no more*, can that number be *increased*? Can it be *diminished*? Those, then, who hold to *fore-knowledge*, and those who hold to *fore-ordination*, are in the same category, and should bring no railing accusation against each other.

other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving thereunto ; and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

15. As God hath fore-ordained the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained all the *means* thereunto.

16. Those who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ.

17. Such are effectually called unto faith in Christ.

he purposed in Christ, before the world began. 2 Tim. i. 9. Hath chosen us in him, *that* we should be holy. And as many as were ordained unto eternal life, believed.* By grace are ye saved through faith, and *that*, not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God, *not of works*, lest any man should boast. Eph. ii. 8, 9.

15. Elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God, *through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience*, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ. 1 Pet. i. 2. God hath from the beginning, chosen you to salvation, *through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth*. 2 Thes. ii. 13.

16. As by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Rom. v. 19. As for thee, also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water. Zech. ix. 11. Thou wast slain, and *hast redeemed* us to God by thy blood. Rev. v. 9.

17. Who hath saved us, and *called* us, with an holy calling. 2 Tim. i. 9. Being justified by faith, we have

* Observe ! Luke does not say, As many as *believed* were ordained unto eternal life ; but As many as were *ordained unto eternal life* believed.

18. And, by his Spirit, working in due season, are adopted, sanctified, and saved.

19. Moreover, such attain everlasting life, being kept and "saved by his power through faith unto salvation."

20. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, and sanctified, but the elect only.

peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. v. 1.

18. And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins. Eph. i. 1. Because ye are sons, he hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your heart, crying Abba, Father. Gal. iv. 6. Saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Tit. iii. 5.

19. Reserved in heaven for you, *who are kept*, by the power of God, through faith unto salvation. 1 Pet. i. 4, 5. I am persuaded that He which hath begun a good work in you *will perform* it, unto the day of Jesus Christ. Phil. i. 6. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and *they shall never perish*, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. John x. 27, 28.

20. *I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.* John xvii. 9. Many are called but few chosen. Matt. xx. 16. And, *as many* as were ordained unto eternal life, believed. Acts xiii. 48. - Moreover, whom he predestinated, *them* he also called, and whom he called, *them* he also justified; and whom he justified,

21. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his will, whereby he extendeth, or withholdeth mercy, as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by and ordain them to dishonour and wrath, *for their sin*, to the praise of his glorious justice.

them he also glorified. Rom. viii. 30.

21. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou *hast hid* these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Luke x. 21. Therefore they could not believe, because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them. John xii. 39, 40. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth. Thou wilt then say unto me, Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but, O man, who art thou, that repliest against God? * What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction? Rom. ix. 18—22.

* It is worthy of remark, that, wherever a doctrine is taught in the Bible, which is *likely to be controverted*, the objection is stated *in advance*, and put down! Thus, when our Saviour said, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, the objection of Nicodemus is recorded; How can these things be? and the answer of our Saviour is given, Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. With regard to the doctrine of the *Incarnation* of Christ, the objection started is the *mystery* of the thing. Paul admits the mystery, yet holds fast the doctrine. Without controversy, says he, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. Again Paul, having affirmed that a man is justified by *faith, without the deeds of the*

Thus have I compared the Standards* of the Presbyterian Church with God's blessed word. I have put the one directly over against the other. I have concealed nothing, masked nothing, glossed over nothing. And now, candid reader, is there not a *very striking resemblance*? Is the language of our Standards one whit stronger than the language of the Bible? Is not the one the very ECHO, IMAGE, and COUNTER-PART of the other? and if, in our Standards, we find some things "*deep and dark*," are they not the very fac-simile of corresponding things "*deep and dark*" found in the sacred volume also? Let us then beware how we rudely touch either, lest, haply, we be found to touch an enveloped thunderbolt, and "fight against God!" As for myself, fully believing that the Bible is the word of God, and that every thing which it teaches is right and good; and that, when properly understood, it will appear worthy of Him who is the essence of all wisdom and love, I am willing to follow the Bible wherever it goes, as the little child follows its parent, or the boat goes in the wake of the gallant ship, which safely ploughs the waves of the mighty deep! Yea, as Ruth said unto Naomi, so would I say to this, my heavenly guide: "Hinder me not from following after thee, for whither thou goest will I go; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried." But it may be objected,

1. That if the doctrines here taught are the doctrines of the Bible, *then the Bible cannot be the word of God*. But **IT IS THE WORD OF GOD**. It is proved to be so, by the commanding evidence of the most stupendous miracles. It is proved to be so, by almost innumerable prophecies, which have been most literally and remarkably fulfilled. It is proved to be so, by the fact of its giving an account, and the

law, meets the objection of the antinomian in this way, Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! yea, we establish the law. And, just so, in reference to the doctrine of *Divine Sovereignty*, having said, Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, he anticipates an objection, Why doth he yet find fault? and *puts it down* in this way. Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, &c. Now this starting of the objection to an unpopular doctrine, *in advance*, and putting it down, is certainly the strongest possible way of establishing the doctrine!

* The things most objected to.

only rational account of the creation of the world ; of the origin of evil ; of the division of time into weeks of seven days ; and other matters connected with the early history of our globe. It is proved to be the word of God, by the sublimity of its doctrines ; the perfection of its precepts ; and its admirable adaptation to the wants and circumstances of man. Indeed, the character and teachings of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, and the power of his religion upon the conscience and the heart of millions, are convincing proofs of its divine origin. Yes, the blessed Bible comes to us, “with credentials clear ; on every line, marked with the seal of high divinity ;” and to deny it, is much the same as to deny that there is light in the sun, or stars in the firmament, or beauty in virtue, or deformity in vice ; and hence to deny that the Bible is the word of God, would be to plunge into difficulties incomparably greater than those we would avoid. But it may be said,

2. If the doctrines here laid down are true, then *man can be no longer a free agent. He is not responsible for his actions : and the doctrine of FATALISM is true.* But these inferences are not correct. The Bible teaches no such thing, nor do the Standards of the Presbyterian Church. Both teach clearly and strongly that man *is* a free agent ; that man *is* accountable ; and that *the DOCTRINE OF FATALISM IS NOT TRUE.* That we are free agents, we are perfectly conscious. In this matter our consciousness is as strong as that of our identity. Of course, then, neither the Bible nor our Standards can say aught against this. In all that the sinner does, he acts freely, with his own full consent ; and to say there is any Divine influence upon the sinner, impelling him, in any case, to do that which is wrong, is impious ; hence, the language of the apostle James, “Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God ; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man ; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived it bringeth forth sin ; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” This is a true, Scriptural account of the matter ; and, in most exact accordance with it, we find this language in our Standards, “*Yet so as there by, neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the freedom of the creature, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*” And again, in speaking of the providence of God extending “to the first

fall, and all other sins of men and angels," we find this language, "*Yet, so as the sinfulness thereof proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who, being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.*" To illustrate and establish the doctrine thus taught, both in the Bible and in our Standards, there are many cases upon sacred record. It is said that the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart, and yet Pharaoh certainly must have been conscious that he acted freely, or he would never have said, "I have sinned. The Lord is righteous, but I and my people are wicked." Joseph's brethren, moved with envy, sold him into Egypt. When Joseph became governor, and made himself known to his brethren, and they were troubled at his presence, he said unto them, "Come near unto me, I pray thee, and they came near; and he said, I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold unto Egypt: now, therefore, be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for *God did send me before you* to preserve life. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive." Notwithstanding all this, it must be admitted, that Joseph's brethren acted freely, and, in conspiring against their brother, and selling him into Egypt, they certainly sinned grievously, and *this they felt and acknowledged*, in this language, when in trouble: "We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; thereupon is this distress come upon us." The case of Balaam also is exactly in point. Invited by the messengers of Balak to go to Moab, and curse the children of Israel, he was expressly forbidden to go; nay he was assured, that the people whom he was called upon to curse were and should be blessed. This was surely enough to prevent Balaam's going. And it is true in the morning he sent away the messengers, saying, The Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you. As if he had said, I am willing enough to go, but I serve a hard master, who will not let me go. Upon the return of the messengers to Moab, Balak, the king of Moab, believing that the prophet of Aram might yet be won, sent other messengers, yet more honourable, and promised great things. To these messengers Balaam said, If Balak should give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more. Willing, however, to give the king of Moab every proof

of his readiness to please him, he invited the messengers into his house, and made an attempt to change the Divine purpose, as though God was a man, that he should lie; or the son of man, that he should repent. As Balaam's covetous heart was set upon the promised rewards of Balak, God, to punish him, and "make his power known," permitted him to go, yes, **WITHOUT APPROVING**, *permitted* him to go, to go on, to his own destruction! Wretched man! he braved every danger for filthy lucre's sake. "And God's anger was kindled, because he went; and the angel of the Lord stood in the way, as an adversary against him. And when Balaam's eyes were opened, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand," conscious guilt filled him with alarm, "and he bowed down his head, and fell flat upon his face, and said, *I have sinned.*" Observe! God *permitted* him to go, but Balaam had full reason to know that if he had the *divine permission*, he had not the *divine approbation*; for God, who changes not, had already said, Thou shalt not go; thou shalt not curse the people; for they are blessed. Now, this case illustrates our doctrine of the providence of God extending itself "even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, yet so as the *sinfulness thereof* proceedeth only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is nor can be the *author* or *approver* of sin." But the case, which, perhaps, of all others, is the most striking, is that touching the crucifixion of Christ, which, we are told, was done by **WICKED HANDS**, although we are expressly told, also, it was done *according to the determinate counsel and fore-knowledge of God*. And note the language of Peter, in another place: "For, of a truth, Lord, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy *hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*" Now, such things being brought to pass by the providence of God, whilst all the sinfulness thereof proceedeth from the creature, may seem strange—*quite inexplicable*; and yet it is all perfectly true; as both the Bible and our Standards positively affirm. But it may again be objected,

3. *How can these things be?* To this I would reply, many things, when stated, and not properly understood, may appear very strange, and even contradictory and absurd, which, nevertheless, are strictly true; and when light comes

in, all objections pass away. A *mathematician* tells me that a line may be continually approaching a certain point, and yet never can reach it! I am astonished! I am ready to deny the assertion; and say, How can it be? He draws a diagram, demonstrates the truth of his proposition, and I am obliged to admit the correctness of his proposition. A *traveller* assures me, that, in going down a river, he was, in the evening of a certain day, fifty miles nearer home than he was in the morning of that day, *and yet farther off!!* I hear the assertion with amazement, and, incredulous, I ask, How can this be? He describes on paper, the *windings* of the river, points out his position in the morning, his position at night; and shows me where his house stands. I understand it now, and what was an enigma before, is such no longer. I *affirm* that you are a *mortal* man, and *must soon die*. The next moment I say you are *immortal*, and *must live for ever!* This moment I tell you that my father is sleeping in the *grave*; the next moment I say, he is robed and crowned in *heaven*. If unacquainted with the twofold nature of man, you exclaim, "Nonsense! what can be more absurd? *mortal*, and yet *immortal!* Sleeping *in the grave*, and robed and crowned *in heaven!* Impossible! It cannot be!" I reveal to you the fact of the *twofold existence* of man, as consisting of soul and body. Your wonder ceases; your mind is relieved; the difficulty is now all gone! *Whilst the Pharisees were gathered together*, Jesus answered them, saying, What think you of Christ? whose son is he? And they said, The Son of David; and he said, How then doth David in spirit call him *Lord?* saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou upon my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. If David called him *LORD*, how is he then his *SON?* And, says the evangelist, no man was able to answer him a word. Not knowing the fact, that Jesus Christ was both God and man, the question was confounding; the thing stated perfectly inexplicable! And now, if we take the ground of modern Unitarians, what will we do with these words of the Saviour, I am the *Root* and Offspring of David. If Jesus Christ be no more than a *mere man*, how could he be the *Root* of David? the *SOURCE* of David's being? And if we, quoting these passages of Scripture which speak of Christ as God, the mighty God, and God over all blessed for ever, should insist upon it, that he is *God only*, how then it may be asked, can he be *DAVID'S OFFSPRING?* What now

is to be done? Why, RECEIVE, AS TRUE, ALL THE DECLARATIONS IN THE BIBLE, *on the authority of God*. Is this unreasonable? Certainly not. It is only what every good child does, as regards the declarations of its earthly parent. For example, this father tells his little children that the earth is turning upon its axis, and is rolling very swiftly round the sun! At first, the child may be astonished, and say "Pa, the world is standing still. How can it be?" But when the parent seriously affirms the fact, the child submits, and believes the assertion made. Does that child trample upon reason? I deny it. There is a syllogism in the mind of that child. It is this: "My father says it is so: my father never tells lies; and therefore it is so." And now to apply this, the Bible says God sent Joseph down into Egypt; and yet the *crime* of selling him into Egypt is laid at the door of his envious brethren. With regard to Pharaoh, God says, For this very cause have I raised thee up, that my power might be shown in thee, and my name declared throughout the earth. And yet God expostulates with him thus: How long wilt thou refuse to let my people go? The Bible tells us that there is only one living and true God, and yet, speaking of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, declares each to be God! The Saviour says, No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him; and yet also uses this language, Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. And the very same Bible which says, "Whom he predestinated, them he also called," says, likewise, "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Are these "*dark sayings*?" Are these "hard to be understood?" Be it so. They are the words of a God, who cannot lie; and I receive every declaration as divinely true. I receive them all *on the authority of God*: I have received the declarations of man, which, at first, were equally inexplicable, and found them true. Shall I believe the word of man, and shall I not believe the word of God? If then I point out certain declarations of Christ and his apostles, and believe them all, and a controversy is started, in relation to certain "*hard sayings*," the quarrel is to be settled, not with *me*, but with *those who uttered* these dark sayings! And it is remarkable, as I have elsewhere shown, that in relation to the doctrine of *Predestination*, as with many others, the objection is started *in advance*! Why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? and put down with a "Nay, but, O man, who art thou,

that repliest against God?" I firmly believe that, in a future world, every thing will be cleared up, and we shall read, in fairer, brighter lines, all the mysteries, even the *darkest* mysteries, both of the WORD and PROVIDENCES of God. In the mean time, WE are willing to receive the Bible, as *suited to a state of probation*, suited to try our *faith*, as well as our *obedience*, and, as the Saviour said to Peter, when he washed his feet, (and he did what Peter could not see the propriety of,) "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter;" even so will it be in relation to the things which appear inexplicable, in the sacred volume. What we know not *now*, doubtless we shall know *hereafter*. The word of the Lord is tried—every syllable true; and we may, without wavering, firmly rest upon it. This is what the Apostle Peter denominates "PRECIOUS FAITH." Only let me have a divine warrant. I am willing to believe any thing, venture any thing! and, in so doing, I honour REASON as well as the Bible, for the word of the Lord is true, and reason tells me, that what is true must stand for ever! When the light of eternity breaks in upon us, then all darkness and clouds will pass away, and we, who now see through a glass darkly, shall then see face to face; and we, who now, know only in part, shall then know even as we are known. Paul, in the very same chapter in which he speaks of the bright light of the eternal world, uses this language: "Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." Now, at first, this appears strange and even contradictory; and yet, when understood, is found to be both true and beautiful. As the stars which shine at midnight fade away and vanish at the rising of the sun, (their twinkling light being lost and swallowed up in the brighter splendours of the glorious orb of day,) even so all the knowledge which we may acquire on earth will be, as it were, lost and swallowed up in the overflowing flood of intellectual light, which shall pour in upon us from the throne of God! And now, as these words, "Whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away," (which seems strange and inexplicable at first,) are, upon examination, better understood, even on earth, even so, a careful examination of certain things, "deep and dark," in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, may, even *now*, give us some light, which we had not before, and thus relieve the mind, and cause us to receive and love that against which we may have had strong prejudices in time past. And now, candid reader, let us notice some of the things most usually

objected to, in the Standards of the Presbyterian Church, and see if these objections be not entirely groundless.

1. ELECTION.—Does any one object to the *word*? It is in the Bible, in numerous places, and cannot be expunged. Is it the *principle* which is objected to? How common is the principle among men! Do we not elect our presidents, our governors, our judges, our sheriffs, and our partners in love and trade? No principle more common than this, and, may I not add, none more valued. Is the *doctrine* of election offensive? And what is the doctrine? Simply this, God's *plan of SECURING the salvation of some, of very many of the human family*. It is an act of super-abounding mercy, a pure work of grace, infinitely *bettering* the condition of the human family, and presenting at least one beautiful rainbow of promise upon the dark cloud which overshadowed our guilty globe! It is something *extra*, which smiles upon many, and frowns upon none; which places no new obstruction in the sinner's way; but leaves him precisely as it found him, untouched. Now, why object to a plan of mercy for *securing* the salvation of some, when, without it, the salvation of all would have been in fearful jeopardy?*

2. UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION.—And what is meant by this? Simply that salvation is *all of grace*, in other words, that those who are saved are chosen in Christ, not on *account* of any merit or obedience of their own, nor any faith. And

* We humbly conceive that the doctrine is virtually admitted, 1. By all *who admit that conversion is the work of God*. Say you are converted. Who converted you? You answer, "God, most certainly." Well, if God converted you, he must have intended to do it; and if he intended to do it, he must have intended it from all eternity; for it is written, "Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning." 2. By those who pray for *special influences*, who pray that God would come down, in mighty power, and slay the enmity of the sinner's heart; and subdue the stubbornness of the sinner's will; and make him a trophy of *victorious* grace: for what does this amount to, but this? Lord, we see that *that* "common grace, which is given to all men, to profit withal," does not bring the sinner to Christ; therefore, we pray for *more* grace, for *conquering* grace. This involves the very essence of our doctrine, and upon it is based the humbling and confounding question of the Apostle, Who made thee to differ? I should prefer that the objector would hold fast the "*form of sound words*," but if, in his "*holiest moments*," he distinctly recognizes that which is the very sum and substance of the doctrine of election, I am content. The thing itself is worth more than its name. I had rather have the jewel and the casket both, but if I cannot get the casket, by all means give me the *jewel*.

does not the Bible expressly say, By grace are ye saved, through faith, and *that* not of yourselves ; it is the gift of God ; not of works, lest any man should boast ? And what says Luke ? “ And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed.” Observe ! It is not, As many *as believed*, were ordained ; but, as many as *were ordained*, believed. And what says Paul ? “ Chosen in Christ, *that* we should be holy,” not *because* we were holy, but *that* we should be holy. This, as I believe, is the precise idea intended to be conveyed by our Standards. It is simply the doctrine of grace strongly asserted. And where is the Christian that will not say, “ Grace ! ’tis a sweet, a charming sound,” or where the converted soul, that will not freely admit, that “ Grace shall crown the work that grace began ?” Precious doctrine !

3. ELECT INFANTS.—This need not be objected to. Surely it must be a very harmless phrase, as something equivalent, or, at least, very much like it, is found in the Standards of another Church, never charged with being too Calvinistic : “ Grant that this child, now to be baptized, may receive the fulness of thy grace, and ever remain in the number of thy faithful and elect children, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Now, to *remain* in the number of God’s *elect children*, implies that there is such a class, and being one of that number, must, of course, be *elect*, and being a child, must be an *elect child* ! Change the word child for infant, and we have the very phrase employed in our Standards ! The only difference, then, in these Standards seems to be this : that one requires the matter to be reiterated at the baptism of every child ; the other does not.*

4. REPROBATION.—And what is this ? A judicial act. Simply, God’s giving the sinner over to walk in the way of his own lusts ; giving him over to a “ *hard heart*, and a *reprobate mind*,” *for the punishment of his sins*. And where is the man, who has read his Bible, who has not seen this doc-

* And is not the doctrine of “ *unconditional election*” also recognized here ? for the child not having done, as yet, any good works, nor being capable of exercising faith, if elect, it could not have been on account of any of these things, and is not this *unconditional election* ? But if it be said that “ All mankind are elected in Christ *to a state of probation*, or *possibility of salvation*,” then, in praying that the child may *ever remain* in this state, is to pray, not that the child may attain *salvation*, but may always *remain in a state of probation* ! its salvation always attainable, but never attained ! As all denominations are imperfect, ought they not to deal very gently with each other ?

trine written there, as with a sunbeam? By reprobation, we mean nothing more than what is plainly intended to be taught in these words of the Apostle, (1 Thes. ii. 11, 12.) “For this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” If any still object, let it be thundered, not in *our* ear, but the ear of *Paul!*

5. THE DECREES OF GOD.—These, as some think, are dark mountains, frowning awfully; but, really, are rather mountains gilded with heavenly glories! for what are the decrees of God, but the calm divine purpose of infinite wisdom and love, to *bring* to pass, or *permit* to come to pass, whatever does come to pass, for the glory of his great name. Is not the glory of God the grand object for which all things were brought into existence? And if, in the work of *Creation*, this was the grand end in view, ought it not to be in the work of *Providence* also? And, whilst God causes many things to come to pass by his *own positive* influence or decree, (such as causing light to exist, and fruits to abound,) is it not desirable that he should also have full power over all the actions of his creatures, to *permit* and *prevent*, as to him may seem best? And is it not pleasing to think that infinite wisdom and love *have had* the arranging of the whole plan? that God, in full view of all possible events, has calmly and wisely determined to bring to pass certain good things, and also calmly and wisely determined to *permit* and *bound* and *control* evil things; only, however, in such a measure and way, as he foresees will ultimately redound to the glory of his great name? With regard to the *first*, James tells us, that “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights;” and with regard to the *second*, the Psalmist says, “The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath wilt thou restrain.” And is it not pleasant to think that as God has, by a *decree*, fixed a bound to the sea, saying, Thus far shall thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed, so he has, also, by a *decree*, fixed a bound to all the actions of his creatures, permitting, bounding, and controlling all things, in infinite wisdom and love? Hence this language of the Apostle: “All things work together for good, to them that love God;” and hence also the loud and harmonious shout in the heavenly world, in relation to the whole plan of the Divine government: “Great

and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints." And now, with this explanation, I ask—if the decrees of God *are high mountains*, do they not rise in grandeur before our eyes? Are they not gilded with heavenly glories? Precious doctrine! Alleluia! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen, Alleluia!

6. THE FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS.—And what is this doctrine? Not that a person, once converted, may live as he pleases, and be sure of salvation, but that those who are truly regenerated, being kept by the power of God, will persevere *in grace* unto glory. And is not this the very language of Peter? "Blessed," says he, "be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who *are kept* by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." And in relation to the matter of being *safely* kept, does not Paul say, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God?" Now I should think that a jewel kept in such a casket, *thus* "*hid* with Christ in God," must be *safely* kept. Paul himself seems to have thought so, for he immediately adds, "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." But what is the language of the Saviour himself? "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them; and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall *never perish*, nor shall any pluck them out of my hand." It would be difficult to conceive of language stronger than this; particularly taken in connection with this prayer of the Saviour: "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." But the correctness of our interpretation seems to be positively and for ever settled, by what the Saviour says, will be the language of the final Judge to those on the left hand in the great day, "Depart—*I never knew you!*" Observe! Not, I know you not *now*, but I *never* knew you! As *individuals*, he certainly always knew them; of course, then, he must have reference to them *as disciples*. Now if any of them had ever been truly converted, they would have been his disciples, and he certainly would have known them as such; but he, the blessed Saviour, the final judge, will say to all upon the left hand, I NEVER KNEW YOU. But the doctrine of the final perseverance of saints is believed,

as it would seem, not only by Presbyterians on earth, but by angels in heaven, yea, by *all* the angels; for our Saviour says, "There is joy, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth." Now, if the doctrine were not true, I wonder if, whilst heaven rings jubilee, and the younger angels are shouting, "The dead is alive, and the lost is found," I say I wonder, if some of the older and more considerate angels would not say, "Stop, young cherub; wait a little; that converted sinner may not come to heaven after all!" But no check is given to the joy of any one! Joy pervades every bosom! One blessed wave of joy rolls all over the heavenly world; and the full choir of angels rejoice that another human being has entered upon the race for glory! another human being has become a child of God, an heir of heaven, and will soon join them in the skies! But some may object, and say, What will we do with other passages of Scripture, such as these, "If the righteous turn from his righteousness," "If the salt have lost its savour," "If they shall fall away, &c.?" Do not such passages overthrow the doctrine of final perseverance? I answer, By no means. Paul says "Though I, or an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel than that ye have received, let him be accursed!" But was it possible for an angel from heaven to preach any other doctrine? And Paul, on a certain occasion, had said, Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved. But had not God said, There shall be the loss of no man's life? The idea in both cases is this—in the purpose of God the MEANS and the END are linked together; and what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

But it may further be objected: Does not Paul say, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that, by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway?" Grant it, freely! but does not the same Apostle also say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?" But the whole matter is beautifully explained in Jeremiah xxxii. 40, where the Lord, speaking of his people, says, "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, and I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me." When, therefore, Paul said, "*lest I myself should be a castaway,*" he only proved that he was a child of God, being under the

influence of that very fear which God promised to put into the hearts of all his children. This godly fear is a never-failing mark of true piety, and I hesitate not to say, that the man in whose bosom it does not exist, has no true religion. He may boast "of inward joys and sins forgiven," but he is not a converted man; he is not a child of God. But finally, it may be said, *We have known some persons who were converted, and who, for a time, were even useful ministers of the gospel, who became miserable apostates, and died in sin.* Not to say any thing about certain "foolish virgins, who took their lamps, and took no oil with them," nor any thing about certain stony ground hearers, "who received the word with joy, but had no root," we need only repeat the words of an inspired apostle, "They went out from us, because they were not of us, for if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us." This is conclusive; especially as it falls in with the usual method of the sacred writers, as we have shown, to notice objections likely to be made to certain doctrines, and to put them down! and, I must say, it was very kind in them to give the advocates of those doctrines such help in advance, thus encouraging them in times of trial, "to hold fast to the form of sound words," and to "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints." Yes, candid reader, believe it, the doctrine of the **FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF SAINTS** is a Bible doctrine, and like the other doctrines here presented, and with which it is inseparably linked, is divinely true. It forms an essential part of a system all glorious and beautiful throughout! Nay, it is the "key-stone of the arch, which shuts and binds the whole." *It must be true*, for not only does the Bible teach it, but reason also. "Do you think," says one, "that God would have suffered Elijah to fall, when he was taking him up to heaven? No more will he permit a child of his to fall, whom he is taking to his heavenly kingdom." It must be true. *Job* believed the doctrine, or he had never said, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall appear at the latter day upon the earth; and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and not another." *David* believed the doctrine, or he would never have so confidently exclaimed, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory." *Peter* also certainly believed it, when he

broke out in this exulting language, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation." Moreover, beyond all doubt, *Paul* believed the doctrine, when he said, in his epistle to the Philippian Christians, "Being confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in you will perform it, until the day of Jesus Christ;" and surely he must have been under the blessed influence of this doctrine when he uttered his well-known, triumphant language, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." What a noble testimony to the truth of the doctrine have we here! And under its influence, how glorious and sublime is this flight and triumph of faith! Heaven in full view, heaven begins on earth! O blessed system of divine truth, which thus winds up in exultation and in joy! and loud and ceaseless songs of praise to HIM, who thus causes grace to reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ, our Lord!

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

THE
DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
POPERY AND PROTESTANTISM.

MY DEAR SIR :—You were educated in the church of Rome, and until recently you have received all its dogmas and teachings as true. You have been providentially led to question the truth of much that you once received with unwavering faith, and to feel that the religion of your fathers and of your youth is not the religion which God has revealed for the acceptance and the salvation of men. Because you possess not the means, nor the information for making the comparison yourself, you ask of me, for the purpose of aiding you in your inquiries after the truth, a brief statement of the difference between Popery and Protestantism. Most cheerfully do I yield to your request: and most earnestly do I pray that you may be brought from darkness to light, and from the bondage of a gloomy superstition into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The points of difference are numerous and various; but for your purpose and mine, it will be only necessary to indicate a few of them.

1. *They differ as to what is the church.* The Papist makes it to consist of all who submit to Christ and the Pope; the Protestant, of all who submit to Christ. However holy in heart, or consecrated in life, all Christians who believe not in the Pope, are heretics and schismatics in the view of Popery, and are to be regarded as infidels, Turks, and Jews! To belong to the church of Jesus Christ, it is as necessary to believe in the Pope as to believe on Jesus Christ? Can any mind, save one dyed in the mingled compound of darkness and bigotry, believe this?

2. *They differ as to the rule of faith and practice.* The Protestant asserts that the word of God is the only and the infallible rule of faith and practice. The Papist teaches that "it is not merely the written word of God, but the whole word of God both written and unwritten; in other words, Scripture and tradition, and these propounded and explained by the Catholic church."

This is a wide difference. The decisions of that small book called the Bible are final with every Protestant. This the Papist denies, and pronounces it a damning error. His rule of faith is, first the Bible, then the Apocrypha, then the traditions—the beginning and the end of which no mortal knows—then the decisions and decrees of councils, and then the interpretation of these by the church. And whether "by the church" is meant the Pope, or a council, or the Pope and council, is not yet determined. If, in some things, the Protestant rule of faith is difficult to be understood, the rule of the Papist is utterly beyond human comprehension.

3. *They differ as to the use of the Bible.* Protestants regard the Bible as the revealed will of God to man—to every man. And hence they vindicate the right of every living man to read for himself, and on his own individual responsibility to God to decide as to what it teaches, and as to what the Lord would have him to believe and to do. But Popery prohibits the general circulation of the Bible; forbids its perusal, save by those who in its opinion will not be injured by it; and supplants it among its adherents by prayer-books and missals and manuals of devotion, whose object is to supplant the religion of the Bible by the religion of the priest. Protestantism keeps burning brightly before you the light which God has kindled in our world for the guidance of our race, and teaches you to walk by it. Popery curses you for so doing, removes that light, kindles up its own, and sends you to perdition unless you walk by its dim and flickering rays.

4. *They differ as to the sole object of worship.* The Bible teaches the unity of the Godhead. In this the Papist apparently unites with the Protestant. But while the Protestant unites with the Bible in denouncing all worship offered to any being save God, or even to God by the intervention of paintings, pictures, or sculpture; Popery, on the contrary, teaches that divine worship is due to the Virgin Mary, to the true

cross, to the little piece of baked dough called the host, and that religious adoration is to be paid to angels, to departed saints, and even to relics—old bones collected from the catacombs, and, for the sake of raising their price in the bone-market, said to be the bones of saints and martyrs.

5. *They differ as to the nature of sin.* Want of conformity unto, or transgression of the divine law, is the only sin known to the Bible or forbidden in its pages. Sin is a transgression of the divine law. So Protestants believe and teach. But Popery teaches, that to transgress *its* commands is sin, and sin of the most aggravated character. It places its commands in importance above the laws of God. It is far more sinful to break Good Friday, than the Sabbath day; to eat meat on Friday, than to get drunk on Sunday; to enter a Protestant place of worship, than to go to the theatre; to read king James's Bible, than to pore over Sue's novels; to deny the infallibility of the Pope, than to burn heretics; for a priest to get married like Peter, than to keep a mistress like Herod. The violation of many of the laws of God it makes a venial offence, while it pours the vials of its anathemas upon the contemners of its precepts, and sends them to burn for ages in purgatorial fires, or for ever in the fires of hell. It makes that to be a light sin which God makes a most grievous one, and makes that to be a sin which is a positive virtue. Thus it makes void the law of God.

6. *They differ as to the agency by which the sinner is renewed.* The need of this renewal is thus taught: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." The agency by which this work is effected is thus taught: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." It requires the power which originally created man from the dust to new-create the human soul, to re-instamp on it the lost image of God. But Popery teaches, that faith with the other graces is infused into our hearts in baptism, and that they are all nurtured up to maturity by confirmation, penance, fasts, alms, the mass, and other things taught as doctrines, which are only the commandments of men. So that the Christian of the Protestant is made by God—the Christian of the Papist, by man. And the practical difference between them is oftentimes as great as is the theoretic difference as to the agency by which they are begotten anew.

If, on the Papal theory, the priest refuses to baptize, how can God make a Christian?

7. *They differ as to the way in which a sinner is saved.* When a sinner asks a Protestant what he must do to be saved, he tells him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved. Jesus Christ came into our world to seek and to save the lost. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and he invites all the weary and heavy laden to himself for rest. As the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, the Protestant sends the inquiring sinner directly to Christ, and tells him that if he believes in Christ he shall be saved. But the Papist tells him to go to confession to the priest, to do penance, to go to mass, to partake of the eucharist, to give alms—especially to the priest—to keep the holy days; and he enjoins a round of bodily service as onerous as it is unscriptural, and which, however long continued, leaves him utterly in the dark as to whether or not his many sins are forgiven. He has nothing but the word of the priest to direct or to comfort him. Is it not a wide difference whether in such a momentous affair, we have the direction of man and the comfort which he gives, or the direction of God and the comfort which flows from the direct acting of faith upon Christ, and the appropriating of his work by faith?

8. *They differ as to the mediation of Christ, as our Redeemer, with the Father.* There is nothing more plainly taught in the Bible, than that Christ is the only “mediator between God and man.” “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” And him the Father heareth always. This is the received doctrine of the Protestant world. Yet this part of the work of Christ is forgotten by Popery, and his mediation is thrown into the shade by the mediation of Mary, of Peter, and Paul; of the holy monks and hermits; of the holy martyrs, and virgins, and widows; of the holy doctors, bishops, and confessors; some of whom were men of God, and many of whom were men of Belial. And thus Popery turns us away from Christ, the only and all-sufficient Mediator, who is every where present to hear, and whose mediation is always prevalent, and sends us to creatures like ourselves, of limited powers, however holy, and who, if on earth at all, or near it, can hear but one at a time. There are many cases recorded

in the history of the nations of Europe, in which desperate men, giving up all hope of escaping the penalty of the law, sought to bribe the ministers of justice, or to enlist the pardoning power in their behalf through the queen and ladies of the court. Can this be the reason why the Pope, bishops, and priests all over the earth, are now crowding around Mary, and are deserting the mediatorial throne of her glorious and glorified Son, who is exalted to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins ?

9. *They differ as to the state into which souls go, on their departure from the body.* The soul of Lazarus, when he died, went to Abraham's bosom, only another name for heaven : the soul of the rich man went to hell. When Stephen was dying, he saw, through the opened heavens, Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Christ said to his sorrowing disciples, when he announced to them that his departure was near, that he was going to prepare a place for them, that where he was, there they might be also. The uniform opinion of the Protestant world is, that at death the righteous go to heaven, and the wicked to hell. But Popery teaches that the souls of the pious, after death, go to a place called purgatory, which is neither heaven nor hell, but some place between them, where they are purified by sufferings more or less protracted, and make satisfaction more or less complete for remaining sins ; and that the power of the Church, the efficacy of alms by their relatives, and the influences of masses offered up, are greatly instrumental in shortening the period of their torments, and in delivering them from these awful fires.

This you will perceive is a very wide difference. This purgatory of Popery, the keys of whose doors are in the hands of the priests, is a fearful affair. It is based on the great error, that the blood of Christ is not sufficient to cleanse from all sin. It is an iniquitous delusion, devised by the priests in the dark ages, for the purpose of extorting money from poor ignorant Papists. Nothing but the doctrine of the infallibility of the church, which stereotypes error, and which is so shamelessly maintained in opposition to a world full of evidence to disprove it, prevents even the priests themselves from casting it out as a loathsome and nefarious delusion. This is the market in which souls are the merchandize, and priests are the brokers.

10. *They differ as to the object of saving faith.* The Bible makes Jesus Christ this object. He that believeth in the Lord Jesus Christ shall be saved. "He that believeth in the Son hath life; he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." In accordance with this is the teaching of the Protestant world. But Popery says, "You must believe all and every article, every point the Catholic Church requires you to believe." It also tells you, "by wilfully erring, or denying one article of your faith, you destroy your whole belief." That is, you may believe truly in Christ, and in all the Bible and the Church teach, save one dogma of the Church—as for instance, purgatory, or the infallibility of the Pope, or transubstantiation—yet, if you fail to believe any or either of these, "you destroy your whole belief," and you are lost! Is not this awful? you are lost for not believing a lie!

11. *They differ in their manner of worship.* When Christ and his apostles were in the world, their great object was to instruct the people—to teach them the doctrines which they should believe, and the duties they should perform. And when the Saviour sent out his disciples, it was with the command to "preach the gospel to every creature." They were endowed with the gift of tongues, so as to preach the gospel to all people in a language which they could understand. And hence Protestants, in every part of the world, adapt every part of their worship to the understanding of the people. Hymns of praise are sung, prayer is made, the Bible is read, in the language of the people. How different from all this is the worship of Popery. Its prayers are in Latin, which perhaps neither the priest nor one of the people understands—its chantings are in the same language, and so is its whole round of ceremony; the Mass, a most unmeaning mass of nonsense, fills up the greater part of the time; and if a word is uttered in your native tongue from the beginning to the end, it is—especially in purely Papal countries—a brief eulogy on some saint, or a brief exhortation to some superstitious observance. The worship of Protestants has for its chief ends the instruction, the conversion, the edification of the people; that of Papists overlooks all these, and fills up its hours of worship with a round of ceremonies as unmeaning as they are unscriptural, and which are

far more Pagan than Christian. Protestants know what they worship ; Papists do not.

12. *They differ as to the power of the ministry.* Protestant ministers simply occupy the place which the Bible assigns them. They are set apart for the preaching of the word, the administration of ordinances, and the edifying of the body of Christ. They work no miracles, perform no charms or exorcisms, forgive no sins, absolve none from punishment. They preach salvation, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all men ; they teach all men the revealed truth of God, and assure them, that by a heartfelt belief of that truth and a life in accordance with it, they shall be saved. Far different from this are the powers claimed by Papal priests. They regenerate by baptism—they require you to confess to them all your sins—they determine the character of those sins as mortal or venial—they affix to each the kind and degree of penance they see fit—they absolve you or not at their pleasure—they create Christ, and offer him in sacrifice in the mass—and when you die, they fit you for death by rubbing you with olive-oil—they then send you to hell or purgatory, as they see fit ; if to purgatory, they promise to get you out by masses proportioned, both as to price and number, to the ability of your friends to pay for them. The Protestant minister points you to heaven by a way which, like the ways that led to the cities of refuge in Israel, is open, straight, and unobstructed ; upon the Papal way the priest erects his many gates, and will not let you pass one without a heavy toll. He carries at his girdle the keys of heaven and hell, and claims the power of sending you to the one place or the other at pleasure ! Is not this a wide difference ?

13. *They differ as to what constitutes true piety in the sight of God.* The Bible says much about being “born again ;” being “renewed in the spirit of our minds ;” being “created anew in Christ Jesus.” These changes it attributes to the Spirit, as the agent that produces them. The love of God which presided in the heart of Adam, as he came from the hand of his Creator, was dethroned by his disobedience, and the love of sin and of self went up to its vacant seat. All true Protestants agree that the change indicated by the above texts, consists in restoring the love of God to its rightful place as the presiding affection of the soul. When, by the Holy Spirit, the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, then the

individual is “born again,” is “renewed in the spirit of his mind,” is “created anew in Christ Jesus.” And this is, in the estimation of the Protestant, the main element of all true piety. This is a change at the fountain of all moral action, and influences all the conduct towards God and man.

How different from this is piety in the estimation of the Papist! It consists in obedience to the church—in submission to her laws—in attention to her ordinances—in the punctual performance of the ceremonies which she enjoins. If the Papist keeps lent piously, he may sin as he lists at the carnival—if he love the Pope, he may hate Protestants—if he fasts on Friday, he may feast on Sunday. The piety of the Protestant consists in a heart right in the sight of God, prompting to right conduct toward all men; that of the Papist consists in an external obedience to prescribed ceremonial rites. And when we remember that God looks not upon the outward appearance, but upon the heart, this is a wide difference. When the Jews, because of the strictness of their external observances, seemed to themselves, and to others, to be very pious, then it was that the Saviour pronounced them “white-washed sepulchres,” and accused them of converting the house of God into a den of thieves. St. Ignatius made the life or death of a Moor who was riding before him to turn upon the point whether he should take one or the other of two roads, and bishops and cardinals have often gone out from what were apparently the most fervent devotions, to burn heretics. The piety of Popery is fanaticism; that of Protestants consists in the exercise of love to God and man. That of the Protestant is guided by the Bible; that of the Papist, by the church and the priest.

14. *They differ as to the Sacraments.* Protestants, taking the Bible for their rule of faith, believe in only two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s supper. By that of baptism, we are admitted to membership in the visible church; and in the Lord’s supper, we commemorate the death of Christ, in obedience to his command, “This do, in remembrance of me.” Every thing here is simple and scriptural. But Popery makes seven sacraments; baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, extreme unction, holy orders, and matrimony. And the administration of these is accompanied by a round of ceremony as farcical as it is unscriptural, as unmeaning as it is absurd. As an illustration of all, take the

ceremony connected with baptism. The water must have been blessed on the vigils of Easter and Whit-Sunday; the priest blows thrice in the face of the person to drive out Satan—he then makes on his face and breast the sign of the cross—he then puts blessed salt into his mouth—he then “by solemn prayer and exorcisms” casts out the devil—he then lays on him “the extremity of his stole”—he then puts spittle into his ears—he then anoints him upon the breast and between the shoulders with holy oil—he then pours water upon his head three times in the form of a cross—he then anoints the top of his head with holy chrism, in the form of a cross—he then puts a white cloth upon his head—then a lighted candle in his hand, then he is baptized. And all concludes, if the subject is a child, with an admonition to the parents, “not to let the child lie in the same bed with them or with the nurse, for fear of its being overlaid!” And sublimely absurd and foolish as all this is, it is the highest sense compared with the ceremonies of the eucharist, in which the priest creates Christ out of a wafer, and while he drinks the wine himself, gives only the wafer to the people! It is through its seven sacraments that Popery debases and enslaves its people.

15. *They entirely differ as systems of salvation.* You are now an inquirer after the way of salvation. You feel that you are a sinner—that as such you deserve eternal death—that your feet are sliding on slippery places—and feeling that if your soul is lost, all is lost, the momentous question is on your lips, “What shall I do to be saved?” Protestantism has but one answer to the question: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” And while giving you this answer, it puts the Bible into your hands as the only infallible guide in the way to glory. About all this there is no mystery, no priestly interference, no tax for the bread and water of life. Christ laid down his life to save sinners; and whosoever believes on him shall be saved, because his blood cleanses all who believe in his name from *all* sin. It was only when the last sands of life were running in his glass, that the dying thief believed on Jesus; and yet Jesus cheered his last moments by shedding down upon him the sunlight of heaven in the blessed promise, “This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Such is true Protestantism, every where, as a system of salvation.

But how different from all this is the system of Popery.

It takes from you the Bible, and sends you to the priest. Instead of sending you to God with the confession of your sins, it sends you to the priest. Your rule of faith is the Church, and the priest tells you what the Church teaches. If you believe all the Bible, and believe fully in Christ as a Saviour, yet, if you reject any thing taught you by the priest as a doctrine of the Church, your faith is vain. It converts repentance into penance; and penance it converts into an awful sacrament, which puts you as effectually into the power of the priest, as is the bird caught in a net in the power of the fowler. And after burdening your conscience with ceremonial sins—after burdening your life with ceremonial observances—after enveloping you in the mists of her mysteries, and stupefying your senses with her gorgeous ritual—after draining your purse to enrich her priests—after so perverting your moral vision as to induce you to regard every person not a Papist as smitten by the anger of heaven, and as an heir of perdition, it only fits you after all, for purgatory, where you may burn for ages in purifying fires before you are fitted for heaven! Such are Protestantism and Popery. As maps of the way to eternal life, the one is as simple as truth, and as clear as the sun; the other is involved beyond comprehension, and as dark and remorseless as the grave. The one is the truth as it is in Jesus, the other is a damnable delusion. The aim and end of the one is to save your soul; of the other, to increase the power and riches of the priest.

Such, my friend, are some of the points of difference between Protestantism and Popery. Were it necessary, I might multiply these points of difference. But I have said enough to show you that Popery is a delusion, a fable, opposed in all its essential points to Christianity, and unworthy of a moment's confidence; and that true Protestantism is the religion of the Bible, which consults only the welfare of the sinner, and which sends him directly to the blood of Jesus Christ for salvation.

Let me request of you, in closing this epistle, to give up all matters of controversy; to forget every thing but that you are a great sinner, and that Jesus is an Almighty Saviour; and to go to him at once, humbly and fervently, saying, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." And you have this promise to encourage you: "*Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.*"

Yours most truly,

KIRWAN.

A

WESTERN PATRIARCH.

THE generation, of which very few are still living, furnished many models of good sense, solid worth, and extensive usefulness. Some of these were of the finest mould. Nor has any part of the land been adorned with brighter examples of virtue than many portions of the West. The personal history of these men was full of incidents, suited to form their characters to patience and courage. But their religious experience and characters belong to the history of redemption, and will never cease to interest pious men.

I have known a few such, and have heard of others. Within the last eighteen months, I have come to the knowledge of one, who was a very remarkable man. I never saw him; but I have taken pains to gain correct information respecting him, and I give the following sketch in full confidence of its minute accuracy.

He was born in County Derry, Ireland, on the 4th of March, 1765. When he was about nine years of age, his parents came to this country, bringing him with them. They found a home in what was then a newly settled portion of Eastern Pennsylvania. They were in humble circumstances. Their abode was in the bosom of the forest. The subject of this notice was their eldest son. His early life was one of constant toil and great privation. Books and schools were rare. The day was chiefly spent in labour and adventure. Candles and lamps were not in vogue. Torchlight was a substitute. Many an evening did our boy spend in reading, by this light, the few books which the piety of his parents had procured.

Manhood approaching, he went to the business of a millwright. Having learned his trade, he crossed the mountains,

erected mills in various places, going as far as Kentucky, and thus improved his worldly affairs. In the year 1800, he permanently settled in a part of the West, where land was cheap, society improving, and a prospect of regular preaching held out. A church was soon organized, and he was chosen one of its elders. This office he held for nearly half a century, with credit to himself, and profit to the church.

He had great natural strength of mind. Surmounting all early disadvantages, he amassed a rich store of valuable and various information. He thirsted for knowledge, and dug for it as for hid treasure. To him labour was pleasure, where knowledge was the prize. By many others besides his family he was resorted to for information. His mind grasped a subject with great tenacity until it was fairly mastered. However laborious the investigation might be, he seemed unwilling to drop any subject until he had definite ideas respecting it. Like Edwards, he seemed to have resolved, "when I think of any theorem in divinity to be solved, immediately to do what I can towards solving it, if circumstances do not hinder." His patience of inquiry was often remarked on by others. In reading the old divines, of whom he was particularly fond, he would not pass a quotation in a dead language until he understood it. In time he acquired such a knowledge of Latin and Greek, that he could ordinarily discover the sense of any quotation in them. But if left in doubt, he did not rest till he had procured the aid of a sound scholar. If the passage was long or difficult, he would secure a written translation. Having lost an infant son, his mind was for a time greatly interested on the subject of the future state of such. No vague notions or analogies would satisfy him. His resort was to God's word. It is believed that he examined every text, that has ever been supposed to bear on the subject. Thus his conclusions were the result of prayer and of searching the Scriptures. They were of course stable and intelligent. On important questions he took no opinion on trust. He often expressed strong dislike to the word "cannot." He knew by experience that great difficulties might still be vincible. His favourite proverbs on such subjects were, "What has been done can be done," and, "All things are possible to industry and energy." He never sunk his individuality in the masses around him. He had a life, a character and mission, quite his own.

Yet he was both social and modest. Both as a Christian

and as a man, he seemed to esteem others better than himself. None but his intimate friends knew his attainments or character, except by report. In the presence of strangers he was through life constrained and shrinking. Three or four young men, preparing for the ministry, were taken into his house. All of them learned greatly to venerate him. At his funeral, one of them, a minister of high character, said that he considered him the best theologian and the most spiritually-minded Christian he had ever known; and that he had felt more diffidence in preaching or expressing an opinion on any difficult point of doctrine or religious experience before him, than before any man he had ever known.

The greatest defect of his character, the soul of his body of sin, was a temper impatient of opposition. His passions were quick and violent, though undue excitement was soon over. He was one of the kindest and most sympathizing friends; yet his aversions were equally strong. Often his passions were kindled into a flame, and in a moment something was said or done, which filled him with subsequent shame or sorrow. Through life this was regarded by himself and his friends as the weak point of his character. Indeed, it marred his peace, interrupted his communion with God, proved a stumbling-block to some, and was lamented by none so deeply as by himself. It was pleasant to see, that as his piety matured, his conflicts with this besetting sin were more and more successful.

The religious experience of such a man must have been marked and striking, profound, earnest, abounding with conflict, and clearly and boldly defined. Of the noble Scottish race, his ancestors, in unbroken succession from their settlement in Ireland, were pious. His parents, though in humble life, adorned their Christian profession. They had the unspeakable pleasure of seeing all their children making a credible profession of faith in Christ. Their oldest daughter has left behind her a name which is better than great riches. She was indeed a mother in Israel, and will long be remembered in the church where she recently finished her course. From early childhood, the subject of this notice was deeply impressed with religious truth, and evinced great tenderness of conscience. When quite a child, he often retired to a grove near his father's house, and spent the Sabbath in reading, meditation, and prayer. Besides the house of God, no spot on earth was so hallowed in his memory as

that grove. Yet he did not then esteem himself a child of God. But when, by searching the Scriptures in after life, his views of the nature and marks of true piety were settled, he often said: "If I am indeed a child of God, I became such when very young. If I now indeed love the Lord, my memory does not go back to the time when I did not love him."

Yet it was not until he reached manhood, that he applied for admission into the church of God. Previous to this, he passed through many seasons of declension and darkness. He used to say: "I often tried to get away from my Lord, but he held me fast, and would not let me go." During this period he had very few public religious privileges. Sometimes he did not hear a sermon for several months, for in those days, where he was, there was a famine of the word of God. Yet if a walk of ten or fifteen miles would bring him to a place of solemn convocation, he gladly undertook it. On one occasion he heard that a Presbyterian minister would preach at a place nearly fifteen miles distant, and, having no shoes, nor opportunity of buying them, he sat up an entire night, made a pair of shoes as well as he could, and, on Lord's day, walked the whole distance. He often said that never in his life was he so well paid for his work. When hindered from attending public worship on the Sabbath, he sought retirement. There, with his Bible and a copy of Ambrose's "*Looking unto Jesus*," his companion through life, he sought communion with God.

In early manhood he fell into a state of coldness and backsliding, which lasted for some time. But the good Shepherd had his eye on his wandering sheep, and brought him back to his fold again, though with labour and sorrow of heart. Bunyan has used no stronger terms, and has expressed no more vivid experience than he, in referring to this period of his history. For some years he was nearly engulfed in despair. He regarded his case as special and peculiar. He often feared that he had sinned beyond the reach of mercy, yet could he by no means cease to plead for pardon. At length his health suffered, and the roaring lion seemed to come upon him with extreme violence. He was even tempted to curse God and die. Yet such thoughts filled him with horror. At last a ray of hope dawned upon him. God, who is confined to no particular order or class of means, enabled him in a dream to see how willingly and effectually Christ

could save him. He did not regard this dream as a revelation, but as mercifully designed to make an impression of truth already revealed. It gave a new course to his waking thoughts, led him to more Scriptural views of the fulness and freeness of salvation by Christ, and thus soon awakened a more comfortable hope in his atoning blood and justifying righteousness. But the tempter soon returned, and plied him with doubts concerning the doctrines of grace. Having heard these views of truth much perverted and slandered, and the remains of his carnal nature opposing some things in them, he yet thought that they were taught by the Bible, and illustrated in his own experience; but he saw difficulties, which gave him a sore conflict. Having begun in the Spirit, he was tempted to end in the flesh. Of one thing he had no doubt, viz. that the Bible is true. He determined that the word of God should settle the controversy. So he gave himself to reading the lively oracles, resolved to receive all they taught. He became as familiar with their teachings on this subject as he was with the faces of his family. It is believed that very few ministers of the Gospel could give more or better proofs of the only way of salvation for sinners than he could. As he was busy during the day, it was his custom to commit to memory at night some portion of Scripture, treating of this subject, and then, as opportunity offered, he meditated on it, while engaged, the next day, in secular pursuits. In this way he went through the entire Bible, viewing its teachings on the subject in various aspects, and tracing them out in their different bearings. The result was a thorough conviction, never again seriously shaken, that the doctrines of grace are the glory of the Gospel. In this stage of religious experience few men have had greater doubts, conflicts, fightings and fears. In later periods of life few have had greater peace in believing. The evening of his religious life, if not cloudless, was yet without storms, and the Sun of righteousness commonly shone with great effulgence. During his last illness not a doubt or fear assailed him. Often he said: "I cannot but believe that I love God. I love his word, his ordinances, his people, and his service. And why do I love him? I can only say, 'We love him, because he first loved us,' and 'Having loved his own, he loved them to the end.'" Thus his soul was at peace amidst the swellings of Jordan. It is true, however, that in the early stage of his last illness, he expressed great apprehen-

sions lest his constitutional impatience should betray him, and bring dishonour on religion. His disease (dropsy of the chest) was of the most distressing kind. To his intimate Christian friends he expressed his solicitude on the subject. And more than once, when he thought he was alone, was he heard pleading for grace to make and keep him patient. Very remarkably were his prayers answered. Throughout his whole illness he was as gentle as a little child. To all who entered his room he desired to say something for Christ. When his physician and friends reminded him that speaking aggravated his malady, he replied; "My living testimony has been so imperfect, I wish now to bear my dying testimony for Jesus." When unable to articulate, his lips were still seen to move, and the last words heard from him were, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

From the time he joined the church he was a diligent and devout student of the Bible. His love for the sacred volume was an unquenchable fire. Few men have studied it more or understood it better. His early advantages of education were extremely limited. But so strong was his desire to read the very words of the Holy Ghost, that at fifty years of age, without a regular instructor, and with but a meagre supply of books, he commenced the study of the Hebrew language, and persevered until he made himself a critical Hebrew scholar. Till very near his death, his Hebrew Psalter was his constant companion. He never seemed weary of dwelling on the very words of God. For more than thirty years, few entered his room in the evening without finding him intently occupied with the Hebrew Scriptures and Scott's Commentary. It was his uniform custom to spend the entire evening in searching the Scriptures. In the latter years of his life, when he was retired from business, this was well nigh his sole employment. This he did with an eagerness and pleasure, that showed how deeply his heart felt the power and relished the sweetness of God's truth. The Bible was to him indeed the only rule of faith and practice. He uniformly referred all his opinions and acts to this standard. When any doctrinal or ecclesiastical questions arose, the Biblical argument was with him decisive and final. The words of Scripture were to him the voice of God, which it is our concern to hear, understand, believe, and obey.

His love for the sanctuary and for social worship was strong and enduring. He really esteemed a day in God's

house as better than a thousand spent in worldly pursuits. It is credibly said of him that for near half a century he was never absent from church or from the regular prayer-meeting, except on account of serious sickness. Even in extreme old age, if he was able to walk, he insisted on going to the house of prayer. He would say: "It will not be long that I can be with you, and it does me good to go." Whether it rained or shined, whether few or many went to the house of God, his seat was never vacant, except when the Master laid his hand upon him.

As an elder, he was prompt, active, and useful. He never declined any duty, fairly laid upon him, because it was laborious or painful. To the burdened soul he was ever ready to give words of counsel and encouragement. And as the pastor of the church lived some distance from town, he was often resorted to. To the sick he was a constant and welcome visitor. His warm heart and cordial sympathy caused him to be afflicted in all the afflictions of his brethren. Conscious of his own infirmities, he guarded his words and acts, lest he should injure others. He understood and felt the spirit of that noble declaration of Paul: "If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." When the Temperance Reformation commenced, he had just completed, at a heavy cost, a still-house. He had put it into operation with fair prospects of being able soon to relieve himself from pecuniary embarrassments, which had come upon him. His pastor and many members of the church early espoused the Temperance cause; and although he *then* believed the business lawful, yet, rather than give offence to his brethren, he at once and at great loss abandoned it.

His sympathy with the Redeemer's cause was hearty and profound. Nothing afforded him so much solid pleasure as news of a revival of pure religion, or tidings of the spread of the Gospel in heathen countries. In every good work he was ready to co-operate. It greatly grieved him that he was able to do so little for the advancement of Christ's cause. Yet he was delighted to see others doing more than he was able to effect.

But his own spiritual life, more than everything else, gave him a marked and striking character. He was eminently a man of faith. His faith was indeed "the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." In his apprehension, spiritual and invisible things were not fictions,

not probabilities, but realities. In his view, God was a real Father, Jesus Christ a real Friend and Saviour, the Holy Spirit a real Guide and Comforter, and heaven a real inheritance and home. He looked at things unseen and eternal. He walked as seeing Him who is invisible. To keep a conscience void of offence towards God and man was therefore the purpose of his heart. When affliction came, his great concern was that it might be sanctified. In every change he said: "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth to him good." He was pre-eminently a man of prayer. Neither business, nor company, nor any thing else could keep him from his closet. One, who sometimes overheard his language in secret devotion, has described it as fervid and wrestling importunity, as reverent and childlike pleading with God. Indeed I have had a description of his intercessions for his own soul, for his family, for his neighbours, and for the church of Christ, which I can compare to nothing so well as to those of Abram for the cities of the plain, or to Jacob's wrestling with the angel. Yet perhaps no man more carefully sought privacy in his seasons of secret communion with God. When he supposed no one was noticing him, he often uttered his thoughts in words, and then were often heard his pious ejaculations. He was often consulted in cases of difficulty, and his first words almost uniformly were: "Pray over it. Do nothing without prayer." In all acts of public worship reverence was prominent; yet he was fervent also, and, when leading the devotions of others, his heart and his words were full of warmth. He was eminently spiritually-minded. The religious aspect of every event was his favourite view of it. The spiritual interests of others were, to his mind, the chief objects of solicitude concerning them. If their souls had health and prospered, nothing could be very wrong. The secret of the Lord was with him, and he showed him his covenant. He was a close observer of Providence, and often saw coming events, which as yet were hidden from the careless and inexperienced.

His religious character was of the earnest and energetic type. Everything about him showed that he was aping no one else. What he was, he was intensely. What his hand found to do, he did it with his might.

In his family, his example and authority were thrown with powerful energy on the side of truth, duty, and vital religion. All saw that with him the one thing needful was spiritual

prosperity. No one doubted that he would make everything yield to the paramount claims of God. He had a solemn and habitual sense of his responsibility as the head of a household. In family worship nothing was hurried, yet he was not tedious. After reading a portion of Scripture, with Scott's Practical Observations on it, he often added "a word in season." A psalm or hymn was next sung.

Then kneeling down to Heaven's eternal King,
The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband* prayed.

Every Sabbath evening his family were assembled to repeat the Shorter Catechism. On these occasions he used no book. His memory was a faithful servant, both as to questions and answers. This exercise was enlivened with appropriate explanations and remarks.

Among other children, he had a son who, in early life, had so severe an attack of illness that his physicians gave him up. Pulse and breath were almost gone. The father went to call the elders of the church to pray for the child. He met his pious and faithful pastor, a venerable man, and brought him and two elders to the room where the sick lay. They interceded for his recovery with great importunity; and then and there the father vowed a vow, saying, "If the Lord will raise up this child, I will solemnly devote him to God for ever, and do all in my power to lead him into the ministry of the gospel." The sick child was healed, and the good man deferred not to pay his vow. As soon as the child was able to understand the matter, his father told him what had occurred, and often afterwards adverted to it, both in conversation and in his letters. The question of serving God in the ministry of the gospel was thus kept before the mind of the son, who was ever taught to look upon the office of a bishop as a good work, most solemn and most honourable. That son became for a while the pastor of the church in which his father was an elder, and the good old man heard from his lips many a sweet gospel sermon. The son is now filling one of the high places on the walls of Zion. Such is the brief outline of the history and character of Joseph Smith, Esq., who died at Mercer, Pennsylvania, on the 31st of July, 1849. This narrative suggests several very weighty truths.

1. Early piety is still possible. Jeremiah and John the Baptist were savingly renewed from their birth. In more modern times, many persons of undoubted piety have traced

their saving impressions to very early childhood. We ought to pray and labour for the conversion of our children while they are yet young. It requires no higher intellectual capacity to love than to hate divine things. He who has mind enough to commit sin, has mind enough to work righteousness. How honourable it is to God, when out of the mouths of babes and sucklings he ordains strength, and thus stills the adversary! What an ornament to religion, even in childhood, was she who afterwards became the wife of President Edwards! Who can read the account of Joseph Smith spending his Sabbaths alone in the retired grove, and doubt that then he was holding communion with Christ? Some are skeptical on the subject of very early piety, and brutish men scoff at it. But this is no new thing; for "when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that Jesus did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the son of David, they were sore displeased." Let the wicked rage, if they will; but let God's people spare no pains to bring their little ones to know and love the Saviour. Has he not said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God?"

2. A true child of God may fall into sad spiritual declension, and may not soon be recovered from it. So the Scriptures teach. Peter fell, and was soon brought to repentance. But David's conscience was dreadfully stupid for a long time. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." The Laodiceans were "lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot," yet they said they were "rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing, and knew not that they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." So that one may be a backslider and not know it. But however long this sad state may last, if God has really begun a good work, he will not leave it unfinished. He will reclaim the wandering. If his people forsake his law, and walk not in his statutes, he will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, his loving kindness he will not utterly take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. These stripes are sometimes many and severe. It is often best that they should be. God says: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee." "The backslider in heart

shall be filled with his own ways." Backsliders often suffer more anguish of spirit than they did when first brought to repentance. David seems to have done so. Indeed some think he never fully recovered that joyous exultation in God, for which he was so remarkable before his fall. Let not any man suppose that he is not a "backslider *in heart*," because he has not sinned openly. David sinned secretly first, and openly afterwards. If you have departed from God, listen to his words of kindness: "Return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity. Take with you words and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously." To such God says: "I will heal their backsliding. I will love them freely; for mine anger is turned away from him. I will be as the dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon. His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon." A recovery from backsliding is sometimes mistaken for a first conversion.

3. True religion is the same in all ages of the world, and in all conditions of life. It is the same in principle. It is the same in its effects. It stains the pride of all glory. It humbles the soul. It begets love to all God's commands. It stirs up the spirit of prayer. It restores the image of God. It awakens penitence. It teaches men to walk by faith, not by sight. The whole life of a Christian is a warfare. To a real servant of God, Christ is precious, a fountain of joy, a well-spring of life, and munitions of rocks. It is, however, true that, in degree, religion is not always the same. Some are babes in Christ; some are carnal, halting professors; and some are strong in the Lord. Let us labour to be eminently holy. What a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Eminent piety is as attainable now as in any previous age of the world. The saint who shall wear the brightest crown in heaven may be unknown to nearly all his own generation, unknown to future ages of the church militant, but not unknown to God. The brightest patterns of piety are seldom found in conspicuous stations.

4. As in the days of Elijah, so now there are probably many humble believers where we think there are few or none. That great man said: "Lord, they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone,

and they seek my life." But what saith the answer of God to him? "I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal." No doubt God now has humble servants where we little suspect it. The tares and wheat grow together, and to a careless observer may seem alike. For years Joseph Smith may have passed for a man of the world, while we have good reason to believe that the incorruptible seed was in him. Even when he was an eminent Christian, he was unknown to fame. Perhaps not one in a thousand of all who shall read these lines ever heard of him before. It was by the merest accident that I first heard of him, from one who resides hundreds of miles from Mercer, but who once happened to pass through that place. I greatly like a saying ascribed to the late Rev. Dr. Rodgers, of New York: "Should I ever reach the kingdom of heaven, three things will greatly surprise me. One will be, that I shall find many wanting, of whose piety when on earth I never doubted. Another will be, that I shall find many there, in whose piety, when on earth, I had little or no confidence. The greatest wonder of all will be, to find myself there."

5. Could we see an eminent servant of Christ in every neighbourhood, we might hope the best things for our country. As a man, as a magistrate, as an elder, as a peace-maker, as a living pattern of piety, what a blessing was Joseph Smith! God's people are still "the salt of the earth and the light of the world." How much good may one man of the right spirit do! How terribly does his example reprove wickedness! How powerfully do his life and conversation allure to piety! No mere officer of the law can spread such peace in a community as he whose dignified example and Christian spirit invite to virtue. The wicked may hate, slander, and persecute him; but when difficulties arise, how all resort to him, and in times of affliction and religious awakening, how will even his maligners beg his prayers and seek his counsel! They know he is right, even when they mock and belie him. But when a man combines office, intelligence, piety, and age, and uses all for God, how unspeakable his value to any people! Such a man is a strong rod, a pillar.

6. To be a servant of Christ is as wise as it is obligatory. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." The grace of God bringeth salvation. Even on earth, the servants of

God are cared for as none others are. If Moses spends forty days or nights in the mountain without bread or water, still he is conversing with God, and when he comes down he is not faint. His countenance shines with an intolerable brightness. "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Toil, strife, sorrow will soon end, and then will come heaven, infinite, eternal, glorious. No man is wise who is not wise for eternity. He who wins heaven cannot die a fool.

7. If the present lamentable want of humble, zealous, successful ministers, and of promising candidates for the sacred office is to be supplied, there must be a return to solemn, earnest family instruction, and parents must devote their sons to this service with joyfulness, if God call them thereto. Fathers, mothers, lay this thing to heart. Pray over it. The cry for help is loud, and long, and piteous. Will you withhold the best you have from such a cause? Let your infant sons be solemnly devoted to God in any service for which he shall fit them. I have been credibly informed of a poor woman who, on returning from a missionary meeting some twenty years ago, wept that she had no money to give to so blessed a cause. She searched her humble dwelling, to see if she could find nothing that could be converted into money; but her quest was vain. She went to the loft of her cabin, she wept, she prayed; she remembered her children; she devoted them to God and to this work. She never forgot that solemn act. Neither did God. Her children grew up, and several of them are already teaching the heathen the right ways of God. Think of pious Hannah and her Samuel of old. See how God blessed the mother of Samuel J. Mills. Give all to God, even an only son. God had an only begotten Son. He gave him up for us. "Be ye followers [imitators] of God."

8. How rich, and free, and efficacious is the grace of God! It is just what we sinners need. The plan of salvation suits us in all respects.

While grace is offered to the prince,
The poor may take their share;
No mortal has a just pretence
To perish in despair.

The gospel brings mercy to the little child in its feebleness, to the young man in his strength, and to the old man in his decrepitude. It offers pardon to the guilty, righteousness to

the naked, purification to the vile, wisdom to the foolish, life to the perishing. Christ succours the tempted, restores the wandering, supports the weak, cheers the disconsolate, guides the doubtful, gives victory in death, and opens the portals of heaven to the redeemed.

Blessed Saviour! Thou art worthy. Thou art worthy to wear the crown and wield the sceptre of an empire absolutely universal. Thou art worthy of all the love and honour and songs of men and angels. Men may call thy gospel foolishness and weakness, but "the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men." Thy "gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Whatever we do, let us do all to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.

Reader! have you accepted that grace? Is Christ all your hope and all your salvation? If you die without his grace, it had been good for you that you had never been born.

PARITY

ADMITTED BY

PRELATISTS.

“Episcopal men cannot show, by the word of God, neither by the practice of the Apostles, nor so much as by the Primitive Church, that a Minister of Jesus Christ hath any superintendency over several private churches, or that a Bishop hath ordained Ministers by his sole and pure authority as is now practised in England; or that he who is not naturally invested with any authority, should have the power to delegate others, and much more secular persons.”

DR. (afterwards BISHOP) STILLINGFLEET.

THE settling of the proper relations between the teaching and ruling officers of the Church of Christ, has arrayed two portions of the Reformed Church against each other for two hundred and fifty years. Since the year 1600, the Protestant Episcopal Church in England, and in the United States, has furnished earnest advocates for Prelacy as a necessary feature of the Church. All the other Reformed churches (and very many individuals in the Episcopal Church) have contended that the primitive system of Church government was one of Parity. Were the question to be settled now by a vote of all the truly pious and really learned members of the Reformed Church, doubtless the advocates of ministerial Parity would count an overwhelming majority. The object of the present essay is to fortify the adherents of the truth by refreshing their memories with the fact that, at the Reformation and for many years thereafter, all the Reformers of note and influence believed that the Church in the Scriptures possessed only two orders of officers, “Bishops or Priests, and Ministers or Deacons.” Of course those Reformers who retained these orders only, believed this to be the fact. Therefore, we need only show that the predecessors of our present opponents believed so too. Parity, even

when tested by Prelacy, is a scriptural principle of Church government. The Prelacy referred to is Protestant Prelacy as it was at first, and as it would be now, did some strive to keep the unity of which they vainly boast.

In proving the truth of the assertion just made, attention is invited to the following positions :

I. The Reformers of the Protestant Episcopal Church taught their people that the Lord Jesus and his apostles established the Church on the principles of Parity. But they did not believe that this example was always binding on themselves, or on others. On the contrary,

II. Many of the English Reformers believed and taught that the civil authority, in any country, could lawfully determine the form of government, and settle the relations among the officers of the church. This principle they embodied in their own Church. For,

III. The English Reformers believed and taught that their Prelates held the ordaining place of their King—that they possessed only what spiritual profits he chose to transfer. Of course they did not insist that other churches must adopt the same manifestation of their fundamental principle. But they left them to retain Imparity or revive Parity, as they pleased. Hence, while they asserted their own Church to be Apostolical, they allowed the same character to all the other Reformed churches.

I. About the year 1538, the English Reformers issued a paper to be a guide to the preachers of their Church during its transition from Popery to Protestantism. To this paper, Cromwell, Vicegerent for Henry VIII., in all matters ecclesiastical, the two Archbishops, eleven other Bishops, and twenty-three learned Canonists and Divines annexed their signatures as possessing authority and influence in their Church. This document was published through the length and breadth of England, for the following purposes: "As touching the sacrament of Holy Orders, we will that all Bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge: First, how that Christ and his apostles did institute and ordain in the New Testament that, besides the civil powers and governance of Kings and Princes, * * * there should be continually in the Church militant certain other ministers or officers which should have spiritual power under Christ to preach and teach the word of God unto his people, and to dispense and admin-

ister the sacraments of God unto them, * * and to order and consecrate others into the same room and office whereunto they be called and admitted themselves.

“Item.—That this office, this power and authority was committed and given by Christ and his apostles unto certain persons only, that is to say, unto Priests or Bishops.

“Secondly.—We will that all Bishops and preachers shall instruct and teach our people committed by us unto their spiritual charge that * * * albeit the Holy Fathers of the Church, minding to beautify and ornate the Church of Christ, did institute certain inferior orders or degrees, as janitors, lectors, &c. * * * yet the truth is that in the New Testament there is no mention made of any degrees or distinction in orders, but only of Deacons or Ministers, and of Priests or Bishops.” Because of the stations occupied by the signers of this injunction, and because of the circumstances under which it was issued, it must be of the highest authority in determining the belief of the English Reformers. Hence Prelatists—like Bishop Ives, of North Carolina, and Mr. Evans, of Maryland—appeal to it as supporting modern notions of Prelacy. But in so doing they garble and distort it grossly. Doubtless it contains many relics of Popery, and asserts that Orders are a sacrament; nevertheless its testimony to the scripturalness of Parity is unequivocal.

In the year 1540, King Henry VIII., as the supreme spiritual head of the Anglican Church, commissioned a portion of his body to discuss and settle certain subjects connected with the Reformation then in progress. The method which the Convention followed was this: “First, the whole business it was to consider was divided into so many heads, which were proposed as questions, and these were given out to so many Bishops and divines; and at a prefixed time every one brought his opinion in writing upon all the questions.” With such care did the English Reformers proceed in their work, that their belief and teachings in its various stages were the results of mature deliberation. Of the questions then answered the following is the most pertinent to our present object.

“Quest. 10.—Whether Bishops or Priests were first; and if the Priests were first, then the Priest made the Bishop.

“Archbishop of Canterbury.—The Bishops and Priests were at one time, and no two things, but both one office in the beginning of Christ’s religion.

“Bishop of London.—I think the Bishops were first, and yet I think it is not of importance whether the Priest then made the Bishop, or the Bishop made the Priest.

“Dr. Robertson.—I am uncertain which were first, nor do I think it absurd that the Priest should consecrate the Bishop, if a Bishop could not be had.

“Dr. Cox.—Although by Scripture, (as St. Jerome saith,) Priests and Bishops be one, and therefore the one not before the other; yet Bishops as they be now were after Priests, and therefore made of Priests.

“Dr. Redmayn.—They be of like beginning, and at the beginning were both one, as St. Jerome and other old authors show by the Scripture, wherefore the one made the other indifferently.

“Dr. Edgeworth.—That the Priests in the Primitive Church made Bishops I think no inconvenience, (as Jerome saith in Epist. ad Evagrium,) even like as soldiers choose one among themselves to be their Captain.”

After all the questions proposed to this Convention had been discussed separately, the conclusions arrived at were collected and published in a volume, called at first, “The Bishops’ Book,” and afterwards, “The Institution for the necessary Erudition of a Christian Man.” This book was defiled by many dregs of Popery; nevertheless it decided concerning the Sacrament of Orders that “they were to be administered in the Church according to the New Testament; but the particular forms of nominating, electing, presenting, and appointing ecclesiastical ministers were left to the laws of every country to be made by the assent of the Prince. * * * The Scripture made express mention only of the two orders of Priests and Deacons.” The authority of this book is unquestionable. It was compiled by the Prelates and Divines of the Anglican Church; the preface to its first edition showed with what care its authors had examined the Scriptures and the ancient Doctors, out of whom they had faithfully gathered this exposition of the Christian Faith; and its second edition was sanctioned by King Henry, who alone had the power of correcting all errors and heresies in his Church. King Henry said that it was intended “to direct all men’s belief and practice;” and King Henry’s intentions were not often defeated by his subjects.

Most of the Popery that was in the English Church at this date, (1542) was removed during the reign of Edward VI.

But the English Reformers never retracted their maturely adopted and often repeated assertions, that ministerial Parity is to be found in the Scriptures. It remains to show that the practice of the English Reformers and of their immediate successors entirely agreed with their professions.

About three hundred years ago (in July, 1550,) Edward VI., the supreme head of the English Reformers in all matters ecclesiastical and spiritual, allowed a Presbyterian congregation with five ministers to settle in London, and there "in freedom and quiet to enjoy and exercise their own rites and ceremonies, and their own peculiar discipline; it being no obstacle that they do not agree with the rites and ceremonies used in our kingdom." To this end King Edward declared, that "of our especial favour, and by the advice of our Council, we will, grant, and ordain that henceforth there may and shall be a temple, or sacred house, in our city of London, which shall be called a temple of the Lord Jesus, where the congregation and assembly of the Germans and other foreigners can be formed and held, with this intent and purpose, that by ministers of the Church of the Germans and other foreigners the uncorrupted interpretation of the Holy Gospel, and the administration of the sacraments, according to the word of God and Apostolical observance, may be maintained." Of this collegiate church John A' Lasco was the superintendent, "a man very remarkable for the integrity and innocence of his life, and for his singular learning." He was a zealous advocate of ministerial Parity. He had found refuge in an hour of need, and was consulted in the compiling of the Prayer Book; yet he has incurred the charge of ingratitude by inveighing against the Prelacy of the Anglican Church.

In 1571, Elizabeth, another head of the Anglican Church, approved an Act of Parliament which provided that "All Priests having been consecrated, &c., otherwise than in the form authorized temp. Edward VI., shall subscribe, &c., certain articles of religion agreed on in Convocation in 1562, on pain of deprivation." This law of the English Church plainly acknowledged that Presbyterian churches have Priests. Assuming that no suspicion ought to be entertained of their orders, it defended the English Church against their doctrines only. As for the persons whom it affected, "undoubtedly it meant to include Papists, and likewise such as received their orders in some of the foreign Reformed churches when they

were in exile under Queen Mary." When on their return the orders of some of these exiles were assailed, this Act was cited in their defence, as in the case of a Mr. Travers who had been ordered by a Presbytery at Antwerp.

In 1578, Sandys, Archbishop of York, in a visitation of his diocese, found reasons to suspect that the orders of W. Whittingham, Dean of Durham, were invalid. Whittingham claimed to have received his orders from the Church of Geneva. When required to prove his claim, he produced only certificates of his election to preach to an English congregation in Geneva. The origin of all his certificates was very doubtful; yet Whittingham's friends insisted that his orders were valid. The Lord President of the Council in giving his opinion on this case wrote, "His Lordship (the Lord Treasurer) could judge what a flame this spark was like to breed if it should kindle; for it could not but be ill-taken of all the godly learned, both at home and in all the foreign Reformed churches abroad, that we should allow of Popish massing Priests in our ministry, and disallow of the ministers made in a Reformed Church." To justify himself, Sandys wrote to the Lord Treasurer as follows: "This Durham matter breedeth a great broil. The Dean hath gotten more friends than the matter deserveth. The discredit of the Church of Geneva is hotly alledged. Verily, my Lord, that Church is not touched; for he hath not received his ministry in that Church, or by order or authority from that Church, so far as yet can appear. * * * But if his ministry, without any authority of God or man, without law, order, or example of any Church, may be current, take heed to the sequel." Mr. Evans, of Maryland, in his essays on the Anglican Ordinations, so tells this story, and so garbles this letter as to make his readers believe that Archbishop Sandys declared the orders of the Church of Geneva to be "without any authority of God or man." He cited this case in behalf of modern Prelacy, but it shall close the evidence in support of the first position for ancient Parity. The sentiments expressed by those who had to decide it, agreed strictly with what their predecessors had uttered forty years before. Whittingham died before the case was decided. But the position assumed by his Archbishop was just such as the Presbytery of Geneva itself might have taken. Advocates of Parity as scrupulously require ordination as do advocates of Prelacy.

The evidence given above has been selected from a large mass of similar tendency, because it is sufficient to establish the truth of our first assertion. The springs whence it was drawn are not yet exhausted. It has been taken from the official writings and acts of the English Reformers, and of their earthly head, lest it might be sneered at or rejected as the private opinions of individuals. What has been quoted came from the valid officers and teachers of the Anglican Church when, dressed in their official robes, they taught their Church authoritatively.

In extenuation of the language used by the English Reformers on the point before us, modern Prelatists urge that it was uttered during the twilight of the Reformation; and that the English Reformers, blinded for many years by the gross darkness of Popery, could not use the light into which they had entered so as to distinguish aright the objects around them, and to assign to each its proper position. It is true that the English Reformers did grope as in the dark, longer than any of their fellow-labourers in Scotland and on the Continent; and their successors seem still to "see men as trees walking." Nevertheless they must have felt sure of having attained the truth on this subject. On many subjects, at one time they taught what was directly opposed to their teachings at another time. But they constantly admitted the claims of Parity from the beginning of their Reformation to about A. D. 1600. Dr. Hallam, the learned Historian of the Constitution of Great Britain, has been unable to find the dogmas of modern Prelacy in the English Church for fifty years after its Prayer Book was established. Surely, sixty years of unvarying teaching and acting ought to settle the principles on which a Church is reformed.

Again, modern Prelatists cite in their own behalf some passages from what they call the mature writings of the English Reformers, wherein they claim to be rightful successors of the Apostles; to have reformed their Church according to Holy Scripture and the Ancient Fathers, &c. But such claims and such assertions as these, can be found in the writings of the most bigoted advocates of Parity. Against the arbitrary application of vague and general expressions all sound logic teaches us to protest. What the English Reformers meant by any such assertions shall be fully revealed in maintaining our other positions. The sense which may and ought to be derived from the Prayer Book shall appear

at the same time. Besides, they who recoil from the quotations made above insist that their opponents shall distinguish between the teachings of the Church, and the utterances of individuals who may belong to the Church. A sermon from Cranmer, the preacher, or a letter from Cranmer, the friend, ought not to set aside the joint decision of Cranmer the Archbishop, and twelve other Bishops; much less ought it to nullify the dogmas and acts of his supreme spiritual head.

Lastly, cases are triumphantly pointed out wherein persons claiming to have been ordered by nonprelatical churches were treated as if they were laymen. Now, here the dates of these decisions ought to be noticed, for they may have been made after a certain time, to support a theory unknown to the Reformers. Also, it ought to appear that these decisions were made by those whom modern Prelacy regards as having lawful authority in the Church. They may have come from laymen, or from some court created by laymen, like the Court of High Commission, or the Star Chamber. No one ought to argue from principles and facts which he will not always submit to. Further, even if these decisions were made while the English Reformers were teaching to their Church the scripturalness of Parity, and by the proper exponents of Church doctrines, the inferences drawn from them are by no means necessary. In this country, Christians are familiar with a practice entirely similar. If an officer in one of our States were to remove into another State, he would forfeit his office in the State which he left. To fill the same office in his new home, he must submit to the forms used by his new neighbours. Else his acts would be invalid, and he himself would be liable to punishment. Now, they who impose these new forms by no means deny that their subject was a true officer before he came among them. To deny that a man is an officer in this State is not to deny that he has been an officer in the States. So also, Prelates in the English Church may have denied that a man was a minister in this Church, and at the same time they may have asserted that he was a true minister in the Church. This distinction is not unknown in England. Archbishop Whately has published an argument to show that all churches ought to ordain their own ministers, although the persons so ordained may have been ministers in another Church. But it is vain to hope that they will cease to cavil whose interest has led them to abjure the teachings of ancient

Prelacy. Say what they will, it is evident that to the last the English Reformers believed that the inherent powers of a Bishop and a Priest were the same. Attention must now be given to the second proposition, viz.

II. Many of the English Reformers taught that the Bible committed the form of government and the relations among the officers of a Church to the determination of the civil authority in its country. To establish the truth of this assertion only official publications by the English Reformers will be quoted.

Among the questions proposed and answered in the Convention of 1540, were the following :

“Quest. 13.—Whether (if it fortun'd a Christian Prince learned to conquer certain dominions of Infidels, having none but temporal learned men with him) it be defended by God's law that he and they should preach and teach the word of God there or no? And also make and constitute Priests or no ?

“Agreement.—In the thirteenth, concerning the first part they do all agree, ‘that not only they may, but they ought to teach.’ But in the second part, my Lord of York and Dr. Edgeworth, doth not agree with the other ; they say that ‘laymen in no case can make Priests, or have such authority.’ The Bishops of Durham, St. Davids, Westminster, Drs. Tresham, Cox, Leighton, Crayford, Symmons, Redmayn, and Robertson, say that ‘laymen in such case have authority to minister the sacraments and to make Priests.’ My Lords of London, Carlisle, and Hereford think that ‘God, in such a case, would give the Prince authority, call him inwardly, and illuminate him, or some of his, as he did St. Paul.’”

“Quest. 14.—Whether it be forefended by God's law that (if it so fortune that the Bishops and Priests of a region were dead,) the King of that region should make Bishops and Priests to supply the same or no ?

“Cranmer.—It is not forbidden by God's law.

“Agreement.—In the fourteenth, they agree for the most part as they did before, that ‘laymen in this case may teach and minister the sacraments.’” A modern Prelatist would not have given such replies to these questions. He would have decided that, as the Church existed somewhere in its proper form, the Prince ought to have sent thither for “the Apostolical Succession.”

These decisions on supposed cases evidently cover the

whole ground contained in the present proposition. But lest it be assumed that the doctrines here advanced were only speculative, and had no practical effect in the Anglican Church at that time, it is necessary to examine the replies made to

“Quest. 9.—Whether the Apostles, lacking a higher power, as in not having a Christian Prince among them, made Bishops by that necessity, or by authority given by God?

“Cranmer.—All Christian Princes have committed unto them, immediately of God, the whole cure of all their subjects, as well concerning the administration of God’s word for the cure of souls, as concerning the ministration of things political and civil governance. And in both these ministrations they must have sundry ministers under them to supply that which is appointed to their several offices. * * * The ministers of God’s word, under his Majesty, be the Bishops, Parsons, Vicars, and such other Priests as be appointed by his Highness to that ministration. As for example, the Bishop of Canterbury, &c. All the said ministers and officers, as well of that sort as the other, be appointed, assigned, and elected, and in every place by the laws of Kings and Princes. * * * And there is no more promise of God that grace is given in the committing of the ecclesiastical office than it is in the committing of the civil office. In the Apostles’ times, when there were no Christian Princes, by whose authority ministers of God’s word might be appointed, there was no remedy for the appointing of ministers, but only the consenting of Christian multitudes among themselves, by an uniform consent to follow the advice and persuasion of such persons whom God had endued with the spirit of counsel and wisdom.” Whenever its purpose may be attained, modern Prelacy is content with a quotation from Cranmer alone; because as Primate he uttered the authoritative voice of the Anglican Church. But among the members of the Convention of 1540, the Archbishop of York only dared to reply to this question, “There was no need of any other authority.” Of the rest, some made no reply; some agreed with Cranmer; and others distinguished between the power of nominating, electing, and that of ordaining or consecrating; the former they gave to the civil authorities, the latter to the ecclesiastical. This evidence must be sufficient to convince a candid mind that the English Reformers be-

lieved and taught as we have asserted. They held that the Bible made Priests and Bishops equal in all respects, and that the King might make them unequal whenever he pleased. Not a line from them has reached us inconsistent with this doctrine. It remains to show how they applied their principles to their own case.

III. The Reformers of the Protestant Episcopal Church openly derived from their King all their ecclesiastical and spiritual authority and power—that is, all authority of teaching and administering the sacraments, all power as well of order as of jurisdiction. Inasmuch as some important consequences will follow from this assertion, great care will be taken to put it beyond all fair contradiction.

In 1534, an Act was passed by the English Parliament, acquiesced in by the Reformers, and sanctioned by Henry VIII., which declared King Henry to be the supreme head of the Anglican Church in all matters, as well spiritual as temporal. The following passage is from this Act, (26 Hen. 8, ch. 1,) “Albeit the Kynges Majestie justely and rightfully is and oweth to be the supreme heed of the Church of England, and so is recognyzed by the clergy of this realme in theyr convocations; yet neverthelesse for corroboracion and confirmacion thereof * * * Be it enacted by auctoritie of this present Parliament * * that our Sovereigne Lord, his heires and successours, Kynges of this realme, shall have full power and auctoritie, from tyme to tyme, to visite, repress, redresse, reforme, order, correct, restrayne, and amende all such errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contemptes, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any maner, spiritual auctorytie or jurisdiction ought or maie lawfullye be reformeyd, repressed, ordred, redressyd, correctyd, restrayned, or amendyd most to the pleasure of Almyghtie God,” &c. The substance of this Act was repeated for the benefit of Edward VI., and ever since the days of Elizabeth it has been the fundamental law of the English Church.

Strictly agreeing with this statute is another (37 Hen. 8, ch. 17,) which declares, “Forasmuch as your Majesty is only and undoubtedly supreme head of the Church of England, and also of Ireland, to whom, by Holy Scripture, all authority and power is wholly given to hear and determine all manner of causes ecclesiastical, and to correct vice and sin whatever, and to all such persons as your Majesty shall appoint thereunto;—in consideration thereof,” &c. In this

manner did the English Reformers cause their Bishops, Priests, and laymen to constitute a body, of which their Sovereign is supreme head on earth. To show in what sense King Henry was declared to be the supreme head of the Anglican Church, we will cite the injunctions which Edward, Archbishop of York, issued to his diocese in 1538—the same year in which he so fully asserted the scripturalness of Parity. “You (his clergy) shall first diligently observe all manner of injunctions given unto you by the King’s Highness’ commandment, and specially concerning * * the confirmation and establishment of the King’s Highness’ title of supreme head over the whole Catholic Church of England, as well spiritual as temporal.” Therefore all curates and others holding benefices in the province of York, must every quarter teach the people how to obey their Sovereign Lord the King, declaring that “to make any stirring, gathering of the people, or commotion, without his express commandment, is to break, not only God’s commandment and law, but also all natural and political order, in which the head governeth the members, and not the members the head, and in which also all the members, by nature and by good policy, employ themselves and endanger themselves for the preservation and maintenance of the head.” So then, the English Reformers called him a head whom all natural and political order required others to obey and preserve that they might live. Their supreme head in all matters ecclesiastical and spiritual was the spring of their ecclesiastical life—the source of all their spiritual power in the Church.

We cannot forbear contrasting with this language of the English Reformers what Andrew Melville said to James VI. in defence of the Kirk of Scotland. “Sir, we will always humbly reverence your Majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your Majesty in private, and since you are brought in extreme danger of your life and crown, and along with you the country and the Church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge our duty, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. Therefore, sir, as divers times before I have told you, so now again I must tell you, there are two Kings and two Kingdoms in Scotland. There is King James, the head of the Commonwealth, and there is King Jesus, the head of the Church, whose subject James VI. is, and of whose Kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord,

nor a head, but only a member. Sir, those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over his Church, have power and authority from him to govern his spiritual kingdom, both jointly and severally; the which no Christian King or Prince should control and discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of his Church. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience, but again I say, you are not the head of the Church; you cannot give us that eternal life which we seek for even in this life, and you cannot deprive us of it." As free Christians of America, we should always thank the only Head of the Church that he ever commissioned Scotch Presbyterians to uncover these great and precious truths—that he sent their children to plant them in the wilds of this Continent, and that he has protected their planting until it has become a great tree in whose goodly boughs we all rejoice.

In direct contradiction to the language and actions of their Scotch neighbours, but in obedience to laws against which they did not protest, and in accordance with their own interpretation of these laws, in 1545, the English Reformers submitted to an Act of Parliament, (37 Hen. 8, ch. 17,) which was passed to correct certain irregularities of the clergy of the Anglican Church. This statute declares that "The Archbishops, Bishops, Archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical but by, from, and under his Royal Majesty." Besides, during the reigns of Henry VIII. and Edward VI., each Bishop took an "Oath of Supremacy," in which he swore before his God, "Also, I acknowledge and recognize your Majesty immediately under Almighty God to be the chief and supreme head of the Church of England, and claim to have the Bishopric of ——— wholly and only of your gift, and to have, and to hold the profits temporal and spiritual of the same only of your heirs, Kings of this realm, and of none other."

Lastly, in the reign of Edward VI., each Prelate of the Anglican Church accepted from the King letters-patent, in which the following remarkable sentences occur: "Forasmuch as all authority of declaring law, and likewise of jurisdiction in all respects, as well that which is called ecclesiastical as that which is secular, at first emanated from the royal power as from a supreme head and the source and fountain of all the magistrates below the throne, surely it is becoming

that they who exercised jurisdiction hitherto only at another's will should gratefully acknowledge a benefit of this kind thus granted to them by the royal liberality, and refer it when accepted to the royal munificence alone, and surrender it as often as it shall seem good to his Royal Majesty. We, inclined by your humble supplications in this respect, and desiring to consult for the good of our subjects, decree that our place shall be committed to you under the mode and form given below, and that therefore you shall be licensed to ordain any person within your diocese of _____, whom you shall find, by a previous diligent and rigorous examination, to be fitted by words and learning, and to ordain and promote all sacred orders and Presbyterships," &c.

To these fundamental documents of the Anglican Church, much might be added from injunctions of Prelates issued about the same time, and from other sources. But it would be useless, for these other authorities all breathe the same spirit and teach the same doctrine in varied language. For instance, the Bishop of Salisbury, "by the authority given him of God and the King," peremptorily admonished all having the cure of souls at the Bishop's hands "to set forth the King's regal power to be the supreme head and highest power under God in earth of the Church and realm of England." This Prelate, having the same authority with his brethren, plainly derived it from "God and the King." This opinion as to the source of his power is not contradicted by any contemporary authority. Surely it is at least as good as that of any of his successors. Hence, according to early English Prelacy, the Apostolical Succession conveyed ministerial power in the Anglican Church from God through the King to the Bishops. But modern Prelacy, with eyes turned from the writings of the English Reformers, and ears deafened to their voice, vainly dreams of an authority derived from God through the Apostles to the Bishops, and as conveyed to itself unstained by false doctrine, unholy lives, or open schism.

Modern Prelacy, unable to deny the authenticity or authority of the papers just quoted, of course denies the inference drawn from them. This inference is that the English Reformers derived their ordaining power from their King. But, says modern Prelacy, "there is a distinction familiar to every sciolist in ecclesiastical affairs, between 'order' and 'jurisdiction.' Order is the spiritual power

derived by ordination from Christ, the Head of the Church. Jurisdiction is the right to exercise this spiritual power in a particular place or diocese. By reason of the connection between the Church and the State in England, 'jurisdiction' there is derived from the Crown. In this country 'jurisdiction' comes from an election by the people. But there are analogous cases even here to the English practice. The spiritual power of a Priest comes from his ordination. But the right to act as a chaplain in the navy and to receive the pay of that office is given by a commission from the President of the United States." We have given the objection in full, and desire to treat it with all candour. This definition of "jurisdiction" is, to say the least, very singular. It might be rejected as destitute of sufficient authority, but we can afford to waive this right. According to this definition of "order" it must be a spiritual profit; but the English Reformers declared on oath, that they had and held the spiritual profits of their stations only of their King and none other, and so they flatly contradict modern Prelacy. Again, it is a palpable truth that the early English Prelates indulged in opinions and language very different from those of their successors. Now, however convenient it may have been, for many years, to maintain this peculiar distinction between "order" and "jurisdiction," and however clearly it may be set forth in the writings and practice of others, we must demand satisfactory evidence that the English Reformers used it so as to affect their language at all times. They professed to reform their Church according to Scripture and the Holy Fathers. But where do these authorities point out the distinction now insisted on, in the language now appropriated to it? The Apostles were ordained to preach and baptize among all nations. Their "orders" evidently included "jurisdiction." He who gave them "jurisdiction" also invested them with "order," and so, according to themselves, it was with the English Reformers. Lastly, that the English Reformers did not rest on the distinction now ascribed to them, is evident from the letters-patent which they accepted from King Edward. These letters virtually define a magistrate to be a person who declares law and exercises jurisdiction. They decide that there are magistrates ecclesiastical as well as civil, and then expressly declare that the King is the fountain and source of the magistrate himself, not of one, nor of two, nor of several of

his powers, but of all of them, of all that makes the difference between a magistrate and an individual. From their King the first set of English Prelates solemnly derived all their authority to preach (declare law,) and to act according to their preaching (exercise jurisdiction) in administering the sacraments, ordaining their own successors, and maintaining discipline. If confirmation of this interpretation be demanded, it shall be given. Henry VIII. was undoubtedly supreme in correcting all errors and heresies in the Anglican Church, by law, as well as in fact. While the Convention of 1540 was in session, he had before him notes of the various opinions entertained on the questions proposed. It has been stated that under "Question 9," some of the Reformers attempted to introduce a distinction between nominating or electing, and consecrating or ordaining Bishops and Priests. But King Henry immediately put his foot on this vanity by writing, in his own hand, on the margin of his notes: "Where is this distinction? Now since you confess that the Apostles did occupy the one part, which you now confess belongeth to Princes, how can you prove that ordering is only committed to you Bishops?" Because that this error was so promptly corrected by the lawful authority, "the Bishops' Book," as we have already seen, gives to the Prince of every country the right of nominating, electing, presenting, and appointing its ecclesiastical ministers. So then, not only is there no attempt to prove that the English Reformers maintained a distinction familiar only to sciolists; but there is the best evidence that they deliberately rejected it. The English Reformers did not believe that their doctrine endangered the existence of the Church, and they were not ashamed of it; so they openly avowed that their orders were derived from their supreme head in Heaven through their supreme head on earth.

"Drowning men will catch at straws"—so modern Prelacy also demands that an instance shall be adduced, wherein the English King ordained or attempted to ordain a Bishop, a Priest, or even a Deacon. But according to the Constitution of the Anglican Church, there has never been a necessity for the King to take so much trouble. The first generation of English Prelates were transferred to, or ordained in the Anglican Church just to relieve him of it. We have shown the instance wherein by letters-patent the supreme head of the Anglican Church committed his place to the first set of

English Reformed Prelates. Now when was there a necessity for his reoccupying that place? The first English Prelates were licensed to ordain because their King had given them a place which possessed ordaining privileges, viz. his own place. Then every ordination which they performed was valid, because it would have been valid had the King himself performed it. This is an immediate inference from the words, "We decree that our place shall be committed unto you, and that therefore you shall be licensed to ordain," &c. These letters-patent were given only to the first Prelates of the English Church. Nor was it at all necessary to grant them to their successors. They settled the origin of the ordaining power in their Church. By virtue of their license the first generation of Protestant Episcopal Prelates gave to their successors what had been given "to them, the ordaining place of the King." They had nothing else to give, for their "Oath of Supremacy" declared that the spiritual profits of their Episcopate were obtained from their King, and from none other. This assertion, that every ordination by a Reformed Prelate is but an ordination by the King of England, will be confirmed—if confirmation be needed—by the mode in which, at this day, Bishops are made in the Anglican Church. "At every avoidance of a Bishopric," says Blackstone, "the King may send to the Dean and Chapter his usual license to proceed to an election; which is to be accompanied with a letter missive from the King containing the name of the person he would have them elect; and if the Dean and Chapter delay the election above twelve days the nomination is to devolve on the King, who may, by letters-patent, appoint such a person as he pleases. This election, or nomination, if it be of a Bishop, must be signified to the Archbishop, &c., requiring them to confirm, invest, and consecrate the person so elected, which they are to do immediately." If the Archbishop delay this confirmation, &c., for twenty days, he is exposed to the terrible punishment of *præmunire*, whereby he forfeits all his goods and chattels, his personal liberty, and his right to any inheritance or bequests. Until the time of Elizabeth, the life of such a recusant might be taken by whoever met him. Now, if the Bishops in this ordination do not derive their power from their King only—if they are not merely his agents—whence comes his right to punish them with a *præmunire* for refusing to exercise their power? The answer is, that they

forfeit their office because their refusal “violates all natural and political order,” and tends to deprive the King of a privilege belonging to his station—that of being “the fountain and source of all magistrates below the throne, as well in Church as in State.”

From what has been established, a consequence of very great importance to modern Prelacy immediately follows. A common proverb declares that “a stream cannot rise higher than its source.” Hence some delight in sneering at the Genevan orders of the Presbyterian Church. Besides this, an eminent authority in the Romish Church has laid down the following as the canon for testing the validity of ordination. It is a settled “principle with Catholics that no error about the nature and efficacy of a sacrament, no positive disbelief of its divine institution, or any unworthiness on the part of him who administers it, can deprive such a sacrament of its effect—provided sufficient matter, valid form, and the due intention concur in its administration.” This canon is allowed by Mr. Evans, of Maryland, in his essays, to defend the Anglican ordinations from the attacks of Romanists. It is evident, from the proverb, that Protestant Episcopal Bishops have, in 1850, only what power of order their predecessors had in 1550—a power derived from God through the King of England. Also, according to the canon, the intention of the first Reformed Prelates of the Anglican Church was to transmit in a valid form, with sufficient matter, to a proper person what they themselves had—the ordaining place of their King. Boast as they may, this is all that, on their own principles, their successors ever had. If, according to modern Prelacy, and notwithstanding their own denials, some of the English Reformers possessed another power, from their ordination in the Romish Church, it is plain, from their own assertions, that they never exercised it within the limits of the Anglican Church; they suffered it to die with themselves. (Unless some of this ordaining virus escaped from them involuntarily. But until the existence of such an imponderable and uncontrollable agent is proved, we cannot determine its possible effects in the case before us.) If then, the peculiar “Apostolical Succession,” for which modern Prelacy contends, be essential to the Church, the Anglican Church and its offshoots in this country are not parts of the true Church. Parity may in triumph point to the tests of early Prelacy; but modern Prelacy is in the utmost need of

the tests of Parity to save itself from being denounced as base coin.

It is unnecessary now to apply to Parity the tests that are presented by the Prayer Book. One thing is evident before examination—that whoever so contracts its vague language as to make it denounce nonprelatical churches, most shamefully misrepresents its authors. If needs be, force should be applied so as to make its definitions contain with ease all those bodies of professed Christians who, at the time of its confirmation, had been acknowledged as true churches, repeatedly and in the most solemn manner. But happily there is no need of force to distend, or ingenuity to explain, or of subtlety to evade the very Catholic language of the Prayer Book. The Prayer Book only requires us to believe that “from the Apostles’ time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ’s Church—Bishops, Priests, and Deacons.” It does not require us to believe that these orders were in the Apostles’ time—nor, that they have always been in the Church—nor, that they have been in all parts of the Church—nor, that they must always be there—nor, that there were always three of these orders—nor, that of these orders the Bishops only must always, in all places, possess the ordaining power. The language of the Prayer Book is a model of vagueness.

In conclusion, it may be safely asserted again, that Parity, even when tested by Prelacy, is a scriptural mode of Church government. For the establishers of Prelacy repeatedly acknowledged that it alone was to be found in the New Testament; and in every way possible, for sixty years, they treated nonprelatical communities as true churches. In retaining Prelacy for themselves, not only they never insisted that all others must do so too, but they derived the imparity between their own Bishops and Priests from their King. This source of their imparity they repeatedly avowed under the most solemn circumstances, and they established it by acts which their successors could never annul. According to early Protestant Prelacy the Apostles established Parity between Bishops and Priests; and allowed them to introduce Imparity whenever they thought it advantageous. It decided that a Bible Bishop was but a Bible Priest—between these officers of the Church there was no degree nor distinction in order, and one made the other indifferently. But it decided also that an English Bishop was superior to an English Priest,

because the English King committed his ordaining place to the Bishop and withheld it from the Priest. Such was the mode in which the English Reformers rendered to Cæsar the things which were Cæsar's, and unto God the things that were God's.

What child of Parity then ever need be dissatisfied with a system which all the Reformers in all countries declared to be of Bible origin? Who can forsake it for a system of Imparity whose peculiar arrangements emanated from the King of England, and, after being carefully disposed, were deliberately and irrevocably fixed by those who alone had the right and opportunity to do so? Truly, "a Presbyterian clergyman looking for the Church," and finding it only in the Anglican Church and its daughters, would present a ridiculous picture, did he not powerfully move our pity. For he shows that he cannot know the truth when he sees it, or he cannot love it when he knows it.

N. B. The writings of the English Reformers, quoted in this essay, may be found in Burnet's History of the Reformation in England, and in Strype's Annals of the Church of England. Chapter and paragraph have not been mentioned, because the arrangement of these works differs in their various editions. The curious in these matters can easily verify the quotations. To these works they are respectfully invited, for it will afford abundant opportunities of contrasting the large catholicity of the English Reformers, with the narrow bigotry of their successors.