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THE

# BEER SHOP.



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## THE BEER SHOP.

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“YOU remember your promise, Michael,” said Thomas Winter to his fellow workman, Michael Ford. “You promised your wife that you would not even pass the door of the Chequers this evening. Why do you stop? This is the way, man.” “I know it, I know it, my good fellow; but —” “But what, Michael? You look down the lane as if you meant to walk down it. Come along, and prove yourself a man of your word.” “No, no,” said Michael, with a foolish-looking smile, “I shall go the old way, ’tis the shortest, Tom; and —” “And turn into the beer-shop?” “Why, perhaps I may. But, hark’ee my old fellow, I’m not going to touch a penny of the wages; that’s the missis’s money. If you must know, I got sixpence to-day, when master told me to hold Mr. Dawson’s horse; and I shall just take a quiet half-pint, and treat you, my good friend, to another, and then we’ll go home as sober as our wives can wish to see us.” “Did you, or did you not, promise not even to pass the door, Mike?” “Nonsense, man,” replied Michael; “you know I meant I would not drink away one penny, no, not one farthing of my earnings; nor will I, but I’ll have one half-pint, or —” Michael did not speak the profane word, nor did he ever swear, but when in a passion. “You need not look so savage in a friend’s face,” said Thomas, calmly, “and the oath that came almost to your lips, had better die there. What! you don’t hear me! you are walking away! You are not angry, Michael, with your old true friend? though you would have me think so that I may leave you to your own way. Stop, old friend,” he cried out in a louder voice; “stop, I’ll walk with you, if you will not come the other way, and keep your promise,” he added kindly as he took his friend’s extended hand, and shook it. “I’ll tell you what, Tom,” said the other, “you are a right true friend. You take a deal to put you out with one.” “I wish to be a friend,” replied Tom, “and I’m not going to show myself a child, because you choose to put yourself, or pretend to put yourself, out of temper with me. Well, you *are* going in?” said

Thomas, as they came up to the door of the beer-shop. "Yes, yes, old fellow, for the sixpence—change for the sixpence, and no more." "I shall go in with you," said Thomas, "but you *will* come out, and go home with me, when the sixpence is spent?" "Trust me for that," said Michael, as he pushed open the door: his friend followed him.

Was he right in following him? perhaps not, but he thought he was, and the beer-shop was no temptation to him. He had never been drunk in his life, though he had once or twice been obliged to enter an alehouse on business. Now he went with Michael in a very watchful state, saying to himself, "Be not high-minded, but fear."

"You'll take a drop, Tom?" said Michael, holding out the mug. "No, Mike, I am not thirsty; and if I were, I would not drink with you to-night."

There was a travelling man seated in the chimney-corner, with a basket on the ground before him, and a few rabbit-skins hanging from the side of it. The man looked very tired, and his little boy, who sat next him, had fallen asleep from fatigue. A very small mug, quite empty, stood on the settle before him.

"Do you mean to say, master?" said Michael, addressing the travelling man, that you have had no more to drink than that thimbleful, after many a weary mile?" "True enough," said the man smiling, "but a little is better than nothing." "Here take a sup." The poor fellow gladly took the offered mug. He had scarcely set it down, when loud voices and louder laughter were heard at the door, and three men burst into the room in high spirits: they sat down on the same bench, as if setting themselves for the evening; when one of them seeing Ford and Winter, started up, and holding out a hand to each, "My good fellows," he cried, "I'm heartily glad to see you; and how have you been? and where are you working? Still at the old place, eh? I and my two comrades, have just come from the town to do a bit of work at the new house (Squire Purcell's) that's a building. What!" he continued, opening his eyes widely, and turning them from side to side, as if looking for some one. "What! no master and no mistress to be seen! and only an empty mug or two!" "Oh yes, I am within call, and at your service," cried Mrs. Saunders, the landlady, coming forward from a small side parlour, "I was just waiting upon a few gentlemen in the

parlour, who are rather particular, and would keep me chatting with them." "Gentlemen!" exclaimed Norris, one of the new comers, repeating the landlady's words, "We are all gentlemen, missis, arn't we? I dare say I am as good a gentleman as any of your parlour-folks!" "Oh to be sure," said the landlady smiling. "Come, come, Norris," whispered one of his companions, jogging his arm; "don't be seeking a quarrel, as usual. If you must quarrel, wait till you are drunk, man!" And then, turning to the mistress, he said, "I hear you have a right good tap at the Chequers—the Cauliflower Head, they call it. We heard of it many miles off, and this night we mean to taste it." "You must give us your opinion, Mike," said Norris, soon after handing over the foaming mug to Michael Ford; "don't fear it, man; it's of the right sort;" and then he sung out,

"Oh, good ale thou art my darling,  
Thou art my joy both night and morning!"

Mike took the cup.—Thomas went home that night without him.

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"I have just called for the key of my room, Mary," said an elderly woman to Mary Ford. "I will not come further than the door, for it is pouring with rain, and my clothes are in a dripping state." "Oh, come in, by all means, and warm yourself, Hester," replied her friend, "and I will run up and unlock the door, and make you a fire in no time." "No, no, Mary, dear, I am well used to wet and cold, and it will warm me to kindle my own fire. Good night! good night, children! Here, John, is an apple for you, almost as red as your cheeks," and, saying so, Hester took a large apple from the basket on her arm, and held it out to her favourite John. Before she turned away, Hester looked round the room with an inquiring glance, as if expecting to see some signs of the presence of another person. Mary understood her. "No," she said; "I do not look for him quite so early. It is more than a quarter of an hour's walk from his work; but he will be here presently. I'm sure he will keep his word this time." "Dear Mary, I hope he may," replied her friend. "I would not damp your spirits. Pray God he may keep his promise."

Michael did not keep his promise. It was long after midnight when Hester was awoke by loud and brutal oaths, and the sound of violent kicks against her neighbour's door, and then Mary's gentle voice might be distinguished as the door was opened, and the drunkard stumbled in.

Several mornings after, Mary was giving her two little boys their breakfast before she sent them to the infant school. Michael was not out of bed. He had been drunk night after night, and this morning he had felt too unwell to rise. As she closed the door upon the children, who went forth hand in hand to school, she heard her husband's voice calling to her, and at once she obeyed the call.

He was sitting up in bed, his usually bright and handsome countenance pale and sunken, and his eyes looking heavy for want of rest. "Mary," he said, "I hardly dare look you in the face, and it is shame and not anger that has made me so sullen for the last few days. Nay, I half hoped to provoke you to be angry and bitter with me, that I might have something like an excuse for not following your good counsel; but there is no standing your gentleness and your patience; and now you are taking your seat beside me this morning, and looking up as sweetly and as mildly into my face, as if nothing had happened last night. Come, let me hear what did happen: something worse than usual I am almost sure." "Dear Michael," replied Mary, mildly, "I always tell you the truth, and I will not now refuse to answer your question. You were very violent last night. I never knew you to be so violent; you swore at the children and frightened them till I sent them to bed out of your way. I should be sorry for your children to learn swearing from their own father." "Was there nothing, Mary, even worse than my words?" "There was a blow, Michael," replied Mary in a soft but distinct voice. Michael shuddered, but he continued his inquiries. "The blow fell upon me, upon my bosom," said Mary. "I will not make light of that blow; it pains me now, and once or twice this morning I have felt as if I could scarcely draw my breath; and yet it was given by this gentle hand—this dear hand," she added, placing her hand on his. "I do not say this to reproach you, my husband. I could bear any violence from you, if it would do you good to harm me. I feel that blow more in my heart and mind than on my bosom. See, dear Michael, what drunkenness can

force you to do; you that are so manly, and so gentle, and so brave. I am beginning to be afraid of you, Michael: you will not believe me, but it is true. How hot your hand feels! why, my poor fellow, you are in a high fever! Yes, and your forehead is burning hot; almost as hot as it was last night. I did not know then what I should have done with you, for you got worse and worse in your violence; and you did so grind your teeth, and storm with such a frantic look, that you might have been taken for a madman. You frightened me dreadfully at one time, when you threw yourself down on the seat in the chimney-corner, and began to strike with all your force at the iron-work of the grate. It was then I placed my hand upon your forehead, and if I had been angry before, which I was not, my heart would have melted with tenderness, when you turned your head, and looked up in my face, and smiled, seeming to know me for the first time. But you soon burst out more violently than ever. I would have gone for the doctor, but I did not dare to leave you. Suddenly, however, it struck me, that if I could cool your head, you would be better, and I dipped my apron in a pail of cold water and wrapped it round your head. I tell you all this, Michael, because I feel convinced that if you had not been relieved, as you then were, by violent vomiting, you must have died—died in your sin, died in a fit of drunkenness! Dear, dear Michael, I could bear any trouble, any suffering with you, but, I think, I could not bear to see you go by such a death as that. It almost puts me beside myself when the thought comes across me, as it does sometimes. Yet I don't know, I don't dare to think, how this course of sin will end. When I lie awake of nights, catching at every sound, hoping, and then dreading, your return, I sometimes work myself up to think that you will be brought in to me a corpse." "You will not care to hear me promise again that I will never more be overcome with liquor," said Michael, hanging his head while he spoke. "I have made so many promises, and broken them so often, perhaps it would be better not to promise." "Oh no! do promise, my dear Mike. It is not wrong to promise; it is only wrong to make a promise in a way that God will not approve. I fear you have done this. You have at one time made your promise, and formed your resolution, from yourself alone, and then gone forth to keep it in your own

strength. Such promises, Michael, are seldom kept. I know that you will answer, 'Well, Mary, if it was the case that I made my promises, a time back, in my own strength, I have not done so of late. I have followed your advice, and made them in the strength of the Lord.'—Yes, Michael, I have heard you say, in words, 'I will not give way to my sin again, and I make this promise, not in my own strength, but in the strength of God.' But tell me, dear husband, have you ever done more than say this in words? Have you not satisfied yourself with words? Now the promise, made in God's strength, must be kept in the same strength. We must, after we have made it, be very watchful, so that at the very first attack of temptation, we may find out our danger, and then at once resist the sin, not only by prayer for God's help, but by all our own powers brought to God for him to quicken them, and make use of them by his Spirit in us. Or, I may say in a few words, we must be in downright earnest to resist sin in the way God teaches, and in the strength he gives. Only be in downright earnest, my dear Michael, and you will come off a conqueror. I have heard say, that never was it told by man's lips, never was it written by man's fingers in a book, of one who cried to God in earnest in his temptation, and was not heard, and helped. It is not, however, the way to get the better of sin, to do as you have done—put yourself in the way of temptation, and then wonder that you fall. A beer shop is not the place to go and make a good resolution in. And when a man sits at a table in a beer shop, with one cup of ale before him, and thinks that he can sit there and say, 'I will take but this one cup, and then I will keep my resolution, and drink no more!' do you think he is likely to find strength to do so? Some of his companions will be ready to jeer at him, some will do all in their power to entice him to take more drink, and he who is man's worst murderer, the old deceiver and tempter, will be present; though the eye cannot see him, he will be there to make sin pleasant, and to laugh at its sad consequences."

Was Michael deeply impressed by what his pious and gentle wife had said to him? He thought he was. He rose up from his sick bed meaning to lead a new life. Better counsel, however, than poor Mary could give, has been disregarded thousands of times. If it were not so, surely the Bible would have prevailed with us all long ago, constraining



us to forsake our sins, for the Bible is the "word of God." The case of Michael Ford is not a singular one. He did not entirely forsake his sin, he went back to it by degrees. "He that committeth sin is the servant" (nay the bond-slave) "of sin." Michael had not ceased to commit the sin of drunkenness; and, though he knew it not, he was led captive by Satan at his will.

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A little knot of persons were gathered together round the well-known round table in the parlour at the Chequers. They belonged to a class a little above the brawlers in the common room, or kitchen; and the landlord and landlady of the several houses where they held their revels, were accustomed at chance times to introduce a "Sir," into their words when addressing them, treating them at all other times with an air of friendly familiarity. One of them, Mr. Postler, the most overbearing and authoritative of the party, had been holding forth in a very lengthened prosy story, of which he had showed himself off as the hero; and his nearest neighbour, Mr. Millins, a very meek, mean-spirited man, had not failed to throw in, in a soft insinuating tone, his usual little dole of flattery. "Why dear me!" said he, when at length Mr. Postler paused, and was about to fill the empty glass which stood before him; "why, dear me, the occurrences you have been relating with so much force of description, have quite prevented our noticing what has been going on around us; and yet I thought, I heard a rush to the yard. Look, Mr. Postler, Mr. Whittle, do you see what is going on? Stand up, gentlemen, put down your glass, Mr. Patten. I know you love a fight, and we may look for some rare sport to-day, for Mike Ford is going to fall to with Billy Pike." "Ah, well, open the window, Millins," said Mr. Postler, in his pompous voice, "and get your head out of the way. Why, what do you mean, man? you have left the blind; why don't you draw it back? we can't see through a blind a bit better than through your block-head." "A well-made man that Mike Ford," said Patten; "what a breadth of chest! what a square shoulder! and what muscle! eh, Mr. Postler?" "Yes," said Postler, "but too tall! half a foot too tall! Billy's a tight lad now, just the right size and height." "Couldn't have been better, if he'd been ir.

regular training," said Patten. "Well, gentlemen, what do you say? shall we step out and take a nearer view? 'Tis a British sight, gentlemen, and a manly sight; there's humanity about it, I say. Will you walk out gentlemen? Come, walk out into the yard." "Why, thank you, Patten; I do very well here," said Postler, "we can enjoy the sport in this snug retreat, and be out of the row." "You see, trade might suffer, sir," said Millins, with his pipe of a voice, "and some customers, that one could mention, would not be over pleased if they thought such respectable gentlemen, as you, could mix in a rumpus with the rabble."

And now the fight began, and took up the attention of the party in the parlour. "Well done, Billy! how he puts in his blows like a knowing one as he is! Mike is all too random and rambling like with his arms: an't he, Mr. Patten?" said Millins, "and, as you said, he's too tall; but he's down, Pike's down, notwithstanding," said Postler.

And now an elderly woman, with a basket on her arm, rushed forward crying, "It's over now, lads, it's all over;" and she put down her basket, which was full of apples, on a bench, begging an old man, who stood with his hands in his pockets, to watch it for her. She did not wait for his muttered consent, but was the next moment standing before Michael, and urging him to make up with Pike, and put his clothes on, and come home with her. The two combatants were seated each on the knee, and supported in the arms of their seconds: Michael gave no answer, but by an unmeaning smile. "Come, come," she said, "give me his clothes;" but the man who held the clothes drew back into the crowd, and the seconds swore at her. "Out of the way, Hester," bawled out several brutal voices. "Off with you, or you'll get more kicks than ha'pence."

The kind-hearted woman looked around her. "Is there not one to help me, and get him away?" she cried in a loud beseeching voice; "not one to feel for his poor wife, and the children?" There was not one. "Don't you see the man's not himself," she cried, in a still louder voice. "He is quite overcome with liquor. Michael, you shall not fight;" and saying so, she sprung forward, but some one in the crowd dragged her back by her cloak, and then another shoved her aside; and another, and yet another did the same.

"Oh, for shame, for shame, Tommy!" exclaimed M

Millins, turning from the window, "for shame, naughty boy, naughty boy! Did you see that, Mr. Postler? my little boy snatched an apple from Hester's basket. Boys will be boys, Mr. Postler. Lawk, he'll be seen, for his mouth's cram full; but now he has got quite up in a corner, behind the gate, and what a bite he has taken!"

The fight continued. Why should we describe it? The party in the snug parlour continued their observations, till the pompous Mr. Postler drew the blind rather suddenly before the window. Mr. Patten sprung up upon a chair to look over it; while Millins stooped down, and peeped under it. "What's that for, my good friend?" said Mr. Whittle, who had scarcely spoken before, but had sat staring with such stupid eagerness at the fight, that the fire in his pipe went out, and he continued puffing without smoke. "Why draw the blind, and hold it with your hand, Postler?" "Because," said Millins, with a knowing smile, "here's the parson come to spoil the sport. He was walking along at a brisk rate down the street, and I saw him turn his head, and now he is coming into the yard." "Why couldn't he seem not to see what was going on," said Mr. Postler, "and pass on? What has he to do interfering with the enjoyments of the people? It is strange that he cannot keep his place." "And scolding my Tommy," said Millins, "as I'm sure he is, and bidding him go about his business. See how the child runs away, poor little boy!"

As Mr. Herbert drew near the crowd that surrounded the ring, Michael Ford fell. One or two stepped forward to assist the fallen man, but Mr. Herbert sprang before them. "Sure enough, Mike's in a fit," cried the second who had supported him. "He is dead, quite dead," said Mr. Herbert, in a deep voice, and he added solemnly, "This body will not live again till that fearful hour when it shall stand side by side with some of those who are now present, before the judgment bar of the Lord God, and they will have to answer there for this deed of blood. Cruel, unmanly you have all been," he said, while the tears rushed from his eyes, "to let two human beings—to let them, did I say; to urge them on to their destruction, both of body and soul. You knew, for you were told—nay you could see, that they were both in liquor. Look at that poor drunken creature," he said, pointing to Pike, the other antagonist, who was standing in the posture of attack, with his fists

clenched, and an insolent laugh upon his lips, "he is not yet sobered, even by the murder he has committed."

While he spoke thus, a long loud shriek burst out from the midst of the crowd, and it was so loud, so fearfully, and wildly shrill, and so high above every other sound, that a sudden and death-like silence succeeded to it.

"'Tis his wife," said Mr. Millins, who had pushed through the crowd, and whose effeminate voice first broke the silence, "and, I suppose, she has just heard that her husband has been killed. See! they are carrying her into the house, and that is her babe depend upon it. His friend, Thomas Winter, is bearing it after them in his arms. She has fainted quite dead away. Poor thing! poor thing! how her arms hang down, for all the world as if she were dead. It's well she does not open her eyes just now to see the man that struck the death-blow. They are washing him under the pump, washing off the blood, but he hardly seems to know what they are about, but stares, quite stupid-like. A sad affair this, Mr. Herbert, is it not? I doubt, as you say, that a doctor can do no good here." Mr. Herbert did not hear, or did not care to hear, these observations; he turned to seek the widow.

"Let me see him—let me see him. You might let me see him," said Mary. She had awoke from her swoon, and as she came forward her voice was gentle and piteous to hear, and she put her hand to her forehead as if it ached. "No, you need not fear, I will not be troublesome, or give way again. But the bad news came all so sudden upon me, just as I was dancing the baby, and turning my ear to listen for the striking of the church clock, and hoping that my poor Michael would be at home to help me with the mangle. I heard the clock strike one—two; and then a voice called to me."

Though her tone was gentle, there was a strange, and almost stupid look on Mary's pale face, as if she was trying, when she spoke, to remember what had happened, but when she saw the body of her husband, she woke up at once to the full and clear understanding of her misery.

The corpse was laid upon the floor of the room in which Mr. Postler and his companions had been observing the fight over their cups. Mary bent down over it, and looked stedfastly in the disfigured countenance. "My poor, poor Mike," she said, as she pushed back the curling hair from

his forehead, and then she pressed her lips and her cheek to her husband's face with much loving tenderness. "It is all over with him now! he will never, no never come home to his Mary and to his children again; never look up in my face, and promise to lead a better life. There was hope—at least I thought there was—while there was life. Oh! why did they let him drink? Was it for the sake of what was to be got from his hard-earned wages? Was it worth their while to take the bread of the wife and the children? Can the blessing of God be upon such earnings? No, it never was, it never can." She lifted up her head, and saw Mr. Herbert standing beside her. "I am afraid, sir, that my grief has made me bitter and unkind about others, but I am almost beside myself. They might have taken all, and left me the choice to beg or to starve, with my children; any thing they might have done but this. And yet, indeed," she said thoughtfully, "it is not of my own trouble that I am thinking. I could have given him up—at least I think I could—if he had been only fit and prepared to meet his God. But this, this is too dreadful. Oh, sir!" she cried, clasping her hands together, and looking up to Mr. Herbert, "this is what I want to know, this is what I want to reason myself into. I want to feel that there was hope in his death. If I could only see one little glimpse of hope, I would catch at that, but——" Here Mary interrupted herself, "You spoke, sir," she said, eagerly, "you answered my question, and said something—you surely said something—though I could not just hear the words, to give me hope." "To beg you to be patient," he replied; "and if not to bid you hope, to bid you wait upon the Lord, and trust in him. I scarcely knew that I spoke the words aloud, for I did not know that you would be able to hear them, and give good heed to them at present. I was saying, with regard to the darkness of your trial, and the doubts and fears which you cannot help feeling: I was saying in the words of our blessed Lord, 'What is that to thee? follow thou me.' There is, however, one message from the Father of mercies that I would speak aloud, and with no hesitation, to you, even now. He sends, by this affliction, to bid you walk by faith, and not by sight. I will promise you, my poor friend, to remain here, till the remains of your dear husband are brought home to you. The coroner will be here, I am

told, in a few minutes; he is now, as it happens, at his sister's in the village. You will, I am sure, be ruled by your friends, Mary, and go home with them. Here is Thomas Winter waiting to give you his arm, and Hester, your kind good neighbour, who has taken charge of the baby, is here; and the child she tells me is very hungry, and will not stay with her."

Mary rose up at once, and turned to meet her friends, Thomas and Hester. The baby, at the sight of his mother, held out his arms, and smiled and crowed with delight; but Mary could not smile, her now quiet grief was too deep even for tears.

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The next time Mr. Herbert saw Mary, he found that she was not sitting in idleness, and bewailing herself, but busily employed about her household work. Still however her first question was, "Is there no hope? Can you give me no hope? It is not the losing of my dear, dear husband that is so very sad to me; and yet that has well nigh broken my heart. But it is not of myself that I am always thinking, but of my poor Mike.

"O sir! to think of that great atonement which our loving Redeemer made—that wonderful sacrifice for guilty sinners; the precious blood of God manifest in the flesh, poured out for lost creatures: to know, as I *do know*, 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.' To know this, to believe, also, that Jesus saveth to the uttermost: that He waiteth to be gracious; and to feel that my dear, dear husband knew all this, and yet perished in his sins! O sir, this is too dreadful! Is there no hope? Sir, do you remember when my poor Mike was so ill last winter, and when I told you plainly how careless he was, that you read to him, as he lay in bed, those awful words in the first chapter of Proverbs. And you read them, I remember, with a trembling voice, and with a look of deep sadness; and you warned my poor Mike in such a moving way, not to trifle with the Almighty God. 'Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock

when your fear cometh ; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish come upon you,' Prov. i. 24—27. 'Mary,' he said, after you were gone, 'those words made me tremble, but they are good and true words : may I pray for grace to give heed to them before it is too late?' But the warning was heeded for a very short time, and he got well again only to return to his old ways ; and now he has died in his sins ! I will try to think of the two paths ; the path of sight, and the path of faith ; one leads on and on, through more rugged places, and more tangled thickets, till it seems to lose itself in a dismal wilderness, where there is no path at all. I think I should lose my senses if I had no other path to walk in than the path of sight. I will try to walk in the path of faith. And I know that it is written that God is love."

"And his promises, Mary, are more certain to come true than the sun is certain to bring back light to our eyes to-morrow after the darkness of the night. Here are some of those promises, Mary," said Mr. Herbert, opening the Bible, and then gently placing it on the table before her. "Read them with your own eyes, or, rather, while your eyes are fixed upon them, read them with faith, and take them into your inmost spirit, to support you, and to comfort you. Yes, Mary, read the words aloud, the very effort, though it may try you, will be an effort of faith."

Mary did not refuse, though her voice in reading was fainter and feebler than when she spoke. "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee : because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever : for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. "And we know," said Mr. Herbert, "that 'His counsels of old are faithfulness and truth,' Isa. xxv. 1, and that all things work together for good to them that love God. Peace and strength are offered you, and assured to you by these promises of God. 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace :' here is the promise of peace. 'In the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength :' there is the assurance of strength, Isa. xxvi. 3, 4. You may not yet be enabled to feel the comfort of this 'peace' and 'strength.' You may not yet see them to be yours ; but you are graciously commanded, yes, even commanded, to wait for them in patience and in hope ;

and, 'if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it,' Rom. viii. 25. My poor friend, we cannot understand our God till we are brought to a close acquaintance with him; much less can we be at peace. But again he has written for your comfort, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace,' Job xxii. 21. "Yes," said Mary, dwelling upon the first words of his sentence, "it is quite true. I know it to be true. We cannot understand him till we are brought to a close acquaintance with him. I had learned to confess this to myself even before this last blow fell upon me. I had been a slow learner by the means which he used with me before; and he tried another way. The drunkenness of my poor husband, the state of starvation and nakedness to which the children, and I, have been almost brought, owing to his drunkenness; all this, and many other troubles, coming from the same source; all led me to look out of myself, and up, and above, and out of the world, for support. I had thought myself religious before, but I then began to feel and to know what godliness really was." "You found that godliness is reality and power," said Mr. Herbert. "I did indeed," replied Mary, very humbly, "and, even if my heart were breaking, I should be constrained to own, that had it not been for my heavy afflictions, I might perhaps have never known Him. Dear sir, I should say, also, that I could not understand God till I drew near to him through his dear Son, I then found him to be my Father, and I have learned to look up to him, as a child looks up to her father, but only through Christ, who has opened and cleared the way which had been blocked and blinded up by our sins." "And we needed such an High Priest," replied Mr. Herbert; one full of tender sympathy, or fellow feeling, for us and with us; 'one who has been tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin.' You will pray for God the Spirit, Mary," he continued, "To make the things of God clearer and clearer to you, for, 'no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost,'" 1 Cor. xii. 3.

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