



CLUSTERS
FROM
SCHOOL

Library of The Theological Seminary

PRINCETON · NEW JERSEY

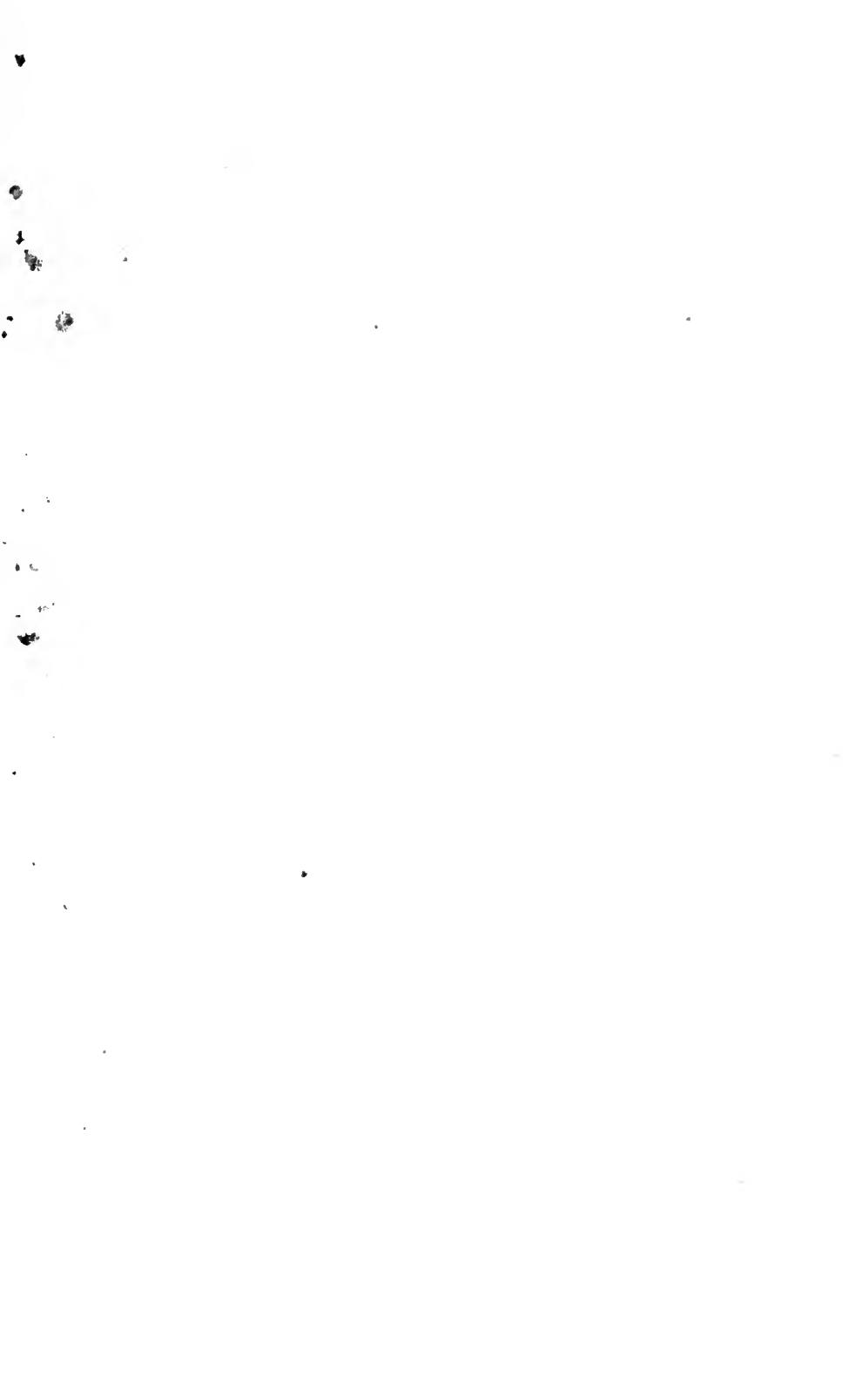


PRESENTED BY

Rufus H. LeFevre

EA 9078

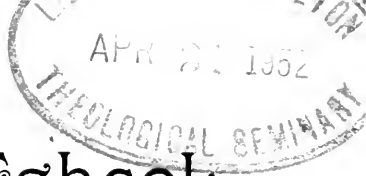
.5. 11723











Clusters from Eshcol;

OR,

WORDS OF COMFORT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

DRAWN FROM THE SACRED SCRIPTURES FOR THE
AFFLICTED CHILDREN OF GOD.

BY

JACOB HOKE,

AUTHOR OF "HOLINESS; OR, THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE," AND "THE AGE WE
LIVE IN; ITS DANGERS AND DUTIES."

SECOND EDITION.

"Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

ISAIAH 48: 10.

DAYTON, OHIO:

UNITED BROTHERS PUBLISHING HOUSE.

1882.

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1883,

By REV. W. J. SHUEY,

In the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington, D. C.

PREFACE.

The circumstances under which the reflections contained in this volume were written, as well as the reasons which induced them, are stated in the second chapter, entitled, "Rejoicing in Tribulation." The reader will pardon the personal narrative therein related, as it seems right and proper to introduce it as an illustration of the subject under consideration, as well as an evidence of the all-sufficiency of divine grace.

As in all families where there are afflicted ones, the softest couch, the sweetest morsels from the table, and the kindest and most unremitting attention are given to such; so in God's family, the most precious truths of his word, expressed in language and metaphor of the utmost tenderness, seem to be addressed to the weak, the afflicted, and the tried. In all this the tender sympathy of Him who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, while a stranger and sojourner among men, is seen.

Communion with God through his written word was the principal source of my pastime and enjoyment during the months and even years of my necessary retirement from the active labors and pursuits of life; and as the truths thus gathered were so full of comfort to my own soul, and so drew out my sympathies for my fellow-sufferers, I feel it a duty, as well as a debt of gratitude to God for the all-abundant grace bestowed upon me during those months of pain and

distress, to share the rich Eshcol clusters which unseen hands brought, and still bring, to my soul with others called to drink of affliction's bitter cup.

It is affirmed of our Lord Jesus Christ that he was made "perfect through suffering," and that in consequence of his personal experience in all the trials through which his followers are called to pass he is the better able to sympathize with them. May I be permitted to say, in all humility, that from personal experience of severe and long-continued affliction I am the better prepared to enter into the sympathies of fellow-sufferers and execute a work for their comfort, which I could not do without this personal experience? Was not this truth in the mind of the apostle when he uttered the words,—contained in II. Corinthians i. 3, 4,—“Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.”

And now, dear reader, hoping that the blessing of God may go forth with these pages and make them a source of good to some of the scattered and suffering saints of the great family of its once suffering Head, I subscribe myself “your brother and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ.”

JACOB HOKE.

CHAMBERSBURG, PA.

INTRODUCTION.

“Many are the afflictions of the righteous.” “As thy day, so shall thy strength be.” These two declarations from the word of God will be found to constitute the basis of the volume now offered to the Christian public. As to the former, it will be needless to amplify. The pilgrimage of life is one of cares, afflictions, bereavements, and sorrows; and God has so ordered that the Christian is no exception to the rule.

Can we say as much for the latter? Bible promises do not create these drawbacks on life's enjoyment. Medical science is not responsible for the existence of disease. It presupposes every ailment for which it brings a remedy. So with the gospel. It only provides for what already exists. Sin is the prolific mother of all our woes. “Is there a balm in Gilead? Is there a physician there?” These are questions of infinite moment to every member of our race; and these questions our author proposes to answer. And if long and patient study of the word of God, and long and painful suffering in the flesh will qualify a man to give such answer, then is he in an eminent degree fitted for the task. “CLUSTERS FROM ESHCOL.” The title is itself full of promise. The book does not disappoint the hope the title excites. The Christian reader will find a feast of good things as he studies these pages.

The author, Mr. Hoke, whom we have for a third of a century intimately known as a friend and brother in the gospel, has been for the greater part of his life a diligent Bible-

student. In his weekly Bible-class and in the Sunday-school, where he has so long labored, he had ample opportunity to test the power of divine truth to bless and save. His practical mind has especially gathered those precious truths that prove such invaluable helps in the Christian warfare.

But he comes to the afflicted, heart-burdened Christian as a brother and companion in like tribulation. For many years he has been a sufferer in the flesh; and he has learned by a happy experience the power of the gospel to sustain and save. Dr. Doddridge was, like many other good men, subject to times of great despondency. At one time a deep gloom had settled upon his mind. Walking along the street, feeling wretched, and not knowing what to do, he heard, through an open door, a child reading, "As thy day, so shall thy strength be." The effect upon him, he says, was indescribable. The burden was lifted from his heart, and he went his way rejoicing.

But these afflictions are not only seasons of gospel comfort, but are to be the means of religious development and growth. They are to yield the "peacable fruits of righteousness to them that are exercised thereby." Says the psalmist, "I went through fire and through water, and thou broughtest me out into a wealthy place." Our author has a blessed knowledge of what this means. He knows what it is to have even the sufferings of life work to the soul's good; and being thus blessed and enlarged in his own Christian experience, he is able to direct others into the like faith.

These "Clusters" will find their way into many a Christian home. They will dry up many a tear, and bring solace to many a care-burdened heart. They will, too, help many a yearning soul to a better trust, a richer hope, a higher joy. The book is sent out on its mission of love with the prayer that God may use it to his own glory and to the comfort and sanctification of the believer.

JOHN DICKSON,

WESTERVILLE, OHIO.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Preface. - - - - -	3
Introduction. By Rev. J. Dickson, D. D. - - -	5
CHAPTER I.	
Fellowship with Christ in Suffering. - - -	11
CHAPTER II.	
Rejoicing in Tribulation. - - - - -	24
CHAPTER III.	
Divine Discipline. - - - - -	44
CHAPTER IV.	
Afflictions—Whence do They Come? - - -	78
CHAPTER V.	
Afflictions—How to be Borne. - - - - -	89
CHAPTER VI.	
Afflictions Improved. - - - - -	107
CHAPTER VII.	
Afflictions Sometimes Removed by Prayer. - -	132
CHAPTER VIII.	
The Graces of the Holy Spirit Developed by Affliction. -	152

CHAPTER IX.

A Royal Sufferer.	- - - - -	180
-------------------	-----------	-----

CHAPTER X.

God's Providential Care of His People.	- - -	191
--	-------	-----

CHAPTER XI.

God in Everything.	- - - - -	207
--------------------	-----------	-----

CHAPTER XII.

Special Grace for Special Occasions.	- - - - -	220
--------------------------------------	-----------	-----

CHAPTER XIII.

Salvation Completed.	- - - - -	239
----------------------	-----------	-----

CHAPTER XIV.

Observations from the Delectable Mountains.	- - -	253
---	-------	-----

CHAPTER XV.

The Crossing of the River of Death.	- - -	315
-------------------------------------	-------	-----

1900

1900

CHAPTER I.

FELLOWSHIP WITH CHRIST IN SUFFERING.

“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. iii. 10, 11.)

Fellowship with Christ in seven important relations, or conditions, is spoken of in the Scriptures; namely,—

I. *Crucified with Christ*; fellowship with the Man of sorrows in his life of suffering. (Gal. ii. 20; Phil. iii. 10, 11; Peter iv. 13.)

II. *Dead with Christ*; dead to self, sin, the law, and the world, as Christ was dead bodily. (Rom. vi. 2, 3, etc.)

III. *Buried with Christ*; separated in spirit, and, so far as possible, separated from all voluntary association with the world. (Rom. vi. 4, etc.)

IV. *Raised up with Christ*; revived to a new life of spirituality and Christian activity. (Rom. vi. 5; Eph. ii. 5.)

V. *Sitting together with Christ in heavenly places*;

the enjoyment of the means of grace; entering into the fellowship of Christ's joys and rejoicings, as well as being made partakers of his sorrows. (Eph. ii. 6, 7.)

VI. *Glorified together with Christ*; made and fashioned like unto his glorious body in the resurrection at the last day. (Phil. iii. 21; I. John iii. 2.)

VII. *Sharing in the coming kingdom and glory of Christ*; sitting upon thrones and forever reigning with Christ. (II. Tim. ii. 12; John xvii. 5, 22, 24; Rev. iii. 21.)

The foregoing is God's own declared order, and it can not be changed nor reversed; and all who would share in the enjoyments of the fifth,—which pertains to this life,—and anticipate and finally enter into the blessedness of the sixth and seventh,—which pertain to the life which is to come,—must first conform to the several preceding relations stated.

Each of the topics thus given would furnish abundant material for a volume. My object, however, is to elucidate, in so far as I can, the single topic of *Fellowship with Christ in Suffering*. This will claim attention in this opening chapter, and throughout the entire book.

Fellowship with the Lord Jesus Christ, in his life of sorrows, afflictions, and trials, is a contin-

gency which all Christians may not only endure, but seems to be indispensable to the higher forms of Christian life and attainment here, as well as to a participation in the blessedness of the life which is to come. Indeed, from the connection which the Scriptures plainly indicate between suffering with Christ here, in the various forms stated, and reigning with him in glory, it is plainly evident that the possibility of the latter depends upon the former.

The symbol employed by the inspired word to illustrate this life of tribulation and affliction is that of *crucifixion*. Death by the cross was not only the most ignominious method of inflicting the death-penalty known to all human law, but it was also the most painful and lingering. As a symbol of the sufferings of believers, in fellowship with their suffering Head, it plainly points to severe and protracted afflictions, and, as the symbol further implies, to deep humiliation and mortification. Such has it ever been with all the suffering family of the Man of sorrows. Being crucified with Christ, then, involves not only the ordinary afflictions and trials usual alike to believers and unbelievers, but to special and extraordinary seasons of affliction and suffering, sent or permitted to come upon the children of God

for their good and the development of the graces of the Holy Spirit.

So important is this self-crucifixion, and so fully established is the fact that the more advanced states of grace and matured fruits of the Spirit can alone be attained by it, and doubtless with the purpose of reconciling Christians to entire submission to the trying ordeal, the Scriptures teach that the cup of suffering of which the Savior drank before entering into his glory was not wholly drained of its contents; but a part was kindly left for those who would, through the same bitter suffering, follow him to the same glorious consummation. This truth seems plainly taught in Colossians i. 24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and *fill up that which is behind* of the afflictions of Christ."

But did Paul, who wrote most of his sufferings with Christ, undergo death with Christ in the sense we have indicated in our second proposition? If so, when did it occur? That eminent servant of God gives utterance to frequent expressions which seem to imply that however advanced his attainments in grace, he has yet struggled against the power of inward foes, and was all athirst after a more complete and perfect deliverance. Romans vii., and its parallel,

Galatians v., plainly sustain this assertion. At other times, this same apostle expresses himself as having undergone this crucifixion-death and resurrection with Christ; but without a better understanding of the apostle's inner life, and the chronological order of his utterances, it can not be learned just when he underwent this process. But that he at some time passed through this ordeal, and realized the precious results, is clear from his frequent admissions of it.

At one stage of Paul's experience he says that he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and that he sought above all things to "know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 8-12.)

Evidently when the apostle gave utterance to these words he had not apprehended—that is, experienced,—the fullness of gospel grace, after which he so ardently aspired. But that his aspirations after this higher life, so frequently ex-

pressed and intensely cherished, and coupled with a consecration so perfect and entire, were at length crowned with success, the faithfulness of God to his promises, and the repeated declaration of the apostle himself, abundantly attest. Probably, after the conflict and victory recorded in II. Corinthians xii., he was enabled to use language which he could not, and which would not have been appropriate to his inner state, prior to that. His language now, is, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

In proof that the experience expressed in the words just quoted was attained through a process of suffering, if not in connection with the special occurrence referred to in II. Corinthians xii., the following scriptures are cited: "From henceforth let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." These quotations prove that the

author of them had passed through severe afflictions, and that the *marks* thereof, the permanent bodily infirmity, yet remained. If the incident of II. Corinthians xii. is not referred to, some other, equally severe and permanent, must have occurred in the life of Paul, which he has not recorded.

But did Paul regret the process of suffering through which he was called to pass—into the possession of the abundant grace bestowed upon him? Hear his own reply to this interrogation: “Most gladly therefore would I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then I am strong.”

It will be borne in mind that we make a distinction between being *crucified with Christ*, and being *dead with Christ*. The first may, and usually does, continue throughout the entire life. It symbolizes *the suffering life* of the believer, which no attainment of grace will turn aside. The second is the death which the wholly consecrated believer undergoes, usually in connection with trials and afflictions,—though not always so,—to the corrupt principle called in the Scriptures “the

carnal mind," "the body of sin," and "the old man." These, even in the regenerated, yet manifest their presence and power in evil tempers; as coveteousness, pride, unbelief, etc. The blood of Jesus alone, applied by the Holy Spirit, can destroy this principle from which so much evil flows. Afflictions only lead the chastened believer to see his need of this cleansing, and make him willing to receive this gracious work. They do not, they can not cleanse the soul.

And now, dear reader, would you attain unto the fullness of the blessing of Christ Jesus, which it is your privilege to obtain in this life, as well as share in the blessedness awaiting the saints in the life to come? You can reach these precious results only by becoming like unto Christ,—by being conformed unto him in all things. And if this conformity involves trials, afflictions, and sorrows, it will be no evidence of the displeasure of God, or that he has withdrawn from you his favor and regard. They rather prove the interest God manifests for your welfare, and his purpose to bestow upon you more abundantly of his grace.

Jesus Christ is the model we are to imitate. We are to be made like him,—conformed to his moral image, and, in some respects, conformed

to his *earthly life* here, that we may in the life to come be made like him there. To produce this conformity, God uses afflictions and trials. These are variously stated in the Scriptures as *refining*, (Isa. xlvi. 10 ; Job xxiii. 10) as *sifting*, (Amos ix. 9) as *pruning*, (John xv. 2) and as *polishing*. The material of which the temple of Solomon was built was all made ready, in form and size, before it was brought together ; and when the sacred edifice was built, each piece exactly fitted the place it was designed for so perfectly, that the sound of hammer or saw was not heard. God is preparing the material of his heavenly temple here ; he is squaring and shaping and polishing each individual for his proper place ; and when the end shall be reached, and the material shall all be brought together, it will be found that no further preparation will be necessary. The symbol plainly teaches this. Every one there must be polished here, prepared here ; and while there are many ways for doing this, the most effectual is suffering. “ Like a workman God stands over each stone, touching and retouching it, turning it on every side, marking its blemishes and roughness, and then applying his tools to effect the desired shape and polish. Some parts of the stone are so rugged and hard that nothing save

heavy and repeated strokes and touches will smooth them down. They resist any milder treatment. And yet, in patient love, this heavenly Workman carries on his purpose concerning us. Keeping beside him, if one may so speak, the perfect model according to which the stone is to be fashioned,—even Jesus, the Father's chosen one,—he labors till every part is shaped according to his likeness, line after line. No pains are spared, no watchfulness relaxed, till we are made entirely like him, being changed into the same image from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. Thus affliction molds and purifies. Thus it effaces the resemblance of the first Adam, and traces for us each lineament of the second, that as we have borne the image of the earthly, we may also bear the image of the heavenly.”—*Bonar*.

But will God suffer his afflicted ones to be consumed in the fire to which he may subject them? It is related that two pious ladies were conversing about the meaning of the words of Malachi iii. 3: “He *shall sit* as a refiner and purifier of silver.” And passing a door over which the sign read the calling of one engaged in working the precious metal, they entered and asked him to explain the process of refining silver. The refiner replied, “I place the crucible containing the

silver in the fire and subject it to an intense heat. *I take a seat by it*, and keep my eye on it, and closely watch it until I can see my own image reflected, when I at once remove it from the fire; for when it reflects my image I know the dross is all consumed, and to leave it longer in the fire would destroy it." The meaning of the scripture was made plain. Thus God watches closely and affectionately his afflicted saints, and when his own image is seen in them he delivers or removes them. He will not suffer them to be consumed nor destroyed.

And what shall be the reward for this life of affliction and suffering here? It is indicated in the words of the apostle: "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (II. Tim. ii. 12.) When the fullness of time shall have come, when the promised inheritance of universal dominion shall be given unto Christ (Rev. xi. 15), he will, according to his gracious promises, kindly share it with those who entered into the fellowship of his sufferings here, and through them, like unto himself, entered into glory. (Rev. iii. 21; Luke xxii. 28, 29.)

Kings do not share their thrones with their subjects; only those of royal blood sit upon thrones. Jesus acknowledges his disciples, and

each and every individual thereof, as his affianced bride; and he has declared that when her seclusion in the wilderness for the "time, and times, and half" shall have been accomplished, she shall come forth therefrom and take her proper place at the approaching bridal-feast. (Rev. xii. and xix.) Then, then she shall be amply compensated for her life of suffering here. Then she shall see that the trying discipline through which she has been led here was all right and for her eternal good, and she will take up the joyful song, "He hath done all things well."

And now, dear afflicted reader, let us question ourselves as to what affliction has done for us, and what progress we have made in being transformed into the image of our elder Brother? Are we losing our worldliness and becoming heavenly-minded? Are we getting quit of pride, passion, stubbornness, covetousness, unbelief, etc.? Are we caring less for worldly honors, for worldly pleasures, for the smiles of men, for the world's applause? Is the world being crucified unto us and we unto it, or are we ashamed of the reproach of the cross? Do we count it our glory and joy to walk where our Lord leads, to suffer where he suffered, to drink of the cup he drank of, and to be baptized with the baptism he was baptized

with? Are we every day becoming more and more unlike the children of earth, more and more fashioned after the image and bearing the lineaments of our divine Exemplar? Do we realize that this earth is neither our portion nor rest? Can we look back to special trials and afflictions and say, there and then I learned precious lessons; there I got rid of some of this body of death; there I got up to a higher level? Have we wiped away our rebellious tears, and been made to shed tears of gratitude and submission? Have we learned that all the trying discipline through which we are called to pass is designed to make us partakers of His holiness? (Heb. xii. 10.)

I close this chapter with quoting the lines of Upham, addressed to suffering ones :

“ Be patient, let the fire consume,
Give God's interior burning room,
Make no resistance, let it blaze,
And self, in root and branch, erase. .

“ Thy life of self hath long annoyed;
Thy hopes assailed, thy joys destroyed;
It poisons every inward sense;
And fire alone can drive it hence.

“ The fiery trial gives distress;
But never fear its anguish less;
The pain thou feelest is a sign
Of flames from heaven, of fire divine.

“ Oh let it burn till pride and lust,
And envy, creeping in the dust,
And wrong and crime, of every name,
Shall perish in the heavenly flame.”

CHAPTER II.

REJOICING IN TRIBULATION.

“Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” (Matt. xx. 22.)

These words are the reply of Jesus, addressed to James and John, to a request of theirs through their mother for some special favor. In response to his interrogation they said that they were able to drink of his cup, and to share in his baptism. He then told them that they knew not what they asked, but that their request should be granted them. The subsequent history of these two eminent and holy men—the martyrdom of the former, and the many persecutions and banishment of the latter,—attest the fulfillment of the Lord’s words, and the severity of the ordeal through which they were called to pass.

In full view of his own baptism of suffering, then near at hand, and in perfect knowledge of all its bitterness, Jesus exclaimed, “I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I strait-

ened till it be accomplished!" His sensitive nature shrunk from his approaching agony; and when the cup was presented to his lips he prayed, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Strengthened by an angel from heaven, he endured his agony to the end, and thereby made salvation possible for mankind, and became heir to a kingdom to be revealed in the last day, which he proposes to share with those who suffer with him.

Through this baptism of suffering, in fellowship with the Son of God, lies the way to eternal glory. And among the other peculiarities of the redeemed hosts in heaven is this, that they have gone there through great tribulation. (Rev. vii. 14.)

It is with extreme reluctance that the writer introduces here his own experience in affliction; but having undergone an ordeal of suffering so severe and protracted, and realized results so precious and abiding, he feels it a duty to others called to suffer in the same way, to place upon record the following statement:

During the many years of my religious life I have been permitted to enjoy much of the Divine presence and favor. My most marked advancements, however, in the grace of God have invari-

bly been in connection with or immediately following sore affliction. Nearly four years ago I undertook to write an elucidation of Rom. v. 1-3. I elaborated at considerable length "justification by faith." I then wrote of its immediate and saving result,—peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. I dwelt with special delight upon its second and higher result,—*standing* (that is, maintaining that position,) and rejoicing in hope of the kingdom and glory of Christ, to be revealed at the last day. But when I came to consider the third and highest result—*glorifying in tribulation*,—I was unable to proceed. Up to this point I had the light of my own experience to assist me. But here was ground I had not traveled over. I had undergone severe afflictions, and had realized gracious results, but my rejoicing was not *in the midst of the affliction*, as taught in the scripture I was considering, but after it was past and the blessing was bestowed, as represented in Heb. xii. 11. Evidently here was an attainment of grace which I was experimentally ignorant of; and I desired to have it. Unable to finish my writing I laid it aside, and about a year afterward, receiving no further light, I destroyed it.

From this circumstance, as well as from my own understanding of the Scriptures, I was led

to form exalted conceptions of the standard of Christian attainment; and my heart earnestly aspired after all the fullness of the grace of God which I could possibly attain unto in this life.

I also felt assured that the world forms its opinion of the Lord Jesus Christ and his religion by the spirit and lives of his professed representatives, thus placing him upon trial before men, in the persons of his friends; and that it was in view of this that he declared of his disciples, "*Ye are my witnesses.*" With the purpose, therefore, worthily to represent my Lord before men, I determined to seek after all the fullness of grace possible to men, and for a number of years prayed in secret thus: "Oh, make me all like Thee. Make me to bear and reflect in all my life, walk, conversation, in my disposition, temper, spirit, in my example and influence, and even in my appearance, the image of Jesus."

Often while thus in secret prayer I was made to hesitate; for, remembering that almost every marked advancement in grace I had made was in connection with some sore affliction, and, from my understanding of the word of God, the grace after which I aspired was usually connected with severe personal chastisement, questions like these would be suggested to my mind: "Are you will-

ing to undergo trials like those in the past, which, though severe and trying, resulted so greatly to your good?" Even two of the bitter trials I afterward was called upon to endure came squarely before me as probable ingredients in my cup. At length I was enabled to lay my all wholly upon the altar of consecration, leaving all else to God to choose and order as he saw best.

Soon after this consecration was made my health gave way. Nervous prostration, induced by long and severe religious and secular labor, came upon me. Then, while prostrated and afflicted, bereavement, sad and sore indeed, came and my earthly home was annihilated. For a period of nearly a year I underwent an ordeal of suffering, physical and mental, that language can not describe. Then followed a precious baptism of the Holy Spirit, and a period of respite lasting about six months. Then, when I supposed my health was permanently restored, and when I was actively engaged in religious labor, affording me much delight, my malady returned with increased force. *Cerebral* exhaustion and chronic congestion with all their attendant evils set in upon me, destroying forever, as I supposed, every earthly hope and prospect. Oh! I shudder as I look back to the long, dark night of agony which settled

upon me ; to the sleepless nights ; to the long and weary days ; to the blasted hopes ; to the humiliation and disappointment ; to the fearful idea that in some way I had displeased my heavenly Father, and that he was chastising me in wrath. Life became a burden ; death seemed greatly to be desired. Then, to crown it all, Satan was permitted to assail me as never before. In the character of an accuser, he charged me with unfaithfulness to duty ; with disobedience to my proper life-work ; with having committed the unpardonable sin. The sword of the Spirit, with which I tried to defend myself from his fiery darts, he wrested from my hand and used it against me. At times Satan seemed to stand personally before me ; and I was startled with suggestions of passages of scripture, seemingly so pertinent, so suddenly presented, and so persistently pressed upon me by a seeming living person, that I was led to suppose it was by the Holy Spirit. Hope forsook me. Despair, dark and gloomy, settled down upon me. For weeks together, excepting intervals of respite graciously granted me, I wrestled with the power of this unseen foe. Oh, the unutterable agony of soul I endured as I gazed into vast, boundless eternity, without hope ! Sadness and melancholy settled down upon me, .

until, like Job under similar circumstances, I longed for death, and deplored the day of my birth into this world. If the reader would know the state of my feelings, he can learn it by reading Job iii., vii., and Psalms vi. and lxxxviii.

Forsaken by God, as I supposed, misunderstood of men, and suffering by day and by night with a malady whose horrors can only be known by personal experience, and which has sent many to untimely graves, or premature retirement from the active labors and pursuits of life, I lost interest in every earthly pursuit, and was under the necessity of secluding myself from all excitement, for medical treatment. This condition of suffering continued for a number of years, until I went down to a depth of suffering reached by but few, and from which fewer still have ever been lifted. The humiliation of our Lord Jesus Christ culminated in a malefactor's death, when "he was numbered with the transgressors; Paul's, when he lost all things, and was counted as the filth and off scouring of the earth; mine, in my forced retirement, and when stripped of family, home, friends, property, health, reputation, and hope. Let no one who may read these lines suppose that his or her condition is worse than mine was; such is not the case. And I detail this little

experience only for the encouragement of such as may be in similar affliction.

In all this bitter ordeal of suffering through which I was passing I had forgotten, or lost sight of my consecration to a life of suffering, if such were the will of God, that I might attain unto the measure of grace after which I aspired. I was conscious of my integrity, that in all my efforts to do what I conceived to be my duty I was influenced by sincere and upright motives, and that, however weak I had proved to be, I had not intentionally sinned, nor withdrawn from my heavenly Father that which, long years since, I had committed to his care. This consciousness of my integrity, and confidence in God's faithfulness, produced confidence in my ultimate salvation, excepting the time when I wandered in the dark regions of despair. My experience is best expressed in the words of the apostle,—“I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.” The apostle's confidence, as expressed in these words, seem to be based upon the faithfulness of God to a *past transaction* rather than in any present-felt emotion. Upon that same rock I also stood, and now stand.

In addition to the comfort arising from the

confidence stated I could at all times, when I could believe that my heavenly Father, while not sending my affliction, yet *permitted it*, and would cause good to come from it, either to myself or others, entirely submit to his will, even to kissing the hand and welcoming the rod which smote me.

This ordeal of suffering continued for three years, excepting the respite of about six months, already stated. During it all, my heavenly Father, while permitting me to be sorely tried by the enemy, and afflicted mainly as a result of my long-continued overwork, has had his eye of compassion upon me, and at length bestowed upon me a most gracious visitation of peace and power, which I will now describe :

On the last Sabbath of the past year, 1877, a little tract, entitled, "Eternal life; can I lose it before I die?" was placed in my hands, with the request that I should read it and give my opinion of it. Unable to enter into its arguments sufficiently to give an intelligent opinion of it, its perusal led me to consider the absolute safety of the Christian. The well-remembered words of the psalmist, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that

•

we are dust," seemed to be more than ordinarily full of encouraging meaning. I considered my past life, my conversion to God in the days of my boyhood, the many evidences of his presence and favor bestowed upon me, and never more satisfactory than at the time this cloud fell upon me. I was conscious that I had not knowingly sinned, nor departed from him, nor withdrawn from his care that which, years before, I had committed to him. Then I saw a fond father press to his heart his little son, and imprint upon his trusting face the evidences of his undying affection. This relation, thought I, is the symbol which God himself employs to represent his relation to and love for his children. Why, then, is this symbol so frequently employed in the Scriptures, and so tenderly enjoined by the Savior in the prayer he taught his disciples, if it does not mean all it represents? And why may not I, notwithstanding my affliction and weakness, claim what the relation implies? Soon, as in all former experiences, confidence in the word of God began to increase. Light, peace, comfort, and joy followed. Gradually, steadily, these precious influences increased, until my despondency and gloom were gone. I felt that my aching, throbbing head was pillowed upon a Father's

heart; and everlasting arms pressed me to his loving bosom.

Oh, what a change! How inexpressibly precious was this blessed peace and comfort which now possessed and filled my happy soul! Instead of dark, gloomy despair and melancholy, my whole being was again filled with an influence so sweet, so precious, so fear-dispelling, and so soul-satisfying that I have no language to express it. The word of God declares that it passes human understanding. Such I found it to be indeed,—the same in kind which I felt when I first believed in Jesus; the same which very often since has filled and satisfied my soul, but now bestowed in measure so large, so constant, so abiding, that there was no room in my heart for doubt or fear. That it is from God, and that I am forever sealed unto eternal life, I have not the shadow of a doubt.

Now, contrast my present condition, under this baptism of the Spirit, with what it was previous thereto, especially when wandering in the region of despair, nearly one year ago. Prostrated beneath the heel of the enemy, lying at the pit's mouth, disrobed of almost everything I prized, crushed in spirit, bruised and stripped and distressed, the spirit of prayer lost, religious duties

irksome, and every earthly prospect shrouded in gloom, I was unhappy indeed. Now, delivered from my fears, filled with inexpressible peace and comfort, and sweetly assured of the unchangeable favor of God here and heaven hereafter, and my heavenly Father proclaiming unto me, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." (Isa. liv. 7, 8.)

As already stated, the experience I thus gained was not different from what I had formerly enjoyed, but was more full and abiding. Its distinguishing characteristics may be stated as follows:

I. In former experiences Jesus seemed to stand pre-eminent before me. My prayers and adoration were all to him. Now the fatherhood of God is pre-eminent, and the Savior appears as my elder Brother, my Fellow-Pilgrim upon life's highway, kindly bearing my burden and encouraging me with the assurance that he will share with me his purchased inheritance. The Holy Spirit, as the divine Comforter, takes the word of God, illuminates it with precious meaning, and seals it upon my heart.

II. I seem to have permanently entered into

the inner sanctuary, the holy of holies, where I am permitted to enjoy the most perfect peace and commune with God, without the intervention of means and ordinances peculiar to worshipers in the outer court. I have no language to express the fullness of peace and comfort bestowed upon me, and the assurance of the presence and favor of God, and of my final salvation. This peace and comfort continue full and abiding so long as I keep my eye fixed upon Jesus, accept the fact of my disability, and commit my all wholly to God. But as soon as my mind is diverted from Jesus, to contemplate myself, my past delinquencies, my present weakness, or my probable future disability, perplexity, and trouble arise.

Like others who have been disabled after many years spent in active religious and secular work, I find it more trying to faith and patience to be idle and inactive than to be diligently at work. If my heavenly Father wills it that my future is to be spent in suffering, I accept the allotment, yea, rejoice in it, only so that his will shall be accomplished.

III. I seem to have undergone a crucifixion to almost every earthly relation, interest, and pursuit. Unable to find pleasure or enjoyment in the things which interest others, and which

afforded me delight previous to this affliction, God has most graciously re-opened a channel of sweetest pleasure in communion with himself through his Holy Spirit and the written word. My attachment to friends and fellow-Christians continues, but in the modified form indicated by the apostle in II. Cor. v. 16. I now seem to have entered into a larger relationship and claim, as being in communion with patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, fellow-laborers who have preceded me to heaven, as well as the many precious ones still living.

IV. There are certain conditions which I supposed were indispensable to the full enjoyment of religion, as favorable surroundings, and active, diligent labor. Indeed, I could conceive of nothing else worth living for than to devote time, strength, and talent to the promotion of the cause of God and the welfare of my fellow-men; for next to the anticipated rest and associations of heaven did I prize the relations and labors of the church on earth. Every duty, every department of labor assigned me, afforded me inexpressible delight. The ways of religion were truly ways of pleasantness, and her paths all peace. And I know of no higher inducement to desire life, health, and vigor, than to enable me to labor

on in the Master's vineyard. I had yet to learn that the grace of God can meet every want of the soul and render it supremely happy, rejoicingly happy, in the absence of these conditions, and in actual suffering from a most distressing affliction. It was the want of this experience which compelled me to lay aside my attempted elucidation of Romans v. 3, as previously stated. Now, I have learned how to harmonize that scripture with Heb. xii. 11.

V. I am again confirmed in an opinion, long held, that in my case it is my duty to use all my experiences for the welfare of others. Impressed with a belief that my religious life would be marked by many trials and triumphs, and that I should commit the principal events thereof to writing for the benefit of others, I commenced this duty over thirty years ago. I was strangely led to use as a suitable text or motto for that narrative, the words of the Savior in relation to Peter,—“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: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” (Luke xxii. 31, 32.) How appropriate these words have been in my case, the record I have written will show.

A severe affliction and an accompanying baptism of the Holy Spirit, some ten years ago, enabled me to write the two books, *Holiness, or the Higher Christian Life*, and *The Age We Live In*. The analogies of the past led me to consider what new duty would be laid upon me in connection with this rich and more abiding baptism; and shortly after its bestowal my former efforts to write of afflictions came to my remembrance, and I was impressed that this duty would now be laid upon me. Strangely, and with a clearness beyond my power to describe, the whole subject of the teachings of the Scriptures in relation to the afflictions of believers came before my mind. The title, the subjects, the divisions, the arrangements, the texts, and the matter, all stood clearly before me. I wrote down the table of contents as suggested, and afterward, as I had strength, wrote and rewrote in this present form the manuscript which is intended to elucidate the subject so important to God's afflicted children. Thus the duty I was incompetent to discharge four years ago, when in comparative health and surrounded with all desired earthly and social comforts, is now undertaken and imperfectly discharged, after years of severest affliction, and while still in the furnace and under the chastening rod.

Before dismissing this personal narrative, introduced here for the purpose of elucidating the subject under consideration, and which may not be referred to again in the following chapters, and as an expression of my feelings in relation to the future, I submit the following beautiful lines :

“ Perhaps the dreaded future
 Is less bitter than I think ;
 The Lord may sweeten the waters,
 Before I stoop to drink ;
 Or if Marah must be Marah,
 He will stand beside the brink.

“ Oh, restful, blissful ignorance,
 'Tis blessed not to know ;
 It keeps me so still in those arms,
 Which will not let me go,
 And hushes my soul to rest,
 On the bosom that loves me so.

“ So I go on not knowing,
 I would not if I might ;
 I would rather walk in the dark with God
 Than go alone in the light,
 I would rather walk with him by faith,
 Than go alone by sight.”

Three years have passed since this manuscript was written. It seems but right that I should now add to this personal narrative the fact of very great relief from my malady, and the continued and abiding presence of God in my soul.

If I have any advice, which I have specially

learned in the school of affliction through which I have passed, that I would give to other afflicted ones, it is this, *accept the fact of your affliction* as an expression of your Father's will concerning you, either sent or permitted by him, and intended for your welfare, either here or hereafter. Resistance will only increase your suffering. Paul prayed *thrice* for the removal of his affliction, and failing to have it taken away was then enabled to accept it. I, too, reached this state, but not until after three years of fruitless struggling. But when this acceptance was reached deliverance came.

And now, in comparing my condition at present with what it was three years ago, when this book was written, I can adopt the words of Upham, and say :

“ Smite on! It doeth not hurt me now ;
The spear hath lost its edge of pain ;
And piercing thorns that bound my brow
No longer leave their bleeding stain.

“ What once was woe is changed to bliss ;
What once was loss is now my gain ;
My sorrow is my happiness ;
My life doth live by being slain.

“ The birth-pangs of those dreadful years
Are like the midnight changed to morn ;
And daylight shines upon my tears,
Because the soul's great life is born.

“ The piercing thorns have changed to flowers ;
The spears have grown to scepters bright ;
And sorrow's dark and sunless hours
Become eternal days of light.”

CHAPTER III.

DIVINE DISCIPLINE.

“As many as *I love, I rebuke and chasten.*” (Rev. iii. 19.)

It is said of our Lord Jesus Christ that he was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,” and that, as the Captain of our salvation, he “was made perfect through suffering.” Such seems to be the case also with his disciples. St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter xii. 7, 8, declares that afflictions and chastisements are indispensable evidences of real discipleship; and that without them we have reason to question our saving relation to God.

The Savior declared to the church at Laodicea what may be accepted as a general principle in the divine administration, that all those whom God loves as a parent he rebukes and chastens as his children. And as our heavenly Father does “not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men,” (Lam. iii. 33,) we are led to believe that there must be an actual necessity for these chastenings. That necessity will be considered in the

proper place. For the present we will consider some of the methods by which our heavenly Father chastens his children. There are many rods at his disposal, among which are:

I. The rod of *poverty*.*

All the wealth of the universe belongs to God, and is distributed by him as is meet and proper in his sight; and from the fact that the majority of Christians are poor in this world's goods, it is evident that this condition is best for them. The Scriptures and general observation establish the fact that worldly prosperity is not the most favorable for vigorous and progressive piety. It usually, if not universally, leads to alienation from God and overmuch care for the interests of the present life. Is it not, then, wise and good for God to withhold or take from his children that which proves an evil rather than a blessing? Do not affectionate and intelligent earthly parents act according to this principle toward their children? Says St. James: "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

To the rich man in the parable it was said,

* For some of the ideas in this chapter I am indebted to Bonar, in his *Night of Weeping*.

“Remember that thou in thy life-time receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” The disadvantages and privations of poverty under which so many of the children of God labor are not, then, arbitrary nor accidental, but are by special, providential arrangement. It is altogether likely that in no other way than through the vale of poverty could the majority of believers ever reach heaven; and our heavenly Father, looking to our highest and greatest good, places us in the condition best adapted to the promotion of that which is of such priceless value to us. In heaven, ample compensation will be made for the temporary disadvantages of this preparatory and probational state. Well, then, can we endure the privations of a few years for our eternity of gain.

There is, also,—

II. The rod of *bereavement*.

The safety of the Christian for the present and future depends upon his loving God above all other persons, and all things; for in proportion to his love will be his confidence in Him as his Guide and Protector. When, therefore, the earthly attachments become so strong as to interfere with our spiritual and eternal interests, be it to

the dearest earthly relations,—as husband, wife, parent, child, sister, or brother,—faithfulness to our highest interests upon the part of our heavenly Father, to whom we have committed this trust, requires that he interpose, and if necessary remove that object. Then, in our weakness and short-sightedness, unable to appreciate the necessity of this providence, we are made to suffer most keenly, and sometimes to call in question the wisdom and goodness of God.

It was under circumstances like these that the psalmist said, “Lover and friend hast thou put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness.” Oh, who can estimate the number of tears shed, the hearts that have been stricken, by bereavements! Of how many may it be said, as it was declared of the sister of Lazarus, “She goeth unto the grave to weep there?”

Of all the sorrows which afflict the believer here, bereavement is the severest. It is the bitterest ingredient in his cup; the sharpest arrow in God’s quiver; the heaviest rod in his hand. “To see the object of our most tender love laid in the grave; to part forever on earth, with no expectation to meet again until Jesus comes; to look upon that face which shall smile no more on us; to close those eyes that shall see us no more; to

press those lips that shall speak to us no more ; to stand by the cold side of father, mother, brother, sister, wife, husband, or friend, yet hear no sound and receive no greeting ; to carry to the tomb the beloved of our hearts, and then return to a desolate home, with a blank in our souls which shall never again be filled until the reunion in the skies ; this, oh, this, is grief indeed,—this is wormwood and gall.”

And yet this is the rod which our heavenly Father is most frequently using,—and none is needed more than it. Perhaps we loved the creature more than the Creator ; the earthly, more than the heavenly ; and God, jealous of our affections, and out of regard for our own welfare, removes the idol of our hearts. Perhaps our earthly homes are stealing away our hearts from the house of many mansions in the skies, and God breaks in upon us in mercy and turns our home into a wilderness. “Perhaps we are sitting at ease in Zion, comforted and contented amid the afflictions of a suffering church and the miseries of a world that owns no Savior and fears no God. Jehovah speaks and we awake. He takes to himself some one from our loved circle, or smites to the dust some wretched sinner. We are aroused, awakened. Our sin finds us out ;

and we mourn and weep over it and seek anew to realize the full measure of our duty.”

Bereavement reminds us too of the fact that our true citizenship is in heaven ; that here we have no abiding place ; that we have more brethren in heaven than upon earth, and that the coming of our Lord draweth nigh when we shall all be reunited again. It kindles in us new desires for the day of reunion, and thus hastens the coming of the Lord ; it promotes the spirit of watchfulness ; it does for us what the departure of Moses and Elijah from the mount of transfiguration did for the apostles,—it leaves us alone with Jesus. This is God’s object in our chastisement. This object is thus gained.

Another of our heavenly Father’s rods, is,—

III. *The rod of disappointment.*

Said Job in the day of his prosperity, “I shall die in my nest, and I shall multiply my days as the sand.” Ah, that nest of worldly ease, hedged about by God’s providences so closely that Satan could neither assail Job nor his property, without the permission of God, was soon to be torn to pieces, and Job’s days made so burdensome and dark that the grave would be more desirable than life. So our best-conceived plans, our fondest anticipations, our brightest prospects,

are often blasted, and we are made to mourn in disappointment. There is a needs be, an actual necessity for these disappointments, or a God of infinite compassion and love would not thus afflict his own dear children. Said the Savior at one time to his disciples, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The same might be said of all God's providential dealings with his children.

As an instance of God's interposition to defeat the purposes of even the unconverted, who form plans for the future independently of his claims, we quote the following case from a book now before us: "It is related that a young man of fine abilities, when entering one of the Italian universities, communicated his plans and hopes for the future to an aged professor named Filippo Neri. Said the young man, 'I intend to spare no labor or pains to acquire a thorough education, so that I may graduate with the highest honors.'

" 'And what will you do when you finish your studies?' inquired Neri.

" 'Then I will take my doctor's degree, and enter one of the learned professions, probably the law.'

" 'What then?'

“ ‘ Well, I expect to become skillful, to rise to the head of my profession, and accumulate wealth and fame.’

“ ‘ What then?’

“ ‘ Why, I shall become rich, respected by all, and promoted to high positions.’

“ ‘ What then?’

“ ‘ I will live in comfort until old age.’

“ ‘ And what then?’

“ ‘ Then? Well then—then—then, I suppose, like others, I must die.’ ”

Once more came the “ What then?” But no answer was made. The Holy Spirit showed the young man his error, and led him to forsake his schemes for worldly good; and in due time he became a useful minister of the gospel.

That young man’s calculations were all for this world, but through the abundant mercies of God and the faithfulness of his devoted, aged servant, his earthly schemes were laid aside, and his life was given to the service and cause of God. Had he not voluntarily changed his course, and had not the providence of God crossed his path and led him into a better way, he might now be reaping the reward of his folly.

There is also—

IV. *The rod of adversity.*

This may be the loss of our good name, reputation, or earthly substance. Or it may be the loss of the friendship and the falling away of friends, and the wrath of enemies. Job had these in view when he gave utterance to the following words: "Behold, he breaketh down, and it can not be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening." (Job xii. 14.) "He hath made me weary: thou hast made desolate all my company." "I was at ease, but he hath broken me asunder: he hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his mark. His archers compass me round about, he cleaveth my reins asunder, and doth not spare. . . . He breaketh me with breach upon breach; he runneth upon me like a giant." "My face is foul with weeping, and on my eyelids is the shadow of death." (Job xvi. 7, 12-14, 16.) "My days are past, my purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of my heart." (Job xvii. 11.) "He hath fenced up my way that I can not pass, and he hath set darkness in my paths. He hath stripped me of my glory, and taken the crown from my head. He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone: and mine hope hath he removed like a tree." "He hath put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me." (Job xix. 8-10, 13.)

Thus God speaks to us and we hear his voice, as we did not in prosperity. Often nothing but adversity will open our ears to hear and heed the divine call. Said God by the prophet: "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear." (Jer. xxii. 21). We need to have our ears closed to earthly sounds, that we may hear those from heaven; to have our eyes closed to the pleasures of earth, that we may see those of the skies; to be turned out of a home on earth, that we may seek a home in heaven. Earth's pleasures, earth's pursuits, earth's associations are too seducing for us; and God breaks in upon them, and we are often led apart in desert places, where alone with God we are led to see our folly and repent of our sin. God can not trust us with too full a cup, or too pleasant a resting-place, lest we become enamored of the one, and unwilling to exchange the other for a heavenly. God can not trust some with health, friends, prosperity; they need adversity to humble them and keep them in the pilgrim's frame. Covetousness is bred of uninterrupted prosperity. Hence riches often take to themselves wings and fly away. We make idols of our friends, and God removes them. In all this, God deals with us not in wrath, but in great mercy. Never for

a moment does he lose sight of us. It is the discipline of love; it is controlled by a kind and loving Father.

There is still one other rod of chastisement, which is,—

V. *The rod of personal affliction.*

This rod is most frequently used by God for the correction of his children, because it is the most effectual. Satan well knew this when he, after failing in his purpose concerning Job, obtained permission to afflict his person; and what the removal of his children and property failed to accomplish, was soon, in part, brought about by severe personal affliction. Would you know how severe was Job's affliction, and the extent to which he was humiliated, while yet maintaining his integrity? You have only to consider his own words: "So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life. I loathe it; I would not live alway."

Said the psalmist under affliction: "Mine eye mourneth by reason of affliction: Lord, I have called daily upon thee, I have stretched out my hands unto thee. Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave? or thy faithfulness in destruction." "I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me." "When thou with rebukes dost correct a man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth." Isaiah gave utterance to the following words: "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me."

Jeremiah expressed his feelings as follows: "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath." "My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones." "He

hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunk with wormwood." "Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me."

The words of these eminent Bible saints, under affliction, are in harmony with the experience of God's afflicted ones in all ages of the world, and clearly show how effective is the rod of personal chastisement in bringing its subjects into a state of humiliation.

Sickness prostrates us; it cuts into the very center of our carnal nature; and oh, what vanity is seen when upon a sick-bed.

Sickness takes us away from the active pursuits of life and sets us aside, and alone with God. We are taken into his private chamber, and there he converses with us face to face. Our relish for the world is gone; our hopes for earthly good are in the dust; our props are all struck away, and we are wholly cast on God. "If it were not for pain," says one, "I should spend less time with God. If I had not been kept awake with pain, I should have lost one of the sweetest experiences I ever had in my life. The disorder of my body is the help I want from God; and if it does its work upon me before it

lays me in the dust, it will raise me up to heaven.”

Sickness teaches us that activity of service is not the only way in which God is glorified. “They also serve who stand and wait.” Active duty is that which man judges most acceptable; but God shows us that in bearing and suffering he is also glorified. Perhaps we were too much harrassed by worldly cares, and needed retirement, yet could find no way of obtaining it, until God laid us down and drew us aside into a desert place. No one of the family rods is more effectual than that of bodily sickness; no one is more frequently used. Let us kiss the rod, and the hand which afflict us.

Having noticed some of the rods by which our heavenly Father chastens his children, let us consider the nature and design of these chastenings. They are—

I. The chastisements of a *Father*.

Saith St. Paul, in Hebrew xii., “If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? . . . Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness."

What are the prerogatives of a father? To direct, control, correct, and provide for his children. What a father does in these respects is at least done in love, if not always in wisdom. What our infinitely wise and good heavenly Father does, must always be right, and for the real welfare of his children.

Afflicted, chastened saint, forget not that an all-wise, all-merciful, and all-powerful heavenly Father controls the tempest, wields the rod, and directs the providence under which you are suffering, and that your eternal good is the end he aims to secure. Then, in humble, unquestioning submission, commit all to him, and with the poet say,

"Thou knowest what is best;
And who, O God, but thee hath power to know?
'Tis thine alike with good to make me blest,
And thine to send affliction's hour of woe.

"No questions will I ask,
Do what thou wilt, my Father and my God!
Be mine the dear and consecrated task,
To bless the loving hand that lifts the rod."

II. It is also a discipline of *love*.
God. as the universal Father, loves all his

creatures, and in that love exercises his fatherly care over them. But he loves his own children with a peculiar affection,—the love of complacency and delight; and in this special love he corrects, reproveth, and chastens, as they may require, as is expressed by the wise man in Prov. iii. 11, 12: “My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son *in whom he delighteth.*”

Have we not, in this peculiar love of our heavenly Father,—a love so great that he withheld not his only begotten Son from an ignominious death that we might be brought into this precious relation,—the highest possible assurance that all that he does and permits concerning us will be for our highest and greatest good, here and hereafter? It is related that during a violent storm at sea the captain's wife, who was with him on the vessel, was greatly alarmed for their safety. Her husband attempted all he could to banish her fears, and at length, taking a sword and holding it threateningly over her, inquired if she was afraid of it. She replied, “No; for my husband holds it, and he will not harm me.” “Then,” said the captain, “Our heavenly Father holds this storm in his hands and he will not suffer us to be harmed, unless it be for our good.”

The chastisements then which are upon us are the result of infinite love; they are the discipline of love. Every step in the process is kindness. There is no wrath, no vengeance in any part of the process. We may rest assured of this, and this is our consolation; for love will not wrong or unnecessarily afflict us. There will be no needless suffering. There will not be one more stroke than is necessary. The furnace shall not become hotter than is needed to secure the result aimed at. And the process will not be suffered to continue one single hour more than is necessary. Were this kept in mind there would be less disposition to shrink from the ordeal, to entertain hard thoughts of God, and suppose that he afflicts us in wrath, or suffers us to be tossed upon the tempest, or burned in the fire, without his regard or notice.

As an illustration of the spirit with which the trying providences of God should be borne, the case of the father of Richard Cameron is to the point. The aged saint was in prison "for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ." The bleeding head of his martyred son was brought to him by his unfeeling persecutors, and he was asked derisively if he knew it. "I know it, I know it," said the father, as he kissed

the mangled forehead of his fair-haired son ; “ it is my son’s, my own dear son’s ! It is the Lord ! Good is the will of the Lord, who can not wrong me or mine, but who hath made goodness and mercy to follow us all our days.”

III. *It is a discipline of wisdom.*

He who afflicts us is God, who is infinitely wise. Wisdom, then, will control it all. He knows exactly what we need, and how to apply it. The times, the instruments, the methods, and the length of endurance, all, all are conceived in infinite wisdom and controlled by infinite love. The surest, the most direct, and the most gentle, yet effective method is devised.

IV. *It is further a discipline of faithfulness.*

Said the psalmist : “ I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” (Psalms cxix. 75.) Hast thou, dear reader, committed to thy heavenly Father thine interests for time and eternity ? Then, thou hast left all to him to choose, to control, and to direct thee in all things. Faithful to his charge, which he willingly assumed, he will not permit thee to suffer loss by loitering by the way, or going in the wrong path, without timely rebuke.

Is the spirit of the world, so deleterious to thy

spiritual prosperity, increasing upon thee? If it is, thou art less likely to be aware of it than others around thee. Thy God, however, knows it, and will in some way awaken thee to a knowledge of thy danger. Are thy worldly attachments—right and proper in moderation—engrossing thy affections and bringing barrenness upon thy soul? Faithfulness upon the part of Him, to love whom with all thy heart is thy chiefest good, requires His interposition, it may be in the removal of the idol of thy heart. Are you becoming remiss in duty because of the press of worldly cares, or, perchance, disposed to sit down at thine ease, while the calls of duty all around thee are unheeded? Then be sure an awakening rod is already prepared for thine arousing. Or are you disposed to tarry on your pilgrimage, and loiter at Vanity Fair, associating with its inhabitants, trafficking in its forbidden wares or indulging in its guilty pleasures? A tempest of adversities will fall upon you ere God permit you to tarry there to your hurt.

Then, the faithfulness of God is seen in this, that he will not pass by a single fault which he sees in us, but will make it known that it may be removed. He is true to his children, whether in sending good or evil upon them. Is he not rather

more true and faithful in sending the evil than the good? It is harder to reprove a friend than to praise him. Yet for love's sake this should be done, for "faithful are the wounds of a friend." Our God then is faithful when he blesses; more faithful when he chastens. This is our consolation, and should allay all our murmurings and establish our hearts in peace. One other evidence of God's faithfulness in chastisement is, that he will not be moved from his purpose by regard for our cries or tears, but will adhere to his purpose until the end he has in view shall be accomplished.

V. *It is also a discipline of power.*

He who is chastising us for our good is not one who is unable to complete the work he has undertaken; nor can he be baffled or turned from his purpose. He is able to carry out his designs against the most resolute resistance. If there were love alone in the dealing, the purpose might fail of its accomplishment, for love is oftentimes helpless and unable to do aught for its object. Wisdom, too, alone is wholly ineffectual. So with untiring faithfulness. It is often altogether impotent, even in its fondest objects. But when infinite *power* is united with infinite love, compassion, wisdom, and faithfulness, we are sure

that every obstacle will be surmounted and the intended object secured. The God who chastises us for our good is infinite in all his attributes. He is "able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." The very possibility, then, of failure is taken away, and He who has commenced a good work in us will complete it unto the day of Jesus Christ.

Such is the discipline through which God is leading his children. It is love, wisdom, faithfulness, and power,—all infinite, and combined to devise and execute our highest good. It is then perfect, and sure of ultimate success. This is our consolation in the hour of affliction.

But what are some of the lessons we learn from the foregoing?

I. *All the afflictions of the righteous, whatever may be their nature, or the immediate cause which produced them, are by God himself. He either sends or permits them. There is no exception to this rule, even in cases which are clearly traceable to our own indiscretion or the malice or weakness of others.*

II. *Afflictions are common to all God's children. Suffering is the family lot, the universal family badge. All God's saints of every age have been familiar with affliction. Eminent piety, exalted*

station, nor extensive usefulness is an exemption from it. Why, then, should we desire to throw off the family badge?

III. *There is no condition on earth fraught with more danger to the soul than uninterrupted health and prosperity.* To be left alone to the enjoyment of unbroken and uninterrupted prosperity and health is the certain road to the ruin of the soul.

Said Evans: "It is upon the smooth ice we slip; the rough path is safest for our feet." "There must be," said the holy Rutherford, "rain and hail and storm in the saint's cloud." Said Macduff: "He who knows us infinitely better than we know ourselves, often puts thorns in our nests to drive us to the wing, that we may not be grovellers forever."

It is related of Cecil, the celebrated religious writer, that, having heard that an excellent friend and fellow-Christian was unusually prospered in his worldly business, he called to caution him against the danger of worldliness which he apprehended in consequence of his prosperity. Cecil told him that he had heard that he was in a dangerous condition. His friend expressed his ignorance of any danger or cause of alarm. Cecil then informed him that that which he had only

heard, he now saw to be really true, and as an evidence thereof his friend was ignorant of his danger. Said he: "I hear that you are prospering in your worldly business and increasing in that which necessarily requires more and more attention; and that, without spiritual grace, will prove to you, as it has to thousands of others, the cause of your ruin." God thus used this eminent saint to deliver that man from impending and certain evil.

There is a *needs be*, then, in the chastisements of the saints; for were their earthly course free from storms and trials, and were there no clouds to obscure their sky and interrupt the sunbeams of health and prosperity, they would forget that they are but strangers and pilgrims here.

IV. *Strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that even long-continued and high-wrought religious enjoyments sometimes beget a feeling of undue self-exaltation, self-satisfaction, and unwatchfulness.* Hence the variations in Christian experience, and frequently the chastisements and humiliations which precede or follow seasons of high religious enjoyment.

We need only cite the case of St. Paul, which he himself relates in II. Cor. xii. 1-7. After recounting how he was caught up into the third

heaven,—even into paradise,—where he heard and saw things which he was not at liberty to tell, he further said, “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

V. *Afflictions and providences are sometimes sent by God to change the course of his children, when it tends to their loss or hurt.* Our heavenly Father, who sees the end from the beginning, is often caused to interfere against our most cherished plans, and, it may be, disable us by sore affliction, to save us from ills which we can not foresee.

A Christian man relates that on a certain occasion in his life he was unusually depressed because his plans and calculations were hopelessly frustrated. On his way home one evening he found his way obstructed by piles of thorn-bushes, which some one had placed in his path. Attempting to go around them and resume the same path, he found that thorn-bushes were so placed as to completely prevent this. Supposing that an enemy had placed these bushes in his way, to annoy him, he went to his home by another way. In the morning he went to see the place, when, to his gratitude, he saw that it

was no enemy but a friend who had prevented him from going farther on his usual pathway home, for a quarry by the way-side had fallen in, across his path, into which he must have fallen but for the interposition of those thorn-bushes. So God by his providences often hedges up the way of his children and turns their steps in another direction, to save them from evils which he alone is aware of.

VI. *Calls to and preparation for special duties and more extensive usefulness are usually God's chastenings and afflictions.*

It is the concurrent testimony of experienced Christians that those who are designed for special service in the church are prepared for their work by severe and sometimes repeated baptisms of suffering. Luther declared that "for the most part, when God sent him upon any special service for the good of the church he was brought low by some severe fit of sickness."

VII. Afflictions and trials are sometimes sent, or permitted by God, to bring to the knowledge of the afflicted one some weakness or defect in his Christian character, of which he was ignorant, and which it was important that he should know and have remedied.

VIII. Sometimes persons of eminent abilities

and influence in the church are laid aside by affliction or removed by death for the welfare of the general cause.

It sometimes occurs that valuable counselors and laborers are laid aside or removed to the church above, to demonstrate that no one is indispensable to God, and that dependence should be placed in God alone. Sometimes trees grow so large that their shadow prevents the thrift of other trees, and their pruning or removal is necessary to the prosperity of the shaded ones. So some Christians live too much in the shadow of others, looking to them instead of to God, and trusting to them to do the work which they should do themselves. God wisely removes such and thereby causes others to go forward to greater activity and usefulness, for their own good and the prosperity of the general cause.

IX. *Whenever visited by affliction the believer may be assured that his heavenly Father designs something better for him than he now possesses.*

Some more advanced state of grace, holiness, and usefulness is about to be presented to his attention and acceptance, and these chastenings are the Father's awakenings thereto.

It is not the barren branches of the vine that are pruned and cut and trimmed by the heavenly

Husbandman, but those that bear fruit, that they may bring forth more abundantly. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit *he taketh away*: and every branch that beareth fruit, *he purgeth it*, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John xv. 2.) The visitations of God to the wicked often result in their being cut off and taken away; those to the righteous, in their chastisement to their awakening and quickening to greater activity and usefulness.

X. *When afflicted, we may be sure there is a sufficient cause for it; and we should seek by prayer to ascertain that cause, so as to remedy it.*

An old writer has said that "the candle will never burn clear while there is a *thief* in it. Sin indulged in the conscience is like Jonah in the ship, which causeth such a tempest that the conscience is like a troubled sea, whose waters can not rest." The chastisement under which you suffer, then, is an evidence that thy God is dealing with thee in mercy, for thine own good. It is God's expression of his hatred of sin and of his purpose to deliver thee from it. The casting of gold or silver into the furnace implies that there is dross in it which requires fire to purge out. Were there no dross there would be no need of fire. Our chastisements are evidences of

impurity within, and of God's purposes to free us of it.

XI. *The affliction will always be, in extent and in suffering, equal to the object to be attained.*

“God's usual method is, to inflict light chastisements; and then, if these fail in accomplishing his merciful purposes he inflicts still greater. There may be touches of transient pain, a brief illness, a slight indisposition, a passing weakness, some common domestic vexation, some trivial casualty, some few days of parting from one we love, some disappointment or annoyance. These are all Fatherly rebukes of the lighter kind; but they are overlooked because so common and light. Had they been sharper or heavier they would have been recognized as such, but being so tender they are hardly worthy of serious attention. Then, these failing in their purpose, some more severe methods are used. A raging fever, a sad bereavement, the loss of earthy possessions, the blasting of our fondest hopes, come upon us like a whirlwind, and we are prostrated in the dust. Our strength seems to fail. Our life is despaired of. Then we know that the hand of God is upon us. Had we heeded the first inflictions of our Father's rod we would have been spared these severe strokes; but the gentleness of the inflic-

tion made us feel at liberty to underrate them, as coming from God. We thus despise the chastisements of the Almighty, and draw upon ourselves greater inflictions. It is wisdom, then, to open our eyes to the voice of God and to hear his rebukes, ere their very severity forces us to bow to them." (Bonar.)

"Protracted trials," says one, "seem specially aimed at the *will*." The will is the soul's citadel. It is the seat of rebelliousness against God and his calls to duty. It must be subdued, and stroke after stroke is brought to bear upon it. These failing, fire after fire is kindled in order to soften it and bring it into subjection. When mild treatment fails, furnace-heat is used. Said a suffering saint, "It requires all the energy of God to bend my will to his." The subjugation of the will is often a long-continued process. Stroke after stroke in sad succession, and sometimes one fearful stroke, which leaves behind it consequences which years can not efface, fall upon the believer. It is a Father's hand. It is the pruning-knife of the great Husbandman. Receive it as such, dear, afflicted, and chastened one, and thy peace shall be greatly multiplied.

XII. *Grace in proportion to the trial will always be given.*

The strength of God is made perfect in our weakness; and as our day and trial are so shall our strength be. Be not afraid, then, dear, suffering saint, that thou wilt be consumed in the fire. Thy God sits over thee and watches thee and will not let thee be consumed.

“ 'Tis true, He now thy strength doth try,
Like birds that teach their young to fly;
But when thou sinkest, He will bring
Beneath thy fall His own great wing.”

XIII. *In our suffering and affliction we are conformed to the image of our Lord Jesus Christ in his life of suffering.*

Throughout all his earthly life, our Lord Jesus Christ was “a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” There was one mark by which he was to be specially distinguished. It is the *bruised heel*. This was the mark by which he was to be known. Acquainted with grief is the family badge, the family likeness. Companionship with Christ implies that we are made like him in suffering as well as in other respects. One sorrow, or one trial, does not make us acquainted with grief; it requires long and severe trials to do this. The Master was a Man of sorrows, and we are to be conformed to his image in this.

XIV. *Afflictions, then, instead of evidences of*

God's displeasure, as we are apt to suppose when afflicted, are his own marks of favor, love, and regard.

St. Paul's estimate of the value and significance of afflictions is expressed as follows: "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also *to suffer for his sake.*"

"St. Peter, in his first general epistle, chapter five, verse ten, says, "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, *after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.*"

Said an eminent saint, "Whatever evidences of God's favor I formerly possessed, I know now beyond a doubt that he loves me and remembers me with favor, because he afflicts me."

However anomalous it may seem, afflictions and chastisements are the expression of our heavenly Father's love. In the light of God's word, there is no other way of accounting for them. Anger or forgetfulness will not account for them. It is simply impossible to trace them to any other cause than love, unless the plain utterances of God's word are entirely ignored. Admit this, and all is harmonious; deny it, and all is confusion,

cruelty, darkness. "Chastising love is the faithfulest, the purest, the tenderest, the deepest of all. It can not wrong us. It seeks only our good." "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth;" and, "as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens." (Heb. xii. 6; Rev. iii. 19.)

"Sorrowing and chastened believer, what more couldst thou wish than this? Thy furnace is severe; but look at this assurance of Him who lighted it. Love is the fuel that feeds the flames. Its every spark is love, kindled by a Father's hand, and designed as a special pledge of his love. How many of his dear children has he so rebuked and chastened; and all, all for one reason,—*I love them*. The myriads in glory have passed through these furnace fires; *there they were chosen*, there they were purified, sanctified, and made 'vessels meet for the Master's use;' the dross and the alloy purged, that the pure metal might remain. And art thou to claim exemption from the same discipline? Art thou to think it strange concerning these same fiery trials that may be trying thee? Rather exult in them as thine adoption,—privilege. Envy not those who are strangers to the refining flames, who are 'without chastisement;' rather surely the severest discipline, *with a Father's love*, than the fullest cup, without that Father's smile." (Macduff.)

XV. *The afflictions of Christians here have a relation to the enjoyments of heaven hereafter.*

Said the apostle, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II. Cor. iv. 17.)

"If we suffer, we shall also reign with him." (II. Tim. ii. 12.)

"Rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I. Peter iv. 13.)

"But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." (I. Peter v. 10.)

"These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God

shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." (Rev. vii. 14-17.)

I conclude this chapter with the following beautiful lines from Upham's *Christ in the Soul*, as expressive of the spirit in which these chastisements should be received.

- " 'Tis all the same to me ;
 Sorrow and strife, and pining, want and pain !
 Whatever it is, it cometh all from Thee,
 And ' tis not mine to doubt Thee or complain.
- " Thou knowest what is best ;
 And who, O God, but thee hath power to know ?
 'Tis thine alike with good to make us blest,
 And thine to send affliction's hour of woe.
- " No questions will I ask.
 Do what thou wilt, my Father and my God !
 Be mine the dear and consecrated task,
 To bless the loving hand that lifts the rod.
- " All, all, shall please me well ;
 Since living faith hath made it understood,
 That in the shadowy folds of sorrow dwell
 The seeds of life and everlasting good.

CHAPTER IV.

AFFLICTIONS—WHENCE DO THEY COME?

“Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.” (Job v. 6.)

The words *affliction* and *trouble*, as used in the scripture placed at the head of this chapter, are *generic*, and imply all forms of bodily and mental suffering to which man is subject. The fact declared of them is that they never come by accident, or chance, nor without an adequate cause.

The general teaching of the Scriptures as well as the inferences from the few cases of afflicted ones therein related abundantly prove that whatever may be the immediate cause of the affliction, it is, in every case of the righteous, *ordered, sent,* or *permitted* by God, for the present or future good of the afflicted one. The wicked, also, are visited by the chastenings of God for the purpose of leading them to consideration and repentance, or to punish them for flagrant wickedness.

What are the usual causes of the afflictions of the righteous? We reply:

I. The Scriptures undoubtedly teach that in some cases God permits Satan to inflict severe affliction upon the believer. This is done, doubtless, for the purpose of testing the faith of the afflicted one or for demonstrating the sustaining and delivering power of Divine grace.

Two prominent cases are given in the Scriptures,—one in the Old, the other in the New Testament. Let us consider these cases. In the first, second, and third chapters of the Book of Job, the cause, nature, and results of the afflictions of that eminently good man are given. Satan having failed in his purpose concerning Job, by bereaving him of his children and his property, asked and obtained of the Lord permission to afflict his person. Permission was granted in the following words: “Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of the Lord, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.” (Job ii. 6, 7.)

The extent to which the power of the enemy extended in this case was not only to the person of Job, but to his children, his property, to the stirring up of the Chaldeans and Sabeans, and even unto the elements of nature,—the winds of heaven, and fire. The intensity of Job’s sufferings

under his afflictions can be faintly conceived by a perusal of his own statement thereof. And although he was reduced to such an extremity that he deplored his birth and desired death rather than continued existence, it is affirmed of him that "in all this Job sinned not." (Job i. 22.)

St. Paul, in II. Corinthians xii., gives a brief encounter with the same grand enemy. The fact of Satan's agency in his affliction is stated as follows: "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, *the messenger of Satan to buffet me.*"

In the case of Job, after the purposes of God were accomplished his afflictions were removed, and his latter days were made prosperous and happy. In the case of St. Paul the affliction remained; but grace was so largely bestowed that he claimed to be the gainer, and even was made to rejoice for and in consequence of his infirmities.

It may be inquired, Why was the affliction removed in the case of Job and not also in the case of St. Paul? To this it may be replied that the purposes of God can not always be understood here. It may be for the reason that Satan charg-

ed that Job's piety was influenced by and dependant upon his worldly prosperity, and also upon the continuance of his personal health. After the falsity of these charges was fully demonstrated, and an eminent example of submission and patience under severe affliction was given, to adorn the pages of holy Writ, and comfort God's afflicted ones in all after ages, the affliction was removed, and Job was restored to more than his former health, prosperity, and happiness. In the case of the apostle, Satan doubtless thought to take advantage of some weakness, some predisposition, some bodily infirmity, to harass his mind and hinder his usefulness, if not entirely to drive him from the field of labor. The infirmity, whatever it was, was made permanent because the occasion of it remained, and grace was bestowed in such large measure that the apostle stands forth as an eminent example of grace triumphing over human weakness and the malice of Satan.

That cases of affliction by satanic agency still occur, and that advantage is still taken of the weakness, the infirmities, and the unfavorable surroundings of the righteous, aggravating the same, either to distract or destroy, or permanently to injure, there can be no question. The

Lord Jesus Christ himself came in contact with this grand enemy of our race; and for the space of forty days he experienced his satanic power. The first Adam met this same foe, and fell under his power. It was necessary that the second Adam also should meet and conquer him. This was done, and the conquest was complete. He is therefore the better prepared to sympathize with those of his disciples who may be called to come in conflict with the same great enemy. To all such, whether in trials of faith by temptations, or suffering sore afflictions, induced by satanic malice and power, the Savior says, as he said to Peter: "Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not."

In the severity of a conflict apparently so unequal, it might be supposed that the advantage would be so much on the side of the enemy that the extreme weakness of the buffeted and tried one would be made to appear. It was so in the case of Job; for he gave utterance to many expressions of seeming impatience. Paul at once betook himself to the strong One for help, and was delivered from this weakness. Peter, under the power of his fierce assaults, so far fell by his power that he denied the Lord, even to cursing

and swearing. But he, as well as Job, was forgiven and restored, and long since they have gone where the power and malice of Satan are unfelt and unknown.

II. As a general thing, bodily affliction is the result of the violation of some law of our physical being,—some indiscretion; for it is true in regard to the laws which govern our physical being as well as our spiritual, that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.” God has nowhere promised to set aside or suspend the laws of life and health,—unless in the special cases stated in Mark xvi. 18,—even for the righteous. Good people,—even God’s chosen and dearly beloved,—then, may be in affliction and suffering by their own indiscretion; and this from the purest and best motives, and while in the discharge of what may be deemed imperative duty.

The apostle in his letter to the church at Philippi (Phil. ii. 30), said that in consequence of his extraordinary zeal, Epaphroditus was sick and nigh unto death, for the work of Christ, not regarding his own life, that he might supply their lack of service. There were idlers in the church at Philippi; and the work which they neglected to do must be done by some one else, or it must be left undone and God’s cause would suffer.

Epaphroditus did this neglected work in addition to his own, and one of the results was that his strength failed under the burden. So there are idlers in all our churches, and the Epaphrodituses are suffering in consequence of the extraordinary burdens imposed upon them. The churches everywhere furnish numerous examples of premature retirement from active labor, or untimely deaths from overwork. Our own church is not without its eminent instances.

God does not impose unreasonable burdens upon his children, nor does he require a devoted few to add to their own burdens those of the idlers in the vineyard; yet it is always the case that in every instance where important duties are neglected by some, they will be taken up and carried by others, in addition to their own. If men, influenced by a burning zeal for the divine glory and the welfare of their fellow-men, suffer their zeal to lead them into labors beyond their strength, they must suffer in the flesh the inevitable consequences. In all such cases it is true of them as it was true with the Master himself,—the zeal of God's house hath eaten them up.

III. Afflictions and trials are often sent by God upon his children for their awakening, correction, and improvement. This is true even if

the affliction has been produced by some secondary natural cause. That God does use the rod of affliction upon his erring and slothful children is abundantly proved in the Scriptures, as we have fully shown in our previous chapter. Reference to the following scriptures will establish this fact beyond dispute: "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty: for he maketh sore, and bindeth up: he woundeth, and his hands make whole." (Job. v. 17, 18.)

"My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth." (Prov. iii. 11, 12.)

"My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 5, 6.)

"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten." (Rev. iii. 19.)

Thus we have the fact of God's agency in the afflictions of his people, with the design thereof, and the manner in which these chastisements should be borne, stated in almost the same lan-

guage by Job,—the author of what is admitted to be the oldest book of the sacred canon,—as well as by patriarch and prophet and apostle.

But what are some of the sources of encouragement for afflicted saints, taught by the foregoing facts?

1. No affliction, bereavement, trial, or what are called accidents, can come upon a child of God without the notice or permission of his heavenly Father. This is true of all occurrences, even though their origin may be plainly traced to some human agency. Whatever may be the nature of the affliction, and whatever may be the immediate cause thereof, by the time it reaches the believer it has become the will of God concerning him.

In addition to the general providence of God, which is over all his creatures, the Scriptures justify the belief that each and every believer is under special guardianship. Said the Savior to the disciples of his own and of every age, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered."

"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."

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he

that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep."

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper."

2. Suppose your affliction or trial, whatever it may be, is sent or taken advantage of by Satan, as in the cases of Job and Paul, it can only be so by permission of God, who will overrule it for good. Satan could not touch Job until permission to do so was given him by God; and the evil spirits could not even enter into the herd of swine until permission was given by Jesus.

3. Are you suffering the result of some imprudence of your own, or from the malice or imprudence of another? If there is guilt connected with it, God will pardon you and remove the guilt. And as he is greater than nature and before its laws, he can and may, if his glory and your best interests require it, suspend those laws and relieve you of their penalty.

4. As afflictions do not come from the dust, nor trouble spring out of the ground,—as is declared in Job v. 6; that is, that they do not come by chance nor by arbitrary laws over which there is no controlling and directing power,—but by the permission of God, whatever may be the im-

mediate agency in producing them, it may be said in all cases, especially of the righteous, to whom special promises are given, *they are of God himself*. Then, there is no trouble, no affliction, no bereavement, no sorrow, or circumstance of trial possible to a child of God unless God himself sends it. Are you suffering, then, dear, afflicted member of the suffering family of God? It is the Father's loving hand that is upon you. And in this fact you have the highest evidence of his love and regard; "for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. xii. 6.)

" God sometimes walks behind the cloud ;
And threatening storms his presence shroud ;
His light is there ; but all unseen,
Because the storm-cloud comes between.

" From that dark cloud the bolts descend,
The skies to cleave, the earth to rend ;
But trusting hearts need not despair ;
God guides the bolt ; and God is there."

CHAPTER V.

AFFLICTIONS—HOW TO BE BORNE.

“Despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.” (Heb. xii. 5.)

“Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.” (James v. 10.)

In the injunction of St. Paul, as quoted above, and found in almost the same words in Job. v. 17, 18, and Proverbs iii. 11, 12, as well as in Hebrews xii. 5, we have the two extremes into which the afflicted often fall; and against both we are cautioned. These extremes are, *despising* the chastenings of the Lord, and *fainting* under them. The former implies to treat them lightly, to consider them as but natural and ordinary occurrences, and possessed of no special significance; the latter, to give way to despondency and discouragement.

In the admonition of St. James, *patience* under affliction—as a medium between the two extremes stated by St. Paul and as the proper spirit for the afflicted—is enjoined.

In considering the conduct of Bible saints under affliction, as examples for imitation, it will be found that while they at times exhibited much patience and submission, and in some cases were enabled to rejoice in their suffering, they all betrayed the usual evidences of weakness and frailty. The tendency in every case was to fainting and despondency rather than to the opposite extreme.

Five cases of eminent saints under affliction are given in the Scriptures; and as we are directed to them as examples for imitation, we propose to consider each case briefly.

The patriarch Job stands forth in the Bible as a pre-eminent example of patience under affliction. His case will claim our attention first. The following words, uttered at various times, show his despondency as well as his conscious integrity and sincerity, and his hope and trust in God.

“Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above, neither let the light shine upon it.” “Why died I not from the womb?” “For now should I have lain still and been quiet, I should have slept: then had I been at rest.” “Wherefore is light given to him that

is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul: which long for death, but it cometh not." "Why is light given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedged in? For my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like the waters." "Oh, that I might have my request; and that God would grant me the thing that I long for! Even that it would please God to destroy me; that he would let loose his hand and cut me off!" "So am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me. When I lie down, I say, When shall I arise, and the night be gone? and I am full of tossings to and fro unto the dawning of the day." "Therefore I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul." "When I say, My bed shall comfort me, my couch shall ease my complaint; then thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions: so that my soul chooseth strangling, and death rather than my life." "I am full of confusion: therefore see thou mine affliction; for it increaseth." "God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked." "He hath also taken me by my neck, and shaken me to pieces, and set me up for his

mark." "He breaketh me with breach upon breach; he runneth upon me like a giant." "Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past." "Oh that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me; when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me, when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil; when I went out to the gate through the city, when I prepared my seat in the street! the young men saw me, and hid themselves: and the aged arose, and stood up." "The arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me." "I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me: with thy strong hand thou opposeth thyself against me."

In the following words Job expresses his consciousness of his integrity, and also his hope and confidence in God:

"Let me be weighed in an even balance, that God

may know mine integrity. If my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes, and if any blot hath cleaved to mine hands; then let me sow, and let another eat; yea, let my offspring be rooted out." "My foot hath held his steps, his way have I kept, and not declined. Neither have I gone back from the commandment of his lips; I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." "He knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

The experience of David under affliction is similar to that of Job; and is as follows:

"O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed. My soul is also sore vexed. . . . Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for thy mercies' sake. For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies." "How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? forever? how long

wilt thou hide thy face from me? how long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? . . . Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death." "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble: mine eye is consumed with grief. . . . For my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing: my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. I was a reproach among all mine enemies, but especially among my neighbors, and a fear to mine acquaintance." "I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh. . . . I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart." "In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord: my sore ran in the night, and ceased not: my soul refused to be comforted." "Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail for evermore? hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?" "O my God, my soul is cast down within me." "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water-spouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." "Lord, why cast-

est thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted and ready to die from my youth up: while I suffer thy terrors I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me: thy terrors have cut me off."

The psalmist's integrity and confidence in God are expressed as follows: "Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for he shall pluck my feet out of the net." "Oh keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait on thee."

The great and good King Hezekiah gives utterance to his feelings under affliction as follows: "The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness: I said in the cutting off of my days, I shall go to the gates of the grave: I am deprived of the residue of my years. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world. Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break

all my bones: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. Like a crane or a swallow, so did I chatter: I did mourn as a dove: mine eyes fail with looking upward: O Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me. What shall I say? he hath both spoken unto me, and himself hath done it: I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my spirit: so wilt thou recover me, and make me to live. Behold, for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave can not praise thee, death can not celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit can not hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children shall make known thy truth. The Lord was ready to save me: therefore we will sing my songs to the stringed instruments all the days of our life in the house of the Lord." (Isa. xxxviii. 9-20.)

Jeremiah, in Lamentations iii., relates his reflections when under the chastening rod as follows: "I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and

brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He had builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travail. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old. He hath hedged me about, that I can not get out: he hath made my chain heavy. Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. He hath inclosed my ways with hewn stone; he hath made my paths crooked. He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood. He hath also broken my teeth with gravelstones, he hath covered me with ashes. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgot prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord: Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remem-

brance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassion fails not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him."

The apostle Paul, in II. Corinthians, xii., relates his experience under affliction. He does not give expression to so great a despondency as the four eminent persons already considered. His experience corresponds with Romans v. 3, rather than Hebrews xii. 11.

It will be seen that in several respects the experiences of these eminent saints under affliction, as related by themselves, were alike. There was in all deep mental as well as bodily distress,—the former greater than the latter. There was the remembrance of former prosperity, enjoyment, and honor, and humiliation and reproach occasioned by contrasting the present with the former; there was loss of enjoyment in life, and a desire for death; and above all there was deep distress at the supposed anger of God in sending sore affliction, and in refusing to hear and answer their prayers. There was also the consciousness of their integrity and uprightness, the absence of

condemnation, and at times confidence in God that in due time he would hear and deliver them.

In all the cases considered—that of St. Paul excepted—there was a tendency to despondency and fainting. The expressions of grief and fear are more numerous and strongly expressed than their confidence and hope. There is no subject upon which the believer is more sensitive than the relation he sustains to God; and if at any time God withdraws the sensible evidence of his favor, as is often the case in affliction, it is at once concluded that for some reason he is offended. And when in addition to the temporary withdrawal of the divine favor God inflicts stroke after stroke of sore affliction, bereavement, and sorrow, the tendency is universal—even with saints of advanced piety—to sink into despondency. And still further, when in addition to all this, from the effects of disease, or for the purpose of testing the faith of the sufferer, repeated prayers and supplications are seemingly disregarded, the spirit of prayer itself is lost, and the means of grace, formerly affording so much delight, lose their interest,—then it is that the soul is made to exclaim with the psalmist: “Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favorable no more? Is his mercy clean gone forever? doth his promise fail

for evermore? Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?"

Distressed and bewildered by affliction, and interpreting God's dealings with us after the standard of *sense* rather than *faith*, we are apt with the poet to say,—

“ Oh is it possible that God,
If God is *Love*, men sometimes say,
Can frowning, smite us with his rod,
And seeming put his love away.

“ Angry he seems, and sore doth smite;
Strange thing for love; and yet he knows
The mystic art to bring delight
From clouds and storms and heavy blows.”

We close the chapter with the following observations, deduced from the facts set forth.

I. We learn from the spirit and conduct of the eminent saints to whom we have referred, and to whom St. James directs us to look as examples of patience under affliction, that none of them was exempt from the weaknesses under suffering usual to human nature; and that in our weakness and disposition to faint and suppose that God's hand is upon us in wrath, and that he disregards our tears and groans and prayers, we do not differ from them, as we may have supposed.

II. True religion does not require nor tend to stoical indifference under affliction.

Jesus himself when called to suffer prayed for the removal of the cup. And even in anticipation of his approaching suffering the Son of God exclaimed, "I have a baptism to be baptised with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" (Luke xii. 50.) St. Paul, also, when sorely afflicted, prayed for its removal. (II. Cor. xii. 8.) The Son of God wept in sympathy with Mary and Martha at the grave of their brother Lazarus. Tears in affliction and bereavement, then, are not sinful. Said a suffering saint: "I hope these groans and tears are not sin: I kiss the rod that smites me, and yet I feel its pain."

III. Immoderate grief is forbidden.

We do injustice to the cause of God and bear damaging testimony against the power of divine grace, thereby discouraging the weak believer by indulging in immoderate and excessive grief. Then "lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way."

IV. It is universal, as the instances we have cited shows, for the most pious and devoted, when suffering under affliction, bereavement, and sorrow, to be deeply concerned lest they have lost the divine favor, and in consequence are chastised by their heavenly Father. This is true especially

in diseases which have a depressing effect upon the mind. Even the great and good Jeremiah supposed that God was scourging him with "the rod of wrath." (Lam. iii. 1.) The Lord uses this rod only upon the wicked; never upon his own children.

V. At no time is the Christian under so much disadvantage in reasoning with the enemy as when reduced by affliction. Afflictions naturally lead the mind to a contemplation of past and present weaknesses,—an exercise which always produces humiliation and shame. Satan in the character of an accuser magnifies our infirmities, and if possible leads us to distrust and despondency.

At all times light and peace come to the soul when self is lost sight of and its eye is fixed upon Jesus. God, however, finds it necessary at times to lead the believer to humiliation, with the view to his advancement to a better state. At such times it is important that the afflicted and humiliated one should bear in mind that God deals with his children after the worthiness of his Son,—not after their own merit. Fear not then while contemplating thine own infirmities to claim full immunity in thy Surety.

VI. In the absence of sensible comfort from

God, accept fully and freely the promises and assurances of the written word,—for it is God's voice speaking to us. This word is of more value than our changeable feelings in interpreting the providences of God, and his will concerning us while under them.

The estimate placed upon the Scriptures and their benefit to the psalmist in affliction are stated in Psalms cxix. 50, 92, 143, 153.

VII. Fail not to heed the apostle's admonition in Hebrews xii. 3, 4: "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be weary and faint in your minds. Ye have not resisted unto blood, striving against sin."

Whatever we may have suffered, if it be short of losing blood, and life, we have not endured as much suffering as the Son of God.

VIII. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." (Ps. lv. 22.) Jesus, the burden-bearer, kindly invites us to permit him to carry our burdens. Take them to him in prayer, lay them at his feet, *and leave them there.*

IX. Get as near to the hand which inflicts the chastisements as possible. It is the dictate of prudence as well as love to draw as near as possible to God in affliction, for thereby the stroke is lightened, and its condemnatory power is lessened

X. Accept fully the affliction which is upon you as the expression of your heavenly Father's will concerning you. Resistance increases your distress and prolongs your affliction.

“ Resistance, which thy fears inspire,
Doth not protect, doth not restore ;
'Tis rather fuel to the fire,
And makes it burn and blaze the more.

“ But when thy troubled soul accepts
The furnace of its wasting grief ;
A power unseen thy life protects ;
'Tis Christ himself that brings relief.”

XI. Cultivate the grace of patience.

“ Let Patience have her perfect work,” said an eminent apostle. “ Tribulation worketh patience,” said the same inspired man. “ Patient in tribulation ” is one of the graces enjoined upon believers.

Patience in suffering is necessary for the comfort of the afflicted one, as well as for the development of the purpose of God in our affliction. It is unwise to judge of any piece of mechanism before it is finished. God's purposes require time for maturity and development.

Dear, afflicted believer, art thou undergoing some severe ordeal of suffering? Art thou afflicted in body and perplexed in mind. Hast thou been long tossed upon some bed of sickness? and have days of pain and nights of sleepless wear-

ness been appointed unto thee? Art thou in straitened circumstances, and suffering for want of the comforts of life? Art thou suffering some wrong or unkindness at the hand of any one? Has the light of thine eyes been laid in the grave, and art thou left to sadness and lamentation? And is the way God is leading thee in dark and mysteries? Are there no foot prints of love traceable in thy way? Is there no light in the cloud which obscures thy sky? No ray of hope for thee in thy earthly future? Be patient; refrain from repining. Utter no impatient or unkind word. You will yet be made to say of God's dealings with you that "he hath done all things well." "The Lord is good to them that *wait* for him." "But they that *wait* upon the Lord shall renew their strength."

As appropriate to this chapter, devoted to the spirit in which the chastisements of God should be received, I quote again from Upham:

"Shrink not from suffering. Each dear blow,
From which thy smitten spirit bleeds,
Is but a messenger to show
The renovation which it needs.

"The earthly sculptor smites the rock;
Loud the relentless hammer rings;
And from the rude, unshapen block,
At length, imprisoned beauty springs.

“ Thou art that rude, unshapen stone;
And waitest, till the arm of strife,
Shall make its crucifixions known,
And smite and carve thee into life.

“ The heavenly Sculptor works on *thee*;
BE PATIENT. Soon his arm of might,
Shall from thy prison's darkness free,
And change thee to a form of light.”

CHAPTER VI.

AFFLICTIONS IMPROVED.

“For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.” (Heb. xii. 10.)

In the scripture above quoted the apostle states the design of God in the chastisements of his children. It is that they may be made to partake more largely of that attribute of the divine nature termed his *holiness*. Of the communicable attributes of God there is none of so much importance to the believer as that of holiness. It is that which qualifies him to glorify God most, to represent the Lord Jesus Christ before the world the most truly, and to enter into and engage in the employments of heaven the most abundantly.

How do afflictions and trials tend to an increase in holiness? We have tried in previous chapters to show that the divine chastisements are intended to awaken the Christian from the worldly stupor to which he is always subject, to weaken his grasp of the associations and relations of life,

and to lead him to a more complete consecration to the service and glory of God. We will only add that by the process of self-crucifixion the corrupt life of nature yet attaching to believers is weakened and destroyed, and the life of Christ, previously implanted in the soul, is correspondingly strengthened and developed. In proportion as the earthly sky becomes darkened, the heavenly is brightened; and as our grasp of earth is weakened, our hold upon the heavenly and divine is strengthened.

Agitation in the material world is always better than stagnation. The winds and storms and frosts and snows are indispensable to health and the productiveness of the earth. So periods of agitation, and even persecution in the church, as well as in the experience of individual Christians, have been marked by more heroic and decided piety than when external peace and prosperity have prevailed. Uninterrupted health and prosperity invariably tend to ease, self-indulgence, and worldliness. It was the church which said, "I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," that was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." (Rev. iii. 17.) It is related that a ship was once found frozen in the perpetual ice of the Arctic Sea.

Upon going aboard of her, everything about the ship was found faultlessly perfect. Every man seemed to be at his proper place; but all were frozen stiff in death. The captain was seated at his table in his cabin, with his log-book before him, and with pen in hand was apparently writing his daily record. He, too, was frozen to death. Upon looking at the last record in the log-book it was found that that vessel had been frozen in there seventeen years. So there are churches now which have drifted into the Arctic Sea of worldliness, and have lost their spirituality and power. Never, perhaps, in all the history of the church was her machinery more complete than at the present. Every department of Christian enterprise seems well manned, and every man is at his place; but how feeble the results in proportion to it all. Alas, she has drifted into formalism and death. And what is true of churches is true also of individuals. Is it not then a mercy when God breaks in upon our monotony of worldliness and prosperity and blasts our cherished prospects and leads us to look to him for what we were seeking in the things of the world? "Most mercifully, then," says Bonar, does God hedge his people about with disappointment of every form, that they may lift their eyes

above this earth and beyond these heavens to the enduring blessedness that is at his right hand forever. With what kindness, though with seeming severity, does he mar the best friendship, that he may attract them to the communion of his own far better and everlasting companionship. With what compassion does he break in upon their misguided attachments, that he may draw them away from earth and bind them to himself by the more blessed ties of his own far-sweeter love. With what tenderness does he tear asunder the bonds of brotherhood and kindred, that he may unite them to himself in far dearer and eternal friendship. With what mercy does he overthrow their prospects of worldly wealth and bring down their hopes of earthly power and greatness, that he may give them the heavenly treasure and make them a 'royal priesthood' to himself in the glorious kingdom of his Son. With what love does he ruin their reputation among men, breaking in pieces their good name, which was their idol, that he may show them the vanity of human praise, leading them to desire the power that cometh from God, to know that in his favor is life, and that the light of his countenance is the very sunshine of heaven.'

The same eminent author from whom the quo-

tation thus given was taken sets forth the various classes of Christian character and the relation of affliction thereto, as follows :

I. "There are some Christians who work, but they do not work like men awake. They move forward in a certain track of duty, but it is with weary footsteps. Their motions are constrained and cold. They do many good things, devise many good schemes, say excellent things, but the vigorous pulse of warm life is wanting. Zeal, glowing zeal,—elastic and untiring,—is not theirs. They neither burn themselves, nor do they kindle others. There is nothing of the 'star' about them, save its coldness. They may expect some sharp stroke of chastisement, for they need it.

II. "There are others who are wakeful only by fits and starts. They can not be safely counted on, for their fervor depends upon the humor of the moment. A naturally impulsive temperament, of which, perhaps, they are not sufficiently aware, and which they have not sought either to crucify or regulate, renders them uncertain in all their movements. This intermittent wakefulness effects but little. They do and they undo. They build up and they pull down. They kindle and quench the flame alternately. There is nothing of the 'star' about them. They stand in need

of some sore and long-continued pressure, to equalize the variable, fitful movements of their spirit.

III. "There are others who seem to be always wakeful; but then it is the wakefulness of bustle and restlessness. They can not live but in the midst of stirring and scheming and moving to and fro. Their temperament is that nervous, tremulous, impatient kind that makes rest or retirement to be felt as restraint and pain. These seldom effect much themselves, but they are often useful, by their perpetual stir and friction, in setting and keeping others in motion and preventing stagnation around them. But their incessant motion prevents them being filled with the needed grace. Their continual contact with the outward things of religion hinders their inward growth and mars their spirituality. These are certainly in one sense like the 'star,' wakeful and unresting; but they move forward with such haste that instead of gathering light or giving it forth they are losing every day the little that they possessed. A deep, sharp stroke will be needed for shaking off this false fervor and imparting the true, calm wakefulness of spirit to which, as saints, they are called. It is the *deepening* of spiritual feeling that is needed in their case, and it takes much chastening to accomplish it.

IV. "There are others who are always steadily at work, and apparently with fervor too. Yet a little intercourse with them shows that they are not truly awake. *They work so much more than they pray* that they soon become like vessels without oil. They are further on than the class last mentioned, yet they still need arousing. They are like the 'star,' both 'unresting and unhasting,' yet their light is dim. Its reflection upon a dark world is faint and pale. It is a deeper spiritual life and experience that they need; and for this, it may be, there is some sore visitation in store for them.

"The true wakeful life is different from all these. It is a thing of intensity and depth. It carries ever about with it the air of calm and restful dignity; of inward power and greatness. It is fervent, but not feverish; energetic, but not excited; speedy in its doings, but not hasty; prudent, but not timid or selfish; resolute and fearless, but not rash; unobtrusive and sometimes, it may be, silent, yet making all around to feel its influence; full of joy and peace, yet without parade or noise; overflowing in tenderness and love, yet at the same time faithful and true. This is wakeful life! But oh, before it is thoroughly attained, how much are we sometimes called upon

to suffer, through the rebelliousness of a carnal nature that will not let us surrender ourselves up wholly to God and present ourselves as living sacrifices, which is our reasonable service."

To arouse us from our stupor and lead us into thorough wakefulness, adversity alone is all-sufficient; for God may say to us as he said to Israel, by the prophet, "I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear. This hath been thy manner from thy youth, that thou obeyedst not my voice." (Jer. xxii. 21.)

But do the annals of the church furnish any evidences of the beneficial results of affliction? Having been directed to the prophets for examples of patience under affliction, it is meet that we also look to them for instances of beneficial results.

The after-history of Job and David and Hezekiah and Jeremiah and St. Paul, whose conduct under affliction has been considered in the previous chapter, shows that the divine chastisements under which they suffered so severely were greatly blessed to their good. See Job xlii. 12; II. Chron. xxxii. 26-33; Lam. iii. 58.

The psalmist speaks more fully of the benefits he received than any of the other saints referred to. The following are some of his utterances:

“For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: *but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.*” (Psalms lxvi. 10-12.)

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is in me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.” (Psalms ciii. 1-5.)

“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” “It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy statutes.” “I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.” (Psalms cxix. 67, 71, 75.)

St. Paul, in II. Corinthians, xii. 9, 10, states the blessings from his affliction as follows: “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in re-

proaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."

It will be observed that while the psalmist expresses his gratitude to God for the blessings resulting from afflictions *which had then been healed*, the apostle rejoices *in the midst of his suffering*. In the case of the former we have an exemplification of the fact taught in Hebrews xii. 11; in the latter of Romans v. 3. The first is a result of simple *submission* to the Divine will; the second, of entire *harmony* therewith. The one brings uncomplaining *resignation*; the other willing *acceptance*, and even *joyfulness*. In the first case the precious results of affliction are realized *after it has passed away*; in the second, they are realized *when the chastening rod is upon us*.

In addition to the cases of the beneficial results of affliction recorded in the sacred Scriptures, the history of the church furnishes abundant examples, a few of which we will narrate. A book lies before me containing the life, conversion, and happy death of a celebrated man—William Gordon, M. D. F. L. S. This man—like many others of a scientific turn—was somewhat skeptical upon the truths of divine revelation until visited by severe and protracted disease that finally resulted

in his death, which was very triumphant. After he had fully believed in Jesus and received the clear evidence of the Divine favor he said to a friend who visited him, "I have been thinking of God as a Shepherd. The shepherd sends out his dog when a sheep has wandered from the fold, to bark at and frighten and sometimes to bite the wanderer, in order to bring it back. So afflictions and pains are the dogs which our Shepherd sends to bring us back to him. Some of us are stubborn sheep. I was one of these, and the dog had to bite me. But the barking and biting are to do us good, not harm, and to bring us to the Shepherd. I have had more enjoyment the last few weeks than in my whole life. I could not have a doubt—not one. He saw me a rebellious child. I am a miracle—an example of a marvelous interposition of God. A short illness would not have been enough. He saw I needed all this; and oh! the blessing that has attended it. I trusted too much to human learning; but when I saw how to get this by coming as a little child, it burst upon me in a way I can not describe. No man could have taught me this. It was the Holy Spirit of grace. Then it all rushed upon my view at once. I saw Christ, my Savior. Stripped of all my filthy deeds, I went to the foot of the

cross, and Christ presented to me God. I have long been trying to learn this by reason. Never! Never! I see what I saw not before, and feel what I never felt. When a man comes to that book as a child he will find wonders in it to make him marvel. The love of God is what I can not describe. So great is it, I could have no doubts and fears. To think that gracious Being has been seeking me and afflicting me till he brought me to this happiness! I murmured; but I did not see what he designed—to bring me to that blessed Savior! All the sayings of the Bible so accord with all I have experienced that I feel it to be the most marvelous book there ever was in the world. Read every word of it, and take it just as it is. I feel my whole mind truly changed. I remember in the first part of my illness, when I saw you all coming in, healthy and vigorous, I inwardly murmured, and was envious; but now I rejoice in your health. I love my friends with a tenfold love. I don't know *how* I feel to them, they are so precious to me."

In a book published by "The Tract Association of Friends," entitled "Musings and Memoirs," intended to illustrate various facts in the divine administration, I find the following incidents, which will further illustrate the fact under con-

sideration in this chapter: Heber informs us of a person he found in an alms-house. He was old and deaf, and one of his hands was so afflicted with palsy that his wooden shoe kept up a continual clatter upon the floor. Although nearly helpless from his numerous infirmities, he was cheerful and happy in the assurance of the presence and favor of God and everlasting life. When asked what he was waiting for he would reply, "Waiting for the appearance of my Lord, when I expect great things,—for he has promised me a crown of righteousness." When asked what was the foundation of his hopes he pointed to the text, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God."

Another writer relates how his own faith was strengthened by an interview with a poor, suffering invalid. He was aged, and so afflicted that he was confined to his chair, unable to lie down day or night. Upon inquiring of him how he was he replied with a cheerful smile, "Oh, I am promoted. I was long the Lord's *working servant*; now he has promoted me to his *waiting servant*."

Another case was that of an aged and crippled

colored woman. She was so crippled by disease and infirmity that she was entirely dependent upon charity. She was unable to use her limbs or eat a mouthful of victuals without being fed. Besides this, she was in almost continual bodily pain, yet filled with peace and comfort. During thirteen years of confinement and suffering she never doubted but that her heavenly Father would continue to care for her. The streams of Divine consolation so abounded at times that she would exclaim, "I forget my poor suffering body altogether. No matter how afflicted I am,—not able to eat or sleep,—still I have this peace, this comfort, that seems to subdue my bodily affliction all to silence. If every hair on my head were a tongue I could employ them all in praising Almighty God."

Testimony like the foregoing might be given indefinitely; but I desist. It may only be necessary to appeal to the reader if he has not at some time experienced the blessedness of the Divine chastisements, and to say with one of old, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted."

What, now, are some of the gracious results of affliction? They may be stated thus:

I. *The subjugation of the will and the destruction of selfishness from the heart.*

The will is the man. As previously stated in another chapter, the will is the citadel of the soul. In it self is enthroned and rebelliousness has its seat. "At conversion," says one, "the will is bent in the right direction; but it is still crooked and rigid and perverse. Prosperous days may sometimes conceal it, so that we may be almost unconscious of its strength; but it is rebellious still, and furnace-heat is needed to soften and mold it. No milder remedy will do. Fire after fire does God kindle in order to soften it; and blow after blow does he fetch down upon it. Nor does he rest till he has made it thoroughly flexible, and hammered out of it the many relics of self which it contains. He will not stay his hand till he has thoroughly marred our self-chosen ways. The bending and straightening of the will is often a long process, during which the soul has to pass through waters deep and many, and through fires hot and ever kindling up anew. Its perverseness and stiffness can be brought out only by a long succession of trials. It is only by degrees that it becomes truly pliable and is brought into harmony with the will of God. We can at a stroke lop off the unseemly branch; but to give a proper bent to the tree we require time and assiduous appliances for months or years.

However rebellious, however unyielding, however selfish and proud, our will must be made to bend. God will not leave it till he has made it one with his own.

When the will has been brought into complete harmony with the will of God, the affliction under which we suffer will have been accepted and its force either arrested or materially relieved. Chafing and fretting will be no longer indulged in, and the affliction itself will be uncomplainingly and even rejoicingly accepted.

There will be also—

II. *Deadness to the world.*

The world is the “spirit which worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience,” and is manifested in the undue pursuit of worldly gain, the desire for worldly pleasures, and the love of pomp, pride, and display. It is personified in the Scriptures as a rival of Christ for the affections of his affianced bride,—the church; and undue familiarity therewith is denounced as spiritual adultery. (James iv. 4.)

The tendency to worldly conformity by Christians, unless wholly delivered from the dominion of the carnal mind, is almost universal. Its dangerous and soul-destroying results are clearly stated in the sacred Scriptures, as are also the

frequent injunctions against it. And yet souls all around us are perishing by reason of worldly conformity. The very atmosphere we breathe seems to promote it. The habit gains upon us; and, like death by freezing, its destructive effects come on so stealthily, so unconsciously, that death ensues ere we are aware of danger. It must be the "enchanted ground" through which we are passing. Indifference to Christian duty and privilege, the undue pursuit of worldly gain, the ambition for distinction and place, the love of pleasure, pride, and frivolity; these all demonstrate with fearful significance the extent to which this spirit of worldliness has gained upon us.

The bride of Christ, forgetful of her high destiny and her proper seclusion in the wilderness until her Lord's return, is living in guilty friendship with her absent Husband's foe and rival. Losing sight of our heavenly citizenship, and waiting for a city to come, we declare by our spirit that we are of the earth, earthly. Expecting to wear a crown of glory in heaven, we shrink from the crown of thorns on earth. Professing to look for a kingdom to be hereafter revealed, we refuse to walk in the self-denying path by which it alone can be reached. Assuming the character of saints, of whom sobriety and gravity

are characteristics, we indulge in all manner of levity, reserving our seriousness for the closet and the sanctuary. But God loves us too well to permit us to slumber on to our eternal ruin. Stroke after stroke of affliction is applied, each one of which says, "Love not the world, neither the things which are in the world." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God." At length we are awakened from our sleep of death. The world's unsatisfying hollowness is seen, and we turn to God, the only source of real good. Our affliction has accomplished its intended result. It has been sanctified to our good. We now turn to God with increased earnestness. We now bear increased fruit unto holiness.

The opposite of worldliness is *heavenly-mindedness*. This can result only from crucifixion and death to the world, and our renewal to a new and higher life in Christ. Its presence in the soul will be evidenced in our increased delight in Christian duties, privileges, and associations, and a corresponding aversion to all worldliness and folly.

III. *The understanding will be greatly enlightened, and the knowledge of divine things will be much enlarged.*

The understanding of the unregenerated, and of many Christians also, is carnal, so that divine truth is but very imperfectly understood. Hence the great ignorance among professors of religion, and even of Bible-readers, concerning the things of God. The rod of affliction reduces us to submission and makes us willing to learn, while the fire burns away the film which obscured our understanding. How fast we learn in the time of affliction. We advance more in knowledge in a single day than in years before.

A deeper insight into the hidden meaning of the Scriptures seems to be specially connected with sanctified affliction. Said the psalmist, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; *that I might learn thy statutes.*" (Psalms cxix. 71.)

"Blessed is the man whom thy chastenest, O Lord, *and teachest him out of thy law.*" (Psalms xciv. 12.)

"The rod of reproof gives wisdom," as well as enables us "to learn songs in the night."

Afflictions take us down into a deeper experience, and also into a more perfect harmony between our own internal state and the truths of the sacred Scriptures; and they are comprehended as never before. Said Luther, "Were it not for tribulation I should not understand scripture."

It is related that a young minister upon graduating from a Theological Seminary was thus addressed by an aged professor: "Young man, we have done all for you we can. One thing more is needed to make you a successful preacher and pastor, and that God alone can do for you. *It is some sore affliction.*"

A keener appetite for God's holy word, a spiritual understanding to comprehend it, and maturity of judgment, are some of the abiding results of sanctified affliction.

There will be also—

IV. *Enlarged fellowship with the household of faith.*

The tendency in all hearts not wholly crucified and dead with Christ and renewed to the new life of spirituality is to denominational and sectarian bigotry. Charity, or perfection in love, lifts us above this feeling, and leads us into fellowship with the entire family of God, whether on earth or in heaven. Personal experience in severe and protracted affliction has taught me that in proportion as this narrowness of feeling is lost we come into enlarged fellowship with the saints; and we will understand as never before the meaning of the apostle in Hebrews xii. 22-24: "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city

of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made made perfect. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

This feeling of kindredness is especially strong for God’s afflicted saints, for whom we will feel a special concern and love.

One other result of sanctified affliction is—

V. *Increased spiritual enjoyment.*

“Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Rom. v. 3-5.)

A properly reconstructed and harmonious will lies at the foundation of all true religious character. Sanctified chastisements are the usual and most effective means to subdue the will and bring it into complete harmony with the will of God. From this harmonious will, patience under afflictions will result. This in turn will lead us into new experiences, which tend to increase and strengthen our hope. Then the love of God

abundantly shed abroad in the heart banishes all fear and shame and discontent. Thus afflictions have been blessed to our increased spirituality, usefulness, and happiness. Said a saint of other days, "I know no greater blessing than health, *except pain and sickness.*" Said another, "Oh, what I owe to the file, to the hammer, and to the furnace of my Lord Jesus Christ."

" The hour of anguish passes by ;
But in the spirit there remains
The outgrowth of its agency,
The compensation of its pains."

Then who can estimate the results of sanctified affliction in the life which is to come? We will have to wait for eternity to develop the relation which the afflictions and trials of this present state bear to the enjoyments of the life in heaven. Said Rutherford a few centuries ago, "I wonder many times that even a child of God should have a sad heart, considering what the Lord is preparing for them." "When we shall come home, and enter into the possession of our Brother's fair kingdom, and when our heads shall find the weight of the eternal crown of glory, and when we shall look back to pains and sufferings, then shall we see life and sorrow to be less than one step or stride from a prison to a glory, and that

our little inch of time in suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome home to heaven."

"Come, then," says the pious Bonar, "let us question ourselves and endeavor to ascertain what affliction has been doing for us, and what progress we are making in putting off the old man and in putting on the new. Am I losing my worldliness of spirit, and becoming heavenly-minded? Am I getting quit of my pride, my passion, my stubbornness, and becoming humble, mild, and teachable? Are all my idols displaced and broken? And my creature-comforts, do I use as though I used them not? Am I caring less for the honors of time, for man's love, man's smile, man's applause? Am I crucified to the world, and is the world crucified to me, by the cross of Christ? Or am I still ashamed of his reproach, and half reluctant to follow him through bad report and through good, through honor and through shame? Do I count it my glory and my joy to walk where he has led the way, suffer wherein he suffered, to drink of the cup of which he drank, and to be baptized with the baptism wherewith he was baptized? Am I every day becoming more and more unlike the children of earth, more and more fashioned after the likeness, and bearing the special lineaments of my Elder Brother, of whom the

whole family in heaven and earth is named? Do I realize this earth as neither my portion nor my rest; and, knowing that one chain may bind me as fast as a thousand, am I careful to shake off every fetter that may bind me to the vanities of a world like this? Is chastisement really purifying me? Am I conscious of its blessed effects upon my soul? Can I look back upon such and such scenes of trial and say, 'There and then I learned most precious lessons; there and then I got rid of some of the body of this death; there and then I got up to a higher level, from which I am trying to ascend to one higher still? Have I learned much of the sympathy of Jesus, and know the blessedness of having such a one as he to weep along with me in my day of sorrow? Have I wiped off my rebellious tears and been taught to shed only those of love and submissive fondness—tears of brotherhood and sympathy; tears of longing to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord?' A goodly prize this; and until it is reached there will be strife between us and God. When this state is reached, then this strife shall cease,—our struggles will be over."

As a means then to reach this result, let us welcome our Father's chastening rod, and with the poet say,—

- “ Oh rather let misfortunes fall ;
They can not reach and harm the soul ;
But only serve to disenthral,
The inward life, and make it whole.
- “ The greatness of thy suffering shows,
That God, who loves thee, hates thy sin ;
And sends the message of his blows,
To see if all is right within.
- “ Trust all to Him, Affliction's stroke
His work of mercy shall perform ;
And leave thee, like the smitten oak,
That's deeper rooted in the storm.”

CHAPTER VII.

AFFLICTIONS SOMETIMES REMOVED BY PRAYER.

“The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James v. 16.)

This often-repeated portion of God’s holy word stands in connection with the injunction to prayer for the recovery of the sick. The whole passage reads thus: “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*” (James v. 13-17.)

In obedience to this scripture the following order is to be observed:

I. In case of sickness word is at once to be sent to the minister, elder, class-leader, or other

officers of the church. It sometimes occurs that there are cases of sickness and the minister is ignorant of it; and failing to visit the afflicted, blame is unjustly attached to him.

II. If the afflicted one has been guilty of any wrong it should be confessed, and pardon sought.

III. If there has been disagreement or enmity between the afflicted one and some other, confession and reconciliation are to be promptly made.

IV. Anointing with oil in the name of the Lord is enjoined.

Some Christians observe this direction, and it is said with good results. I can see no reason why this simple scriptural direction should not be observed and the divine blessing expected according to the promise connected therewith.

This anointing with oil may, however, be intended only to teach that while looking to God to heal the afflicted one the usual and necessary remedies are to be diligently used.

V. Prayer in faith is to follow these preliminaries. As if to encourage our faith to expect favorable results the inspired apostle cites the case of Elijah, in answer to whose prayers God suspended the laws of nature, or placed them for a time in the power of a finite being. (James v. 17, 18.)

Is this promise of the restoration of the sick to health, in answer to prayer, invariable and absolute in every case, or are there exceptions to it, as there are to all general rules, although not expressed in the letter of the record?

The following, I think, are exceptions:

1. Diseases and afflictions which in their nature are incurable except by special miracles,—as dismemberment of the body, infirmities of age, impairment of the constitution, and such afflictions as result from violations of the laws of health, the turpitude of which requires the death of the offender. In such cases the guilt may have been pardoned, but the bodily effects still remain.

St. Paul speaks of some who, by reason of sins so peculiarly aggravating, were delivered unto Satan for the destruction of the body, while their spirits were saved. (I Cor. v. 1-5.)

The Apostle John says, "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. *There is a sin unto death: I do not say that ye shall pray for it.*" (I. John v. 16. See also Psalms xxv. 7; I. Cor. xi. 32.)

2. The promise to restore the sick to health, like all other promises, is always subject to the

will of God. In some cases he may see it better for the afflicted that he should not be restored; and the affliction may continue, or death may result. The case of St. Paul, as related by himself in II. Corinthians xii., is an illustration. After praying thrice for the removal of the affliction, and failing to have his prayer answered as he expected, God bestowed upon him extraordinary grace, so that he was made to rejoice notwithstanding his affliction was made permanent.

Prayer offered in faith for the recovery of the sick, if not answered in the way expected, will still not be in vain, but will result in some greater good than the restoration of the afflicted one.

With the exceptions we have stated, and probably others of which we are ignorant, prayers for the recovery of afflicted Christians may be answered in their restoration.

But have we any well-authenticated cases on record of such restoration? We cite the following: The case of Hezekiah, King of Judah, is to the point. The scriptural record is as follows: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the Prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and

prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years." (II. Kings xx. 1-6.)

It is plainly evident that in this case Isaiah joined his prayer with Hezekiah. The long and familiar intimacy existing between them, their union of action in reforming the abuses of the people, and the fact that on another occasion they unitedly prayed for the deliverance of the nation from its enemies (II. Chron. xxxii. 20), as well as the connection of Isaiah with the whole case, unmistakably show that they both prayed for the life of the king. And their united petitions were answered.

Before me lies a tract, published by the Williard Tract Repository of Boston, entitled, *Were*

they Miracles? It gives the particulars of three undoubted cases of instantaneous healing of the sick in answer to prayer. These cases when first brought before the public through the columns of the religious press occasioned much interest and inquiry; and after the truthfulness of the same was fully ascertained they were published in the present form, and largely circulated. In the second edition of this tract, from which I shall quote, testimony is given to the permanency of the cures of two of the persons, after an interval of several years in which to test them. The number and character of the witnesses are such as to place the facts stated beyond dispute or suspicion.

The first case is that of Mrs. Jane C. Miller, wife of a Congregational minister of Oberlin, Ohio. President Charles G. Finney, who was long and intimately acquainted with the family, and who first published an account of the healing of Mrs. Miller, in the *Advance* of December 26th, 1872, says that Mrs. Miller "is a lady of unquestionable veracity. However the fact of her healing is to be accounted for, her story is no doubt worthy of entire confidence, as we have known her for years as a lame, suffering invalid, and now see her in our midst in sound health." In a tes-

timonial subsequently attached to a statement made by a number of persons familiar with all the facts of the case Mr. Finney further says, "I know Mrs. Miller well, and have no doubt of the truth of the statement regarding her instantaneous healing in answer to prayer."

The following is Mrs. Miller's statement

"From my parents I inherited a constitution subject to a chronic form of rheumatism, which affected my whole system. For nearly forty years I was subject to more or less suffering from this cause. For seven years, until the last three months, I have been unable to get about without the aid of crutch or staff,—generally both. I have used many liniments and remedies, but with no permanent good results.

"Last summer [1872] several of us Christian sisters were in the habit of spending short seasons of prayer together. Some of our number had read the narrative of Dorethea Trudel, and had spoken to me on the subject of healing in answer to prayer. My faith had not then risen to this elevation. I had, in fact, accepted what I supposed was the will of God, and made up my mind to be a lame and suffering invalid the rest of my life. I had long since ceased to use remedies for the restoration of my health, and had

not even thought of praying in regard to it. Notwithstanding what had been said me, I remained in this opinion and attitude until the 26th of September last, when several ladies met at our house, by appointment, for a prayer-meeting. I had grown worse for some time, and was then unable to get out to attend a meeting. I was suffering much pain that afternoon; indeed, I was hardly able to be out of my bed. One lady was present who could speak to me from her own experience of having been healed in answer to the prayer of faith. She related several striking instances in which her prayers had been answered in the removal of divers forms of disease to which she was subject. She also repeated a number of passages of scripture which clearly justified the expectation of being healed in answer to the prayer of faith.

“She said that Jesus had shown her that he was just as ready to heal diseases now as he was when on earth; that such healing was expressly promised in the Scriptures in answer to the prayer of faith, and that it was nowhere taken back.

“These facts, reasonings, and passages of scripture made a deep impression on my mind, and for the first time I found myself able to believe that Jesus would heal me in answer to prayer. She

asked me if I could join my faith with hers, and ask for present healing. I told her I felt that I could. We then knelt, and called upon the Lord. She offered a mighty prayer to God, and I followed. While she was leading in prayer I felt a quickening in my whole being, whereupon my pain subsided; and when we rose from prayer I felt that a great change had come over me—that I was cured!

“I found that I could walk without my staff or crutch or assistance from any one. Since then my pains have never returned; I have more than my youthful vigor. I walk with more ease and rapidity than I ever did; and I never felt so fresh and young as I now do, at the age of fifty-two.

“Now, the one hundred and third psalm is my psalm; and my youth is more than renewed like the eagle’s. I can not express the constant joy of my heart for the wonderful healing of my soul and body. I feel as if I was made every whit whole.”

Another case related in this tract is that of a daughter of Rev. Alfred Connet, a Congregational minister of Carbondale, Osage County, Kansas. It is related by her mother as follows: “About the middle of September, 1871, our eldest daughter,—Nettie,—then nearly eight years old, began

complaining of her left leg. The physicians pronounced it sciatic rheumatism. At times her sufferings were very great. Frequently she would not walk for a week. She was lame all the time, and never free from pain. In the fall of 1872 she seemed worse. One limb appeared to be higher than the other, and that limb shrinking away. It was not nearly so large as the other. We called in physicians again. They said the indications were that it was hip-disease. We wrote to the surgical institution at Indianapolis in regard to her. They thought she could be cured there, but that if she did not have treatment soon she would be a suffering cripple for life. We wanted to send her there for treatment, but found it impossible to raise the means. The child grew worse; and on the 29th of December, 1872, she had not left her bed for several days, and her sufferings were intense.

“That Sabbath morning we read an article in the *Advance*—‘Prayer for healing; a remarkable cure.’ Then came the thought, Why can we not have faith to believe that Jesus will cure our child? Myrie and Orthy, of seven and five years, talked together about asking Jesus to cure Nettie. She told one of the children to come to her; and I kept on reading, as though I had read nothing

remarkable, though I am sure that I knew not what I was reading about. I dreaded any conversation with the children. At length I could stand it no longer, and left the room and prayed for faith to believe that my child could be cured. I then went to Nettie. She asked me if I would pray, and ask Jesus to cure her. I asked her if she believed that Jesus would cure her. She thought he would. And the little ones expressed the same opinion. My faith was growing stronger. I told them we would read about Jesus curing the sick. I then read aloud all the instances of healing recorded in Matthew. We all felt then that all we had to do was to ask Jesus to cure her. I prayed, and was followed in prayer by Nettie. We asked for her cure that day. After prayer I discovered that a change had come over the child. She looked worse than ever before. The thought occurred to me that God was going to answer our prayer by taking her to himself. At her request I read to her awhile. She then wanted to be helped in the rocking-chair, though she could sit only on one side. I helped her up; and while doing so such a sense of weakness came over me as I never felt before. I laid down on her bed and immediately fell into a deep sleep. How long I slept I know not—per-

haps half an hour, or may be an hour. I was then awakened by Nettie telling me that she was cured. She would say, 'O Mamma, I am a new girl! Jesus has cured me. How I do love Jesus!' She was the happiest person I ever saw. For the first time in fifteen months she was entirely well and free from pain. She could run, jump, stand on one foot,—in short, do any of the many things a well child could. I then took off the plaster which the doctor put on her hip a few days before—to make it sore. There was no sore; and we quit giving the medicine. That night we were a happy family; and it was late before the child could compose herself to sleep. On Wednesday following the doctor came to see her. He could find nothing ailing the child. He seemed to think that mesmerism or something of the kind had been used. He has been here two or three times since, and always questions her closely. The last time he was here—a few days ago—he found her in the kitchen with an apron on, doing her work."

The third case of miraculous healing related in this tract is that of Mrs. Ellen C. Sherman, wife of Rev. Moses Sherman, Methodist Episcopal minister of Piermont, New Hampshire. The healing occurred in 1873.

Mrs. Sherman had been greatly afflicted a great

many years, and for sixteen years prior to her instantaneous recovery was mostly confined to her bed. She was afflicted with a complication of diseases, among which was spinal weakness. In fact nearly every organ of her lower body was chronically diseased, which the best medical skill failed to relieve; and for the eighteen months prior to her healing it required two persons to lift her in and out of bed. Between nine and ten o'clock on the night of August 27th, 1873, she was left alone for the night, her husband sleeping in an adjoining room. She says that when left alone she considered her helpless condition, and earnestly called upon God for relief. At length she felt that the Savior was unusually near her. We will now give her own words. "I began to be conscious of a *Presence* in one quarter of the room—his *presence felt, not seen*. Then I heard his voice speaking, as it were, in a whisper to my inner ear, saying, 'I will come unto you, and will manifest myself unto you.' So real and palpable was this spiritual Presence that it seemed as though I might grasp him with my hand, and feel his form, were I only able to get up; and he filled the room and my whole being with his loving smile. I can never tell how much of bliss entered into that hour. * * * Oh, the unutterable

bliss of that hour! I felt, oh, if I could have such a Presence with me always it would be joyful to lie here and suffer in view of such love. * * * But now, as I considered that God had taken my body for his temple, I thought, This sick, worn-out body,—what a poor offering to make to God for his temple! The thought troubled me, and I wished that I had something better to offer. Then the Spirit—not the Presence—whispered within me, ‘He is able to restore it, and fit it up for his own temple.’ This was the first intimation I had of the design of the great Physician. Then I became conscious of a movement of the Presence, and it seemed to be filling the room more and more. The only way that I can express it is that the room seemed to be filled thick.

“And now from the foot of the bed the Presence whispered, ‘Believest thou that I am able to do this?’ This was repeated many times while I lay there and reasoned the matter all over. I thought, He is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and all power is given unto him. I remembered his miracles when he was here on the earth. I knew he was willing. He had come because he was willing; yes, and anxious to do it. All this passed through my mind quickly.

The power to yield and believe was given; and I said,—my whole being, it seems to me, said it,—‘*Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.*’ At once the Presence seemed to press up to me over the foot of the bed, and whispered to me the words, ‘And he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.’ And they were accompanied by a warm breathing upon my face. The words were many times repeated, and each time were accompanied by a new wave of influence from the Presence—warmer and more powerful than the one before. Each new pulsation of the Holy Breath flowed down deeper and deeper through my body; and as it went all pain ceased. The feeling was more like a current from a galvanic battery. It was a warming, vitalizing power, giving me new life and strength. Thus the breathing went on, and the sweet, inflowing power continued, until it had penetrated my whole being, causing all pain to cease, and filling me with the most delicious sensation.

“While the healing influence was being breathed upon me I was told very emphatically that this was a *miracle*. It was also said, ‘Go tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee; this is not done in a corner, *but that the world may know.*’

“After a little while I was told by a whisper

from the Presence to raise my left arm—the worse one—to my head. Before, I was not able to raise either without the aid of the other; but now I raised this easily, and without pain. Then I was told to raise the other, which I did with equal ease. Then to turn over. At once I came over like a cork in water. It seemed almost involuntary. Then, ring the bell (call my husband). I did so; and he sprung out of bed, and came in but half awake, and lighted a candle. As he did so I asked him, ‘Is there not a strange influence in the room? Do you not feel it?’ Then I said, ‘There is a strange influence in the room. The Savior is here at work upon me.’ I had no idea of what was coming; but as soon as I said, ‘The Savior is here,’ etc., there was spoken to me inwardly from the Presence, with great emphasis, ‘*That the people may know that the Son of man hath power on earth STILL to forgive sins, RISE UP AND WALK!*’ At once I, who had been bed-ridden and incapable of stepping a step for months, threw off the clothes with my left arm, sprung out of bed upon my feet, and started to walk across the room.”

Her husband at first supposed that she was crazed, but soon learned by her joyful exclamations of adoration and praise to Jesus that she

was in her right mind; and he joined in with her in thanksgiving to God for what he had wrought. The family were called up and rejoiced together several hours. In the morning Mrs. Sherman arose, dressed herself without assistance, eat a hearty breakfast, and soon resumed the active duties of life. All the complications of disease of spine, limbs, stomach, kidneys, and other organs from which she had so long suffered so severely, were made whole. Two years after this truly wonderful occurrence Mrs. Sherman wrote to a friend, "I was asked yesterday if I still had the same faith that I was healed which I had two years ago. It has caused me to think some on that point. I can hardly say I have faith that I was healed. *It is knowledge; not faith.* But I have no more doubt of the cure being wrought by Jesus Christ, I suppose, than had those who were healed by him when on earth. I am in good if not perfect health. I can not remember a summer when I have been so healthy and strong and so able to work."

I have thus given the facts connected with the three cases of instantaneous healing narrated in this tract. The facts are as well authenticated as human testimony can authenticate any event. From my understanding of the Scriptures, and

from personal experience of the wonderful power of divine grace under affliction, both to sustain and deliver, if not actually to restore, I have no hesitation in declaring my belief that in all these cases God miraculously healed the afflicted ones.

In addition to the cases already narrated many others might be given, for the religious press records many such. I will, however, close this chapter by narrating a case of which I have *personal knowledge*, and the facts of which are beyond the possibility of mistake. A person was deeply anxious for his brother, who to all appearance was rapidly sinking to the grave with pulmonary consumption. One day while bowed in secret prayer, as was his custom for this brother, he was suddenly and clearly assured by an inward conviction that his prayer was heard, and his brother's life would be prolonged. So clear was this assurance that prayer changed to wonder, astonishment, and praise. The fact of this answer to prayer was made known to some eight or ten fellow-Christians, including the pastor, and all concluded to wait for the result. The afflicted person resided a considerable distance from where the praying brother lived, and it was near two weeks before information was received. At length word came that the sick man was suddenly and

strangely recovering his health; that he was able to resume work, and gave promise of complete restoration. He rapidly improved; and now nearly fourteen years have elapsed and he still lives, and bids fair to live for many years more.

I will call no more witnesses, for it seems like calling upon human testimony to vouch for the veracity of God, who is worthy of being believed without incidental and collateral testimony.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE GRACES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT DEVELOPED BY AFFLICTION.

“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.” (Solomon’s Song iv. 6.)

That precious portion of God’s holy word—the Song of Solomon; called also the “Canticles,”—from which the passage quoted above, and which I propose to elucidate in this chapter, is taken, sets forth the relation existing between the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer in language and metaphor of the most tender and expressive character. In the main the symbol employed to represent this relation is that of the Husband and his affianced bride. This symbol, while still preserved, is sometimes varied; and the figure of the Shepherd and his flock is also used. (Chapter i. 7, 8.) In the scripture under consideration in this chapter the symbol of a garden of choice and fragrant spices is employed; and the fact symbolized is, the heart of the believer as a garden, in which the precious fruits and graces of

the Holy Spirit are produced. As might be supposed from the symbol employed to represent the attachment existing between Christ and his people, as Husband and affianced wife, the expressions of affection are both reciprocal and tender, such as the relation implies. The language used, though inexpressibly tender and expressive, is yet chaste and elegant.

I have for elucidation in this chapter a garden of spices; and my object in introducing it here, in a book appropriated to the consideration of the afflictions of believers, is to show that afflictions and chastisements are necessary to develop the graces of the Spirit in the hearts of believers, and to cause the precious fragrance thereof to go abroad to bless and edify others, as well as to glorify God.

Upon the nature and significance of the symbol, I remark,—

I. *Gardens are usually selected ground for this special purpose.*

When a place for a garden is chosen the most suitable in soil and location is selected. The Scriptures teach that salvation is entirely of God. The first beginning of it originated in the great loving heart of God. Man's acceptance of the grace proffered in Jesus Christ brings him into a

saving relation to God. Hence it may be said of each individual Christian, as it was said specially to the apostles, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." We are Christians then—if Christians at all—because our salvation originated in God. And yet the relation, while originating in God, is mutual; for had we not accepted the proffered hand of God we would yet be in our sins. Hence it was said of Mary of Bethany, "Mary hath *chosen* that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." (Luke x. 42.) This relationship between the Lord Jesus Christ and the believer is one of *pure choice* on the part of each. God chooses us and we choose him. The analogy of the symbol, as well as the general teaching of the Scriptures, is in harmony with this view.

In choosing and calling persons into his service God sees not as man sees, for often the most devoted and useful Christians are made such out of the most unpromising material. John Bunyan, the author of the *Pilgrim's Progress*, is an illustration. Prior to his conversion he was noted for his ignorance, wickedness, and profanity, but grace wrought a wonderful change in him, and he became a devoted, pious, and eminently useful Christian.

The woman wedded to a king or a prince, though humble and poor previous to her marriage, at once rises to the position of her husband. The fair peasant-girl who married an emperor of Russia became at once a sharer of his dignity, palace, and crown. So when the humble believer weds the Lord Jesus Christ he becomes a sharer in his kingdom and crown.

II. *The place for a garden having been selected, it is set apart for this special purpose by a hedge, wall, or fence.*

The orientals were accustomed to fence in their gardens with hedges of prickly shrubs. Sometimes a stone wall was built around them, as was the case with Gethsemane. This wall or hedge was to mark the line of separation between the place selected for a garden, upon which special care was to be bestowed, and the barren waste outside, upon which no such special care was to be given. Its object was to prevent intrusion by evil-disposed persons and by beasts and animals.

The church of God in all ages has been separate and apart from the world. Such is God's order. But this gracious and necessary arrangement has not always been respected upon the part of the church. She alone has suffered from her guilty folly. The Scriptures teaching this separation, this hedging in, are as follows:

“The Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself.” (Psalms iv. 12.)

“A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.” (Solomon’s Songs iv. 12.)

“Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” (II. Cor. vi. 17.)

What is true of the church in relation to this separation from the world is true also of each individual person composing it. It is all-important, then, that the dividing-line between the church and the world be plainly drawn and well understood. Said Dr. Cuyler in his Heart-Life, “Where does the dividing-line run between true religion and the world? We answer that it runs just where God’s word puts it; and a conscience which is enlightened by the word and by prayer does not commonly fail to discover it. Where God is honored is the right side; where God is dishonored, or even ignored, is the wrong side. Where Christ would be likely to go if he were on earth, is the right side; but where a Christian would be ashamed to have his Master find him, there he ought never to find himself.” “Bear in mind,” said the same excellent author, “that every *pure* pleasure which an unconverted heart can enjoy, such as the joys of home and of friend-

ship, the love of letters, or art, the sight of beauty, or the delight of relieving sorrow, all these the Christian can have and enjoy likewise. They are not sinful, and the child of God can partake of them with a clear conscience. But just where a Bible-conscience tells us to *stop*, the license of the world begins. The word of God draws that dividing-line. Over that line lies the path of self-indulgence. Over that line lies self-pampering, frivolity, slavery to fashion. Over that line God is ignored and often defied! Christ is wounded there and often crucified afresh. Over that line the follower of Jesus has no business to go; for if he goes at all he must go as a participant in the pleasures of the world, or as a protestant against them. If he goes to partake, he offends Christ; if he goes to protest, he offends his ill-chosen associates."

Says another excellent author: "Conformity to the world implies resemblance to it; and when a professed Christian begins to look like a worldling, and live like a worldling, how dwelleth the love of God in him. There is a complete and irreconcilable antagonism between what the Bible calls 'the world' and the grace of Christ."

There is nothing which so effectually destroys from the heart all true spirituality as worldliness

in spirit, life, and association. It brings leanness upon the soul, and condemnation and death hereafter. The only effectual remedy for this evil is that designated by the apostle in Romans xii. 1, 2: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed *by the renewing of your mind.*" If Christ dwell in the soul in all the fullness it is our privilege to have him dwell there, we will have no desires for the frivolities and pleasures of the world, nor for any pleasure or pursuit into which we can not take Christ with us; but will heartily subscribe to the following sentiment:

" Oh, can I quit celestial good,
The growth of life's immortal tree,
And feed, instead of angel's food,
On earth's poor dust and vanity."

As another step in preparing a garden there will be—

III. *The breaking up of the soil, and its former worthless productions destroyed.*

In the preparation of the heart for the reception of divine grace, it must be broken up by the plowshare of truth. This can be done only by the Holy Spirit in the use of that truth.

As a thorough conviction of sin is necessary to a thorough conversion, and a thorough conversion is necessary to a decided, whole-hearted,

and consistent following of Christ, as well as to entrance into heaven at last, it is all-important that conviction be thorough and radical. Said Rutherford, "Many lay false and bastard foundations, and they get Christ for as good as half nothing, and never had a sick night of sorrow for sin. This maketh loose work."

Says Cuyler: "Half-way converts make half-way Christians. Some men's boughs hang on the church-side of the wall, but their *roots* are on the world's side. Such bear nothing but leaves. * * * Unless conversion is radical and thorough, unless the submission of the soul to Christ is without compromise and conditions, there will be half-heartedness and halting to the last."

In regeneration the heart is renewed, and the plants of sin are cut down and destroyed. These plants are enumerated by the apostle in Galatians v. 19-21, as follows: "Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings," etc. Truly a fearful crop to grow in a human heart! These all flourish spontaneously, and without cultivation and care, in the natural heart, as weeds grow and flourish without cultivation in wild, neglected soil. They must be de-

stroyed from the heart before the plants of grace can be made to grow and flourish therein.

IV. *Gardens are intended to raise choice and useful plants, which must be implanted therein.*

In Solomon's Song in the same connection from which the scripture I am illustrating is taken, the fruits or productions of the garden of the renewed heart are stated as "an orchard of pomegranates, with pleasant fruits; camphire, with spikenard; spikenard and saffron; calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense; myrrh and aloes, with all the chief spices." (Solomon's Song iv. 13, 14.) These beautifully represent the graces of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. They are stated by the apostle—in Galatians v. 22, 23,—as follows: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," etc.

As spices are not native to oriental gardens, but are planted therein, so the graces of the Spirit are not natural to the human heart. They do not spring forth spontaneously, but are among the blessed results of regeneration.

V. *Constant care and attention are necessary to cultivate and bring to perfection these implanted fruits.*

The Scriptures unmistakably teach that how-

ever radical and thorough the work of regeneration, there yet remains in the renewed heart a corrupt principle, inherited from the first Adam, the tendency of which is to sin. This principle is variously termed in the Scriptures as "the old man," "the body of sin," "the carnal mind," and "a root of bitterness." (See Romans vi. 6, viii. 7; Hebrews xii. 15.) This evil principle, this remaining *root of bitterness*, springs up and brings forth fruit unto sin, unless carefully watched and kept down. Hence the admonition of the apostle in the same connection. The developments from this root are seen in the evil tempers so often manifest in professed Christians, as pride, self-will, self-esteem, coveteousness, etc. These must be carefully guarded against; and the root from which they spring should be eradicated from the soil of the heart. This is entire sanctification. The occasional cutting down of weeds as they appear in our gardens, and hinder the growth of the implanted fruits, is not the best way to destroy them; they should be plucked up by the roots and cast out. The provisions of the gospel contemplate a remedy not less radical for the destruction of the weeds of sin which grow in the garden of the heart.

" Tear from thy heart the poisonous weed
Of self and sin that's growing there ;

And plant, instead, celestial seed ;
 And thus eternal fruitage bear.

“ Not by the wayside shall it grow ;
 Not in a hard and rocky soil ;
 But where it shall not fail to know
 The cultivator’s tears and toil.”

VI. *Gardens, to be vigorous and productive, must be well watered.*

In oriental gardens streams and fountains of waters are considered a necessity. One of the advantages of Eden was its plentiful supply of water. (Gen. iii. 10, 11.) In paradise regained, as it appears in the apocalyptic vision, the River of Life, clear as crystal, prominently appears. (Rev. xxii. 1, 2.)

In the garden of the soul this necessity of watering is fully provided for. In it are “ a fountain, a well of waters, and streams from Lebanon. (Solomon’s Song iv. 15.) These streams and fountains beautifully represent God’s Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers. Said Jesus upon that last great day of the feast at Jerusalem, “ If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.”) (John vii. 37-39.) To the woman at Jacob’s well he said, “ Whoso-

ever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John iv. 13, 14.)

The importance of the Holy Spirit in the development of the Christian graces can not be overestimated. Some of the strongest declarations and most expressive symbols of the word of God are employed to represent this fact.

" Ho! ask of *me*, and I will give,
From my own life, *thy life's supply*;
I am the fount; drink, drink, and live;
No more to thirst, no more to die."

VII. *The unobstructed rays of the sun are also needed to develop the fruits of the garden.*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the sun in the moral heavens. And as vegetation will not grow and flourish to maturity without the rays of the sun, so the plants in the Lord's garden can not flourish and mature without this moral Sun.

The Lord Jesus Christ is an exemplar after which we are to copy. To become daily more like him we must be in constant intercourse with him. It is communion with *the person of Christ* that brings spiritual prosperity; and the want of this communion with a personal Christ brings

leanness and barrenness. Said an eminent writer, "There are not a few who are so occupied with *truth* that they forget 'the True One;' so occupied with faith that they lose sight of its *personal* object; so given to dwelling upon the work of Christ that they overlook his person. They seem to regard the latter as a matter, if not beyond them, at least one about which it will be time enough to concern themselves when they see him face to face. *What He is*, seems a question of small importance, provided they know that he has accomplished a work by which they may secure eternal life. They take little interest in the *person* of Him who has purchased their blessings. The redemption is all, and the Redeemer is nothing—or at least very little. The sufficiency of the work is all; the glory and excellency of his person nothing. They get all the benefit they can out of the work of Christ, and then leave Christ himself alone. What is all this but selfishness? And this selfishness is a constant hindrance to spiritual prosperity." In full knowledge of this fact of the all-importance of daily intercourse with *the person* of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of its absolute necessity to spiritual growth and maturity, Satan interposes many obstacles between the soul and Christ. It may be the love

of the world, or of the creature, or of man's applause. Or it may be even religion itself, in its round of ordinances, sacraments, and duties. These, however right and proper, interpose between the soul and Christ, and become instruments for exalting self and lowering the Savior. (Bonar.)

Cultivate, then, daily intercourse and communion with the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, if you would grow in grace. Without it, the plants of grace in the heart will become lean and tender and wilted.

VIII. *Oriental gardens are places of frequent resort to those having access thereto.*

It was probably in the splendid hanging-garden which Nebuchadnezzar built that he was walking when, in the pride of his heart, he exclaimed, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty?" (Daniel iv. 30.)

The Lord Jesus Christ, the heavenly gardener, is represented in his word as often visiting, yea, as dwelling in the heart of the pure and holy. That he takes great delight in the precious fruits which their hearts produce is also well established. In all the relations in which he is repre-

sented as sustaining to the believer—whether of the Shepherd, or the Vine, or the Husbandman, or the Husband,—the expressions of his love to his people are strong and tender,—stronger even than theirs to him.

Says the happy believer in the connection which I am elucidating, “Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.” To this he replies, “I am come into my garden, my sister, my spouse: I have gathered my myrrh with my spice.” Again he says, “I went down into the garden of nuts to see the fruits of the valley, and to see whether the vine flourished, and the pomegranates budded.”

The bride again speaks, and says, “My beloved is gone down into his garden, to the beds of spices, to feed in the gardens, and to gather lilies.”

Again she speaks unto her companions and says, “While the King sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof. . . . My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi.”

Says Jesus to his bride, “I am the rose of Sharon, and the lily of the valleys.”

The bride responds, “As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters. As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my be-

loved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Again the heavenly Bridegroom speaks, "Come with me from Lebanon, my spouse, with me from Lebanon: look from the top of Amana, from the top of Shenir and Hermon, from the lions' dens, from the mountains of the leopards. Thou hast ravished my heart, my sister, my spouse; thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck. How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb: honey and milk are under thy tongue; and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon."

This is precious language, indeed; and those who walk in close intimacy with Jesus will have no difficulty in understanding it. But again:

IX. Gardens are designed *to be useful* as well as ornamental. Though hedged about to prevent intrusion, the precious fruits and spices thereof send forth their fragrance to benefit others. It is said that in the countries where spices are cultivated the sweet fragrance thereof is carried by the winds to a considerable distance. So there

are some Christians who bring forth the fruits of the Holy Spirit so abundantly that they fill the air with their fragrance, as orchards in October fill the air with the perfume of ripe fruit.

God intends that his children, while being happy in his service, should, by their spirit, temper, and lives, shed forth a precious fragrance to benefit and bless others. Gloom and melancholy are not their portion. "The lines are fallen unto us in *pleasant* places." Said one, "We need not hide our peace any more than we should hide our cross. Let the world see both, and learn how well they agree together." Says one, "When the winds blow upon the cinnamon-bushes, it is from *the bushes themselves* that the odors flow out. The softest zephyrs can not draw fragrance from a pig-weed. The Holy Spirit may waft odors from a true Christian life; but *the Christian must do the living*. Dead trees yield no spices. * * * The measure of a Christian's power is the measure of that Christian's piety. Grace must be *in the soul* before it can come out of the soul. * * * As long as any member of Christ's church lives a hollow life of mere profession; as long as he aims to please himself and not his Savior; as long as he is grasping and self-seeking and self-indulgent and covetous and a lover of pleasure more than

a lover of God ; so long the professed cinnamon-bush is not a whit better than the Canada thistle. A church full of such professors, whatever their creed, is only a patch of weeds." But even in genuine Christians there are latent graces, which require to be drawn forth. The delicious odors of grace may lie unexercised and undeveloped ; and some wind of adversity, some sore trial, is needed to develop those odors. Hence the prayer of my text,—“ Awake, O north wind ; and come, thou south ; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

There are two winds mentioned in this scripture. God may send either or both, as seemeth unto him good. I will consider them separately. There is—

1. *The south wind.*

The wind from the south is always soft, gentle, and warm. It may represent the calm, peaceful influences of the Holy Spirit filling, and at times overflowing the hearts of believers. Or it may represent the lighter and ordinary trials to which all Christians are constantly liable. These to some extent develop the spirit of the inner life of the believer, and by them he may glorify God and benefit his fellow-men.

We have then, also,—

2. *The winds from the north.*

The winds from the north are always fierce, boisterous, and cold. They clearly symbolize afflictions and trials of more than an ordinary character.

It is these northern blasts which more fully develop Christian character. Then there are some graces which can be developed only in affliction,—patience being one of them. Said Dr. Cuyler, “Sometimes God sends severe blasts of trial upon his children, to develop their graces. Just as torches burn most brightly when swung violently to and fro; just as the juniper-plant smells sweetest when flung into the flames; so the richest qualities of a Christian often come out under the north wind of suffering and adversity. Bruised hearts often emit the fragrance that God loveth to smell. Almost every true believer’s experience contains the record of trials which were sent for the purpose of *shaking the spice-tree.*”

“ Who bears a cross prays oft and well ;
Bruised herbs send forth the sweetest smell ;
Were plants ne’er tossed by strong wind,
The fragrant spices who would find ?”

The history of the church abounds with instances of eminent saints under affliction, whose patient, uncomplaining, and often happy submission has done more to magnify the grace of God

than all the labors of their previous lives. The spirit and conduct of Abraham, of Moses, of Joseph, of Job, of David, of Isaiah, of Jeremiah, of St. Paul, of Bunyan, of Wesley, and numerous others under afflictions, trials, and persecutions, have gone out to the ends of the earth to glorify God and to encourage other afflicted and tried ones. Had their lives been spent in active service only, and not at times under severe trials and chastisements, the fragrance of the graces they emitted would not have been spread so widely. Then how much does the church owe, for its best and most useful literature, to its afflicted children. It seems that some of our best devotional books, as well as some of our best and most enduring hymns, were prepared in the room of affliction. A few instances will be cited.

John Bunyan was locked up in Bedford jail for twelve years, by that royal scoffer Charles II. He could not, as previously, preach to the listening thousands who attended his ministry; but in the quiet and retirement of his cell he wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress*, a book which for usefulness stands next to the Bible. Bunyan was deprived the privilege of preaching for a period of *twelve years*; he has been preaching for centuries by his writings, and will continue to preach by the same

means until the end of time. *Richard Baxter*, in the furnace of affliction, was led to look away from earth to heaven, and sung so sweetly of its joys and sweet rest that the odors thereof yet survive to bless and encourage God's afflicted saints.

In the time of Queen Elizabeth a prisoner was shut up in the dreary old tower of London. He, too, caught a vision of the better country, and composed that hymn which will survive until the Lord shall come,—

“ Jerusalem, my happy home,
When shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end,
Thy joys when shall I see? ”

A Presbyterian clergymen in New Orleans once called to visit a young Scotchman who was lying very ill. The young stranger paid but little attention to what was said to him about his soul. During one of his visits the minister began to hum over to himself the lines, “Jerusalem, my happy home.” The youth burst into tears, and exclaimed, “I used to hear my mother sing those lines when I was a child.” His heart was melted, and he received the truth with penitence and joy. The sweet odors from the dreary tower of London reached down the ages to this poor wanderer in a strange land.

Sarah F. Flower, afterward married to William B. Adams, in a season of peculiar trial wrote that inimitable hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee." It is a favorite with all of God's scattered and suffering flock; and it, too, will live until the end of time. Professor Smith says that Hitchcock and Park, as they wound their way down the foot-hills of Mount Lebanon, came in sight of a group of fifty Syrian students, standing in a line, singing in full chorus. They were students of the new college of Beirut, at Abieh, and they were singing *in Arabic* to the air of "Bethany." As the professors drew nearer they caught the sublime words,—

" Nearer, my God, to thee;
 Nearer to thee;
 E'en though it be a cross
 That raiseth me,
 Still all my song shall be,
 Nearer, my God, to thee,
 Nearer to thee."

Surely in the case of the gifted writer of this beautiful hymn, the rough wind of affliction wafted the odors from her pious heart to a great distance.

Then there are the productions of that prince of sacred poets,—Cowper. The church but little knows the severity of the affliction under which he wrote the two hymns commencing as follows:

“ There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel’s veins ;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.”

And,—

“ God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform ;
He plants his footsteps in the sea,
And rides upon the storm.”

Dr. Doddridge, the eminent scholar and writer, was afflicted in a similar manner to Cowper. The north winds of affliction in his case, as in that of Cowper and others, caused the fragrance from the Lord’s garden to be wafted very far off, to cheer and comfort the hearts of God’s saints.

Instances like the foregoing might be given without number; but let these suffice. They demonstrate the fact we wish to make prominent in this chapter.

It will be seen, then, that while in other chapters in this book we have shown the beneficial results of affliction to the afflicted believer himself, in this chapter, and under the similitude of the scripture we are considering, the benefits of affliction *to others* is our main object. Times of affliction are the believer’s best opportunities for glorifying God. Patient, uncomplaining submission, or joyful acceptance of the affliction, which it is our privilege to attain unto, will do more to

promote the divine glory, by magnifying God's grace in its power to save, to sustain, to deliver, and to lift above the pain and depression incident to severe affliction, than all the active service we can possibly render in health and prosperity. To be tossed by tempests and severe storms, and yet cleaving fast to God; to be in a condition of severe suffering, and yet calm, peaceful, and even joyful,—this brings more glory to God than all else we can do.

Says the pious Bonar, "Angels can glorify God much in heaven amidst its glory and blessedness; but oh, not half so much as we can do on earth amid suffering and shame."

Says Macduff, "In affliction you can glorify God in a way angels can not do in a world where no trial is. They can glorify God only with the *crown*; you can glorify him with the *cross*, and the prospect of the *crown* together."

But it is *sanctified* affliction only which brings the precious results we have stated. If God's chastenings are not willingly accepted and patiently borne they will tend neither to our own advantage nor to the good of others. Let all, then, who are passing through seasons of severe affliction see well to it that they do not fail to secure a larger share of "the peaceable fruits of

righteousness," a more advanced degree of God's holiness, which they are intended to produce, as well as grace to exemplify the patience, submission, and even joyful acceptance of trials, by which God is glorified and others benefited.

Dear afflicted saint, art thou called to suffer long and severely upon the bed of languishing, and have wearisome days and sleepless nights been "appointed" to thee? Have thy worldly possessions, upon which perhaps thou wert leaning too strongly for thy soul's good, been swept away from thee by the devouring fire, or the wickedness or frailty of thy fellow-men? Or has the light of thine eyes, the desire of thy heart, gone to the grave, no more to be seen until Jesus comes and brings all his loved ones with him, turning thy earthly home into a wilderness, lest its joys and blessed associations should steal away thy heart from the house of many mansions in the skies? Has prop after prop of the earthly scaffolding, upon which thou hast been relying, been forced to totter and fall, leaving thee to learn that the peace of the world will suffice only for days of health and prosperity, but is utterly inadequate in the hour of adversity? These are some of the rods which our heavenly Father is laying upon us. They have been familiar to the

saints in every age. The path of suffering and sorrow is not an unfrequented way. All God's saints in every age have trodden it. Their footsteps can yet be seen. "Do not look, then, for a situation without crosses. Be not anxious about 'smooth paths,' immoderate earthly enjoyments, unbroken earthly prosperity. Write upon them, '*Beware.*' You may live to see them become your greatest trials." God loves us too much to permit us to have an unbroken sunshine upon our earthly life. His chastisements may seem to speak of wrath; but they are all of love. The rod of wrath is never used upon his children; it is reserved for incorrigible sinners only, and then but sparingly. Oh, how it sweetens," said one, "all our blessings, and alleviates all our sorrows, to regard both as emanations from a loving Father's hand."

But will God permit his children to suffer unnecessarily, or any severer, or longer than the object he has in view may require? "He knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." "He stayeth his rough wind in the day of the east-wind." He has said, "I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made." (Isaiah lvii. 16.)

My reader, are you, with the writer, drinking affliction's bitter cup? Have the north-winds of adversity been let loose upon thee? Then thy God contemplates some greater good, some more advanced state of grace for thee. Or, perhaps, the sphere of thy usefulness heretofore has been too limited, and God intends, by these cold winds, to enlarge it. Be not then afraid of the cold blasts which beat upon thee. Thou as much needest the sharp blasts of trial to develop thy graces, as thou needest the south-wind of love and mercy to foster and increase them. Canst thou not, then, respond to the invocation of our text and say,—“Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.”

I will close this chapter with the following observations:

(1.) God's sovereignty, or right to use his children so as to promote his glory and lead others unto himself, is absolute and unquestioned.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the world's only hope. He is yet on trial before the children of men, and his professed friends are his representatives. The world will judge of Christ and his religion by what they see in the spirit, conduct, and lives of his professed friends. Hence Jesus says, “Ye are

my witnesses!" If, then, God can be glorified and souls be saved by subjecting believers to circumstances of trial and affliction, in which the advantages of religion and the preciousness of its graces are manifested, it is his indisputable right so to do. Believers thus used to promote the divine glory, and the welfare of their fellow-men, should count it an honor.

(2.) Every individual who takes upon him a profession of religion is under obligations to so avail himself of the provisions of grace as to have them do for him all they possibly can, that he thereby may be the better able to glorify God and benefit his fellow-men. He should also be willing to undergo any course of discipline, however severe and afflictive, which tends to the results stated.

(3.) How inexpressibly precious must that grace be which can accomplish results so great, so grand, and fraught with interests extending into all future time and eternity.

Consider the symbols employed in the Scriptures to represent man's moral state without grace. A diseased body from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot (Isa. i. 6.); a body dead, and in a state of corruption (Eph. v. 4.); a cage filled with unclean birds (Jer. v. 27.); a fountain send-

ing forth all manner of uncleanness and impurity (Mark vii. 21-23.); a blasted, cursed soil, bearing only pernicious and deadly weeds (Gal. v. 19-21). Consider then the symbol used to represent that same heart, under the influence of God's Holy Spirit,—*a garden*, producing the precious and fragrant spices already enumerated, sending forth their fragrance to bless and save others. Consider all this, in connection with the great events of the interminable future, for which the process of discipline, by the methods we have stated, are but preparatory; and then weigh against this the comparative fewness of thy trials, the lightness thereof as compared with those of the Savior and some of his followers in other ages, and the shortness of time in which they are to be endured as compared with the eternity of bliss beyond; and then decide whether or not trials and afflictions are blessings rather than evils.

CHAPTER IX.

A ROYAL SUFFERER.

“ But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.” (II. Chron. xxxii. 25.)

In considering the spirit and conduct of the Old Testament saints as examples of patience under affliction, as directed by the Apostle James (v. 10.), we have learned that while those eminent men possessed much of the grace of patient submission, they also exhibited much dejection and other evidences of human weakness under suffering. The circumstances connected with the case of Hezekiah, king of Judah, his weakness under affliction, his restoration in answer to prayer, and his subsequent inconsistencies, are given with so much minuteness in the Scriptures as to suggest the propriety of devoting a chapter to a further consideration thereof.

In order that we may have all the facts connected with the case of this eminent servant of God, a careful perusal of the following scriptures

is necessary: II. Kings xx.; II. Chron. xxxii. 24, 25; Isa. xxxviii.

We quote from II. Kings as follows: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the Prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the Lord, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, saying, I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the Lord came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid it on the boil, and he recovered. And Hezekiah said unto Isaiah. What shall be

the sign that the Lord will heal me, and that I shall go up into the house of the Lord the third day? And Isaiah said, This sign shalt thou have of the Lord, that the Lord will do the thing that he hath spoken: shall the shadow go forward ten degrees, or go back ten degrees? And Hezekiah answered, It is a light thing for the shadow to go down ten degrees: nay, but let the shadow return backward ten degrees. And Isaiah the prophet cried unto the Lord: and he brought the shadow ten degrees backward, by which it had gone down in the dial of Ahaz."

We call attention to the following facts connected with this case:

I. Good and useful men, in the height of their usefulness, and at a time when, according to human judgment, their life and presence are indispensable to the success of the particular work in which they are engaged, are not exempt from disabling afflictions and death. Hezekiah was to the Jewish people what Luther was to the Christian church and people of the sixteenth century. He was evidently one of those chosen instruments of God who appear at times upon the arena of human life for the accomplishment of some great work. His special mission was to reform the evils which Ahab and others of his wicked

predecessors had introduced into the Jewish worship. For a full account of his piety, his zeal for true religion, his labors to reform the idolatrous practices of the nation, to re-establish the pure worship of Jehovah, and to save the people from their powerful enemies,—the Assyrians, who were at that time invading the land, and threatening Jerusalem itself,—see II. Kings xviii., xix., II. Chron. xxix., xxxii., and Isa. xxxvi.

And now, right in the midst of his usefulness, and when his presence and authority seemed so necessary to complete the good work in which he was engaged, he was visited by sore affliction, even unto death. Strange, indeed, are the providences of God. How many men have been taken from the ministry in the height of their usefulness, while others whose inefficiency and want of consecration, rendering them hinderances rather than helpers, are left to cumber the ground?

We learn from this that no one, however useful, is indispensable to God; and that though his workmen may be laid aside or removed by death, his work will still be carried forward by others, whom he will call to his service.

II. The approach of death does not find every good man fully prepared.

It sometimes occurs that God's laborers are so intent upon the work that their own hearts are neglected. Working more than they pray, as did the church at Thyatira (Rev. iii. 19.), or caring for the Lord's vineyard while their own is neglected, as is stated in Solomon's Songs, i. 6, is sure to entail spiritual leanness. Real heart-piety, while developing its life and vigor in active, earnest Christian labor, is best promoted by closet duties,—as self-examination, Bible-reading, and secret prayer. These duties are often crowded out into a small space by men actively engaged in religious as well as in secular work. In all such cases the unexpected approach of death, as in the case of Hezekiah, requires a further setting of the house in order, a closer heart-examination, a more unreserved committal to God, and a clearer apprehension of his favor. Then it is that, like the good man whose conduct we are considering, they turn their faces to the wall, weep over their neglect, and call upon God for mercy. And then it is, too, that they call to their bedside some faithful Isaiah to intercede for them.

The reflections of Hezekiah in his distress are given by his compeer and fellow-laborer, Isaiah (Isa. xxxviii. 9-22). They are the reflections of a man looking into the open grave, and not up into

heaven as did St. Paul just before his execution (Titus iv. 6-8). The latter had his work all well done, and his house fully in order. Hence his joyful readiness to depart. The former was called to face death unexpectedly, and while his house was somewhat in disorder. Hence his confusion. We learn from this the necessity of looking well to our own hearts, lest we, too, meet with a similar surprise.

III. The solemn retrospect which, if the mental state does not preclude, is sure to come at the approach of death.

The Savior himself when approaching the period of his death, looked back over his earthly life, as well as to the future, and exclaimed, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." (John xvii. 4, 5.)

St. Paul—in what is probably his last written words—said to Timothy (II. Timothy iv. 6-8.), "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous

Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Hezekiah's retrospect was; “I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight.” (II. Kings xx. 3.)

His prospect has been given already, as previously quoted. It was written by himself, though recorded in the sacred annals by Isaiah. Had his illness terminated in his death, as was expected, doubtless his victory over all his fears would have speedily followed his prayers and tears.

It will be observed that each of these persons, while recalling their past labors in the cause of God with evident pleasure and comfort, did not urge them as the ground of their hopes for the future. They looked for their reward as *a gift* rather than as the price of their work. “The wages of sin is death, but *the gift of God is eternal life.*”

All men will at the approach of death—unless their mental state is such as to preclude it—have this solemn retrospect and prospect. Then, if never before, will their judgment upon their past actions be honest and sincere. To the devoted

and faithful it will be the source of untold comfort. To the unfaithful and unconsecrated it will be the occasion of deep self-condemnation and penitence. To the wicked it will cause unutterable confusion and remorse. Oh, at that momentous hour to be able to say with the Savior, "*I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,*" or with St. Paul, "*I have finished my course,*" will occasion more comfort than if we had the universe at our disposal.

“ How pleasant 'tis, when life is run,
 And never more our steps shall roam,
 To say with joy, *our work is done,*
 And we are going home.

“ How pleasant 'tis, our sorrows past,
 With better, brighter worlds in view,
 To give one parting look, the last,
 And say with joy, *Adieu.*”

IV. The resort of the righteous, at the approach of death.

St. James says, “Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.” Desiring to be undisturbed by the world, from which he was about to be separated, Hezekiah “turned his face to the wall and prayed.” And, as is the case everywhere under such circumstances, other good men came to his bedside to sympathize and pray with him. United in their labors for the reformation of the people,

and in their prayers for deliverance from their enemies (II. Chron. xxxii. 20.), Isaiah and Hezekiah now conjointly called upon God for the life of the latter. God heard and regarded their cries, and the king's life was prolonged.

V. Notwithstanding Hezekiah's life was spared in answer to prayer, the proper means must still be used.

By Isaiah's direction figs were applied to Hezekiah's boil, which occasioned his illness. God sometimes works independently of means; but usually in connection with them. We have no warrant in the Scriptures to expect divine interposition while the necessary means are unemploy'd. "God is a very present *help* in trouble." This promise of divine assistance does not supersede the necessity to help ourselves. To neglect the usual means, expecting God to interpose miraculously, is presumption.

VI. Hezekiah, like many others, betrayed his incredulity and unbelief.

When Isaiah informed him that he was about to die he accepted the statement, and set about the work of preparation. When, by God's direction, the prophet informed him that his life would be prolonged he refused to believe it, and desired some sign to confirm the statement. Strange

weakness of human nature! It is a peculiarity as universal as the race. Said Hezekiah, "What shall be the sign that the Lord will heal me?" "What sign shewest thou that we may see and believe?" said the quibbling Pharisees to Jesus. God is worthy to be believed upon his own veracity, without signs and pledges in confirmation of his word. No greater insult could be offered to any one than to question his veracity; yet even good men—like Hezekiah—are guilty of this crime against God.

VII. Under peculiar circumstances, like those under which Hezekiah was placed, God sometimes condescends to gratify even the weaknesses of his servants. He made the shadow go backward ten degrees upon the dial of Ahaz, as demanded by the king.

For an account of a similar condescension to satisfy the credulity of another eminent servant of God, see Judges vi. 36-40.

VIII. The resort of the righteous when raised up from a bed of affliction.

Hezekiah went up to the house of God on the third day thereafter, to render public thanksgiving to God for his restoration. It is right and proper that God's merciful deliverances should be publicly and formally acknowledged; and the

house of God is the proper place to make such acknowledgment.

IX. Persons restored to health from severe affliction sometimes are guilty of great indiscretion.

The king of Babylon sent messengers with a present and congratulations to Hezekiah upon his recovery, when he very imprudently showed them the rich contents of his treasure-house. For this indiscretion the land was afterward invaded, and the people and their treasures were carried captive into Babylon. (II. Kings xx. 12-18.)

X. Vows and resolutions made in affliction and at the supposed approach of death are not always kept after restoration to health. In II. Chronicles xxxii. 25 it is recorded, "But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem."

XI. Notwithstanding all the weakness betrayed by Hezekiah during and after his affliction, he finally died in peace and honor, and now rests with his fathers. (II. Kings xx. 21.)

CHAPTER X.

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE OF HIS PEOPLE.

“The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.” (I. Peter iii. 12.)

The Scriptures abound with assurances of God's fatherly compassion and care for his children under all the circumstances of trial and want and danger through which they are called to pass in this life. These assurances are usually clothed in language and metaphor of the most tender and expressive character, evidently for the purpose of impressing us with the minuteness of that attention and the unflinching constancy of his love.

Having considered, under appropriate heads, many of the scriptures which relate to the personal and bodily afflictions of believers, it seems right and proper to devote a chapter to the consideration of some of those which relate more especially to God's providential dealings with his children. This class of scriptures is so large and varied, embracing almost every exigency

which can befall the Christian, that it will be necessary to utilize them in the following summary manner :

I. There is a class of scriptural promises and assurances which are to be understood as *conditional*; that is to say, their fulfillment may not always be in the precise manner we might expect, or that the phraseology in which they are clothed would lead us to anticipate.

The following are of this class :

“Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance.” (Psalms xxxii. 7.)

“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.” (Psalms l. 15.)

“He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence.” “A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee.” “There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.” (Ps. xci. 3, 7, 10.)

These scriptures, and all others of a similar character, promising exemption from trouble, affliction, or prevailing epidemic, are *conditional to the will of God*; for it is a fact that the righteous

have many and severe trials, meet with the accidents usual to this life, and fall a prey to epidemics, as well as the wicked. Job and David and Jeremiah and Daniel and the apostles were all good men, and yet they were sorely afflicted, persecuted, and tried. The fact taught in these scriptures is, that in all cases of affliction or trial the righteous have the advantage over the wicked, that when it will be for the greater good of the individual to be exempted he shall have exemption; and when his best interests can be best promoted by suffering for a time, suffering will be permitted, but overruled in the end for his eternal gain. In either case, it is *the greatest good of the individual* that determines the question of suffering or exemption. Were it not so, and were these promises of God absolute and unconditional, the Christian would fail to receive the rich blessings which only come through affliction. Infinite love and wisdom, securing us against error or loss or undue suffering, holds our destiny. Under all circumstances, then, however threatening the storm, however afflicting the providence, however severe the epidemic, we have the assurance that God's eye of compassion is upon us, and his providence orders and controls everything relating to us. The word *chance* is not found in God's vocabulary.

“ O God, thou knowest what is best;
 And as my weakness can not see
 What things will make my spirit blest,
 Help me to leave my choice with *thee*.”

II. There are promises which are *absolute*, as,—
 “The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble.” (Psalms ix. 9.)

“In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock.” (Ps. xxvii. 5.)

“Thou shalt hide them in the secret of thy presence from the pride of man: thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues.” (Psalms xxxi. 20.)

“The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord: he is their strength in the time of trouble.” (Ps. xxxvii. 39.)

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.” (Psalms lv. 22.)

“He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.” “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” “He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honor him.” (Psalms xci. 4, 11, 15.)

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” (Isa. xl. 29.)

“The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him.” (Nahum i. 7.)

“As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever.” (Psalms cxxv. 2.)

These passages, with all others of a similar character, are *absolute*; and their fulfillment in every case may be relied upon. They are like so many checks upon the divine fullness, which we may present at any time in full confidence that they will be promptly honored. These *absolute* promises differ from those of a conditional character in this, that the thing specially promised shall be given. In the former, God reserves the right to decide what will be best for us. An eminent writer remarks that if we ask God for silver, and silver is not given, it will be gold; if we ask for gold, and gold is withheld, God will give us diamonds. He is always as good as his promises, and often still better.

III. God's fatherly concern for his children expressed by symbols.

“Like as a father pitieth his children, so the

Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust." (Psalms ciii. 13, 14.)

"I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (II. Cor. vi. 18.)

"Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." (Isa. xlix. 15.)

Traveling once in the cars, I observed a woman sitting near me who had her child nicely laid on the seat in front of her, which she had turned toward her. It was sweetly sleeping; and her eyes were constantly upon it. At a late hour in the night the child awoke, and, perhaps, alarmed at the strange scenes around it, began to cry. The mother took it in her arms and pressed it to her heart, and by those ways which only a mother can use, soothed and calmed it, and soon it fell asleep again. I thought of the scriptural use made of parental and maternal love to express God's concern for his children, especially of the words of Isaiah lxvi. 13 — "as one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

It is related that at the time of the wreck of the steamer Kent every mother on board inst-act-

ively caught to her arms her youngest child. A minister of the gospel relates that having occasion to move his library from a room on the ground-floor to an upper room, his little son insisted on helping him. He at length gave him a small book to carry; but he insisted on having a larger one. To satisfy him he gave him a larger book, which he succeeded in carrying to the foot of the stairs, when, unable to carry it farther, he began to cry. The minister was compelled to carry both the boy and the book. So God often carries both his children and their burdens.

Would we know the scriptural estimate of the strength and tenderness of paternal love? Read our Lord's own delineation of it in Luke xv.

IV. God's providential interposition for the safety of his children.

"He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust." (Psalms xci. 4.)

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." (Psalms xxxiv. 7.)

"As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever." (Psalms cxxv. 2.)

From a book published by the Society of the Friends, entitled, "Musings and Memoirs," I con-

dense the following statement: A gentleman residing in Philadelphia was about to go upon a journey to a distant place. Taking a seat in a car at the Kensington depot he felt a strong impression to change his seat. Without stopping to reason about the impression he at once obeyed the inward monitor, and at considerable difficulty, because of the crowded condition of the cars, took another seat. Just as the train was leaving the depot a stone, hurled by some one, came crashing through the window, breaking the glass to pieces and destroying the panel on the opposite side. A fellow-passenger, who had observed the man changing his seat, and seeing that thereby his life was no doubt saved, went to him and asked him why he left that seat. He told him of the impression wrought in his mind, and attributed it to the providence of God.

William Penn relates in his writings that when in Ireland he met a Christian woman who told him that when the city of Cork was invested by King William's army she and her little daughter were sitting at a certain place, when she was strangely seized with a sudden fear and a strong impulse to move away from where she was sitting. Immediately after she and her child had left the place a cannon-ball struck the seat, tearing it

all to pieces. She also attributed her preservation to the providential interposition of her heavenly Father.

Horace Bushnell, in his "Nature and the Supernatural," relates that a wealthy man of California—Captain Yount—twice dreamed in one night that he saw a company of emigrants perishing in the snow on the mountain. He related his dreams to an old hunter, and described to him the appearance of the place where the emigrants were snowed in, as it appeared to him in his dream. The hunter at once recognized the place as Carson-Valley Pass. To the astonishment, and against the protests of many, Captain Yount dispatched a company of men with mules, blankets, and provisions to the place designated,—one hundred and fifty miles distant. Arriving there, they found a company of emigrants in exactly the perilous condition in which they appeared to Captain Yount in his dream. The emigrants were rescued, and ever after looked upon Captain Yount as their deliverer. Of the truthfulness of this occurrence it is said there is no doubt, as many of the emigrants and their descendants are yet living witnesses.

It is related of an eminent Christian, whose name has escaped my memory, that he dreamed

that having died, he was ushered into an ante-room before entering into heaven. While there, he was astonished to see a panoramic history of his own life pictured upon the walls of the room. Having satisfied himself after examination of the faithfulness of the record, and remembering that he had come near losing his life by having been thrown from his horse, he sought in the proper place in the panorama for this event. Great was his surprise and gratitude to God when he saw it faithfully depicted, and God's guardian angels shielding him from harm.

V. God's providential care for his children in times of want.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt. vi. 26.)

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Luke xii. 6, 7.)

The following illustrations of God's providential care of his needy children are taken from the book previously referred to: A number of families emigrated from Pennsylvania to Canada,

where, during their first winter, owing to the severity of the cold, the depth of the snow, and the scarcity of provisions, they were in danger of starving. Their only resource for a long time was the bark of the slippery elm and bass-wood, from which they made a kind of jelly which sufficed to support life. At the approach of spring their affliction increased, for the jelly made of the elm and bass-wood sickened them. In their extremity they collected together and called upon God in prayer to deliver them from impending starvation. Whilst thus sitting together and calling upon God a pigeon alighted on a tree near by. It was caught, and the broth made from it kept them alive. The next day another pigeon was taken, and so on for fourteen days in succession. On the fifteenth day no pigeon came. One of the children who was lying in bed from weakness occasioned by the want of food, inquired if the Great Spirit was angry that he did not send any more pigeons? Death again seemed inevitable, when one of the men returned from a neighboring stream and reported that the ice had given way, and fish enough to sustain life could be caught. In this way God kept those pious emigrants from starving until the return of spring and summer, when their wants were supplied by the ordinary means.

Thomas Fuller in his writings relates the following incident: "When the city of Exeter was besieged by the parliamentary forces, so that only the south side thereof toward the sea was open into it, incredible numbers of larks were found in that open quarter, for multitudes like quails in the wilderness, though, blessed be God, unlike them both in cause and effect, as not sent for man's destruction, nor with God's anger, as appeared by the safe digestion into wholesome nourishment; whereof I was an *eye* and *mouth* witness. I will save my credit in not conjecturing any number, knowing that then, though I should stop beneath the truth, I should mount above belief. They were as fat as plentiful; so that being sold for two-pence a dozen and under, the poor, who could have no cheaper, or the sick no better meat, used to make pottage of them, boiling them. Several natural causes were assigned hereof. However, *the cause of causes was divine Providence.*"

It is related that during the stormy period of the Reformation, when Luther was confined in the Castle of Wartburg, he one evening took a seat at a window in his room, and sat down to meditate. His great heart was troubled by the rumors of war and bloodshed, in opposition to

the truth, which reached him. To add to his solitude, night was approaching; and the distant thunder and lightning gave evidence of a night of storm and tempest. While thus musing in sadness a robin, which had its nest in a neighboring tree, sat upon a twig and warbled forth its evening song of thanksgiving to God; and then, seating itself in its nest, and placing its head under its wing, it went fast asleep, all unalarmed by the approaching darkness and storm. The great reformer thought of God's declared care for his children, as well as for the birds, and felt that like the robin, he could commit all to his heavenly Father. In this way his fears were allayed.

There is one other class of afflicted ones to whom special promises are given, with the consideration of which we will close this chapter.

VI. God's very special and tender regard for the fatherless and widows.

"Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me." (Jer. xlix. 11.)

"A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation." (Psalms lxviii. 5.)

"The Lord preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow." (Psalms cxlvi. 9.)

There is no class of afflicted ones that appeals more strongly to the sympathies and watchful care of the church than the widows and children of deceased servants of God. Certainly some of the most assuring and tender promises of the Scriptures are given to such.

As an illustration of God's watchful care of these, the following narrative I condense from the statement which I find in the book previously referred to. The facts are related by a missionary in Canada, and are said to be strictly reliable. A farmer dying, left a very amiable and pious widow and three children. Desiring to disincumber herself of the care of the farm she sold all of her effects which she could dispense with, proposing to take up her residence in a neighboring village. A friend learning of her intention congratulated her upon her decision, and remarked that she would be much more comfortable and safe in her new home than in the country, where she would be unprotected. "Oh," said she, "not unprotected! Far from it. You forgot that I am now under the special care and protection of Him who careth for the fatherless and widows. I feel confident that He will protect us."

The farm-house, in which she remained until after she had made sale, was in a solitary place,—

not another house being within half a mile of it. The night after the public sale the widow, her three children, and her maid-servant were alone in the house. The night was stormy, and the wind howled fiercely, shaking the house at every blast. Unable to sleep, the widow thought she heard in the pauses of the tempest some unusual noise. Then she heard the barking of a dog, apparently on the other side of the house from where the first sounds were heard. This increased her alarm, as she had no dog of her own. Awakening the maid, they quietly went to where the dog was, and opening the door a large black dog rushed into the house, and without stopping proceeded to the back window, where stood two men trying to effect their entrance. The dog leaped through the window and pursued the men. After a time, during which the inmates of the house could distinctly hear a scuffle between the dog and the would-be robbers, the dog returned and was admitted. The house was made as secure as possible, and all waited anxiously for daylight, the dog sleeping on a rug prepared for him. In the morning the dog eat a hearty breakfast, which was gratefully given him, he expressing his gratitude by wagging his tail and fondling them. Having eaten, he left the house, and was

never seen afterward. It was supposed that the robbers expected to find the widow unprotected in her house, with a large sum of money—resulting from the day's sale. The dog it was thought had followed some one to the sale, and was left there. The true solution, however, is this: God in that way interposed to save this widow and her fatherless children from being robbed and probably murdered. Truly, there are none so safe as those who are under the protection of God.

CHAPTER XI.

GOD IN EVERYTHING.

“The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord: and he delighteth in his way.” (Psalms xxxvii. 23.)

The Scriptures abundantly teach that God is in every event that befalls his children,—either in sending, permitting, or directing and controlling it for their good. This is true also of all those events which occur from some plainly-seen secondary cause.

Under the influence of divine grace it is not hard to submit uncomplainingly to trials and afflictions which are clearly traceable to the hand of God; but when we feel that we are suffering from our own indiscretion or folly or sin, or from the design, malice, or ignorance of others, it is not so easy. Almost every event which befalls us in life, whether favorable or otherwise, comes to us through or by some human instrumentality; and nearly all our trials result from our own or some other's inadvertence. Now, we know that

God can not be the author of evil,—nor can he approve of it in others; and yet in some way he must be the agent in every event that befalls his children, or the numerous scriptures which declare his watchful care and guardianship over his children, his ordering all their paths, choosing all their ways, directing all their steps, and causing everything to work for their good, are without truth, meaning, or comfort. If the righteous are liable to the wicked designs of Satan, or of the ungodly, independently of the divine cognizance or permission, then the class of scriptures expressing God's constant care and attention, and the fact of their absolute safety under all circumstances, is meaningless.

Wicked men may devise evil concerning the Christian, and their designs and actions may be disapproved by God; but by the time the result reaches the believer *it has become the will of God concerning him*, and should be accepted as such. Joseph was sold by his brethren into bondage, in a strange land. The act was theirs. It was wicked. It was contrary to God's own declared order touching our relations with each other. But yet Joseph says of it, "God did send me before you to preserve life." (Gen. xlv. 5.) God did not incline the hearts of Joseph's brethren to

sell him into bondage; but he permitted them to do it, however wicked and unbrotherly it was, and overruled it all for good, not only to Joseph himself, but to the Egyptians and all the neighboring nations, and this in harmony with his general purpose to elevate Joseph and make him the instrument of the salvation of the people from famine. All this God did without approving of the wickedness of the agents by whom it was effected.

The child in its father's arms is safe, and no harm can come to it without the father's notice and permission, unless he is unable to prevent it; and even then the father suffers the harm himself before it reaches the child. God is our Father. We are his children. Our place is in his arms. We are dearer to him than earthly children are to their parents. His wisdom, love, and power to detect and turn aside evil aimed at us are all infinite, and are all pledged by oath and promise for our safety. (Heb. vi. 10-18.) What then have we to fear? Who can harm us? Who is able to pluck us out of his hand? Who is able to set in motion any train of circumstances designed for our hurt, without the notice, detection, and intervention of our heavenly Father? No power of earth or hell can touch us without first obtaining

permission of God, or forcing him to stand aside, or passing through him.

The believer is represented in the Scriptures as *in the Lord Jesus Christ*. He is in Christ as the branch is in the vine; as the member is in the body; as the wife is in the husband. He, as it were, is absorbed in Christ, loses his identity in him—Christ standing for him. If he suffers, Christ also suffers. Is he tempted, tried, persecuted? Christ also suffers, is tempted, tried, and persecuted. (Acts ix. 4, 5.) How safe, then, how absolutely safe is the believer in Christ! Nothing can harm him without harming Christ, in whom he abides. No pain, no affliction, no bereavement, no accident, no sorrow can come to him without afflicting the great loving heart of the Lord Jesus Christ. Are there plottings of evil against the Christian? No evil formed against the child of God shall prosper, so long as he is a follower of that which is good. Is his name cast out as evil, and is the tongue of slander let loose against him? God shall hide him in the secret of his presence from the pride of man, and shall keep him secretly in his pavilion from the strife of the tongue. (Psalms xxxi. 20.) Does pestilence, or famine and want threaten thee? Thou needest fear no evil; for thy God has given

his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; and no evil shall befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. Do storms and tempests of affliction and sorrow threaten thee? God shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. (Psalms xci.)

This precious fact of the believer's absolute safety in Christ is one of the great facts of divine revelation. It is one of the *unseen* things which human reason can not comprehend, and is revealed to the eye of trusting, confiding faith. The armies which the king of Syria sent against Israel, and which sought the life of Elisha, because he, by the spirit of prophecy, foreknew and forewarned of all their designs, comprised a great and mighty host. They encompassed the city in which this servant of God was, cutting off, to all human expectation, all means of escape, and causing his servant to exclaim, "Alas, my master! how shall we do?" He saw with his natural vision only, and only natural objects. Elisha, seeing with the soul's interior eye, perceived that the mountains all about the city were girdled by a mighty host of horses and chariots of fire. He had seen at least one of these before, when in it Elijah ascended into heaven; and in the fullness

of his confidence he calmed his servant's fears with the assurance, "Fear not: for they that be with us are more than they that be with them." (II. Kings vi. 14-16.)

A devoted Christian lady says that during one part of her religious life she was much troubled with fear and doubt, and found it difficult to live a life of implicit trust, especially under God's chastening rod, with which she was often and severely afflicted, because of the many secondary and evil causes, as she supposed, which seemed to control nearly everything which concerned her. She carried her perplexities to God in prayer, and was enlightened and delivered in the following manner: She dreamed that she was in a perfectly dark place, and that there advanced toward her from a distance a body of light, which surrounded and enveloped everything around her. As it approached a voice seemed to say, "*This is the presence of God. This is the presence of God.*" While surrounded with this presence, all great and awful things in life seemed to pass before her—fighting armies, wicked men, raging beasts, fearful storms, pestilence, sin and suffering of every kind. She shrunk back at first in terror; but she soon saw that the presence of God so surrounded and enveloped her and each and every

one of these things, that not a lion could reach forth its paw, nor a bullet fly through the air, excepting as this presence moved out of the way to let it pass. And she saw that, let there be ever so thin a sheet, as it were, of this glorious presence between herself and the most terrible violence, not a hair of her head could be ruffled, nor anything touch her, unless the presence divided to let the evil pass through. Then all the small and annoying things of life passed before her; and equally she saw that these also were so completely enveloped by this presence that not a cross look, nor a harsh word, nor petty trial of any kind could reach her, unless God's great and glorious presence moved out of the way to let it reach her. Her difficulties vanished. Her question was answered forever. *God is in everything;* and to her she knew no secondary causes. She saw that her life, day by day, and moment by moment, came directly from her heavenly Father's hand, let the agencies be what they may. This lady from that time entered upon a new and better experience, in which all tormenting fear was completely banished, and she found no difficulty in seeing God in every event of her life.

Is it not true that nearly all the troubles and perplexities with which believers are afflicted are

prospective, and really never do occur? Instead of walking by simple faith, as the word of God directs, trusting God moment by moment, and dismissing all anxious thoughts for the future, we seek to reverse or set aside God's order, and walk by sight. And, not content with bearing the necessary burdens of the present, we not only carry with us those of the past, but attempt also to carry those of the future, and failing to bear up under the weight we complain of the want of divine support. Cast from thy shoulders the burdens of the past; attempt not to anticipate the probable burdens of the future; accept each and every occurrence of thy life as an expression of thy Father's will concerning thee, and thou shalt realize that God is in everything to thee, and that all things are working together for thy good.

A Christian man who had met with a severe misfortune, by which he lost nearly all his earthly possessions, was much overwhelmed with grief. He could not see the hand of God in an affliction which reduced him and his family from affluence to want. Sitting in the house of God one Sabbath, the minister preached from the text, "All things shall work together for good to them that love God." The man of God illustrated the idea

of the events in a Christian's life *working together*—one event influencing another, and this still another, until a gracious result is wrought for the afflicted one,—by a person looking on the wrong side of a clock. He sees a number of wheels, some larger and some smaller; some turning one way and some another, and all seemingly in confusion and without purpose or design. He then saw the same clock in the face; and he saw that all those wheels were working together for one purpose—to mark time upon the face of the clock. “So,” said the minister, “God’s providences, however afflicting and perplexing and seemingly confused and purposeless, are all working together to produce one result,—thy highest and eternal good. We may not be able to see how one dispensation of affliction and loss operates on another to produce this result; but God overrules and controls it all, and he will bring it to pass.” The distressed man was relieved of his burden. He accepted the fact that God permitted designing men to rob him of his worldly possessions for the express purpose of securing to him some greater good. He rested in that confidence, was relieved of his burden, and in a few years was enabled to bless God for the loss he had sustained, because of the richness of divine grace bestowed upon him.

An aged colored woman was thus addressed by a lady who was troubled and perplexed by almost everything around her: "Ah, Nancy, it is well enough to be happy now, but I would think that the thoughts of your future would sober you. Suppose, for instance, that you would have a spell of sickness, and be unable to work; or, suppose your present employers should move away and no one else would do anything for you; or, suppose—" "Stop," said Nancy, "I never supposes anything. De Lord is my Shepherd, and I know I shall not want. Ah, honey, it's dese supposes which is makin' you so miserable. You'd better give dem all up and trust de Lord."

It is the privilege of the believer, then, *to see God in everything, in every event of his life*, and to receive everything as coming directly from his hand, *with no intervening secondary cause*. If he attempts to discriminate between events, trying to submit to what is plainly from God's hand, and fretting over those which seem to be the result of his own or other's inadvertence, his peace must be disturbed. But when he can rise to this, *to see God in everything*, irrespective of secondary agencies, to feel that every event of his life, whether pleasant or otherwise, no matter what the apparent intervening cause may be, comes

to him directly from God, is the expression of his will toward him, and is intended for his good, then, and then only, will he have abiding peace and perfect trust.

Child of God, accept the fact that thy God is in every event of thy life; that there is not a single occurrence which can be attributed to *chance*; that not a single event can befall thee without his notice and permission; that there is a "*needs be*" for all the afflictions and disappointments and trials through which thou art called to pass. "Oh," said an eminent saint, "what a pillow is this 'needs be' on which to rest an aching head!" What we know not now concerning God's providential dealings with us, we shall know hereafter,— "when the mists have rolled away." Said Thomas Brooks, "The great Counselor puts clouds and darkness round about him, bidding us follow at his back, through the cloud, promising an eternal and uninterrupted sunshine on the other side."

Said Jeremy Taylor, "Nothing does so establish the mind amidst the rollings and turbulence of things as both a look above them and a look beyond them,—above them, to the steady and good hand by which they are ruled; and beyond them, to the sweet and beautiful end to which,

by that hand, they will be brought." On that other side, when all shall be made plain to us, we shall see how every affliction, every bereavement, every disappointment, and every adversity was needful for us, and without them we could never have reached that blissful place.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, do not be over-anxious about the roughness of your voyage; for every apparently rough and unfriendly blast which beats upon you is but hastening you to the desired haven. And do not attempt to anticipate grace for trials which are yet in the future; for this is not God's order, nor in accordance with his declared method. He has promised to give the grace at the time and to the degree it is needed. The proper attitude of the saint in which to bear up under present troubles and in prospect of the probabilities of the future is expressed in the following lines:

" 'Tis a great lesson which we learn,
In this our weak and trying state,
To see God's hand at every turn,
And patiently to wait.

" Concealed in mysteries sublime,
When painful months and years are past,
The things, deep hidden for a time,
Are all revealed at last.

" We know them then, but know not now;
We walk by faith, and not by sense;

And cheerfully and humbly bow,
Before Thy providence.

“ O God, this blessedness impart,—
This foretaste of a heavenly state,—
The gift of a believing heart,
Which patiently can wait.”

CHAPTER XII.

SPECIAL GRACE FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS.

“As thy days, so shall thy strength be.” (Deut. xxxiii. 25.)

We have in the pilgrimage of the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, in connection with which the scriptural promise above quoted stands, a symbol of the pilgrimage of believers from the Egypt of sin to the Canaan of heaven. The deliverance of that people from bondage, their passage through the Red Sea, their miraculous supply of bread and water, the fact that their clothing and sandals did not wear out, the abiding presence, protection, and guidance of God in the pillar of cloud and fire, their final crossing of the Jordan and entrance into the promised land, all were typical of the pilgrimage of Christians through this life, and all were designed to impress the people with their constant and entire dependence upon God.

Was it not infinitely better for the Israelites when called to pass through a barren wilderness,

where neither bread nor water could be had by ordinary means, that God supplied their needs *day by day* rather than by one endowment of the whole at the commencement of their journey? And is it not better for Christians that God pledges himself to supply their daily needs, as their circumstances may require, rather than by one endowment when first they enter upon their Christian life? Were it otherwise, many, if not all, would, through unfaithfulness, lose the needed grace and be left to lament their folly in the day of trial.

God, then, has wisely ordered that grace shall be meted out to his children *at the time and in the proportion it is needed*. Ordinary grace for ordinary, and extraordinary grace for extraordinary trials, are fully assured. This is the fact I wish to impress in this chapter. The children of Israel had their extraordinary as well as daily and ordinary trials; but in them all the divine interposition was equally ample and opportune. The children of God in all ages have their special as well as ordinary emergencies, and have ever found that grace is equal to each and every trial. There is no condition or contingency possible to the Christian, within the bounds of duty, in which the divine protection, support, and deliv-

erance are not abundantly promised. And it is only when he wanders where neither duty or consistency call him that he places himself outside of the divine care. A circumstance in the history of the apostles will illustrate this point. The multitude, after having been miraculously fed by the Savior, proposed in their enthusiasm to make him their king. Having dismissed the people, he sent the apostles across the Sea of Galilee in the ship to a designated place, where he was to rejoin them in the morning. The twelve evidently went alone with reluctance; for it is said that he *constrained* them. In trying to obey his directions a fearful storm drove them from their course, out to sea, and they were in danger of perishing. When all their efforts appeared to be in vain, and they were giving up in despair, the Master came to their rescue. Now, had the apostles gone upon that voyage without the Savior, by their own choice, they might have had some ground for fear; but having obeyed his commands, the responsibility of their safety was with him, and he, ever faithful, appeared for their deliverance just at the critical time. (Mark vi. 45.)

Among the many emergencies in life to which the believer is subject, and in which more than ordinary grace is needed, are the following:

I. *Straitened worldly circumstances.*

Does God take cognizance of the worldly interests of his children; and does he ever interpose for their deliverance in times of want and distress?

The case of Elijah, who was fed by the ravens (I. Kings xvii.), of Hagar and her child, who were miraculously preserved from death (Gen. xxi.), and of the widow of Zarephath, whose oil and meal were multiplied in a time of famine (I. Kings xvii.), are to the point.

The following instances of God's interposition in the worldly concerns of his people are taken from *Musings and Memories*, formerly referred to. One winter morning a gentleman of Boston, while in attendance at a daily religious meeting in that city, had his mind strangely directed toward a stranger in the meeting, and he was impressed to hand him some money. The stranger was apparently in no need himself, and the gentleman felt reluctant to approach him. But at the close of the meeting he yielded to the strong impression and quietly slipped a five-dollar bill in his hand, telling him to use it as he saw fit. The next morning that stranger arose in the meeting and said that in former days he possessed means, and delighted to use them in relieving the needy, but that owing to reverses he was not able to do as

formerly. He also said that while on his way to the meeting the day before he saw a Christian woman, sick and poor, with neither food nor fuel in the cold weather, and that he earnestly desired five dollars to relieve her. At the close of the meeting a strange brother had slipped that amount into his hand, telling him to use it according to his own judgment, and that he went right from the meeting to that woman's house, and gave it to her, telling her that the Lord sent it. She thankfully received the timely gift and attributed it to her heavenly Father's love and care.

Henry Erskine of Cornhill, Northumberland, in his writings says that one evening, when residing in Dryburg, Scotland, with his large family, they had eaten their last morsel of food and were without a penny to purchase more. In the morning his children were clamoring for bread; but there was none in the house. After a time, while he was silently looking to God for help, a knock was heard at his door, and a man asked assistance to take from his horse a very heavily-loaded sack, which he was directed to leave there. It proved to be a plentiful supply of provisions. The donor was unknown.

On another occasion he says he was in Edin-

burg, and without the means of purchasing food. While walking along the street he was stopped by an individual who asked him if his name was not Erskine. Replying that it was, a letter was handed him containing a considerable sum of money. It was signed, "From a sympathizing friend." Mr. Erskine says he never knew who the generous donor was.

One other case we condense from the account in this book. A man residing in Philadelphia was under the necessity of borrowing five thousand dollars, to enable him to prosecute his business. He effected a loan of three thousand dollars from a friend and two thousand from an insurance company. A time of panic and failures came on, and this man was informed by both the parties of whom he had borrowed money that it must be returned the next day. The poor man was panic-stricken,—for at this time many business houses were paying as high as one per cent a day for the use of money,—and he knew not where he could obtain relief. He carried his case to God in prayer, spent a sleepless night over it, and arose in the morning in much distress. It was the day of the week on which he usually met with his brethren in the house of God for worship, and notwithstanding his depression he re-

sorted to the church. As he sat in silence and sadness an aged minister arose and strangely spoke for the comfort of those in financial distress. In the course of his remarks, and entirely ignorant of the condition of his deeply interested auditor, he said, "Art thou in need? The money will come before thou needs it."

The afflicted man felt that the discourse was intended for him, and that God was about to interpose in his behalf; but as to how, he knew not. After the meeting he went to the office of the person of whom he had borrowed the three thousand dollars, to see if he could not in some way get an agreement for further time. To his astonishment he was told that the man had that day sailed for Europe, and left word that he could repay the money when it suited him. Greatly encouraged, he started to see about what he owed the insurance company; and on the way he met a friend who inquired of him if he wished to borrow two thousand dollars. Upon telling him of his circumstances the two thousand dollars were handed him, with which he at once canceled the loan to the insurance company. Was not the providence of God in this man's deliverance? Was it not in all the cases we have cited? None but skeptics and unbelievers could question it.

Probably the fault with us is, that we do not carry to God our daily *secular* trials and difficulties as we should, under the mistaken notion that he does not feel concerned in them. “*In all thy ways* acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” (Prov. iii. 6.)

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.” (Psalms lv. 22.)

There are also special distress and trial; as,—

II. *Severe personal affliction.*

Upon this point so much has been written in other chapters that we do not deem it necessary to reproduce it here. The cases of the eminent Bible saints under personal affliction, already considered, abundantly prove that the grace of God is sufficient for any emergency, and that it is always bestowed when the exigency demands it.

Before me lies the biography of an excellent Christian lady, who was called to her eternal reward at a comparatively early age. Previous to her affliction, which resulted in her death, she by mistake took an overdose of deadly aconite, and was brought down to the gate of death; but she finally recovered from it. She thus describes her feelings when in that critical condition: “I did not lose my consciousness, though my whole body became rigid and cold. My sight left me, and

even my tongue stiffened in my mouth. The cold perspiration stood on my forehead; and I thought, Truly this is death. For more than one hour I thought every breath would be my last. * * * For five hours I lay very low, suffering the most intense agony,—indeed, the suffering was more fearful than anything I had ever dreamed of; but I can truly say that *it was worth it all to realize what a perfect Savior Jesus is in time of trial.* I wish I could tell you of the heavenly calm he granted me during those hours of dreadful suffering. I have always from my childhood had an almost morbid fear of death; and even since I have put my trust in Jesus I have sometimes been tempted to fear that when the trying hour came I should feel frightened, even though I knew that through a crucified Redeemer I was going to our eternal home in bliss. But when I thought each moment was my last, and the shadows of the dark valley were about me, every fear was taken away and a heavenly joy and peace filled my soul. Jesus was with me, and I was not afraid.”

Some time after her recovery from this poisoning this same young lady was taken with consumption, from which she subsequently died. During that illness she thus wrote to a friend:

“For days past the thought of dying in consumption has been very painful to me; but it was glorious when I felt that Jesus was able for this also. He will bring me through, and even make me triumph over it. *And now the thought of a lingering death is not painful; it even looks cheerful.*”

There are also—

III. *Times of epidemic, or plague.*

The ninety-first psalm appears to have been written for such occasions as those under consideration. This psalm was the special and favorite portion of scripture of the late Bishop D. Edwards. He appropriately termed it “*The Christian’s Life-Insurance Policy.*” Read it; and carefully consider the strong expressions used, assuring of absolute safety even under the trying circumstances stated.

“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 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 honor him. With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

As stated in a previous chapter, absolute exemption from the pestilence and other ills of life may not in every case be granted the Christian. The chief fact taught is, that he will either be exempted or afflicted, as will be for the best, the Lord himself being the judge.

The domestic figure of the hen shielding her chickens under her wings in time of danger is of such a nature that it might seem sacrilegious to use it as relating to God and his children had not God himself in this instance, and the Savior afterward, employed it. (Matt. xxiii. 37.)

As another occasion calling for special grace we refer to—

IV. *The approach of death.*

It is often the case that devoted and pious Christians, when under deep affliction, shrink from the idea of dying, and because of this fear write bitter things against themselves, as well as distress their anxious friends. There are others, also, of whom the apostle writes in Heb. ii. 14, 15, who “through fear of death are all their lifetime subject to bondage.” In all such cases of the former, this fear will disappear and complete victory will be given at the proper time. In the latter, all tormenting fear, whether of death or anything else, will disappear when the experience of perfect love shall have been attained. (I. John iv. 18.) This experience is attainable by all at any time.

While it is the privilege of believers to live above all tormenting and peace-disturbing fear of death, there is yet needed special dying grace,

which, like grace for all special purposes, is only conferred when the exigency is near at hand. An illustration of this important fact has often occurred as follows: The writer has had frequent occasion to travel by railroad to the city of New York. The ticket entitling him to a passage over the road to the city, purchased at the commencement of the journey, secures to him all that it promises; but as he approaches the end of his journey the conductor in charge of the train passes through the cars and distributes to each one entitled to receive it another ticket, which passes him over the Hudson River, on the steam ferry-boat. This ferry-ticket was not given with the passage-ticket, although included in the contract, but was distributed when it was about to be needed. Neither was it given to any but to those who were entitled to it, or could show their passage-ticket. So God dispenses to his children dying grace only when it is needed. Were he to confer it with converting and living grace many would lose it, like unto some who would lose their ferry-tickets, and be left in a dilemma at a critical time. And as it would be highly unreasonable for those having traveling tickets to trouble themselves as to how they would get across the river at the end of their journey be-

cause they were not then in possession of the ferry-ticket, so it is unreasonable for believers, who have all-needed living grace, to perplex themselves as to how they will get across the river of death. God will see to it that the needed grace shall be given when it is needed. In the interval it is safer in his care than in ours.

In further illustration of this fact the following cases are introduced. The first is that of our Lord himself. The mental sufferings of the Savior were greater in Gethsemane than at any subsequent time; for, in addition to the bitter cup of anguish and distress which every individual would have to experience because of sin, all of which at one time was pressed to his lips, he had before him the physical agonies of crucifixion which he was to undergo. No wonder, then, that under this accumulated agony his sensitive nature found utterance in the exclamations, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death!" "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" But after the appearance of an angel, strengthening him (Luke xxii. 43.), a decided change was apparent, and throughout the whole of the bitter process lamb-like submission characterized him. As it was with the Master, so it is with his disciples.

It is related of an eminent Christian that while under sentence of death for his faith he was visited by some of his friends, one of whom inquired of him if he was ready to be burned? "No," "I would not like to be burned now; but then I am to be burned to-morrow, and don't need burning grace 'till then; and I know it will be given when needed."

Another martyr, of a timid, sensitive nature, while being led to the stake was somewhat alarmed, and exclaimed, "Oh, I can't burn; I can't burn!" Some priests near him, hearing these words and supposing that he was willing to recant to save his life, spoke to him and offered him life. Indignantly refusing this offer, and coming in sight of the place of execution, and receiving abundant evidence of the presence of God, he exclaimed, "Now I can burn! Now I can burn!"

A young lady, the daughter of pious parents, one of whom—her mother—had already preceded her to heaven, was afflicted with consumption. Although long a consistent Christian, she shrunk from the idea of dying. Her devoted father did all he could by his counsels and prayers to prepare her for the trying event which it was evident was near at hand. Entering her room one morning, her father saw that a change had come

upon his daughter. Her countenance gave evidence of a calm, resigned, and joyful frame of mind. Perceiving her father she said, "O father, I had such a sweet dream last night. I dreamed that I came to a river over which I had to pass. It was wide and deep, and the wind was blowing, making the waves roll very fearfully. As I stood on the brink, fearing to enter, I saw a person coming down a hill on the other side; and standing on the bank and stretching out her hands she said, 'Sister, come.' I looked, and saw it was my sister. The river did not seem so wide, nor dark, nor stormy. Presently I saw another person come down; and standing beside sister, she stretched forth her hands and said, 'Come!' I saw that it was mother. It got much lighter; and the river seemed so narrow that I thought I could easily go over. Then a shining person came and stood between mother and sister; and reaching out his hands he said, 'Daughter, come!' Oh, it was Jesus! I forgot the river, for he stretched forth his hands and lifted me over. O father, I am not afraid to die now."

The two following cases came under the writer's own observation. I was present once when the physician informed the family that one of its members, a person well advanced in life, and

long an humble Christian, was in a critical condition. The afflicted one saw by the anxious countenances of the friends that her case was critical, and became much alarmed. "Oh," said she, "must I die and go into vast eternity—so unexpectedly!" One who stood by thus addressed her: "The doctor says there is no immediate danger. Do not become alarmed and confused. Look the matter squarely in the face, and all will be well. Don't stop to reason with the enemy as to whether or not you have been converted and are a Christian, and have been faithful or unfaithful, but go right to Jesus as you are, leaving all perplexing questions to him. Throw yourself upon his mercy, upon his promises, and trust him to save you,—not for what you have been, or have tried to do, nor for what you are now, but for his own sake—for what he has done and promised." The advice was followed, and in a few hours all fear was gone and great peace filled her heart; and she exclaimed repeatedly, "Now I feel that I am not afraid to die."

An aged man, a professed Christian for many years, upright and honest, but not very clear or demonstrative in his religious experience, was brought to the gate of death by a lingering disease. Said he to the writer, while great peace

was depicted upon his countenance, "All the days of my life I was afraid of death, and always put it as far from me as I could. Now, when I am up with it, and am brought to look it in the face, I find for the first time that I have no fear whatever. God has done so much for me and has taken all fear away so completely that I desire, yea long to depart to be with Christ."

Instances like the foregoing might be given without number; but let these suffice. In our concluding chapter—Crossing the Jordan of Death—testimony to the power of divine grace in death will be given, by which it will be seen that in the fact, as well as in the prospect, death is shorn of its terror to the believer, and that all-sufficient grace is always given for that trying emergency. I conclude this chapter with the following beautiful lines, expressive of the fact of all-sufficient grace given at the near approach of death, even to the disrobing it of its terrors, and that to those who feared and trembled when viewing the monster at a distance :

" These Border-Lands are calm and still,
 And solemn are their silent shades ;
 And my heart welcomes them, until
 The light of life's long evening fades.

" I heard them spoken of with dread,—
 As fearful and unquiet places ;
 Shades, where the living and the dead
 Look sadly in each other's faces.

“ But since Thy hand hath led me here,
And I have seen the Border-Land;
Seen the dark river flowing near,
Stood on its brink as now I stand,

“ There has been nothing to alarm
My trembling soul ; how could I fear
While thus encircled in thine arm ?
I never felt Thee half so near.”

CHAPTER XIII.

SALVATION COMPLETED.

“ Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” (Phil. i. 6.)

An elucidation of the scripture placed at the head of this chapter seems to be necessary to complete the general subject of this book. I remark, then,—

I. Religion in the soul is *a work*.

By a work, I mean that true religion is a living, acting, working, and assimilating principle implanted in the soul, and kept alive therein by the Holy Spirit, and not a faultless observance of the ordinances, ceremonies, and duties of religion. The latter may exist without a single element of saving grace in the heart. The former, though small in its beginnings, will, if the conditions of spiritual prosperity are observed, enlarge and increase until its final consummation in heaven.

II. Religion in its operation in the heart is a *good work*. The quality of a given thing is esti-

mated by what it cost, or for what it will do for its possessor. Religion tested by this standard is of inestimable value. It cost the highest price in all the universe of God, even the life of his only-begotten Son; and it secures for its possessor deliverance from the guilt, condemnation, and power of sin here, and eternal life and glory in the life to come. It is good, too, for what it does for individuals, for families, for communities, and for nations; good in its origin, good in its objects and designs, good in its present results, and good in what it proposes to do in the life to come. It is good in its beginnings, good in its constant progression, and doubly good in its final results. It is good for the young and it is good for the old; it is good in health and it is good in sickness; it is good in prosperity and it is good in adversity; it is good in life and it is good in death. It is good, supremely good, for what it saves us from, as well as what it saves us too. Oh, it is indeed a good work. Lord, evermore give us more and still more of it.

III. True religion has its *origin in God*.

Our salvation in its commencement, as well as in its completion, is entirely of God. He first entertained purposes of mercy concerning us; and the expression of those purposes was the

gift of his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. And by the complete and perfect satisfaction which Christ made to the law upon Calvary, every obstacle in the way of the salvation of the soul of every individual of our race, so far as God is concerned, has been entirely taken away; and it may now be said to us as it was declared to the church at Philadelphia, "Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it."

The only difficulty now is with man himself. He rejects and neglects the all-sufficient remedy which Heaven has provided, and which is so freely proffered and urgently pressed upon his acceptance. Hence says the Son of God, "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life."

In proof of the fact that all the difficulties in the way of man's salvation are with himself alone, and that God is already reconciled in Christ and only waits the sinner's acceptance of the proffered mercy to pass upon him the evidences of perfect reconciliation and pardon, let the following scriptures be considered: "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to-wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us

the word of reconciliation. 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." (II. Cor. v. 18-20.)

The difficulty in the way of the salvation of each and every individual may now be said to be lodged in his *will*. It is the controlling faculty of the mind; and as it determines, so will be the moral state of the individual. God will not coerce the will; for to do so would destroy the moral agency and reduce us to mere machines. He will only enlighten the understanding, convict the conscience, and influence the judgment. But the will is left free to choose or refuse; and so long as it retains its perverseness, God himself may be successfully resisted. If the will chooses God and his service, our salvation is assured; if it refuses, our damnation is inevitable. This explanation gives the true import of the words of the apostle in II. Corinthians viii. 12—"If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not."

IV. Salvation, while originating with God, is first developed *within the heart of the individual*.

Man's method is to commence the work of reformation on the outside and work inwardly; God's method is to commence inside and work

outwardly. This fact is exemplified in the case of the Pharisees, to whom our Lord said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." (Matt. xxiii. 25, 26.) Again he said on another occasion, "That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man." (Mark vii. 20-23.)

The seat of the moral disease, it will be seen, is *within the heart*; and the remedy, to be effectual, must always be applied where the disease is seated. Phariseeism always has, and yet does, work on the outside. It offers to cleanse the heart by ordinances, sacraments, the wearing of peculiar garbs, etc. God's plan is to work from within, where the disease is seated. He makes the fountain clean and the stream will be clean of necessity. He cleanses the heart, and the life will be right as a consequence. With propriety, then,

he said, "The kingdom of God is within you." It is the leaven which a woman hid in the meal, and which leavened the whole lump. The grace of God in the heart will always make the life right. Outward reformation only leaves the heart as foul as a cage of unclean birds.

But I remark again, and lastly,-

V. God, who commenced this work of grace in our hearts, *will carry it on to full completion, at the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The word "*perform*," as it is used in the text we are considering, means *to perfect, to complete, to finish*. The truth it teaches is that God, who has commenced this work within us, will also complete, perfect, and finish it. This completion will take place in "*the day of Jesus Christ*;" that is, when Christ shall come again in the clouds of heaven at the last day, termed pre-eminently the day of Jesus Christ, for then he shall appear in his own proper glory, and not as the man of sorrows as formerly. When Christ shall thus appear in his glory, his saints, living and dead, shall be changed into the same glory and be made like unto him. This glorification of the saints is what the Savior meant in his intercessory prayer when he said, "And the glory which thou gavest me *I have given them*; that they may be one, even as we

are one." (John xvii. 22.) When this consummation shall have been reached, then, and then only, may it be said that grace has completed its work for us. But shall it then have done for us all it can do? We know not. The Bible reveals nothing further than the resurrection, glorification, and exaltation of the saints. Anything beyond this is left for future revelation, as the interminable future of the redeemed and saved may demand.

Jesus Christ, then, is the model after which the saints are to be fashioned; for God has predestinated us "to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) We may become like him, as he now is, only after the similitude of his earthly life, of which suffering composed a large part. We shall be made like him, as he now is, hereafter, at the last day. And as Christ was perfected through suffering (Heb. ii. 10.), and as suffering is the common lot of the family of God, and through suffering the redeemed shall reach their final destination in heaven (Rev. vii. 14.), and as Christ has promised that those who share in his sufferings here shall partake of his glory hereafter, we should rather rejoice in our tribulations as the true evidences of our divine

relationship, as evidences that we are in the true way to life everlasting hereafter, and as the certain pledges of the glory which awaits us. We need not, then, count upon bright days here, nor expect to pass through life without storms and tempests. Peace within we may expect—this is promised us; but peace without is not our lot. It was not the Master's lot. It has never been the lot of his followers. It can not be ours. Tribulations and trials are the common heritage of the family of God. It is the family badge and the mark by which they are to be known, for by it they are most like their Elder Brother.

God, then, is mercifully preparing his children here for their proper place in the kingdom, to be revealed at the last day. And as the material for the first temple was all shaped, squared, smoothed, and polished on the ground where it was cut, or quarried, so that when it was brought together each piece fitted the place it was designed for so completely that the sound of hammer or saw was not heard in further preparation in the erection of the sacred edifice, so God is shaping, squaring, smoothing, and polishing his material here for the temple hereafter, of which they shall form a part; and when all the scattered household of God shall be gathered together in the skies, per-

fect unity and harmony will prevail, and each one will be found to be just fitted for the place intended. To accomplish this work of preparation, the saw, the hammer, and the file are needed; and by them we are being made more and more like unto the perfect pattern after which we are to be conformed. Are we undergoing extraordinary trials and afflictions? Extraordinary care bestowed upon any of the material of which the temple was composed implied extraordinary hardness and unfitness, or that it was designed for more than an ordinary position in the sacred edifice. The analogy points to exaltation in heaven in proportion to our suffering here. Had not Paul this fact in his mind when he declared that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." (II. Cor. iv. 17.) And also in that other of his sayings, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." (Rom. viii. 18.)

Upon this last passage Hannah More has remarked: "'I reckon,' says Paul, like a man skilled in spiritual arithmetic. 'I reckon,' after a due estimate of their comparative value, 'that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy

to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.'” “No man,” she continues, Of the sufferings of the present world he had shared more largely than any other man. Of the glory that shall be revealed, he had a glimpse granted to no other man. He had heard the words of God and seen the vision of the Almighty; and the result of this privileged experience was, he ‘desired to depart and be with Christ;’ he desired to escape from this valley of tears; he was impatient to recover the celestial vision, eager to perpetuate the momentary foretastes of the glories of immortality.”

If there is any one fact more than another that I would want to be assured of beyond the possibility of a doubt, it is whether the work of grace commenced in my heart shall be carried on to its completion? Or shall I, by reason of my weakness or unfaithfulness, prevent this consummation? The apostle, as if anticipating this very anxiety, and intending to meet it, uses language which precisely meets the case,—“Being confident of *this very thing*, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” He doubtless bases his confidence upon God’s own declared purposes, as well as upon his invariable method of always completing

every work which he commences. This work, then, will have its completion when our Lord comes again in the clouds of heaven at the last day, called by pre-eminence "*the day of Jesus Christ.*" St. Peter referred to this day when he declared that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (II. Peter iii. 10.)

The Apostle John referring to that day declared, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, *we shall be like him.*" (I. John iii. 2.) Said St. Paul, "Our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

The same apostle again says: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii. 3, 4.)

St. Paul speaks still further of the coming of Christ and the glory to be revealed at that time, as follows: "If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." (I. Thess. iv. 14-17.)

In his Epistle to Titus, St. Paul, speaking of the coming of our Lord and the glorification of the saints as the great motive to patience, faithfulness, and diligence, uses this language: "Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ." (Titus ii. 12, 13.)

In the apocalyptic vision the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the glorification of the

saints and their gathering together at the marriage-feast in the skies is placed in Revelations xix. 1-9. The rejoicings of the redeemed hosts at that event will be found in Revelations vii. 9-17.

Dear afflicted followers of our Lord Jesus Christ, let us be patient in all our afflictions. Our God will not inflict one stroke more than is necessary to accomplish his purposes concerning us. And when those purposes shall have been accomplished, and we shall have been made fit for our place in the heavenly temple, the shaping, the cutting, the polishing, shall cease, and we shall be gathered to our proper place. Then our trials will have ended forever. Then God himself, as if unwilling to commit this pleasant duty to other hands, will wipe away all tears from our eyes. Then we shall abide forever where there shall be "no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away."

"Until the day break, and the shadows flee away," let us go up into the "mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense," and with the gifted Bickersteth, in his "*Yesterday, To-day, and Forever*," catch a view of the coming glory.

" In a glimpse,
In the individual twinkling of an eye,
The ground on which we stood, trembled and gave;

And I, a sense of rapture like new life
 Through every limb discoursing, found myself
 Apparell'd in celestial robes, what once
 Was mortal clothed in immortality,
 What was corrupt in incorruption lost.

* * * * *

“ The Bridegroom met the Bride alone. Himself
 In glorified humanity supreme,
 Incarnate Light; and she like him in glory,
 No spot or wrinkle on her holy brow,
 No film upon her robes of dazzling white,
 Most beautiful, most glorious; every saint
 Perfect in individual perfectness;
 And each to each so fitly interlink'd,
 Join'd and compact, these countless millions seem'd
 One body by One Spirit inspired and moved.
 The various members knit in faultless grace,
 The feeblest as the strongest necessary,
 Nor schism, nor discord, nor excess, nor lack;
 The Ideal of all beauty realized,
 The Impersonation of delight and love.”

CHAPTER XIV.

OBSERVATIONS FROM THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS.

“Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.” (Solomon’s Song iv. 6.)

It was upon a mountain that the Savior stood when Satan showed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glories of them, and offered to give them unto him if he would fall down and worship him. It was upon a mountain that Moses stood when he viewed the promised land, into which he was not permitted to enter because of his disobedience at Meribah. It was from “a mountain great and high” that the revelator stood when the apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem, descending out of heaven, was shown him. It was doubtless upon an eminence that Abram stood when the Lord said unto him, “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for-

ever." It was from the top of Lebanon and Amana and Shenir and Hermon, and from the mountains of the leopards, and the lions' dens, that the heavenly Bridegroom called his spouse to follow him to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense, there to abide until the day break and the shadows flee away. And it was from the Delectable Mountains—the same, doubtless, as the mountain of myrrh of Solomon's Song,—that the pilgrims to Mount Zion had such an extended and delightful view of the Celestial City. The author of *Pilgrim's Progress* properly locates the Delectable Mountains at a late stage in the believer's pilgrimage, and near the end of his journey. Symbolizing, as it does, an advanced state of Christian experience, this mountain affords a favorable position for extensive observation, both retrospective and prospective. Taking a position upon one of its highest peaks, all of which have been appropriately named by the shepherds who reside there, and who are always ready to entertain and instruct pilgrims, as Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere, we invite the reader to share in our observations.

The Delectable Mountains, with their gardens, vineyards, meadows, orchards, pleasant fruits,

dainty flowers, and fountains of clear and sparkling waters, were all provided by the king of the Celestial City for the accommodation of pilgrims. Here they may find rest, soul-refreshment, and precious companionship. Here the Heavenly Jerusalem is in full sight. Here the kind shepherds are ever delighted to entertain pilgrims, and show them things which will be to their profit and edification. Oh, it is truly, as its name indicates, a delightful place indeed. Here we love to linger, and feel loath to leave, were it not that our King has provided something still better for us.

But before we proceed on our farther journey let us go up into the mountain's highest peak and take some observations. We turn first to retrospect the way by which we have come. We recall to our remembrance the difficulties we encountered, the discouragements we met, the enemies we contended with, and the victories we were enabled to achieve. These solemn retrospects are common to pilgrims; and they are fraught with comfort or reproach, according as life has been faithful or otherwise.

“ 'Tis good to cast a look awhile
Upon the troubles of the past;
When heaven and earth, without a smile,
With clouds and storms were overcast.”

A traveler in South America relates that he ascended a mountain through what he supposed was an undergrowth of weeds. But in the morning, looking back from the mountain's summit, he saw that what he supposed were weeds was the sensitive plant, and that the crooked, zig-zag way by which he had come was plainly marked, even down to the foot of the mountain. So from the position we occupy, our past wanderings, from the commencement of our pilgrimage to the present, are all plainly marked, and we will have no difficulty, but much cause for humiliation, and also for great rejoicing, in tracing out our past course.

Far away in the distance is the City of Destruction. What cause for gratitude to God that, from our earliest recollection, we were dissatisfied with that place and desired to become a pilgrim. These early impressions, under God, are the result of the godly example and faithful instructions of pious parents. They were pilgrims, and have crossed the river and now rest in heaven. After our pilgrim life is ended we expect to join them in the pilgrim's home.

At a very early period of life we entered upon our pilgrimage. Well do we remember the discouraging struggle we had in the Slough of De-

spond. Some of its filth adhered to us for a long time afterward; and even yet it is sometimes seen upon our garment. At the wicket-gate we long waited for entrance. It was at length opened, and we entered in and became a pilgrim indeed. There, too, stands the cross, at the sight of which the burden fell from our back. The House of the Interpreter stands in the same region, where we found pleasant lodging, and where we received wholesome instruction. Its chief inmate, the Holy Spirit, kindly volunteered to accompany us upon our pilgrimage. We have found him a pleasant and useful companion. He is perfectly familiar with all the way, and even guides our feet, as well as protects and comforts us. The Hill of Difficulty lies away in the distance. We succeeded in climbing it; and mercifully, by taking heed to the instructions of our guide, escaped the danger of losing our roll by resting in the arbor, placed there by Satan. There, too, in that same neighborhood, we found entertainment in the house called Beautiful. Its associations, its privileges, as well as its opportunities for Christian labor, have all proved to be very agreeable; and we have never felt like going elsewhere for either companionship, pleasure, or a field of usefulness.

“ I love thy kingdom, Lord,—
The house of thine abode,—
The church our blest Redeemer saved
With his own precious blood.”

“ For her my tears shall fall ;
For her my prayers ascend ;
To her my cares and toils be giv'n
Till toils and cares shall end.”

There, in the same locality, just this side of the Hill of Difficulty, we, too, met Mr. Worldly Wiseman, who directed us to Mr. Legality for deliverance; and had not Evangelist come to our assistance, and directed us to the right way, the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai would have overwhelmed us. Mr. Worldly Wiseman still lives and misleads many pilgrims. We caution others to be on the lookout for him. He will offer you the church and her ordinances instead of Christ. Beware of him. He has ruined many pilgrims. St. Paul doubtless fell into his hands; and the seventh chapter of Romans details his struggles for liberty. The eighth chapter assures us that Evangelist directed him aright, and that he took his counsel.

Soon after meeting Evangelist and heeding his counsel, we were joined by a fellow-traveler, one Faithful. He long journeyed with us, was an excellent companion and instructor, but long since has crossed over the river to the Celestial

City. God has given us many others since. They have proved pleasant traveling companions; but our heart yet delights to cleave to Brother Faithful. We shall meet him on the other side. We, in company with Brother Faithful, passed through Vanity Fair. By taking heed to the instruction of the Interpreter, we passed through this place, so fatal to many pilgrims, without harm. We, too, came in sight of the lions, and found, as have all other pilgrims, that they were chained by the side of the road, and could not reach us unless we deviated from the path. No lion nor ravenous beast can ever go upon the King's Highway. There, too, we met the great Apollyon in fearful conflict; but Immanuel came to our rescue. Then, in Doubting Castle, Giant Despair long held us a prisoner. Oh, we shudder at the remembrance of the bitterness of our experience while in his dreary prison. Despair, indeed, settled down upon us, and, like Christian and Hopeful under similar circumstances, life became a burden and death desirable. But our Immanuel again interposed and delivered us. Blessed be his name. Our experience during this dreary part of our pilgrimage is fitly expressed in the following lines:

“ It was a dark, untravel'd road,
In which my steps were called to go;
The path of many a weary load,
And where it led I did not know.

“ A weary road with rivers high ;
 Wild beasts were standing on the rocks ;
 And clouds came drifting through the sky,
 Fill'd deep with fires and thunder shocks.

“ But through the clouds, and through the flame,
 And foaming floods, as on I went,
 A voice of hope and cheering came,—
 ‘ *Fear not to go where God has sent.* ’ ”

But now we are upon the Delectable Mountains. Strange that they are so near Doubting Castle, and that so many pilgrims are caught therein. Here, however, all is beautiful and delightful. Here in the gardens and vineyards we find many pilgrims, all of whom have much to say of the many deliverances wrought for them by Immanuel. Here, too, the shepherds tell us that the heavenly Jerusalem can be seen on a bright day through their perspective-glass. We will ask the shepherds to permit us to look through it, and tell our readers what we may see.

Oh, how delightful is this place! How inspiring and invigorating is the pure atmosphere! How sweet and nourishing the clusters from these vineyards, and the fruit from these orchards! How pure and reviving is the water from these fountains,—foretastes, doubtless, of the Fountain of Life in heaven. And, then, how grand, how inspiring, the view from these lofty peaks! We

feel like resting here awhile; but a voice says to us, "Arise ye, get ye hence; for this is not thy rest!"

" I see a hand you can not see,
Which beckons me away;
I hear a voice you can not hear,
Forbidding me to stay."

But before we proceed farther let us erect a monument of thanksgiving to God for bringing us safely thus far upon our heavenly pilgrimage, and upon it write,—

" Here I'll raise my Ebenezer;
Hither by thy help I've come;
And I hope by thy good pleasure,
Safely to arrive at home."

We now turn in the direction of the heavenly Jerusalem, and see just ahead of us, and adjoining the Delectable Mountains, indeed but a continuance of them, the land of Beulah. (See Isaiah lxii. 4, 12.) Here it is that the sun shines day and night. Here the air is pure, sweet, and fragrant with the odor of camphire, spikenard, saffron, calamus, cinnamon, frankincense, myrrh, and aloes of the king's gardens. Here are the king's orchards and vineyards, the fruit of which the pilgrims are ever permitted to eat. Here is no lack of corn and wine, for all is in abundance. Here the singing of birds is ever heard, and here

the bells of the Celestial City are ever heard to ring. Here the noise of the heavenly trumpeters, with the effects of the fruit they eat, prevent the pilgrims from sleeping, and yet they receive as much refreshment as if they slept ever so soundly. Here they are in sight of the Celestial City, the inhabitants of which occasionally come over and walk with the pilgrims. Here the pilgrims walk to and fro, their eyes filled with celestial visions, and hearing nothing, seeing nothing, feeling nothing, smelling nothing, nor tasting nothing that is offensive. Here the weary pilgrims betake themselves to rest, and have more rejoicing than in any part of their past pilgrimage. Here the Slough of Despond, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and Doubting Castle can not so much as be seen. Here, on the borders of heaven, the pilgrims have a better view of the Celestial City than at any other time. Here the contract between the bride and the Bridegroom is renewed; and here voices from out of the city are heard, saying, "Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh! behold, his reward is with him." Here all the inhabitants of the country call them, "The holy people, the redeemed of the Lord." Surely, this is the place of which we sing,—

“ I’ve reached the land of corn and wine,
 And all its riches freely mine ;
 Here shines undimm’d one blissful day,
 For all my night has pass’d away.

CHORUS :

- “ O Beulah land, sweet Beulah land,
 As on the highest mount I stand,
 I look away across the sea,
 Where mansions are prepared for me,
 And view the shining, glory shore,
 My heav’n, my home for evermore.
- “ The Savior comes and walks with me,
 And sweet communion here have we ;
 He gently leads me with his hand,
 For this is heaven’s border-land.
- “ A sweet perfume upon the breeze,
 Is borne from ever-vernal trees,
 And flow’rs that never fading grow,
 Where streams of life forever flow.
- “ The zephyrs seem to float to me,
 Sweet sounds of heaven’s melody,
 As angels with the white-robed throng,
 Join in the sweet redemption’s song.”

“ But what is Beulah land, where is it, and what does it symbolize in Christian experience ? ”

Beulah means *married*. The Christian experience which it indicates is that deep, abiding, and all-satisfying intercourse between Husband and wife—the Lord Jesus Christ and his bride.

“ But,” it may be inquired, “ are not all believers married unto Christ ; and have not all this experience ? ”

All truly converted persons are married unto Christ; but many do not fully realize their divine relationship, and as a consequence do not abidingly possess the precious experience of full salvation. Failing to obtain, by reason of their worldliness and want of consecration, a satisfying portion in Christ, they seek in the world, and in worldly vanities, pursuits, and associations, for what they feel to be necessary to complete and perfect happiness. Hence their dissatisfaction, inconsistencies, and legal entanglements. But where Christ is fully and constantly accepted, and the world, his foe and rival, is entirely forsaken, the experience of complete and perfect satisfaction will be attained and retained. This is entire consecration. This is entire sanctification. *This is Beulah-land experience.*

This experience is found throughout the entire Scriptures. Some books, and chapters of others, are entirely devoted to it. That precious portion of God's holy Word, the Song of Solomon, is the Beulah land of the Scriptures. Indeed, it can be understood only by those in the enjoyment of the experience it details.

But let us hear some of the expressions which fall from the lips of the happy inhabitants of this delightful place. Says one: "The winter is past,

the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land." Says another: "As the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of En-gedi."

"The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills."

"My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth among the lilies."

"I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night."

"I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love."

"His mouth is most sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem."

Says another happy pilgrim: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want."

Says one: "This is the bleating of Messiah's sheep—I shall not want! I shall not want!!"

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalms xxiii.)

This is the language of entire consecration. This is the experience of entire sanctification. This is the Beulah land of the Christian's pilgrimage. Contrast these utterances, and the evangelical spirit which they breathe, with the utterances of the seventh chapter of Romans, and the legalism which it expresses, and the difference will at once appear.

The distinguished author of the "Pilgrim's Progress" locates the Land of Beulah at a late period of the believer's pilgrimage and near the end of his life. We claim that while this experi-

ence is usually attained at this period, it may be obtained and retained at any time after entering into the wicket-gate. There is a by-way to hell, as the immortal dreamer has shown us in his allegory; and there is a nearer way to the Land of Beulah than by the Valley of the Shadow of Death and Doubting Castle. This nearer way is Entire Consecration and Faith.

“A highway shall be there, and a way,” says Isaiah (xxxv. 8.). The way is *one*; but it is a *highway* to those only who consecrate themselves fully, and believe for it; and *a way* only to those who do not comply with these conditions.

In the prophecy of Ezekiel (xlvi.) the stream of salvation is represented as but ankle-deep; then up to the loins; then a great and mighty river, which no man can cross over. The stream is *one*; but it will be deep or shallow, according to the faith exercised. To full consecration and strong faith, it is a mighty river,—even “waters to swim in;” to the weak and partially consecrated, it is but ankle-deep.

Then there are some who locate the Land of Beulah at the commencement of the Christian's pilgrimage, claiming that the soul is entirely sanctified when it is regenerated. These make no distinction between being sanctified *in part*, and

in whole, or *wholly*, as the apostle states it in I. Thessalonians v. 23. This view finds no encouragement in either God's word or the universal faith of the church of the past. It is of recent origin; is an innovation upon the faith of the church, and is contrary to the analogy of the Christian's life as taught in the Pilgrim's Progress.

We turn now to resume our observations, and see in the distance a river through which we must pass. We will not, however, consider here the passage of this river, reserving this for our next and concluding chapter. Beyond this river, upon the everlasting hills of Zion, the Holy City, the New Jerusalem is faintly visible. That city is the dwelling-place of God. To it the Savior ascended from the mount of Olives. Into it Enoch and Elijah also ascended, without passing down through the dark river of death. To it patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, and all other pilgrims who have preceded us, have gone. There they now abide; and there our pilgrimage will end, for this is the pilgrim's home.

But little, comparatively, is known of heaven. The Bible, while revealing with unmistakable distinctness the way to reach heaven, discloses but little of its interior excellences. Said a trav-

eler as he approached the city of Baltimore, by the Chesapeake Bay, "That light in the distance can not be a light-house, for it does not show us Baltimore. It does not reveal its streets and buildings, and its inhabitants and their mode of living." The light-house is not intended to reveal Baltimore, but to lead us safely to it. So God's word; it does not propose to disclose all the glories of heaven, but rather to guide us to it. Like the light-house, the Bible points out the true way, as well as reveals the shoals and rocks and quicksands which threaten our safety.

A missionary who labored in some far-western field said once in our hearing, that one Sabbath he left his home to preach in a distant village. His way lay through a large prairie, which was grown up with tall grass. While crossing this prairie a snow-storm came down upon him and he lost his way. Night set in and he was yet lost in this trackless field. Remembering that he had a compass in his pocket, he struck a light and took his bearings by that compass, and regulated his course accordingly. In a short time he reached his destination. God's word is the sure compass! Consult it, obey its teaching, and it will lead you to heaven.

It is said that "on the shores of the Adriatic

the wives of fishermen, whose husbands have gone far out upon the deep, are in the habit at eventide of going down to the sea-shore and singing, as female voices only can, the first stanza of a beautiful hymn. After they have sung it they listen till they hear, borne by the winds across the desert sea, the second stanza, sung by their faithful husbands as they are tossed by the gale upon the waves. Perhaps, if we could listen, we too might hear in this desert world of ours, some sound, some whisper, borne from afar, to remind us that there is a heaven, a home, and that our departed friends have not forgotten us."

A traveler crossing the Atlantic Ocean says that on approaching the shores of Europe, one bright and beautiful morning he observed a peculiar fragrance in the atmosphere. Inquiring of the captain of the vessel as to what caused it, he was informed that it was the odor from the orchards and vineyards along the coasts which they were approaching. So the land-breezes from Canaan are wafted to us, and increase our desire to reach that happy place. We welcome these precious breezes as harbingers of the fruitfulness, the grandeur, and the glory of that better land.

Probably the reason why the Scriptures reveal no more of the glories of heaven, and the bright

visions thereof, which have been granted to a few, and these only in their dying hours, are not permitted to be made known, is, that if the full glories of the heavenly state were revealed here, travelers thitherward would become dissatisfied with their wilderness life and become unduly anxious to depart. Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, tells us that Christian and Hopeful caught a glimpse of the heavenly Jerusalem when nearing the River of Death; and both fell into a spell of home-sickness, desiring to depart at once and be with Christ, and were for a time unable to proceed on their pilgrimage. God, then, properly withholds these transporting scenes until so near the end of the journey that they do not permanently injure pilgrims, reserving the full vision of eternal glory for immortal eyes.

And yet visions of heaven, in some few cases so glorious, so transporting, and so encouraging, have been given, and we narrate them here.

St. Paul was caught up into the "third heaven," "into paradise," "into heaven," and heard and saw things which he declared he was not permitted to reveal. (II. Cor. xii. 4.) Rev. William Tennent, a godly minister of the gospel, above a century ago, was favored in a like manner with St. Paul, and like him, he was not per-

mitted to tell what he had seen or heard. Payson, that eminently holy man, was highly favored in his last hours with visions of heaven and of its angelic inhabitants. Even the sweet music of the redeemed was wafted to his eager and enraptured ears.

Senator Foote, who died some years ago in Washington, caught a glimpse of the everlasting city just before his redeemed spirit left the shore of time for its home in heaven; and he exultingly exclaimed, "I see! I see!! Beautiful! Beautiful!! The pearly gates stand open wide!"

Rev. H. Y. Humelbaugh, of our own church, when dying, exclaimed in holy ecstasy, "O Doctor, what a beautiful land lies just before my eyes!"

"Oh, heaven is nearer than mortals think,
When they look with trembling dread,
At the misty future that stretches on,
From the silent home of the dead.

" 'Tis no lonely isle on a boundless main,
No brilliant, but distant shore,
When the lovely ones who are called away,
Must go to return no more.

"No, heaven is near us; the mighty veil
Of mortality blinds the eye,
That we can not see the angel bands
On the shores of eternity.

"Yet oft in the hours of holy thought,
To the thirsting soul is given
The power to pierce through the mist of sense,
To the beauteous scenes of heaven."

We come now to consider heaven as it is revealed in the Scriptures, and inquire,—

I. *What does the word of God reveal as to the splendor and glory of heaven?*

Is heaven a *place*, or is it only a state, or condition? Says Dr. Howard Crosby, "We are accustomed to say that space and time are only conditions of our finite and composite natures, and that to unfettered spirits there would be recognition of neither time nor space. Whether this be so or not, no man can tell. It is a transcendentalism that it is folly to talk about. Time and space are absolute necessities to our thinking. Every conception of our mind is formed on them as a foundation; and we can have no idea of God himself except as in time and space. However, we must—whether we will or not,—take the word 'place,' as used in the words of our Lord, John xiv. 3, in a *literal sense*. Even if it be not literally a place, we think of it as a place—for we can not think of it in any other way. And, moreover, from the words being used when our Savior might have said simply, 'I go to *prepare* for you,' we may infer that it is actually a place, as we understand the word, that is meant here."

The scriptural representations of heaven, to our mind, clearly teach that heaven is a *place*—a

city; and as such, its splendor and glory are described as follows:

1. *The external glory of heaven.*

The Revelator says of the angel, "He carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasperstone, clear as crystal; and had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: on the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, a hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel. And the

building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl." (Rev. xxi. 10-21.)

We notice,—

2. *The internal glory of heaven.*

"And the street of the city was pure gold, as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." (Rev. xxi. 21-23.)

"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and

the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." (Rev. xxii. 1-5.)

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." (Rev. xv. 2.)

Thus we have heaven described as a *city* of twelve thousand furlongs in extent, each way; that is, it is fifteen hundred miles in width, in length, and also in height,—for "the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal." Its walls, built of jasper,—*blood-red*,—are "a hundred and fifty and four cubits;" that is, two hundred and sixteen feet high. These stand upon twelve foundations,—most likely twelve ranges or layers of precious stones, the names of which are given,—and upon each of which is engraved the name of an apostle. The gates—twelve in number,

three on each side,—are each of one pearl. The streets are paved with pure gold, clear and transparent as glass or crystal, which reflected the glory of the Lamb like unto “a sea of glass mingled with fire.”

Such is the *material* splendor of heaven, if materialism applies at all to anything connected with the abode of the redeemed. Can the human imagination conceive of anything so grand, so transcendently magnificent as this? Even if it be but symbolical, the glory and splendor of the place will be great, as the reality always exceeds the symbol. Says Dr. Crosby, “Imagery may be valuable as a help, provided we do not rest our hope and affections and desires upon the images, but upon the ineffable and indescribable beyond.” But is heaven a city only; and is there not variety there in scenery and landscape as here? It seems clear from the Revelator’s account of the new heaven and new earth succeeding the present, which is burned up at the descent of the Judge, at the last day, into which the new Jerusalem descends, that a new and vast world shall succeed this upon which we now live, and that the heavenly Jerusalem, as already described, is but the metropolis of this new world.

There seems to be a want of harmony between

the statement made in Matthew xxv. 34, and John xiv. 2, 3. How can it be explained? In the former the Judge is represented as saying to the righteous at his right hand, in the last judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom *prepared for you from the foundation of the world;*" in the latter, Jesus said to his disciples, when about to leave them, "I go to *prepare a place for you.*" In the first, the kingdom—the place—has already been prepared; in the second, it is yet incomplete. It will be seen that the latter quotation stands in connection with the words—"In my Father's house are many mansions." These "many mansions," doubtless, are the innumerable worlds in the vast universe, called here, "My Father's house." To these worlds the redeemed from earth may hereafter be permitted to go, and with the inhabitants of which they may mingle. But as some of these worlds may have become disorganized by sin, like our own, their reconstruction, at the expiration of their probation, may be the preparation to which the Savior referred.

But where is heaven? The theory held by some eminent men upon this question is worthy of consideration,—that as the sun is the center of our solar system, around which other planets and

their satellites revolve, so somewhere in the vast universe of God there is a great central world, around which all the other systems revolve; and in this central world God specially dwells, and directs and controls all his works. That central world is heaven. It is the dwelling-place of the redeemed. Speaking of heaven as a city, Thomas Guthrie said, "It is a city never built with hands, nor hoary with the years of time; a city whose inhabitants no census has numbered; a city through whose streets rush no tide of business, nor nodding hearse creeps slowly with its burden to the tomb; a city without griefs or graves, without sin or sorrow, without births or burials, without marriages or mournings; a city which glories in having Jesus for its King, angels for its guards, saints for its citizens; whose walls are salvation, and whose gates are praise."

" Never eye

Of mortal man had seen, nor ear had heard,
 Though ravish'd with the distant fame thereof,
 Glory like this; the handiwork of God,
 And fashion'd of heaven's choice material, light
 Through which the Light of lights translucent shone;
 The mansion of creation's Architect;
 The palace of the everlasting King;
 Its gates of pearl, its edifice of gold;
 Its walls on twelve foundations superposed
 (Of which the divine realities the earth
 Can only lend its feeblest semblances),

The jasper streak'd with many a tender dye,
 The sapphire of celestial blue serene,
 The agate once Chalcedon's peerless boast,
 The fathomless repose of emerald,
 The ruby, and the blood-tinctured sardonyx,
 The chrysolite like amber sheathing fire,
 The beryl emulous of ocean's sheen,
 The opal-tinted topaz clear as glass,
 The soft, pale purple of the chrysoptase,
 The Melibœan hyacinth, and last
 The lucid violet of amethyst.
 But not of pearly gates, or golden streets,
 Or bulwarks, or foundations built of jewels,
 Thought we that day, or lingered to admire;
 For we were on our way to meet our God."

But what can we learn from the Scriptures of—

II. *The condition of the redeemed in heaven?*

In order to consider this question with the care which its importance demands, I shall take up the following points in the order stated.

1. Do the spirits of departed saints go immediately into the presence of God, and do they enter into a state of conscious happiness; or do they go into a state of unconsciousness, and thus remain until the resurrection, at the last day?

In every age of the Christian church, from the apostolic age until the present, it has been held that the spirits of departed saints go immediately into a place of conscious, happy existence, and remain there until the resurrection of the body, at the last day, when soul and body, reunited and glorified, dwell forever in heaven.

That the place into which the spirits of departed saints go at death, though sometimes called paradise, is heaven, is proved by the following scriptures.

The Redeemer said to the dying malefactor at his side, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke xxiii. 43.) St. Paul, in narrating his wonderful vision, uses the terms "third heaven" and "paradisè" synonymously, thereby proving by inspired authority that paradise is heaven.

That the spirits of departed believers do not, at death, go into a state of *unconsciousness*, and thus remain until the resurrection, as is taught by materialists, but do go at once into the presence of Jesus, and there abide in conscious, happy existence, is established by the same inspired authority. St. Paul, in writing to the church at Philippi (Phil. i. 21-23.), declares of himself what is equally applicable to all Christians,—“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to *depart, and to be with Christ*; which is far better.”

In his epistle to the church at Corinth, the same apostle says (II. Cor. v. 6-8.), “We are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at

home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be *absent from the body*, and to be *present with the Lord*." Here the apostle recognizes the fact of his body being but the tenement in which himself—that which constituted his own personality—dwelt. This tenant is the spirit; and while it remained in its tenement—the body—it was absent from the Lord; but to depart from its fleshly tenement was to be at once in the presence of the Lord. Plainly the apostle knew of no intermediate and unconscious state. Materialists alone hold to the heterodoxy of soul-sleeping. It is a pernicious doctrine, and belief in it leads to other and greater departures from sound orthodoxy.

But it may be inquired,—

2. Is the home of the souls of the redeemed—the heaven into which the spirits of departed saints go at death—the same where the glorified shall ever abide, after the resurrection and glorification, at the last day?

There is a difference of opinion, held by good men, upon this question. Some claim that our present earth, after its destruction by fire, in the last day, will be reconstructed and refitted for the abode of the saints, and that the new Jerusa-

lem, as described in Revelations xix., will be its metropolis. While I incline to this latter opinion, I am willing to await the developments of that momentous period, assured that our God will make it all right for us.

3. What will be the outward appearance of the glorified saints?

The saints are to be changed and glorified and made like unto the glorified Redeemer. We now bear the image of the earthly,—the first Adam; we shall then bear the image of the heavenly,—the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. (Phil. iii. 20, 21; I. Cor. xv. 43-49; I. Thess. iv. 13-17.) Would you know what is the appearance of the glorified Redeemer, after whom the saints shall be conformed? Read the description in Rev. i. 12-18; Daniel vii. 9, 10, x. 5, 6; Matt. xvii. 2.

This is the consummation of the Christian's hope. This is awaking in the likeness of Christ. This is the salvation completed. This is the consummation for which the Redeemer prayed. (John xvii. 22.) This is the realization of the promised glorification with Christ, because we suffered with him in this life. (II. Tim. ii. 11, 12.) This is walking with Christ, dressed in white, emblematic of purity, and bearing palm-branches, emblematic of victory and eternal peace, because

we walked with him here in shame and reproach. This is sharing the kingdom, appointed unto those who continued with the Redeemer in his temptations. (Luke xxii. 28, 29.) This is the corruptible putting on incorruption. This is being conformed unto the heavenly image of our Elder Brother, as we were conformed to his earthly image here. This is the full and complete and ever-abiding glory promised as the consummation of all our hopes and aspirations. We shall be in a city which is appropriately called "glory." The bodies with which we shall enter into that place shall be glorious,—“like unto the glorious body of Christ.” The garments which we shall wear are “for beauty and glory.” The crowns we shall wear are “crowns of glory.” The society with which we shall forever associate are the glorified. The songs we shall sing shall be songs of glory. The rest we shall enjoy shall be glorious. The inheritance to which we shall attain is one of glory and honor. The consummation to which we are called is “eternal glory.” The salvation which we have secured is “salvation with Christ, and eternal glory.” And in anticipation of all these, we now rejoice with “joy unspeakable and full of glory.”

“ Oh, happy saints, who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white !

Safe landed on that peaceful shore
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.

“ Released from sorrow, toil, and strife,
And welcome to an endless life,
Their souls have now began to prove
The height and depth of Jesus' love.”

As another feature of the condition of the redeemed in heaven, I notice,—

4. The absence of all suffering and distress.

Suffering and distress are universal in this world. No one, however upright and holy, is exempt from this bitter cup. In heaven, however, all suffering will forever have ended. Said the angel to the Revelator, concerning the innumerable throng which stood around the throne in heaven, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. *They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes..*” (Rev. vii. 14-17.)

Again the Revelator says, “And I heard a

great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God *shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.*" (Rev. xxi. 3-5.)

This blessedness, this exemption from suffering and tears, has been clearly predicted by the prophets of old, unto whom visions of the future glory of the redeemed were granted. Said Isaiah, "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God *will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth.*" (Isa. xxv. 8.)

Again the same prophet says, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. (Isa. xxxv. 10.) See also Isaiah xxx. 19; Jeremiah xxxi. 12. Oh, the tears that have been shed in this world,—tears of anguish, tears of bereavement, tears of personal suffering, tears of parting, tears of widowhood, tears of orphanage, tears of homelessness, tears of poverty, tears of want, tears over our own

spiritual poverty, and tears of heart-breaking anguish because of the waywardness and sin of loved ones! Time does not wipe away these tears. Even the society of the redeemed does not do it. Angel hands can not do it. God alone can do it; and he reserves this task to himself, and with his own hand wipes away all tears by forever banishing all causes for tears.

“Oh, tell me,” said a man, as he came rushing into the street in the city of London, from his house, after the last member of his family had died of the plague which ravaged that city in the seventeenth century, “is there a place anywhere where people do not die?” Yes, yes, there is such a place, and but one place; and that is heaven.

“Tell me, ye winged winds,
That round my pathway roar,
Do ye not know some spot,
Where mortals weep no more?
Some lone and pleasant dell,
Some valley in the west,
Where, free from toil and pain,
The weary soul may rest?
The loud wind dwindled to a whisper low,
And sighed for pity as it answered, No!

“Tell me, thou mighty deep,
Whose billows round me play,
Know'st thou some favored spot,
Some island far away,
Where weary man may find

The bliss for which he sighs,
 Where sorrow never dies?
 The loud waves rolling in perpetual flow,
 Stopped for awhile, and sighed to answer, No!

“ And thou, serenest moon,
 That with such holy face,
 Dost look upon the earth,
 Asleep in night's embrace,
 Tell me, in all thy round,
 Hast thou not seen some spot
 Where miserable man
 Might find a happier lot?
 Behind a cloud the moon withdrew in woe,
 And a voice sweet but sad responded, No!

“ Tell me, my secret soul,
 Oh tell me, Hope and Faith,
 Is there no resting-place
 From sorrow, sin, and death,
 Is there no happy spot,
 Where mortals may be blest,
 Where grief may find a balm,
 And weariness a rest?
 Faith, Hope, and Love, best boons to mortals given,
 Waved their bright wings, and whispered, Yes, yes;
 in heaven.

There is not only the absence of all sorrow and distress in heaven, but there will be—

5. The presence of all that is necessary to perfect happiness.

First, and pre-eminently, there is the personal presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. He has been the joy and life of his people here; he will be equally so in heaven, for the Lamb is the light thereof. Christ will be there as the source of all

blessedness to his people; as the interpreter of the dark providences through which he led his flock in this life; and he will be there, like a shepherd, to lead his people to the green pastures, and to the unfailing fountain of life.

But there will be also all the good and holy from every kindred and tongue and nation, among whom will be patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and martyrs. And there, too, will be our own loved ones, from whom we have been separated here. Says Bonar in his *Morning of Joy*, "From Abel downward there has been one long scene of bereavement and separation. The griefs of parting make up the greatest amount of earthly suffering among the children of men. And from these griefs the saints have not been exempted. Bitter have been the farewells that have been spoken around the death-bed, or in prisons, or on the sea-shore, or on the home threshold, or in the city among strangers,—the farewells of men who know that they will meet no more till the grave gives up its trust. Death has been the great scatterer, and the tomb has been the great receiver of the fragments. The pain of parting, in the case of the saints, has much to alleviate it; but still the bitterness is there, and our hearts are made to bleed from the

wounds thus made. But in heaven is reunion. During the night we have become scattered; in the morning, when day breaks, we shall be gathered together. Here it is a smitten Shepherd and a scattered flock; there it will be a glorified Shepherd and a gathered flock. Everything connected with this reunion is fitted to enhance its blessedness. To meet again anywhere, or at any time, will be blessed; how much more blessed to meet at such a time, in such circumstances, and in such a home. The dark past will lie behind us like a prison from which we have come forth, or like a wreck from which we have escaped and landed in safety in a quiet haven. We will meet at the marriage-table. We will meet under the shadow of the tree of life. We will meet beside the river of life. We will meet to keep festival, and sing the song of everlasting triumph. Oh, it was blessed to meet here for a day; how much more blessed to meet there to part no more forever. It was blessed to meet here, even with parting full in view; how much more where no such cloud overhangs our future."

But shall we know our friends in heaven? This has been the great question of the ages, and deserves some consideration here. Says Dr. Wm. Morley Punshon: "The question of the recog-

dition of departed friends in heaven, and special and intimate reunion with them, scripture and reason enable us to infer with almost absolute certainty. It is implied in the fact that the resurrection is a resurrection of individuals; that it is this mortal that shall put on immortality. It is implied in the fact that heaven is a vast and happy society; and it is implied in the fact that there is no unclothing of nature that we possess, only the clothing upon it of the garments of a brighter and more glorious immortality. * * * When God said in the ancient Eden, 'It is not good for man to be alone,' there was a deeper signification in the words than could be exhausted or explained by the family tie. It was the declaration of an essential want, which the Creator in his highest wisdom has impressed upon the noblest of his works. * * * Life of all kinds tends to companionship, and rejoices in it, from the larva and buzzing insect cloud up to the kingly lion and the kinglier man. It is a social state into which we are to be introduced there, as well as a state of consciousness. Take comfort, then, those of you in whose history the dearest ties of life have been severed by the rude hand of Death, those whom you have thought about as lost are not lost, except to present sight. Perhaps

even now they are angel watchers, screened by a kindly Providence from everything about, that would give you pain; but if you and they are alike in Jesus, and remain faithful to the end, doubt not that you shall know them again. It were strange if amid the multitude of earth's ransomed ones that we are to see in heaven we would see all but those we most fondly and fervently long to see! Strange if in some of our walks along the golden streets we never happen to light upon them! Strange if we did not hear some heaven song, learned on earth, trilled by some clear, ringing voice that we have often heard before!"

"But," says one, "can I be happy in heaven when I know there that some loved one—some brother, or sister, or wife, or husband, or parent, or child,—is in perdition, or living in sin in the world and on the way to everlasting destruction?"

This is a mystery that God has not seen fit to make clear to us. We should remember that he is the Father of all men, in a more exalted sense than any parent can be, and that his attachment to his children is greater than ours possibly can be, and that his great heart of love is ever yearning for the salvation of all. And yet, when

the period of their probation has expired, and they persist in their rebellion against him, he, consistent with his love and compassion, forever banishes them to hopeless misery. God destroyed the people of the antediluvian world, and the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah; and yet they were his children, and the objects of his love. We are to be like God. We are to have his Spirit, and to be in perfect harmony with him in all things. If then God can, consistently with his character for love and compassion, consign the wicked to everlasting destruction, we must be, we can be, able to consent thereto. Says Dr. John S. C. Abbott, "If God, our loving, heavenly Father, can be happy on his eternal throne while some of his children are in persistent rebellion against him, and are suffering the rebel's dreadful doom, earthly parents, translated to heaven, sharing God's nature, with souls ennobled, expanded, illumined with celestial light, will certainly witness nothing in the administration of God's government which will thrill their souls with anguish."

I come now to notice,—

III. *The employments and enjoyments of the heavenly state.*

What the employments of the redeemed in

heaven will be, and what their enjoyments consist in, are but faintly revealed in the Scriptures. In addition to the absence of all causes and conditions of unhappiness, there will be the presence of every condition necessary to the most rational, joyful, and permanent happiness. But what these conditions will be is left to their development. There will be that indispensable condition to perfect enjoyment, the presence of Jesus, the unfailing source of all Christian joy; for it were unsatisfying to the redeemed and glorified to dwell forever in the midst of the highest conceivable splendor without Him who alone can fill and satisfy the soul. "In his presence is fullness of joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore."

The Scriptures, however, do reveal somewhat of the felicities of the heavenly state; and I shall dwell on these and consider the subject in two aspects; as,—

1. The social condition of the saints in heaven.

That conception of heaven which considers it a *home*, a place for sanctified social enjoyment, such as pure and spiritual beings could enter into, is most probably nearest the reality. It will not all be formal and stated worship there. The enlarged relationships of heaven, the renewal of

former associations, the recollections of the past, the anticipations of the future, as well as the innate tendency of man's nature for social enjoyment, which grace augments rather than diminishes, seem to point to a large degree of social enjoyment in heaven.

Says Dr. Charles F. Deems: "Will any soul that reaches heaven feel strange there? Will it seem a foreign country? Will all its sights and sounds and suggestions be totally unfamiliar? Will they wake no responsive note on any chord of the harp of memory? Will they shed no ray of light on the lens of hope? There are many who are looking forward to a residence in heaven. Will it be more than a residence? Will it be a home? We know the difference between the two when applied to places here upon earth. There are many kind of residences; *there is but one home.* The only real home a man has upon earth is the spot in which he would rather be than in any other place. The place in which he gets the most rest, most comfort, most solace, most satisfaction to every craving of his nature—*that is home.* How do we look forward toward heaven? Is it simply the termination of the journey where, in the natural course of things, the pilgrimage ceases? Such a state of affairs may occur to a man who

has gone from his home, and whose business or duty has taken him across the ocean to a foreign port. There he may have to stay all the days of his life, and behind him leave wife and children, father and mother. He looks forward with interest to his arrival. He would rather be there than on the stormy ocean. But it is not home. Now, how do we feel toward heaven? Is it simply the end of the road we must travel as Christians, and which we must terminate somewhere? Or do we have longings for heaven? Does it come into our dreams? Do thoughts of it often lift our souls as the tides lift up the seas? Do we feel that every other residence is a tent, but heaven is our mansion; that we go to every other place because we *must*, but are stretching ourselves to be in heaven because we shall be at home in heaven? It may be so sweet, so delicious, so satisfactory, so fulfilling, as to come in sudden and sublime contrast with all our previous experience. In this sense it may, for a brief season, be startling and somewhat strange; but if we have been spiritually-minded upon earth, each new moment in heaven will bring us the fulfillment of some hope, or the completion, in shouts of laughter, of some song which we had begun upon earth, and which had been drowned in sobs.

It will be the being 'forever with the Lord' that will make our heaven everlasting."

Says Thomas Guthrie: "Home! oh, how sweet is that word! What beautiful and tender associations cluster around it. Compared with it, house, mansion, palace, are cold, heartless terms. But *Home!* That word quickens the pulse, warms the heart, stirs the soul to its depths, makes age feel young again, rouses apathy into energy, sustains the sailor in his midnight watch, inspires the soldier with courage on the field of battle, and imparts patient endurance to the worn-down sons of toil. * * * Grace sanctifies our afflictions, and imparts a sacredness to the homes of earth by making them types of heaven. As a home, the believer delights to think of heaven. Thus while lately bending over a dying saint, and expressing our sorrow to see him so low, with the radiant countenance rather of one who had just left heaven than one about to enter it, he raised and clasped his hands and exclaimed in ecstasy, 'I am going home!'"

In heaven the redeemed will come into immediate and personal intercourse with all God's family, with whom, though now scattered and unseen, they already stand related. Among these will be our own loved ones, as well as the great

company of whom the apostle speaks as being already in our relationship,—“Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant.” (Heb. xii. 22-24.)

In addition to the persons already enumerated,—surely all that seems necessary to complete and perfect happiness,—there will doubtless be saved ones from other worlds, probably redeemed by the same Savior who redeemed us. With these, saints from this earth will be permitted to associate, and, in company with them, shall visit the worlds from which they have come. This opinion was held by Dr. Dick, the eminent Christian philosopher; and it seems to be implied in the words of the Savior in John xiv. 2.

Oh, the bliss of the reunions that shall take place in heaven between parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, pastors and people, and brethren of the same household of faith. There they shall meet again; there they shall be reunited in bonds that shall never more be sundered; there shall be re-established

a home that shall never be broken up. Oh, blissful hope! Oh, blessed expectation!

“ A home in heaven! When our friends are fled
To the cheerless gloom of the moldering dead;
We wait in hope on the promise given;
We will meet up there *in our home in heaven.*”

I shall consider next,—

2. Religious, or devotional employments of heaven.

There is no temple in heaven, no place specially set apart for worship, for all heaven is alike sacred and holy. (Rev. xxi. 22.) The worship there will be spontaneous, habitual, and constant, rather than formal and at stated times and places.

The following are references to the worship of heaven: “ After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb. And all the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four beasts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshiped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our

God forever and ever. Amen. And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them." (Rev. vii. 9-15.)

"And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him a hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in the foreheads. And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps: and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." (Rev. xiv. 1-3.)

"And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name, stand on

the sea of glass, having the harps of God. And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest." (Rev. xv. 2-4.)

"And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments. . . . And again they said, Alleluia. . . . And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshiped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. 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 thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (Rev. xix. 1-6.)

It will be perceived from the foregoing quotations of God's holy word, concerning the worship of the skies, that it is adoration, praise, and

thanksgiving, altogether. The time for supplication and prayer will have ended forever; and from thenceforth the harps of the redeemed will be tuned to but one song,—the song of Moses and the Lamb. This is redemption's song, which the redeemed only can sing, and which must be learned here. Neither the four symbolic beasts, nor the elders, nor the angels, can enter into this song, for they have not been redeemed. They, however, respond to it with loud exclamations of "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty." "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God forever and ever. Amen." (Rev. vii. 12; xiv. 3, etc.)

Redemption's song can be sung by the redeemed only; for "no man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." (Rev. xiv. 3.) The Israelites, after having safely passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea, and witnessed the destruction of the pursuing hosts of Egypt, stood upon the shore of deliverance and sung responsively the hymn of thanksgiving and praise recorded in Exodus xv. In like manner the Israel of God, after having safely passed the wilderness of life, and crossed the river of death,

their enemies all left behind them, will stand upon the shore of everlasting deliverance and sing redemption's song. The analogy between the two is so striking that the former is the accepted scriptural symbol of the latter. Hence the song of the redeemed in heaven is called "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb." (Rev. xv. 3.) And as no one could have entered into the spirit of the song of the saved hosts of Israel, nor adopted its sentiments truthfully, who had not undergone the previous experience of Egyptian bondage, the hardships and inconveniences of the wilderness life, and the perils of the Red Sea, and the pursuing hosts of Egypt, and complete and everlasting deliverance therefrom, so now no one can enter into the song of the redeemed in heaven who has not undergone the previous experience of bondage to sin, the toils and privations of the wilderness life, the assaults of the devil, and the bitterness of death, and complete and everlasting deliverance from all these by the blood of the Lamb. Redemption's song must, then, be learned here. It is commenced in prayers and sighs; it is carried on amidst tears and toils, afflictions and sorrows, until it merges into a shout of triumph in heaven.

“ ’Tis said, perhaps it may be true,
‘Prayer ends with earthly days;’
Or, rather, that it flows into
One ceaseless song of praise.”

That there will be variety in the worship of heaven is seen by comparing Revelations iv. 8-11, with xix. 1-9. In the former the four symbolic beasts, and the elders, seem to lead in the ascriptions of praise. In the latter the exclamations of joy and thanksgiving come from the redeemed, and are responded to by the assembled hosts of angels.

This last scene—that depicted in Revelations xix. 1-9—is the first occasion in which all the redeemed have been congregated together. It is the first and final assemblage of the redeemed church,—the bride of Christ,—as she comes up from her resurrection from the dead, clothed in the glorious garments of immortality, and her being placed at her proper place at the table, at the Lord’s side, at the marriage-supper of the Lamb. The symbolic woman of Revelations xii., representing the church of Christ, in her collective capacity constituting the bride of Christ, the Lamb’s wife, now emerges from her wilderness retreat, at the end of the prophetic period of “a time, and times, and half a time,” and takes her position by her Lord’s side. And now, on this

festive occasion, from this vast congregated host, composed of the redeemed, the angels, and all the hosts of heaven, now gathered for the first time altogether, goes up the loud acclaim, "Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power, unto the Lord our God." "Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." This sung from so vast and mighty a host, in which you, my reader, may take a part, and in which the writer confidently expects to have a share, was "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings."

But will this service of song and praise produce weariness? No; for though the redeemed "serve God day and night" (Rev. vii. 15.), they "yet rest from their labors." (Rev. xiv. 13.) This ceaseless service proves the necessity for bodies so constituted as to be unsusceptible of weariness or fatigue. This will be provided for in the resurrection and glorification.

" There, on those high and flow'ry plains,
Our spirits ne'er shall tire,
But in perpetual, joyful strains
Redeeming love admire."

I come now to notice, lastly,—

IV. *The qualifications necessary to entrance into heaven.*

This, without doubt, is the most important question we have for consideration, in connection with the subject of the future residence, employments, and enjoyments of the redeemed in the heavenly state; and, fortunately, upon this particular question the Scriptures are clear and explicit. Everything that relates to Christian character, from regeneration to final glorification, may be considered a qualification for heaven. I will, however, confine myself to but a few of the qualifications stated in the book of Revelation, which are as follows:

1. The redeemed saints in heaven are all clothed in pure and spotless white. This is emblematical of purity and holiness,—Rev. vii. 9, 14; xix. 8,—this “fine linen, clean and white, is the righteousness of the saints.” It was “*granted*” unto the saints,—that is, it was given unto them; and like redemption’s song, which can be learned only here, it must be secured here, washed white here in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. vii. 14.), worn here, and kept unsoiled and unspotted from the world. Ample provision has been made for this cleansing; for a fountain has been opened “to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and uncleanness.” (Zech. xiii. 1.) Well will it be if all who profess to be followers

of the Lamb avail themselves of this fountain of cleansing, and wash their robes white, and keep them white, until the coming of the Lord.

A fitness for heaven is indispensable to its enjoyment. That fitness is holiness; and holiness can be secured only here. Says one, "Place a sinner under the very shadow of the tree of life, and he would say, 'I don't want to be here.' In visiting an art-gallery, or a conservatory of music, our enjoyment will be in the ratio of our previous training and development of our tastes and sympathies in this direction. As those entertainments would be to the blind, or deaf, so would the joys of heaven be to the sinner. Heaven must be begun upon earth. We must carry its bud in our hearts here, or we can never see its full blossom hereafter. Entrance into heaven is not the result of a projectile force lifting us into an unknown place. It is the result of a process begun in time. The church is God's training-school, where the appetites and affections for the joys of heaven are developed. Our great work is not merely to get men into heaven, but to prepare them for it. When they are ready they will be there soon enough. Our characters are now catching colors which will survive the judgment-day. What gigantic importance this gives to

time. As we sit before the artist's camera while our photograph is being impressed upon the sensitive plate, how important it is that we maintain the right position. A slight move will spoil the picture. So during our brief years on earth our characters are impressed for eternity. Death will be the artist closing the watch, and announcing the process completed; and the impression there made can not be altered. Death is not a final discharge. It is only a transfer. It takes us to the judgment-seat, and leaves us as it found us. The direction which the main current of our affections and aspirations has taken upon earth will there become fixed. Let us not lose the opportunities now passing or we lose the inheritance. Let us not miss the tide or it will be forever too late."

2. The redeemed in heaven are said to be "without fault, or guile" (Rev. xiv. 5.); that is, they are pure and upright in *their life*, as well as in heart. Their professed love to Christ and to his people is "without dissimulation;" and they abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good." (Rom. xii. 9.)

3. They bear upon their foreheads their Father's name. (Rev. xiv. 1.) Reference is hereto made to the custom of branding upon slaves the

names of their masters, so that all who saw them could tell to whom they belonged. So the servants of God, the sheep of Christ's fold, here in this life, as well as there in heaven, bear about in them, in their spirit, temper, disposition, and life, evidences of their divine ownership, as plainly as if their Father's name were written upon their foreheads.

4. They "follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth." (Rev. xiv. 4.) Following the Lamb is imitating his example. Like him, they are humble and meek and gentle and guileless. They know the Shepherd's voice and follow him, and a stranger they will not follow.

5. They have kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. (Rev. xiv. 12.)

They have studied God's word to learn the will of God concerning them; and they have held fast to sound doctrines, and have not been led into the errors and falsehoods which are to prevail in the last days. (Rev. xvi. 15.)

6. They have overcome the great enemies of the soul—the flesh, the world, and the devil,—by the blood of the Lamb, and their testimony for Christ. (Rev. xii. 11.)

Realizing the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Jesus in their own hearts, they bear testimony to

the power of the same by their words as well as by their upright and consistent lives.

7. They have endured the hardships of their earthly pilgrimage, and been faithful unto death. (Rev. ii. 10.)

Those who set their hands to the plow, and look back, are declared to be unfit for the kingdom of God. Those who persevere unto the end will be saved, and those only.

8. They have suffered with Christ in this life, and now share with him in his glory.

It is one of the peculiarities of the redeemed hosts in heaven—a peculiarity which the angel specially notices,—that they came up there through great tribulation. (Rev. vii. 14.)

Tribulations and trials are common to all men, both good and bad; but there are some trials which are peculiar to Christians alone. It is these special trials, and the ordinary trials sanctified, that have a relation to and a bearing upon the glory of the redeemed in heaven. Then, when thus crowned and glorified with Christ, will the afflicted saint understand the import of the words of the Savior, “Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me?” (Luke xxii. 28, 29.)

“If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”
(II. Tim. ii. 12.)

“For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (II. Cor. iv. 17.)

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. viii. 18.)

Behold, now, the description of heaven as we have sketched it, drawn from the sacred Scriptures! Behold the redeemed, standing amidst angels and seraphim, forever saved and beyond the reach of harm; with God himself fully revealed to their wondering, immortal, and rejoicing eyes; palms of victory in their hands, emblematic of eternal victory; harps of gold upon which to celebrate the high praises of God and the Lamb; crowns of glory upon their heads, indicating their kingly character as they sit beside the Savior upon his throne. Add to all this, complete and eternal exemption from all forms of suffering, sorrow, danger, toil, tears, trials, labor, privation, hunger, thirst, poverty, bereavement, widowhood, orphanage, old age, and death; God himself compassionately wiping away all tears with his own almighty hand, as if he spe-

cially delighted to do it and reserved the task for himself alone ; and Jesus, still in the tender character of a shepherd, leading his flock to living fountains of waters, and to the rich pastures of sweetest bliss ! Oh, this is heaven !—only in part, however, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” (I. Cor. ii. 9.) These words, though relating to the believer’s privileges in this life, as the connection shows, are yet applicable to the glories of heaven also.

“What no human eye hath seen, what no mortal ear hath heard,
 What no thought hath never been, in its noblest flights conferred,—
 This hath God prepared in store
 For his people evermore.”

I now stand upon the Delectable Mountains ; I shall ere long stand upon the Mount of God. I now “see through a glass darkly ;” soon I shall see face to face. I now know in part ; then I shall know even as I also am known. Until the daylight of eternity break, and the shadows flee away, I will remain upon the mountain of myrrh, and the hill of frankincense, and with the eager, expectant bride, in anticipation of her Lord’s coming, say, “Turn, my Beloved, and be thou

like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of Bethel."

But what will be my rapture when first I see the new Jerusalem, the city of God, the home of the redeemed? With what delight will I gaze upon its streets of transparent gold, its walls of jasper, its foundations of precious stones, and its gates of pearl? With what relief shall I first realize that now I am forever delivered from all sorrow, tears, afflictions, pain, and distress? With what rapture will I first behold Jesus, fall at his feet, hear him speak to me, and permit me to speak to him? And, oh, bliss of bliss! joy of joys! shall heaven itself find language fit to express the bliss I shall experience when the Savior places the crown upon my head, and the harp in my hands, and tells me that now I am forever to dwell in his presence? Then who of all my departed friends will first recognize and greet me? Whom shall I first see and speak to? Shall I know the loved ones who have gone over before me; and will I need to be told who this one and that one is; or shall I know them by intuition, as Peter, James, and John knew Moses and Elias upon the mount of transfiguration? And will I not take up the soliloquy of the poet and say,—

“ And am I, then, in heaven? Is this the land
To which my yearning heart so often turn'd

Desirous? This the paradise of saints?
And is it I myself who speak? The same
Who wandered in the desert far astray,
Till the Good Shepherd found me perishing,
And drew me to himself with cords of love?
Has he now brought me to his heavenly fold,
Which sin can never touch nor sorrow cloud,
Me who hath water'd with my frequent tears
The thorny wilderness, and struggled on
Foot-sore and weary,—me, the wayward one?
And shall I never wander from him more,
And never grieve his brooding Spirit again?
Oh, joy ineffable! I am now in heaven!"

CHAPTER XV.

THE CROSSING OF THE RIVER OF DEATH.

“And they are there unto this day.” (Joshua iv. 9.)

The passage of the Israelites, under the leadership of Joshua, over the river Jordan, and their entrance into the land of Canaan, with which event the scripture quoted stands connected, fitly symbolize the death of believers and their entrance into heaven. The long and arduous pilgrimage of the desert was about to terminate, the promised inheritance was about to be entered upon, and it only remained that Jordan should be crossed and the fruition of their long-cherished hopes should be realized. So the Christian pilgrim from the City of Destruction to the Canaan of heaven, having safely crossed the wilderness of life, with all its hardships and dangers, finds only the stream of death between him and his promised rest. This last obstacle overcome, he forever enjoys the glories and bliss of heaven.

I am aware that the analogy between Canaan

and heaven is not entirely perfect, for the Israelites encountered enemies in Canaan after entering therein, while in the heavenly Canaan no enemies will be found. In this case, as in most scriptural analogies, the symbol falls below the fact symbolized, without destroying the analogy.

By command of God, Joshua directed that twelve men, one from each tribe, should each take up a stone and set it in the midst of Jordan, where the feet of the priests stood who bore the ark of the covenant. Twelve stones they were also to take from the bed of the river and carry them with them and set them up in the place where they lodged that night. It is evident from the connection in which these words stand that these twelve stones were subsequently carried with them, and kept conspicuously in their lodgings in all after-time; and when any one—their children especially—would ask what these stones were designed to represent, they were to be told that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord when it passed over the Jordan, and that these stones were to remind them of and keep in perpetual remembrance that event. (Joshua iv. 6, 7.)

These stones were fitly called "*memorial stones;*" and it was said of them, as well as of the twelve

stones placed in the midst of Jordan, that, at the time the sacred record was written, "*they are there until this day.*"

That these expressive incidents in the history of God's chosen people possessed a significance above the comprehension of the people at that time, and probably of Joshua himself, there is no doubt; and that they symbolize some things connected with the passage of believers over the river of death, is equally clear. Let us consider what this significance probably is.

Death is a part of the penalty incurred by Adam's transgression; and as all the race of mankind sinned in him, in that transaction all became equally subject to the penalty. Hence, says the apostle, "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.) In the atonement made by the Son of God that penalty has been fully met, as well as every other requirement of God's law; and as God will not require it of us and of our Substitute also, it follows that all those who come under the provisions of the atonement, by compliance with the conditions upon which its benefits are made available, will experience in *the matter of dying*, as well as in other respects, some

advantage, some immunity, over those who do not comply with these conditions and come under the protection of the atonement. This advantage, this immunity, will be considered in this chapter.

Death, and the victory achieved over it by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the relation which Christians sustain to it and to the victory thus achieved, are set forth in the Scriptures under the following symbols :

I. *Death personified as a Jailer, or Prison-keeper.*

The Jewish and probably pagan idea of the place of departed spirits is that of a vast world called Hades, surrounded, like a prison, with huge, impassable walls, and Death, personified as a jailer, standing, key in hand, at its iron gate, admitting all who came, both good and bad, but permitting none to escape.

Many eminent Christian scholars hold the opinion that at death the spirits of the departed all go into one world, both good and bad, but are widely separated by a vast and impassable gulf, and that there they remain in happiness or misery, according to their character and lives here, until the resurrection at the last day, when the spirits come forth to re-inhabit their respective bodies and to appear before the judgment-tribunal.

This view seems to be in harmony with several passages of God's word, among which are the following: "Death and hell [Hades] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they [the inmates of Hades] were judged every man according to their works." (Rev. xx. 13.)

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it is said of the rich man that "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." (Luke xvi. 23.) If the word here translated *hell* means, as is claimed, *Hades*, it does not disprove the fact of a hell of torment for the wicked; for the rich man, though in the same vast world with Lazarus, was yet widely separated from him, and was in *torment* while Lazarus was happy in Abraham's bosom.

In that ancient confession called the "The Apostles' Creed," the fact of Hades is acknowledged in the words affirmed of Christ,—“He was dead and buried, and he descended into hell,”—Hades.

Bickersteth in his grand production, "*Yesterday, To-day, and Forever*," holds this view, which appears in the following quotation:

“Our mother earth
Has but one sepulcher for all. And here
One Hades, by us call'd the under world,

Receives the spirits of the damn'd and blest;
 One world, but widely sunder'd by a gulf
 Inevitably fixed, impassable,
 Which severs to the left hand and the right,
 The prison-house of woe and paradise."

Whatever may be true in regard to the speculations concerning *the place and condition* of departed spirits in the intermediate period between death and the resurrection, the Scriptures unmistakably establish the fact that the righteous are taken at once into the presence of the Savior, and into communion with other saints, and enjoy conscious happiness, while the wicked go at once into a place of suffering.

To the penitent and believing malefactor, crucified by his side, the Savior said, "To-day shalt thou be with me *in paradise*." (Luke xxiii. 43.) That paradise is heaven is proved by St. Paul, who, in giving an account of his vision, uses the words "*paradise*" and "*third heaven*" synonymously. (II. Cor. xii. 1-4.)

"Nor think
 That paradise, though situate in the deep
 Which lieth under, is not real heaven;
 Heaven is where Jesus is, and he is there."

That there will be no interval of unconsciousness, no cessation of activity, no intermission of enjoyment, is equally placed beyond dispute by the confidence with which St. Paul expressed his

belief that to be absent from the body is to be present, at once and forever, with the Lord. (II. Cor. v. 8; Phil. i. 23.)

Some sixty-three years after the ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ to the right hand of the Father, he appeared in his glorified human body to the aged and well-beloved John, then in banishment upon the Island of Patmos “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Notwithstanding their former intimacy, the aged apostle failed to recognize, in the glorious personage before him, his former Lord and Master, upon whose bosom he formerly laid his head. Having fallen to the earth as dead, the glorified Redeemer lifted the aged apostle upon his feet, and calmed his fears by the precious words,—precious not only to John, but to all God’s scattered family of every age and country,—“I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; *and have the keys of hell and of death.*” (Rev. i. 18.)

The key is an emblem of authority; for he that holds the key to the entrance to any place may be considered as having control over that place. The power of death was formerly held by the devil (Heb. ii. 14); but it has been wrested from him, and is now held by Christ. This he

did *by submitting himself to death*, going down into death's prison-house, remaining there for a time, and then coming forth in victory.

Among the several books of the first and second centuries of the Christian dispensation which claimed to be canonical, but were properly rejected as uninspired, is one in which it is related that the soul of the Son of God, immediately upon its departure from the body, went into Hades, causing much uneasiness among the wicked spirits there, and calling forth extraordinary vigilance upon the part of Satan to prevent its departure. But upon the third day after its entrance it went forth, notwithstanding all resistance, crushing down the huge iron gate, and forever placing it out of the power of Satan to restore it.

The foregoing account is without doubt apocryphal; but it serves to illustrate the fact of Christ's complete and abiding victory over death. The Son of God, then, is the mighty Conqueror. He now holds, and for all time to come, until Death and Hades shall be abolished (Rev. xx. 14), will continue to hold the power over the great foe of our race.

The victory achieved by Christ over death extends not only over Hades, the place of departed spirits, but over the grave also, the place where

the body is deposited; for he had the keys of both in his possession. Our Lord Jesus Christ went down into the grave and laid there three days, his spirit being meanwhile in paradise, and then came up again by his own almighty power. And, as if to demonstrate the completeness of his victory over death and the grave, he brought with him many of those who had been sleeping there. (Matt. xxvii. 52, 53.)

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the earnest, the first-fruit, of the glorious harvest which awaits the saints; and his glorious appearance as he manifested himself to John on Patmos (Rev. i. 13-16), and as he now appears in heaven, is the model after which all who die in him, and all who are alive and remain at his coming, shall be conformed.

Oh, precious thought, our Elder Brother, he who in all things, sin alone excepted, was made like unto his brethren, took upon him our flesh and blood that he might suffer as we must suffer, die as we must die, go down into the grave as we must go down into the grave, that through his own death he might destroy him who had the power of death,—that is, the devil,—and thus prepare the way for our deliverance from the power of this great enemy. (Heb. ii. 14, 15) And

now, although we and our loved ones must go into the grave, and there hold communion with "corruption, earth, and worms," we do not pass beyond the jurisdiction of Christ, nor where his authority does not extend, nor where he has not himself gone; but we shall be under his supervision and watchful care, until he shall bid us arise.

" God, my Redeemer lives,
 And often from the skies
 Looks down and watches all my dust,
 'Till he shall bid it rise."

As another representation of death, I notice,—

II. *Death is a mighty conqueror.*

This symbol of death is found in Revelation vi. 8. The great enemy is there represented as a hideous and ghastly human skeleton, seated upon a pale horse, attended by Hades, the prison of departed spirits, into which he consigns all who fall by his victorious and relentless hand.

From this symbol of a mighty conqueror, seated upon a pale horse, and riding forth to universal conquest, originated the more modern idea of the King of Terrors, in the character of a human skeleton, seated upon a throne of human skulls, and swaying undisputed control over the human race. This change from a *horse* to a *throne* may be due to the fact that the former

symbol was designed to represent a special era in the history of the church, in which deaths by plague were widely prevalent, while in the latter the idea of universal and continuous rule is symbolized.

“ But that black phantom soon
Assum'd a livid pale, most ghastly steed,
Best ridden by the King of Terrors, Death,
And follow'd by the shades of hell.”

In the character of a king, or a tyrant, Death has exercised almost universal dominion over the human race. Of all the vast multitude of human beings who have lived, but two—Enoch and Elijah—have escaped the power of this tyrant. And all who are now living, and all who will yet live, down to the end of the world, except those who may be living when the Savior comes again in the clouds of heaven, must fall before this mighty conqueror. “A conqueror all along he has been, —never yet baffled; his course one perpetual triumph,—the ally of Death following in his footsteps; not only smiting down the victim, but devouring it,—taking it into his den and consuming it bone by bone, till every particle is crumbled into dust, as if to make victory so sure that a retrieval of it would be absolutely impossible.”

Oh, who can estimate the agony, the woe, the

heart-aches, the tears, the distress, and the privations which have been occasioned by the victorious arm of this pitiless, relentless tyrant! What household has been exempted from his unwelcome visits? What homes have escaped his devastating power? What families has he broken up and scattered,—no more to be united till Jesus comes! What widows and orphans has he sent forth to battle with a pitiless world! And when has this relentless tyrant, in a single case, been turned aside from his purpose by either age, sex, beauty, wealth, poverty, piety, or usefulness?

But is there no power than can arrest the victorious course of this pale horse and his relentless rider? Is there no one strong enough to wrest the scepter from this enthroned monarch? May we not take up the inquiry of the poet and ask,—

“ How long shall Death, the tyrant, reign,
And triumph o’er the just? ”

These inquiries are answered by the Prophet Hosea, who, in his prediction of Christ’s victory over death and the grave, uses language which seems to have been formed specially to meet the symbol of the enthroned King of Terrors,—“*I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction.*” (Hosea xiii. 14.)

Death has now been despoiled of his power by our Lord Jesus Christ; and although he is yet permitted to sway his scepter for awhile, his power has been greatly mitigated in the cases of the saints; and ere long he, too, as the last enemy of our race, shall be completely destroyed. (I. Cor. xv. 26.)

But, in what manner did the Redeemer break the power of this great tyrant? By what means have this horse and his rider been arrested in their victorious career? In what way has the scepter been wrested from the hand of this enthroned monarch?

The Lord Jesus Christ, the Strong Man armed, met the great conquering enemy on his hitherto unchecked course, and threw the horse back upon his haunches and wrested the sword from the hand of its rider. He entered into the palace of the King of Terrors, and there wrested the scepter from his hand. He is therefore the conquering Hero. But in this mighty conflict he himself was wounded. He received the sword into his own bosom, and poured out his life-blood that we might live. The wreath of victorious battle, however, is his; and under his shield we may rest secure. Death has been arrested in his course. He is now a conquered foe.

One other symbol of death employed in the Scriptures, is,—

III. *Death as a deadly serpent.*

Some serpents are inoffensive and harmless; this great serpent is armed with a deadly sting,—
“*The sting of death is sin.*” Sin gave unto death its sting, and the law gave sin its strength. (I. Cor. xv. 55, 56.)

In the character of a great and deadly serpent, Death has assailed our whole race, and all who have ever lived, with but two exceptions, have fallen by his sting. The venom of this sting is first felt at birth, and continues to be felt throughout the entire life; for life is one unceasing battle with death, and every pain we feel, every tear we shed, and every cry that escapes our lips, is the result of the deadly poison which has been projected into our system. All classes and conditions of life are alike subject to the fatal results of the sting of this great serpent; and until the great Deliverer came and plucked away his sting, his sway was universal and undisputed.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the great Deliverer, has taken away from Death his sting, by permitting it to pierce himself. He overcame the great enemy by allowing himself to be overcome. He robbed the grave of its victory by laying there

awhile himself. "He caused the grave to let go its hold by going down into its precincts and wrestling with it in the greatness of his strength. He brought round the law, which was against us, to be upon our side, by giving the law all that it sought, so that it could ask no more either of him or of us. Ah, this is victory! It is not escaping by stealth out of the hands of the enemy; it is open and triumphant victory,—victory which not only routs and disgraces the enemy, but swallows him up; victory achieved in righteousness and in behalf of those who had once been lawful captives."

In that grand and consoling statement of the victory achieved over death by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fact of the resurrection and glorification of the saints, this exultant interrogation, inspired by the greatness of the victory and the certainty of the glory which is to follow, is thus defiantly put: "*O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" (I. Cor. xv. 55-57.)

Death, then, to the believer, is a conquered foe. He is a jailer despoiled of his key; a monarch without a scepter; a serpent without a sting.

But, it may be inquired, must not Christians die and pass into the dominion of death?

Believers must pass through the dominion over which the dark shadow of death rests,—called the “Valley of the Shadow of Death,”—but they will encounter *the shadow of the great destroyer only*. Shadows may alarm, but they can not harm us.

In securing this victory over death our Lord Jesus Christ did not meet, as his people will meet, a serpent despoiled of its sting; but he met the great serpent in all its venom and power, receiving in his own person the sting intended for us. In a word, *Jesus died as a sinner dies that sinners might die like saints*. In this conflict with the great serpent, the seed of the woman received a wound in his *heel*, but in turn he crushed the serpent’s *head*. (Gen. iii. 15.)

The relation which Christians now sustain to death is illustrated by the following incident: In the war between France and Germany a few years ago, all Germans in foreign lands still owing allegiance to the fatherland were called upon to serve in the German army. A person seeing his German friend walking about the streets of London, asked him how it was that he had not responded to the call of his government, and gone to the war. “Oh,” said he, “be-

cause I am dead ; the government has no claim upon me." "What, you dead ! Explain yourself." "Well, I did not want to go to the war, and I found a young man who offered to go as my substitute. He went instead of me ; he took my place and was killed. Now that was counted just the same as though I had been killed ; and I am considered by the government as a dead man, and they have no further claim upon me."

The Lord Jesus Christ, moved by love and compassion, became our Substitute. He took our place under the law. He died for us ; and God accepts his death as though we had died. And, now, to all who accept of salvation by Christ, to all who are in Christ, losing thereby their personality before the law in him, death is practically ended ; for, as our Substitute has already died for us, God will not require it again of us. But those who refuse or neglect this great salvation, who avail not themselves of the great provisions of mercy, must indeed die, must meet the penalty in their own persons.

In the light of this explanation, how plain and simple are the following scriptures : "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same ; that through death *he might destroy him*

that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

"Jesus said unto her [Martha], I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me *shall never die.*" (John xi. 25, 26.)

St. Paul, in I. Corinthians xv. 54, declares that death is "*swallowed up in victory;*" and in II. Timothy i. 10, he declares that "Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ hath *abolished death.*" Death, then, to the Christian is only a *sleep*; and the church has caught the correct idea of it in naming the resting-places of their departed ones as "*cemeteries,*" from a Greek word which signifies "*sleeping-places.*"

This advantage, this immunity, be it remembered, accrues to Christians only. They alone encounter shadows only. All out of Christ meet and fall by the power of the King of Terrors himself.

"But," says one, "is not this the doctrine of materialism, which teaches that the wicked shall be destroyed in death, and shall thereafter have no conscious existence?"

No, by no means. We hold that to Christians Death has been despoiled of his sting, his terror, his power to harm, and may be counted as a friend rather than a foe, an advantage rather than a disadvantage; for, has not St. Paul included it among the possessions of Christians, in his enumeration of their treasures?—"All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or *death*, or things present, or things to come; *all are yours.*" (I. Cor. iii. 21, 22.) The wicked, however, will not realize this advantage. To them Death is a fearful enemy; and they shall experience his sting, his terror, his power to harm, without a single mitigating or relieving circumstance.

In the world of departed spirits the souls of the righteous will abide until the resurrection, in paradise, a place of inexpressible joy and happiness, while the souls of the wicked shall abide in darkness and misery and wretchedness and woe. In the resurrection, the bodies of both the righteous and the wicked shall be resurrected and re-inhabited by their respective spirits. The righteous, glorified and immortalized, shall go to the place prepared for them from the foundation of the world, while the wicked, immortalized and transformed, shall go into the place prepared

for the devil and his angels. (Matt. xxv. 34-46.) This is the second death referred to in Revelation xx. 14.

In what form and after what likeness the wicked shall be made to conform in their resurrection, the Scriptures are considerably silent. As the righteous shall be conformed to the image of Him whom they have served, it is altogether likely that the ungodly will be made to bear, in some respects, the image of him whom they chose here to serve. Oh, horrid thought! Well is it that God has mercifully hid this from our knowledge.

But what, it may be inquired, is the analogy between the memorial stones referred to in the scripture placed at the beginning of this chapter, and the victory over death secured to believers?

Simply and beautifully this: The priests who bore the ark of the covenant passed on some twelve hundred yards in advance of the hosts of Israel, and as soon as their feet touched the water they divided, and remained divided as long as the ark was kept in the river, and through these divided waters the people all passed over safely. The ark of the covenant was a type of Christ, the true ark of the covenant; and as the former divided the waters of Jordan, and afforded the

Israelites a safe passage through them, so the latter divides the waters of the river of death, and affords God's Israel a safe and triumphant passage through them. And as the waters of Jordan were powerless to harm the Israelites as long as the ark was in their midst, so the waters of the river of death are powerless to harm the spiritual Israel so long as the true Ark, the Lord Jesus Christ, remains therein. And as the stones which were planted in the midst of the river were placed where the feet of the priests stood who bore the ark of the covenant, and were left there when the ark was removed, so the virtue of Christ's presence in the region and dominion of Death remains there, although he himself is no longer there. These memorial stones, then, are intended to symbolize the all-important fact of the perfect, complete, and ever-abiding victory gained over death by our Lord Jesus Christ; and it is of these it is affirmed in our text that "*they are there unto this day.*"

The stones taken from the bed of the river and carried with them, and subsequently set up in their lodgings, symbolize the triumphant passage of believers through the river of death, as the stones themselves were intended to keep in perpetual remembrance the safe passage of the children of Israel through the river Jordan.

That I have not misunderstood the significance of these memorial stones, let the following scripture be considered: "And he spake unto the children of Israel, saying, When your children shall ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean these stones? Then ye shall let your children know, saying, Israel came over this Jordan on dry land. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up from before us, until we were gone over: that all the people of the earth might know the hand of the Lord, that it is mighty: that ye might fear the Lord your God forever." (Joshua iv. 21-24.)

The stones placed in the midst of Jordan are hidden from our sight; so the great fact which they symbolize, the perfect and ever-abiding victory over death by Christ *for the benefit of believers*, is not visible to natural eyes, but to faith only. The stones carried up from the bed of the river and subsequently kept in their dwellings, were at all times visible, and their significance was ever known; so the great fact which they symbolize, the happy and triumphant deaths of believers, are among the richest and most precious treasures of every Christian family. The one is not

realized until the hour of death; the other is always present and visible, in our dwellings, in our homes, for there it is always needed.

The annals of the church abound with instances of complete and perfect victory in death, a few of which I will introduce in illustration of our subject:

John Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim's Progress*, describes the crossing of the river of death of the pilgrims Christian and Hopeful. After entering into the river, Christian at first became alarmed, and supposed that he would go down under the water. Hopeful encouraged him with the words, "Be of good cheer, my brother; I feel the bottom, and it is good." After some time Christian broke forth in exclamations of praise,—“Oh, I see Him again; and He tells me, ‘When thou passest through the water, I will be with thee; and through the river, they shall not overflow thee.’” Christian, therefore, presently found ground to stand upon; and so it followed that the rest of the way was but shallow, and thus they got over.

These pilgrims in passing through the river of death found that whatever had become of the stones placed in the midst of the Jordan when Israel passed over, the great fact which those

stones symbolized—the ever-abiding presence of the great Ark of the Covenant, Jesus Christ,—was still there.

A traveler to the Holy Land says that at his first sight of the river Jordan he was made to exclaim, “What! Is this narrow, insignificant stream the great Jordan about which I have heard so much? I supposed from the prominence given to it in the Scriptures, and the oft-repeated words of the hymn, ‘On Jordan’s stormy banks I stand,’ that I would see a wide and deep river!” So, many Christian travelers have found in approaching the river of death that their previous conceptions of it were altogether extravagant, and, with a pious lady when dying, exclaim, “*Oh, its only a brook!*”

John Janeway, an eminent Christian of England, in the seventeenth century, after a life of eminent piety and usefulness came down to the river of death. When confronting his last enemy he said, “I am ashamed to pray for life. Is there anything here more desirable than the enjoyment of Jesus Christ? Can I desire anything below comparable to that blessed vision? Oh, that crown! That rest which remains for the people of God! And, blessed be God, I can say, I know it is mine.”

To a friend who visited him he said, "I feel the excellences of Jesus Christ; my heart is as full as it can hold in this lower state."

As the end drew near his language was nearly all adoration and praise. Admiring the boundless love of God to him he said, "Oh, why this love to me, Lord? Why to me? Praise is now my work; and I shall be engaged in that sweet employment forever. Oh, help me to praise Him! I have nothing else to do. I have done with prayer; I have almost done with conversing with mortals. I shall soon behold Christ himself, who died for me, and loved me, and washed me in his blood. I shall shortly be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon mount Sion, with an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of the just made perfect. I shall hear the voice of multitudes, and be one among them who say, 'Hallelujah! Salvation! Glory and honor and power unto the Lord our God.'" In this happy frame and giving utterance to such triumphant expressions he passed through the river safely, upon the stepping-stones placed there by our blessed Lord.

William Gordan, an eminent Christian and physician of England, well known to scientists as a man of great abilities, when dying, exclaimed,

“People have said that death is *frightful*. I look on it with pleasure. I see no monster around me! Death! I see no death at my bedside; it is that benign Savior, waiting to take me. I could not have a fear. Christ, not death, is about to take me. There is no death to the Christian. The glorious gospel takes away death. I don't look at myself. I am a mass of corruption; but I revel in the atonement. I shall never see Death, that monster so often talked of. It is Christ! Death? Death? There is none here. It is all swallowed up of life! I see nothing but Christ.”

Said Bishop Haven, when dying, “It's so delightful dying,—it is pleasant, so beautiful. The angels are here; God lifts me up in his arms. I can not see the river; it is all light. I am floating away from earth up into heaven; I am gliding away unto God.” One of his friends inquired of him if it was all right with him? He replied, “Yes; I have not a cloud over my mind. I believe the gospel all through,—all through.”

Rev. W. T. Lower, a minister of the church of the United Brethren in Christ, a man of excellent Christian spirit, died prematurely from excessive labor in the Master's vineyard. His last illness was long and severe; but his submission and patience were perfect and complete. His last

sermon was from the text, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace." (Psalms xxxvii. 37.) It was said to have been a sermon of extraordinary clearness and power. It proved to be prophetic of his own departure, then near at hand. A few days after the delivery of that sermon Mr. Lower took to his bed, from which he never arose, until carried to his grave. During his illness he was always patient, uncomplaining, and submissive, and as the end drew near, often exceedingly joyful and triumphant. Calmly, peacefully, and in perfect confidence in God, this man of God passed away, just as the evening sun sunk behind the mountain near at hand. His end was *peace*. His entrance was *abundant*. His feet, too, found a safe passage through the river, upon the stepping-stones placed there by our Lord Jesus Christ.

As an illustration of the power of divine grace to sustain and give victory in death, the case of Rev. H. Y. Humelbaugh is an eminent example. Mr. Humelbaugh was also a minister in the church of the United Brethren in Christ, and died October 13th, 1868, while pastor of the church at Chambersburg, Pennsylvania. The writer visited him frequently during the several weeks of his illness, and was present with him

when he died and heard the expressions of triumph as they fell from his dying lips, many of which were written down at the time, lest they would be forgotten. Among all the precious utterances of departing saints none that we have ever heard surpass for beauty and grandeur some of the expressions which fell from the lips of this man of God. They deserve a permanent place in the annals of the church; and, so far as we can, we give them this prominence.

Mr. Humelbaugh appeared to have a presentiment of his approaching death, and often spoke of his departure, expressing, however, the wish, if consistent with his heavenly Father's will, to recover and live awhile longer for the sake of his family.

Visiting him early in the evening prior to his death I found him quite ill, but calmly resting in God. To my inquiry if he still enjoyed the presence of the Savior, he replied, "Oh, yes, I am happy,—though at times I have severe trials. Yesterday morning I thought I was going over. Oh, if I could have had strength I would have shouted the praise of God! Before you go I must tell you the vision I had about two weeks ago. I was alone one day, when four angels came and stood there at the foot of my bed, bearing in their

hands a beautiful white lounge. After standing awhile and looking upon me very lovingly they went up again."

Said I to him: "Are you certain you were not asleep and dreaming?"

"I tell you I did see them,—I was wide awake; and I thought I was dying, for I felt my heart breaking at the sight."

Mrs. Humelbaugh informed me that at the time referred to she was absent from the room, but upon returning she found him with closed eyes and very pale. Supposing him to be dead she called to him. Opening his eyes he said, "Were you frightened?" "Yes," she replied; "I thought you were dead." He then told her of the vision of angels he had seen.

Returning to the room of the sick man, after meeting with and leading my class, about nine o'clock at night, I found his family in tears. The doctors had just left, telling them that he was fast sinking. I entered his room, and shortly after some five or six brethren, members like myself of Mr. Humelbaugh's congregation, came in and remained till his death, some three hours afterward. Desiring to know the doctor's opinion of his case he inquired of him, and was told of his critical condition. He replied, "Well, this

is not what we expected, but it is all right." He was apparently surprised at the nearness of death, and for about a half hour he lay in silence, evidently meditating and praying. At length, obtaining complete victory over all fear, he exclaimed, "I have tried to live a religious life; and now I can say, Saved by grace! Saved by the grace of God!" Then turning toward the doctors, who sat by his side, and extending his arm and with a smile of triumph upon his pale face, he exclaimed, "*O doctor, what a beautiful land lies just before my eyes!*"

Turning to his weeping wife he said, "O Fanny, weep not for me; I will soon be at rest,—forever at rest from all my troubles. Oh, lead a holy life. Train up the children in the fear of God—in experimental religion; and tell them to be humble." Then raising both hands he exclaimed, "Let people say what they choose against experimental religion; thank God, it saves in a dying hour!"

After resting awhile he said, "I started to serve God when young,—thirteen years ago; I tried to hold out, and now I am almost home." Inquiring the time of night, he was told it was near twelve o'clock. He then said, "If I could, I would like to sing." "Shall we sing for you?"

I inquired. "It might confuse me; you had better not." Then in a feeble strain he faintly sung, "I'm nearer, nearer home,—nearer to my happy home."

During the four hours in which this occurred he labored hard at times for breath,—had several sinking-spells, but was at all times in perfect peace and holy ecstasy.

Having left the room, about an hour before he died, he inquired where I was. Being called, I hastily returned to his bedside; and, desiring me to resume my place by his side and hold his hand, as I had done all the evening, he said, supposing that I was frightened and desired to get away, "Don't be alarmed; this is all right; it will soon be over!"

When very near the end he attempted to quote the words, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." Omitting the words, "I fear no evil," I quoted the whole verse correctly to him, he repeating it after me; and then, as if inspired with the precious import of the concluding words, he exclaimed, "*They comfort me! They comfort me!* Yes, blessed be God, they comfort me." Then, laying his hand on his breast, he said, "O Jesus,

precious Jesus, thou art precious to my soul!" In a few moments, with holy ecstasy, with the light of heaven in his countenance, and with uplifted hands, he exclaimed, "O KING OF TERRORS! O END OF TIME! OH, ALL IS BRIGHT! I'LL SOON BE AT HOME!"

With the words, "Farewell, brethren," he closed his eyes and ceased to breathe, his happy spirit released from its tenement of clay, and, doubtless, was escorted to heaven by the four shining ones who had appeared to him a few weeks previously.

Mr. Humelbaugh while in health often spoke to the writer of the gloom which seemed to come over him when contemplating death. He was then viewing it from a distance; but when he came to test the reality his fears all departed, and he passed triumphantly through the river.

Before me lays a tract, a book, and a written manuscript, in which the peaceful and triumphant deaths of loved ones are recorded. These were written by husbands for their departed wives, and a sister for a departed sister. They are Memorial Stones, taken from the river of death, and set up and cherished, as God intends such memorials should be cherished, *in our families*, where they may be constantly seen, and where by con-

tinual intercourse therewith we may become familiarized to the fact that death is a conquered foe, that those of our friends who have left us have passed through the river safely, and that the virtue of the presence of the true Ark of the Covenant—our Lord Jesus Christ—still abides in the river of death, and that our feet, when we come to pass that river, shall find the stepping-stones to be there still.

A few extracts from these memorials I will give; and they will demonstrate that triumph in death is not confined to persons of eminent talents, position, or usefulness in the church, but that the humble and lowly can also share therein.

Mrs. C. A. Castle, wife of Bishop N. Castle, whose triumphant death, after a long and severe illness from consumption, has been recorded by her husband, and published in a tract by the Holiness Association in the church of the United Brethren in Christ, has furnished one of the most remarkable instances of the power of divine grace to sustain and give victory to the believer in death which the annals of the Church contains. This devoted Christian lady went with her husband to the Pacific coast, to which he was appointed by the General Conference of 1877, and while there was stricken by that fell destroyer—

consumption. Some time before her death she received the blessing of entire sanctification; and from that time until her departure she was unusually filled with the Holy Spirit, and testified to all with whom she came in contact the power of Jesus to save from all sin. As the hour of departure drew near she gave utterance to expressions of holy triumph and ecstasy which have but few parallels. I will now quote from the record written by her husband: "For some two days and nights she was almost incessantly employed in labor for souls and in praise. She would sing, at short intervals, day and night. Oh, the melodiousness, the heavenliness of that singing! She could never sing much; but this was unearthly singing. At one time she said, 'The Lord has washed my heart so clean. It is white, yes, whiter than snow. Oh, this sweet peace; it flows as a river to my soul! This room is full of glory; my pillow is covered with glory.' Remaining quiet a few minutes, in which she seemed sweetly resting, she exclaimed, 'Why, I was not breathing, was I? It seemed that the Lord breathed through me.' After passing away into a motionless and speechless state, in which she remained for quite a period of time, with every indication of death,—limbs cold and brow clammy,—on reviving she

said, ‘When I was so near gone I stood in the bright rows of heaven, and joined their songs. I wanted to stay; but Jesus said, “Linger a little while longer.”’ All the clothes—handkerchiefs, bed-clothing, stand-cover,—had to be perfectly white and free from any signs of dirt; her mouth and teeth and finger-nails were cleansed; ‘for,’ said she, ‘since Jesus has washed me so clean, I want everything clean around me.’ When the lamp was turned low to save her eyes she said, ‘Oh, how full of light this room is! In heaven they need no light; Jesus is the light of the place. Oh, how beautiful heaven is! It is all pure. The angels are all pure.’ Then she sung, ‘Glory, glory fills my soul,’—waving her hand in triumph. Only those who heard this singing can tell of its heavenly melody. At the end of the singing she exclaimed, ‘Sweet Jesus, precious Jesus! Oh, it is nothing to the Christian to die!’

“Passing away again, as previously mentioned, she quite suddenly aroused with shouts of ‘Glory! Glory!!’ clapping her hands in great ecstasy, exclaiming, ‘Now I know why God would not let me go. He told me to come back and tell you to preach this full and free salvation. He says I can not do it,—my lungs are gone; but tell him to do it,—and I will be with him. Oh,

that I had found this full salvation years ago! How much good I might have done! I have enjoyed religion all these years! I found Jesus precious to my soul—in my closet; but, oh, it was nothing to this! This flows as a river; it is constant! My room is all lighted up with glory.’ Then waiving her hand she exclaimed, ‘Oh, how bright the cross! How beautiful the crown!’”

“Here,” wrote the bishop, “follow some wonderful things. This vision occurred in the forenoon, and was wonderful. No tongue or pen can describe the glorious, spiritual presence that seemed to pervade the room where this suffering saint was lying. Heaven came down to earth. It was truly a mount of transfiguration. The countenance, especially the eyes, seemed celestial. A soft, mellow light, or heavenly sweetness, shone from them,—only varying in rich and mysterious deepness as new wonders filled the vision. I was occupying a seat at the foot of the bed at the time, having been in conversation, when I chanced to see a more fixed and entranced gaze, upward and onward, as if trying to survey some scene of musical interest. The eyes passed through a certain space, backward and forward, up and down, as if surveying numbers. It must be observed here that the talk was not rapid; it

was quite slow and measured, as when one is looking by the aid of a glass into the distance and by slow degrees discovers and relates scenes of thrilling interest. The brilliancy of the countenance increased and the expressiveness of the eyes became more intensely glorious as the scenes detailed increased in interest. Let it be observed how gradually the vision opens and increases in magnitude; especially how the multitude of the heavenly host increased in numbers. After a few moments' gaze she said, 'Oh, heaven is such a beautiful place! It is brighter than a thousand suns!' Then gazing a moment she exclaimed, 'Don't you see those bright ones? They come in thousands.' A pause, with increasing interest, 'Oh, what a multitude! There stands Jesus! Oh, don't you see him? Oh, how bright! The air is filled with bright beings! They are increasing in numbers! They are coming nearer! Oh, glory! See the holy ranks! Oh, they are coming for me! My heart is made ready for the heavenly company! Oh, they are coming from all the courts of heaven! They are waiting for me! Glory! Glory! More are coming! They are all around my bed. I am waiting, waiting. Oh, it is so light in my room; it is filled with angels. I see for miles and miles, and it is all filled with

angels,—millions and millions of angels.’ While gazing for a time, back and forth, up and down, she said, ‘I have not seen any of my friends yet.’ Then lowering her eyes, as if viewing the ranks, she exclaimed, while a heavenly brilliancy filled her eyes, ‘There is sister Jane, who died at Elkhart. Oh, how beautiful! There is Jesse—sweet little angel. He is in mother’s bosom. [This little babe died in Iowa.] There is Sister Kitson. Glory! Glory!! [We were at this sister’s house the last night we spent near Warsaw, Indiana.] There is Father Zahring; Josie and Ellie Tuck. They are all angels, sweet angels.’ Father Zahring died very suddenly, near Frankfort, Indiana, the year that I was in charge of Frankfort Circuit. Josie and Ellie, daughters of Rev. H. Tuck of St. Joseph Conference, died at Elkhart, Indiana.

“But the vision continued, ‘There is aunt Katie Lower. She came up through great tribulation. Brother Farmer, Brother Hadley, Brother Hadley’s child, Dr. Linn’s little children,—they are all angels. I can’t number that multitude; it will take an eternity to number it. It is a multitude that can’t be numbered.’ Rev. Joseph Farmer of St. Joseph Conference died the year of our marriage, while I lived near Berrien Springs,

Michigan. Our sainted wife never saw him. She saw his picture frequently; and we often stood at the head of his grave; but in person she never saw him. In this vision she knew and named him. Surely, to the pure in heart, heaven and earth are not widely separated.

“In the midst of these wonderful scenes she broke out into singing, ‘Glory, glory, glory, glory, fills my soul!’ Then she exclaimed, ‘It is so beautiful! Such beautiful mansions prepared for all the faithful. Oh, Jesse is so sweet! Heaven is full of little children. It will take millions and millions of years to count them. My brother Philip, who was killed in the army; Sister Blinn, Charley Losier,—the dear little boy. Tell Ida [her daughter] to write and tell them.’ After this she exclaimed, pointing them out, and wondering why we could not see them, ‘See the friends! There is one; there is another;’ and so on.”

In this happy frame this devoted servant of God continued for a few days, and then, suddenly and without affording the friends by her bedside time to say farewell, her happy spirit took its departure to be with Christ and with the loved ones whom she saw in vision. Truly, she found a safe passage through the river upon the sure stepping-stones placed there by our Lord. 23

Miss A. W., while yet in youth, was called to meet the great enemy, death. Of a timid and retiring disposition, she often expressed her fears of meeting death, especially in the form of lingering, painful disease. When in the last stage of consumption she wrote to a friend thus: "C. has told thee, of course, how much worse I am in body; but I am very happy. I think the thought of just falling asleep in Jesus is perfectly sweet. It is so different from my old view of death; and this is all that death is to him who trusts in Jesus—just falling asleep on Jesus' breast to awake at the glorious resurrection-morn."

This young lady when dying "was placed upon a sofa in the center of the room, that she might have the benefit of all the air passing. As she seemed to be sinking into death her parents, sisters, and friends gave her the parting kiss, she sweetly smiling and whispering, '*It's so lovely to be going.*' Addressing her father she inquired, 'Father, am I dying?' To his words she responded, '*It's all right; I want the Lord's will done.*' Just before she drew her last breath she folded her hands across her breast, and with a sweet smile, and gazing upward, said, '*My Beloved is mine, and I am his.*' In the act of turning her on her side, her sister said to her, 'Almost home,

darling,' when, with her last breath, she whispered, 'W-i-t-h the Lord.' The feet of this youthful pilgrim found the sure stepping-stones to be '*there unto this day.*'"

Mrs. E. W., an estimable Christian lady, after a sore and protracted illness approached the brink of the river of death. Obtaining, in answer to her many prayers, a perfect victory over the fear of death, she gave utterance to the following beautiful words: "O dearest Lord, thou hast fully satisfied the longing desire of thy poor, helpless servant. Oh, how shall I thank thee sufficiently, and praise thy holy name for the fresh and unexpected display of thy heavenly love and mercy! Glory! Glory!! Glory!!! Thanksgiving and praise be to thy worthy and adorable name forever! O Lord, thou hast fully satisfied! Come when thou pleasest. Thy servant is ready and willing to be taken to thy holy arms."

Addressing her husband she said, "I was praying to-day, when suddenly a burst of glory came. Tell all my dear brothers and sisters that I want them to partake with me in the same joy, the same heavenly love, and the same glorious prospects which I now feel, and with which my heart and soul are filled." Then, with a countenance beaming with heavenly rapture, she exclaimed,

“Oh, Happy! Happy!! Happy!!! Glory! Glory!! Glory!!! Language can not set forth a sense of the eternal weight of glory which presses on my happy, happy soul.”

In this frame, and giving utterance to such triumphant exclamations, she continued for awhile and then sweetly fell asleep in Jesus.

These dying triumphs might be continued to almost any extent, for the annals of the church abound with them; but we desist. We might tell of the dying triumphs of the martyrs, of the reformers, of the Wesleys, of Fletcher, of Toplady, of Locke, of Payson, of Otterbein, of Edwards, and of a host of others; but enough has been given to demonstrate the fact that whatever may have become of the stones set up in the midst of the Jordan, and of those taken from the midst of the river and carried with them and subsequently preserved in their families, the facts which these memorial-stones symbolized—the complete and abiding victory over death achieved by our Lord Jesus Christ, and the memorials of triumphant and happy deaths of saints cherished in our households and families,—yet remain; for *“they are there unto this day.”*

My task—if employment so pleasant and delightful as the preparation of this work can be

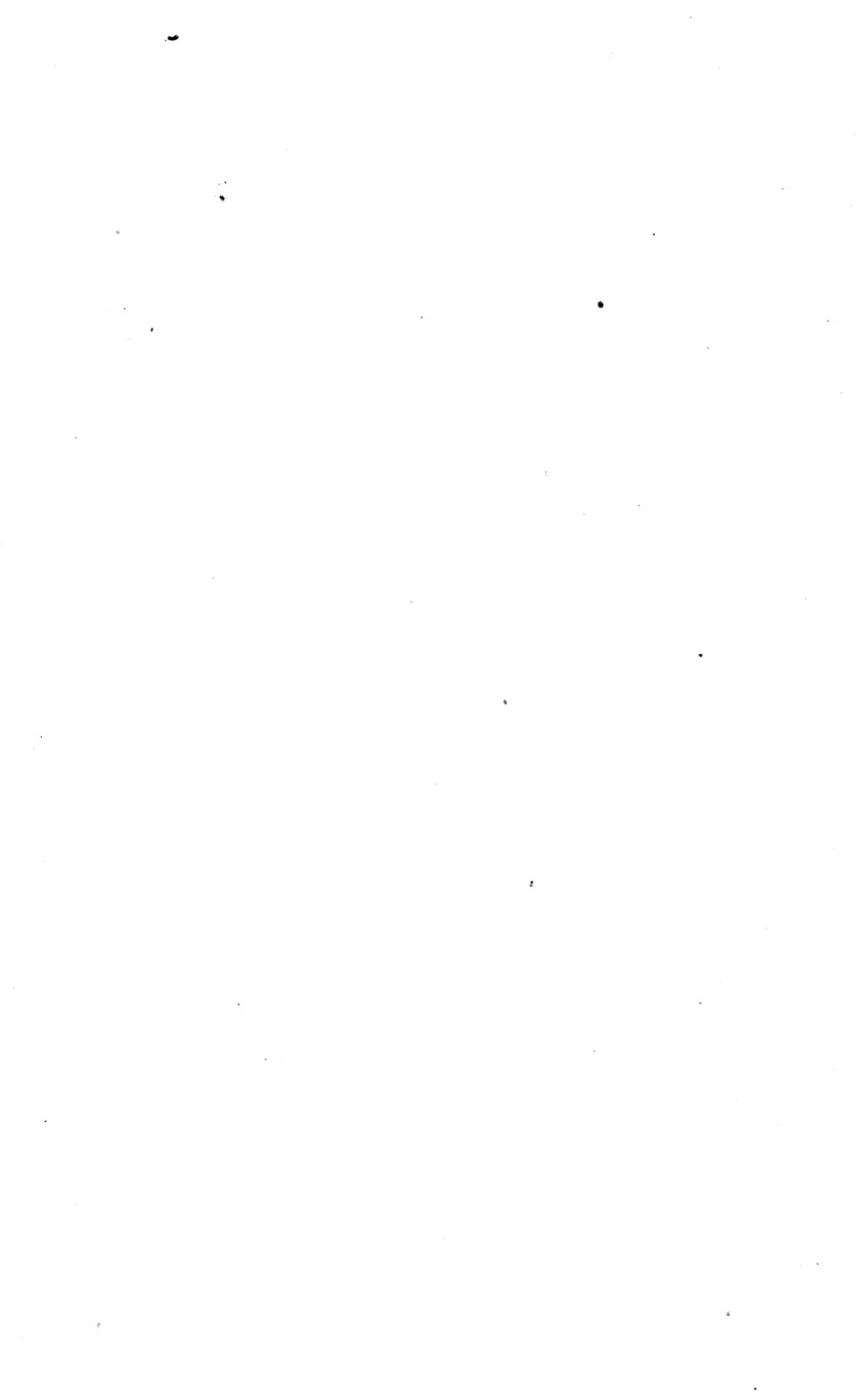
called a task—is finished. I have tried to set before the reader the teaching of God's holy word in relation to the afflictions and trials of believers. And I think it has been demonstrated that instead of these being evidences of the Divine displeasure, as we are apt to conclude when afflicted, they are rather evidences of God's special love and regard for us, and that without them we have reason to question our divine relationship.

And now, in conclusion, and as an expression of our own relation to the subject treated in these pages, and to the kingdom and glory near at hand, the anticipation of which is so delightfully precious in affliction so severe and protracted as that under which these pages have been written, I quote the following expressive and appropriate verses from Upham's "Christ in the soul:"

" The days of toil soon are over ;
Temptations, darkness, sorrow gone,
Already see the shining shore,
And let the bark move swiftly on.

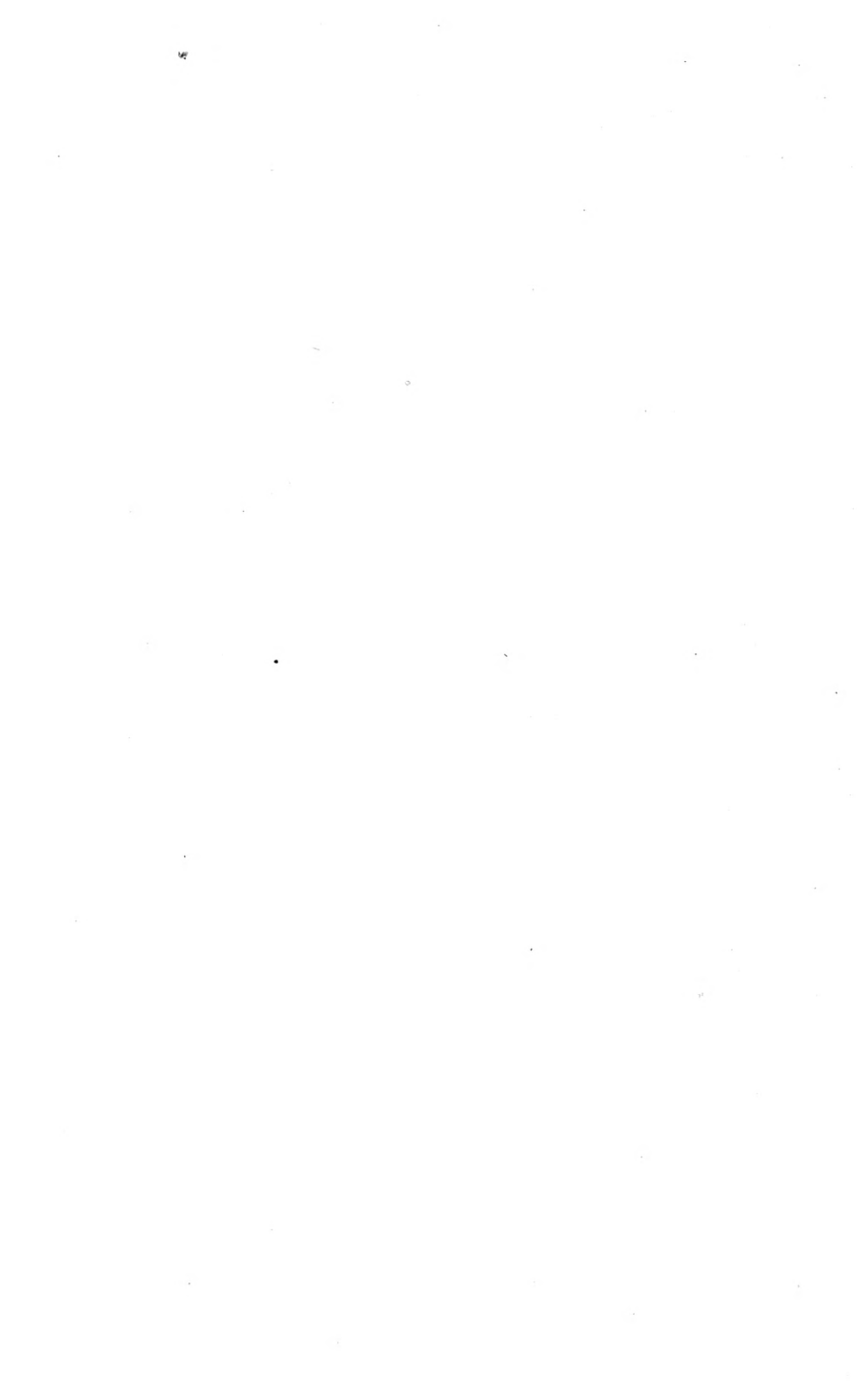
" The waves are dashing round the prow ;
And hostile clouds are in the sky ;
But wave nor cloud can hurt us now ;
Behold ! The shining shore is nigh."



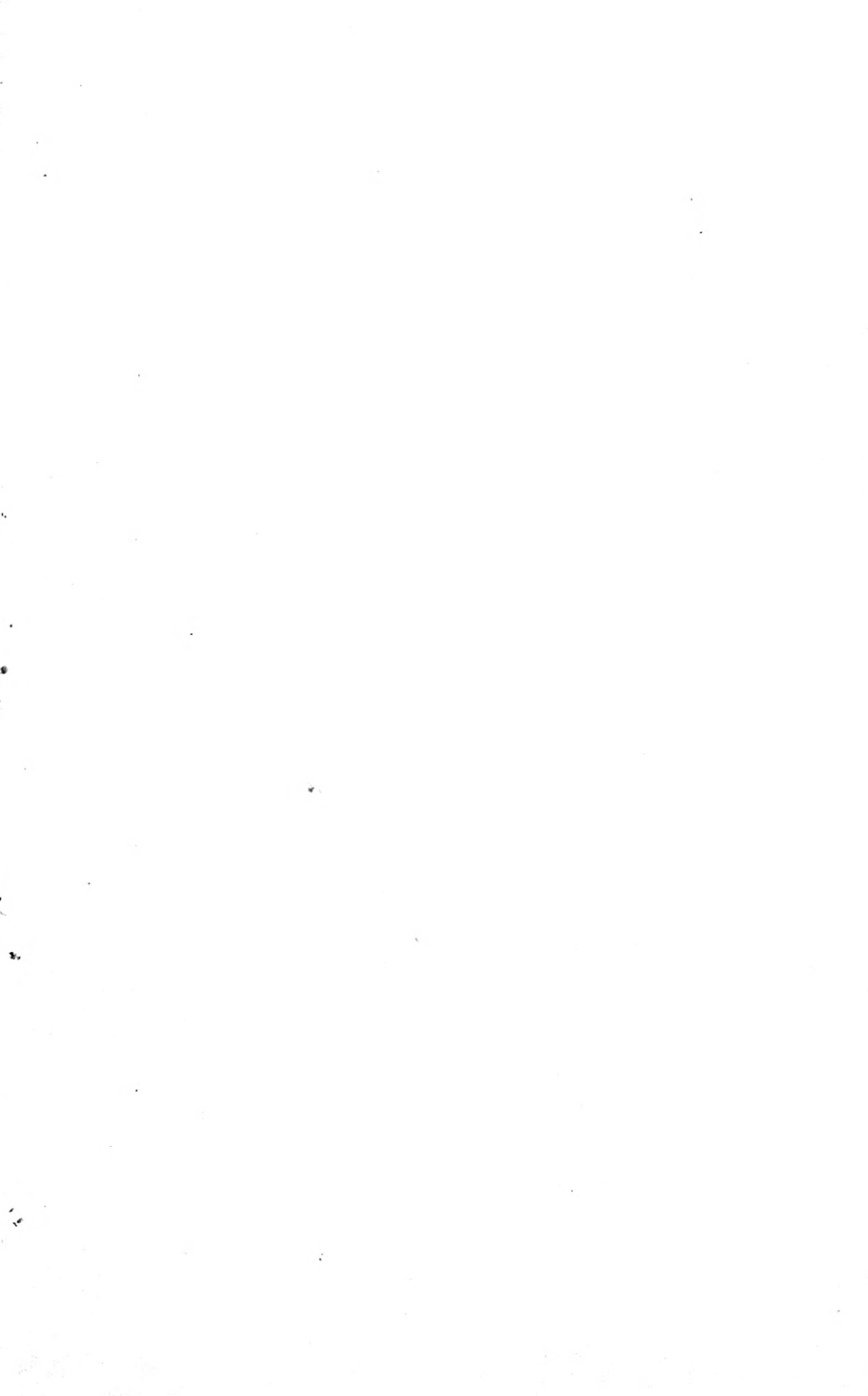












BX9878.5 .H723

Clusters from Eshcol : or, Words of

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00044 8466