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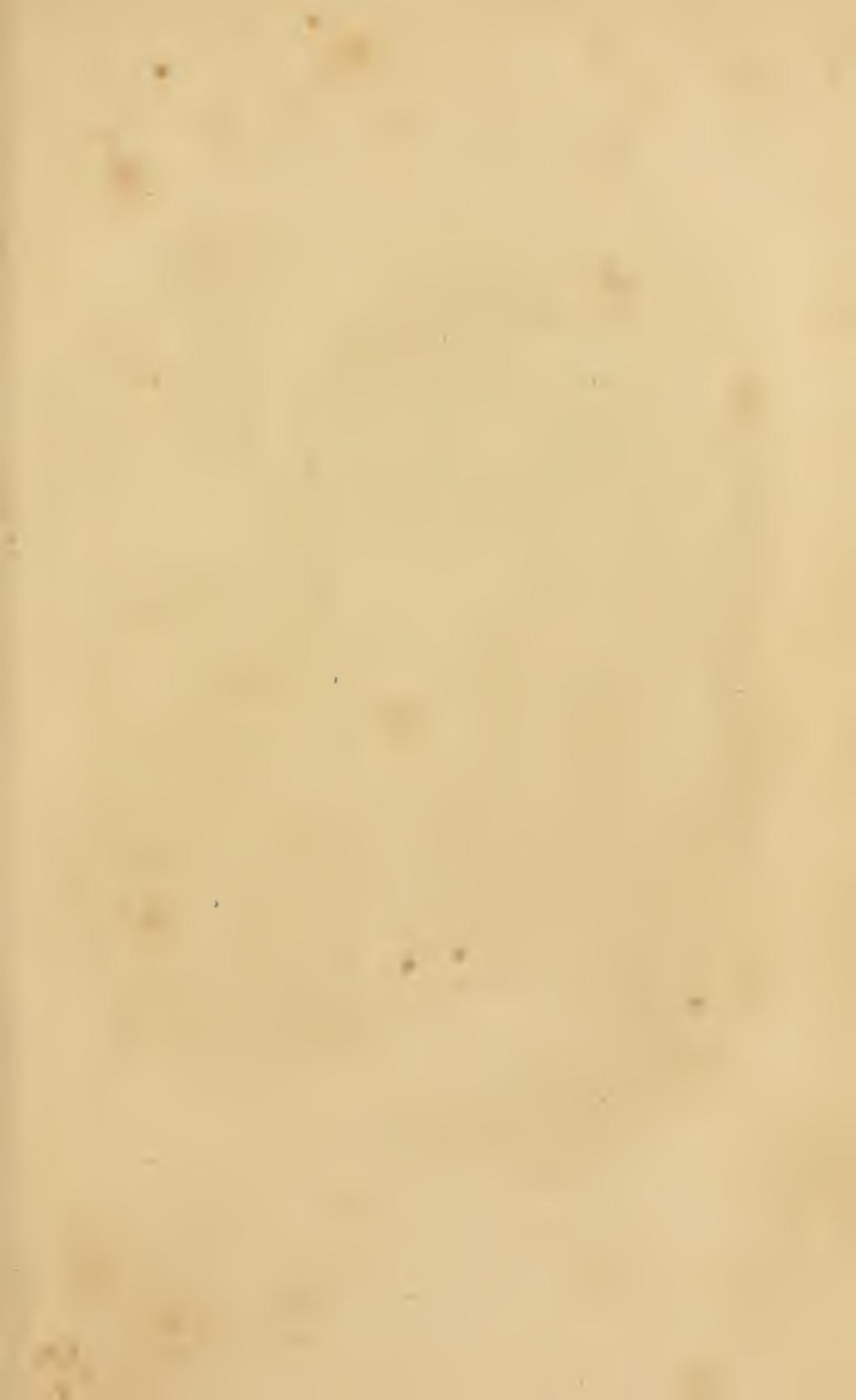
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Cottage lectures, or, The
Pilgrim's progress



KNOCK, AND IT SHALL BE
OPENED UNTO YOU.



COTTAGE LECTURES;

OR,

THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

PRACTICALLY EXPLAINED.

Designed for Cottage and Family Reading.

"I know of no book—the Bible excepted, as above all comparison—which I, according to my judgment and experience, could so safely recommend as teaching and enforcing the whole saving truth, according to the mind that was in Christ Jesus, as 'The Pilgrim's Progress.' It is, in my opinion, the best summary of evangelical theology ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired."



PHILADELPHIA :

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION,

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TESTIMONIES

TO THE ENGLISH EDITION OF THE COTTAGE LECTURES ON
THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS.

By the ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY to the Author.

"I have found time to read enough of the Lectures to be satisfied of their great merit, and I congratulate you on having devised the idea, as nothing was more likely to interest your people, or more suited to instruct them. You need not doubt the circulation of the Lectures, as soon as they become known."

The REV. EDW. BICKERSTETH to the Author.

"I thank you for your Cottage Lectures on the Pilgrim's Progress. I have been able to read but few of them, but I like what I have read much, as very plain, simple, and evangelical, just calculated to instruct and interest the poor, and help some missionaries and lay teachers in their very important work of conveying saving truth to the minds of the uninstructed."

The REV. ROBT. WHITEHEAD to the Author.

"Your excellent work on the Pilgrim's Progress has greatly pleased me. Its very plainness delights me; its cheapness, also, I think a vast advantage. I hope it will have a large sale, and encourage you to make fresh adventures."

Entered according to act of Congress, in the year 1849, by the
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Pennsylvania.

P R E F A C E.

WE never knew an instance in which a familiar and consistent parable failed to interest persons of every description. The parable of the Prodigal Son is a perfect specimen of this kind of teaching. The profoundest scholar is deeply affected by its inimitable pathos; while the most unlettered rustic, who would probably have slept over a learned sermon upon the nature of repentance, here finds his attention chained, listens with deepest interest to every part of the simple narrative, and has so thoroughly apprehended the important truths which are here prefigured, that he cries out at the end, with unfeigned emotion, "I am that prodigal! I will arise and go to my Father!"

Now, the kind of teaching that most resembles instruction by a parable, is to teach by an allegory. Allegory is the sister of parable, and the great allegorist, whose work is popular wherever the English tongue is spoken, and which is celebrated and relished in almost every modern language,* is John Bunyan. By the rare combination of original poetic genius of the

* For interesting particulars respecting its circulation, the reader is referred to a twopenny book published by the American Sunday-school Union, under the title of "The Pilgrim of Many Lands."

highest order, and the deepest experimental acquaintance with evangelical truth, he has thrown a bewitching charm over every part of the Christian's path, from his first awakening in the City of Destruction, until he has crossed the river that divides the land of his pilgrimage from the city that he seeks, and the celestial gates have closed upon him in the regions of eternal day!

Few who have read the "Pilgrim's Progress" in early life, and then recurred to it again in after-times, have ever done so without the most exquisite emotion being awakened in the heart. It touches a chord of the keenest sensibility. It lights up the checkered experience of real life with the romantic imaginings of fancy, and imparts to the sombre hues of maturest age some of the glowing tints that were painted in our earliest youth. The effect is the same in kind, though not in degree, as that produced by the sacred volume itself. We seem again to have met with an early benefactor, and to be looking into the secret spring,

"Which gave our earliest, best emotions birth;"

and we enter with all our hearts into the sentiments so feelingly expressed by Cowper:

"O thou, whom, borne on fancy's eager wing,
Back to the season of life's happy spring,
I pleased remember, and, while memory yet
Holds fast her office here, can ne'er forget;
Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail;
Whose humorous vein, strong sense, and simple style,
May teach the gayest, make the gravest smile;
Witty, and well employed, and, like thy Lord,
Speaking in parables his slighted word:
I name thee not, lest so despised a name
Should move a sneer at thy deserved fame;

Yet e'en in transitory life's late day,
That mingles all my brown with sober gray,
Revere the man whose Pilgrim marks the road,
And guides the progress of the soul to God."

The striking testimony borne by the late Dr. Arnold to the "Pilgrim's Progress" is very remarkable. His admiration of it was very great. "I cannot trust myself," he used to say, "to read the account of Christian going up to the celestial gate, after his passage through the river of death." And when, in one of the foreign tours of his latter years, he had read it through again, after a long interval, "I have always," he said, "been struck with its *piety*; I am now equally, or even more, by its *profound wisdom*. His 'Pilgrim's Progress' seems to be a *complete reflection of Scripture*, with none of the rubbish of the theologians mixed up with it."

Now, since the learned and unlearned all agree in admiring this wonderful book, and since its great design is to illustrate evangelical truth, and to present it in a captivating form, how extremely desirable is a familiar and popular course of Lectures upon this unrivalled allegory! Few books would be so well adapted for family reading on Sabbath evenings. If the interest of the allegory were maintained in a narrative style, its meaning simply explained, and then a pointed application briefly addressed to the conscience, such a Lecture, we conceive, upon any part of the "Pilgrim's Progress," would chain the attention of both young and old, for half an hour, and, by God's blessing, awaken a profitable train of thought in the breasts of all. A book like this might be used with profit in a school-room or private house, wherever two or three

were gathered together for edification and religious instruction. In neighbourhoods of the new and remote sections of the country, where public worship is rarely held and where other means of religious instruction are few and far between, a group of parents and children might be readily assembled in a private house, and find in this volume all the needful help, so far as outward means are concerned, to secure a profitable and edifying interview. Who can tell how many might be awakened by such a use of this unpretending volume, to flee from the "City of Destruction" and not look behind them till they reach the home of the blessed!

Sometimes a Sunday-school is opened for an hour or two on God's holy day in places where no opportunity for stated public worship is enjoyed. In such cases parents and neighbours might conveniently assemble after the exercises of the school, and draw from this volume such assistance as they may need in conducting all the exercises of religious worship. It will be observed that each Lecture is accompanied with a hymn at the beginning and close, and also with a form of prayer chiefly in the language of Scripture, for those that may feel the need of such an aid to devotion.

We are aware that many valuable contributions have been made to the better understanding and spiritual improvement of "Pilgrim's Progress," and though many simple-hearted readers may have said of some of them what is reported to have been said to the venerable Mr. SCOTT by a poor woman, to whom he had made a present of a copy of the work with notes by himself, that "she understood it *all but the notes*;" others have pointed out new and striking features of the

work, and opened fresh sources of pleasure and profit in its perusal. There is still room, however, for such a volume as the present, and its adaptation to a *felt* want is fully evinced by the rapid and wide circulation of the original work.

The simple, unaffected, earnest and evangelical spirit that is diffused throughout the present volume, and the ingenuity with which the allegory is made to serve the purposes of the author in sustaining and giving effect to his admonitions and exhortations, are among its chief recommendations.

The Lectures were delivered, a year or two ago, in a school-room, by the Rev. CHARLES OVERTON, Vicar of Cottingham, Eng., to the people of that parish, and in adapting them to the purposes of the present publication, due pains have been taken to impair as slightly as possible the integrity of the original work.

It will be observed that the thirty lectures comprised in the volume are confined to the pilgrimage of *Christian*. The story of Christiana, his wife, and their children will probably be the subject of another volume. It will be observed also, that though the subjects of the Lectures are taken up in the order of the events of the allegory, each Lecture is entirely independent of the rest.

We can heartily unite with the author of the Lectures in the prayer that the Eternal Spirit, who magnifies his own glorious power by the weakness of the instruments which he employs, may own and bless the following pages to the present and everlasting benefit of many souls. Lord of all power and might! Speak through these pages to the hearts and consciences of many who shall peruse them. Let some poor slum-

berer in the City of Destruction be thoroughly aroused by them, and effectually warned to flee from the wrath to come. Let some true pilgrims, whose faces are set to the heavenly Zion, who are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before them, and whose souls are discouraged because of the way, receive here a word of comfort to deliver them from their grief, and to direct and encourage them in the way everlasting. And oh, let the writer, and some that have profited by his labours, be conducted safe through the swellings of Jordan, be found with their true certificate at the celestial gate, and be admitted through the gates of the city to the glorious company that have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; and let them sing, together with the general assembly and church of the first-born whose names are written in heaven:

ALLELUIA! SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHICH SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND TO THE LAMB, FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN.

LECTURE I.

THE AWAKENING.

HEBREWS xi. 13, 14.

AND CONFESSED THAT THEY WERE STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS ON THE EARTH :
FOR THEY THAT SAY SUCH THINGS DECLARE PLAINLY THAT THEY SEEK
A COUNTRY.



WHAT a view, dear brethren, we have here of all real Christians, in the midst of this worldly wilderness. This is not their rest. They are travellers and wayfaring men. They are not now at home; but they are on their way thither; they are going home. They feel, they confess, that they are strangers and pilgrims on the earth; and by their life and conversation they declare plainly that they seek a better country, that is, a heavenly. Now the joys and sorrows, the difficulties and the adversaries, peculiar to the Christian, from his first setting out to the end of his journey, are very beautifully set before us in the Pilgrim's Progress. I have long thought

that a course of simple Lectures on this most interesting book might be useful and instructive to many; and I have often resolved, if sufficient strength and energy were given me, that I would make an attempt of this kind. You must not, however, suppose for a moment, that it is lawful for us to put any human composition, however excellent, in comparison with the Divine testimony; or that a minister would be justified in making a text-book of any book except the book of God. It is only as the Pilgrim's Progress illustrates, explains, and enforces the vital and solemn truths of the Bible, that we can make use of it, when we assemble and meet together, as now, for prayer and religious instruction. Regarded in this point of view, we shall find the Pilgrim's Progress well calculated to interest our minds, to affect our hearts, and to guide our feet in the way everlasting.

We shall now confine our attention to three important particulars, which meet us at the first opening of the book.

- I. The Pilgrim's awakening to a sense of sin:
- II. His conversation with his family: and,
- III. His first interview with Evangelist.

May the Holy Spirit abundantly bless our undertaking. Oh that we may every one be truly convinced of our guilt and danger, effectually warned to flee from the wrath to come, and declare plainly by our life and conduct, that we are strangers and pilgrims on the earth, looking for a city that hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God!

- I. We have to consider the Pilgrim's sense of his

sin and danger. See how he is first introduced to our notice. "I saw a man clothed with rags, standing in a certain place, with his face from his own house, and a book in his hand, and a great burden upon his back." O affecting picture of every soul of man, when, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, he comes to his right mind, and is about to return from the far country to his heavenly home. This does not represent the awakened penitent as he appears to others, but as he sees himself in his own heart, and as he really is in the sight of God. "He is clothed with rags." He knows and feels that he is destitute of every thing to recommend him to the favour of God. He has nothing wherewith to come before the Lord; nothing that can endure his penetrating eye; nothing that can abide his righteous judgment. He has nothing to be proud of; nothing to enable him boldly to lift up his head. Instead of this, his language is, Behold, I am vile. He lies down in his shame, and confusion covers him as a garment. He feels now the truth of the humiliating confession of the ancient church: We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. "His face is turned from his own house." The awful realities of eternity have made him indifferent to temporal enjoyments. How little now do all his present plans and pleasures, and interests and pursuits, appear in his sight. He feels that *one* thing is needful; that his sweetest earthly comforts, and his choicest temporal blessings, must not stand in the way of his everlasting salvation. He remembers that it is said, how solemnly said, Whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. "A book is in his hand"

The awakened sinner can no longer persist in the fearful neglect and sinful disregard of God's Holy Word which he has hitherto practised. He seeks out the book of the Lord, and reads. He is anxious for information upon a matter of the first importance, and in which his everlasting all is involved. He sitteth alone and keepeth silence. He ponders continually the solemn declarations contained in the book of God. In that law doth he meditate day and night. "He has a great burden upon his back." Oh the weight of unpardoned sin! Every one who is really awake has some apprehension of the meaning of this. Mine iniquities, he says, as a heavy burden, are gone over my head. Conscience brings up, and memory records against him, innumerable instances, in which he has incurred the displeasure of the God who made him. He has obtained some true sight and proper sense of his manifold sins and wickedness. The remembrance of them is grievous unto him; the burden of them is intolerable. Not yet, however, has he been sufficiently humbled nor learned properly the malignant nature of sin, as contrary to God, and as an offence committed against him. See how this deeper conviction is produced.

"He opened the book and read therein, and as he read he wept and trembled, and not being able longer to contain, he brake out with a lamentable cry, saying, What shall I do?" His convictions deepened with his increasing knowledge of the book. The more an awakened sinner searches into the Holy Scriptures, before he is established in the gospel of peace, the more his distress increases. He dare not, however, cease to read. Painful and humiliating are the discoveries which he is continually

making ; and he finds that by increasing knowledge, he increaseth sorrow, but still does he follow on to know. His heart is softened. He reads with self-application. So deeply is he sensible of his guilt, that all the curses that are written in the book of the law appear to be especially addressed to him. He cannot as yet apprehend the promises. If he thinks of these at all, he considers them addressed to any one rather than to himself. The Holy Spirit gives him, through the word, still clearer views of the glorious holiness and terrible justice of that God with whom he has to do, and against whom all his sins have been committed. At the same time he obtains also, by the same means, a deeper sense of the desperate wickedness and exceeding sinfulness of his own heart. At length, like Peter's hearers, he is pricked in his heart, he can refrain no longer, and like them he earnestly inquires, What must I do ?

Here, beloved brethren, let us pause for a moment, to make a most important inquiry. Do we know any thing of this individual conviction of sin ? The time and the manner, the circumstances and the degree, in which these convictions are wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, will greatly vary in different travellers to the same celestial city. But oh, let us seriously remember, the life of faith and grace invariably begins with experience of this kind. If we are altogether unacquainted with it, we can be Christians only in name and appearance, but not in deed and in truth.

He knows no hope who never knew a fear.

How can we have a good hope through grace that our sins are pardoned, and that we are personally interested in the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of

God, if we never saw the plague of our fallen nature, never bewailed the offences of our sinful lives? Who is it that has said, "They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

II. We proceed now to consider the Pilgrim's conversation with his family. For some time he kept his distress locked up a secret in his own breast. Finding, however, that this concealment only increased his anguish, at length he opened his mind to those with whom he lived. Addressing them by the most endearing terms, he told them how the troubles of his heart were enlarged. I am undone, he said, by reason of the burden that lieth hard upon me. Then, in the most solemn language, he warned them that they too were involved in the same condemnation, and exposed to the same danger of which he was so greatly afraid. I am certainly informed, he proceeded to say, that this our city shall be burnt with fire from heaven, in which fearful overthrow we shall all miserably come to ruin, except (which I do not yet see) some way of escape may be found. Little consolation did the Pilgrim derive from opening his mind to his carnal relations. They had no experience themselves of the burden of which he complained, and therefore they laughed at his fears. They gave no credence to that word of warning which had so deeply affected Christian, (for that was the Pilgrim's name,) and therefore they treated as idle tales all the awful things which he told them about the approaching destruction and the burning fire. First, they tried to laugh him out of his fears, and to hush his convictions with carnal expedients. But this

would not do; the wound was too deep to be healed with slight remedies. After they had put him to bed, and all the attempts they made to soothe and compose him, and to restore him to his former state of mind, he told them that he only grew worse and worse. They then proceeded from ridicule to harshness. But Christian gave himself more entirely to meditation, and reading, and prayer. He would walk solitarily in the fields, sometimes reading and sometimes praying, and thus for some days he spent his time.

Dear brethren, how much there is in all this for our direction and instruction. When a person begins to give the first proof of coming to his right mind, often do his carnal friends say of him, that he is losing his senses. Much that passes within the penitent's breast was perhaps never intended to be divulged to human ears. The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy. If you are only thoroughly awakened yourself, you must try to awaken others. You must not by any means shrink from addressing to those who more especially belong to you, the language of affectionate entreaty and solemn warning. But be not surprised if you meet with reproach and contempt where you expected to find sympathy and help. How often is it found that a man's foes shall be those of his own house. Unless God, by his Holy Spirit, open the eyes and teach the hearts of those among whom you dwell, they will ridicule your spiritual fears, and treat those solemn passages of Scripture, which make you tremble, as if they meant nothing at all. Nay, more than this, you are sure to meet with those who will invent a thousand schemes, and use a thousand artifices, to hush

your fears, and to make you thoughtless and careless, even as they. Just as Christian's friends got him to bed, and tried to efface his serious impressions, so do worldly people invariably act to the awakened sinner. They try to have him again locked up in the slumber of carnal security. If that will not do, they endeavour to frighten him out of his religion, and labour by persecution and reproach to expel what they consider the strange and fanciful notions which he has adopted. But mark, dear brethren, how the true Pilgrim, when so tried, is distinguished from all others. He is neither to be soothed nor terrified out of his impressions. He can find no ease or abatement of his spiritual distress from any thing that is ministered for his relief by carnal friends. Miserable comforters are they all, and physicians of no value. And so he tells them. He assures them, that after all they have done, like the woman in the gospel before she came to the true Physician, he only grows worse and worse. He fears the anger of God more than the revilings of men, and therefore he is not daunted by all the clamour that is raised against him. Perceiving, however, that so little good is to be done at present, by intercourse with his fellow-creatures, he more resolutely cultivates communion with God. He gives himself unto prayer.

This, beloved, is the true way to seek peace and ensue it. How little can man do for the relief of him whom God has wounded, and in whose conscience the arrows of the Almighty stick fast! The same hand that planted the wound must again be stretched out for its healing. Whenever a person is deeply convinced of his sin and danger, and continues diligently to study the Scriptures, and





earnestly to pray for Divine teaching, he is certain eventually to be guided into the way of peace. Every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. All needful instruction shall surely be given, all requisite instructors shall certainly be sent. This brings us to consider

III. Christian's first meeting with Evangelist. While he was in this awakened state, actually asking, What must I do, and reading and praying, a man called Evangelist, (which is the name of every true minister of the gospel,) came and stood before him. The conversation that took place between them is very instructive. Evangelist asked the weeping man, For what reason he was crying? To this he replied, I perceive by the book in my hand that I am condemned to die, and after that to come to judgment; and I am as unwilling to die as I am unable to stand before God in judgment. Oh what an opening out is here of the inmost heart of a convinced sinner. *This book tells me I must die.* It tells me the wages of sin is death; and the soul that sinneth it shall die. I have broken God's holy law; I am a sinner, and therefore this fearful sentence is denounced against me: I must die. But I feel an inward shrinking from the execution of this sentence. I am unwilling to die; I am not prepared to die; I am afraid to die. This book tells me too, that God will bring me into judgment for all that I have done during the time of my life, and that I must be judged according to my works. But my works cannot stand the severity of God's judgment. My own heart condemns me. And shall not he who is greater than my heart, and who

knoweth all things, condemn me also? If God deals with me according to my works, my ruin is inevitable. How can I stand before this holy Lord God? I am afraid to appear before his dreadful bar. Who may abide the day of his coming, and who shall stand when he appeareth?

The manner in which Evangelist proceeded, after this, to probe the wound of Christian, is very striking. Since, (said he to the trembling penitent,) since this life is attended with so many evils, why are you not willing to die? Now observe from the answer the depth of Christian's conviction. I fear, he said, that this burden, which is upon my back, will sink me lower than the grave, and that I shall fall into Tophet, that is, into the fearful place, prepared of old for the grand adversary and all his adherents. When death approaches, I must go to prison, and then to judgment, and from thence to the place of execution. These are the thoughts that trouble me. This is the reason for which I cry. Dear brethren, if death were all, if there was nothing to be apprehended after death, it might be well to rush at once into eternity, and there to seek refuge from the many evils and calamities with which we are encompassed. But where can a never-dying soul flee from the presence of its offended God? Can it avoid his presence by escaping from the body? Oh no. "If I make my bed in hell 'Thou art there.'" It is not from the many sorrows of this present life, that the awakened sinner is mainly anxious to fly. It is to be delivered from his burden of sin; that sin which, unless removed, he feels must sink him lower than the grave. Have you, my brethren, known any thing of this painful apprehension? Oh remember that it is

appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment. If you are not fit to die, you are not fit to appear before God in judgment. "Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him, lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison: for thou shalt not depart thence, until thou hast paid the very last mite."

The direction given by Evangelist is immensely important. He pointed with his finger to a distant wicket-gate, and told the trembling Pilgrim that he must enter therein. Christian's eyes were so dim, and his mind was so agitated, that he could not see the gate, even when it was plainly pointed out. He had no doubt, however, as to the direction in which Evangelist pointed, and he was able to discern a shining light between him and the gate. This was all that he needed at present, and quite sufficient for his immediate use. Keep, said Evangelist, that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto; so shalt thou see the gate, at which, when thou knockest, it shall be told thee what thou shalt do.

Here observe, how true it is, that man's extremity is God's opportunity. How seasonable was the meeting of the despairing Pilgrim with Evangelist! The Holy Scriptures are of themselves able to make us wise unto salvation; and that is wise enough. But it generally pleases God to employ the instrumentality of some Evangelist, some faithful minister of the gospel, in imparting peace and consolation to the wounded conscience. Since the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. Are any of you, dear brethren, going heavily and weighed down under the load of sin?

Do not then be surprised if we probe your wounds before we attempt to heal them. If you are slightly wounded you will be content with a slight cure; but if you are thoroughly wounded, nothing will satisfy you but a thorough cure. When the minister points out to you the narrow way of life, by faith in Jesus Christ, it may not at first be plain and visible to you. But only be looking unto Jesus, and go in the right direction. Obey what is plain, and what you see not now, you shall see presently. Keep your eye fixed upon the shining light of God's most holy word. The entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple. Be faithful to that light, and follow up your convictions. Dread nothing so much as to smother your convictions, and to rebel against your light. Keep that light in your eye, and go up directly thereto, and when you knock at the gate, it shall be told you what you have to do. "To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness." "His going forth is prepared as the morning;" and "then shall we know, if we follow on to know." "Jesus said, If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."

THE HYMN.

My former hopes are fled,
My terror now begins;
I feel, alas, that I am dead
In trespasses and sins.

Ah, whither shall I fly?
I hear the thunder roar;
The law proclaims destruction nigh,
And vengeance at the door.

When I review my ways,
 I dread impending doom ;
 But hark, a friendly whisper says,—
 “Flee from the wrath to come.”

I see, or think I see,
 A glimmering from afar ;
 A beam of day, that shines for me,
 To save me from despair.

Forerunner of the sun,
 It marks the pilgrim's way ;
 I'll gaze upon it while I run,
 And watch the rising day.

THE PRAYER.

O thou great and glorious Lord God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, we humbly beg thy blessing upon the solemn truths which have now been brought before us. For thy dear Son Jesus Christ's sake, send thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, and effectually convince us of sin. Show us that we are altogether as an unclean thing, and that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. May we burst every tie, which prevents the salvation of our souls. May thy holy word be our constant study ; and may it discover to us our true condition in thy sight. If we have never yet done so, Lord grant that we may now individually inquire, “What must I do to be saved ?” Enable us by thy grace to act with wisdom and faithfulness to those around us, especially to our kindred according to the flesh. May we warn them of their danger ; and if they refuse to hearken, oh let them not prevail upon us to sleep as do others, but may we give ourselves to prayer. And when we feel that we are exposed to thine anger, and that the heavy burden of our sins will sink us lower than the grave ; oh do thou in mercy send us a faithful Ambassador to do the work of an Evangelist. Send out thy light and thy truth, and guide our feet into the way of peace. Make us perfectly to know thy Son Jesus Christ, to be the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to be faithful to the light we have, that in due time more light may be given to us. May we follow on to know thee, and constantly knock at the gate of mercy, until it is opened to us and we are there told what things we ought to do. We ask this in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our only Lord and Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE II.

TEMPTATIONS TO DRAW BACK.

In all my Lord's appointed ways,
My journey I'll pursue ;
Hinder me not, ye much loved saints,
For I must go with you.

Through floods and flames, if Jesus leads,
I'll follow where he goes ;
Hinder me not, shall be my cry,
Though earth and hell oppose.

Through duty and through trials too,
I'll go at his command :
Hinder me not, for I am bound
To my Immanuel's land.

HEBREWS xi. 15.

AND TRULY, IF THEY HAD BEEN MINDFUL OF THAT COUNTRY FROM WHENCE THEY CAME OUT, THEY MIGHT HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE RETURNED.

WHEN a person is really convinced of sin, and begins in earnest to seek after the salvation of Christ, he becomes a pilgrim. Then he perceives how necessary it is for him "to escape for his life;" and he turns his back upon the City of Destruction, breaks loose from the various ties, the sins and follies, the pleasures and pursuits, that have hitherto bound him to this present evil world, and he sets

his face steadfastly to the heavenly Jerusalem. Seldom, however, does he proceed far, before he encounters various temptations and inducements, which strongly urge him to relapse again into his former state of insensibility and carnal security. "And truly, if he had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned."

We left our pilgrim, in the last lecture, just after the important instructions he had received from Evangelist. The temptations that he met with to return to the City of Destruction, at his very outset from it, will form the subject of our present discourse. These temptations arose from three different sources :

- I. The clamour of his family.
- II. The advice of worldly neighbours.
- III. The sad despair into which he fell.

Let us try to view these important particulars, in the light of God's holy word, and may the Holy Spirit make the consideration of them profitable to our souls.

I. The first temptation which Christian met with to turn him back, arose from the clamour of his family. No sooner had he received the important instructions of Evangelist, than he followed them immediately. He could not indeed actually see the gate through which he must enter, although Evangelist pointed it out to him. But he had sufficient light for his present direction. He knew clearly which way he was to take. A shining light was before him, and he was cheered with the sweet as-

surance that, if guided by that, all would be plain in due time. With this promise, therefore, and this information, he not only set off, *but he began to run*. He had not, however, run far from his own door, when his wife and children began to cry after him, and begged him to return. You remember before he had actually set out, how solemnly and affectionately he had spoken to them. Oh how glad he would have been, if only they would have gone with him! But they would not at that time listen to his voice. They did not see and feel as he did, and he could not change their hearts. Now therefore, that they are crying after him, and begging him to stay, what are they doing? They are asking him to resist the clear light that has been imparted to his conscience; to disobey the plain and positive direction which he has received, and thus to involve him in that impending destruction, which he is anxious above all things to escape. The manner in which Christian acted under this temptation, is touching and affecting in the extreme. "He put his fingers in his ears, and ran on crying, Life! life! eternal life! So he looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain." "He put his fingers in his ears." He durst not trust himself to give any ear to the seductive voices of those whom he loved so well. He felt it unsafe to stop for a moment to parley with the temptation. "He ran on." He was certain that nothing but retaining in his soul a quick and lively sense of the all-absorbing importance of eternal things, could save him from this snare, and therefore he cried as he ran, "Life! life! eternal life!" Nay, so jealous was he of his own heart, and so deeply did he feel that it might be enticed back again to the place from which

he had set out, that he ventures not to stay in all the plain,

Or cast one longing, lingering look behind.

He remembers Lot's wife. "He looked not behind him, but fled towards the middle of the plain."

Some of you, my brethren, may at present be in circumstances somewhat similar to these. Listen then very attentively to the scriptural admonitions that are here addressed to you. When you have the plain word of God for your guide, make haste and delay not to keep the commandments of God. You are engaged in a matter that requires haste, when you are fleeing from the wrath to come. Be anxious therefore, not only to walk in the narrow way of life, but to *run* the race which is set before you. And oh remember, whatever enticing voices may endeavour to stop your progress, or to call you back, remember, I say, that you are escaping for your life. It is still, dear friends, almost impossible for any one, thoroughly awakened to the value of his soul, to take a decided part and to follow the dictates of an enlightened conscience, and not to be tried with the entreaties of carnal relatives. If you are thoroughly awake, and they are not, how can it be otherwise? If you are confident, from God's word, that the life you have been leading can only issue in eternal death, and they see no manner of harm in such a life, what can you expect? Be sure that you first use all prudent, all affectionate, and all solemn means to bring them to a better mind, and to induce them to set out with you on a new and a better course. But if they altogether refuse to do this, if they have no heart for the narrow way and the strait gate; if they will neither go in them-

selves, nor suffer others that were entering ; then consider, very seriously, what you have to do. If you cannot go to heaven in company, *go alone!* Resolutely stop your ears to all the representations of your unconverted friends and relations ; and oh remember that death, eternal death, is behind you, and life, eternal life, before you ! If you are at all disposed to compromise, or to listen to the entreaties of the worldly and the unawakened, this will certainly be the result. While you do not at all benefit them, they will most certainly injure or ruin you. You will soon lose the quick impression which you now have of eternal things. You will sink into indifference and worldliness, and unconcern ; and if death overtake you in such a state, you will miserably perish under the aggravated sin of having resisted the Holy Ghost, and fought against the convictions of your own conscience. Oh consider, “ What will it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul ! ” You had better break asunder the nearest and dearest of all earthly ties ; you had better suffer the loss of all things, life, health, reputation ; better far to lose them all than lose your soul. “ If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee. ” Say, did not the Pilgrim do well when “ he stopped his ears, and ran on crying : *Life, life, eternal life ;* and looked not behind him, but fled to the middle of the plain ? ” Go thou and do likewise.

II. Let us now pass on to consider Christian’s next temptation to return. This arose from the advice of his carnal neighbours, Obstinate and Pliable. These two men were more zealous in their endeavours to bring him back than the rest of his

acquaintance, and they set out after him for this purpose. As soon as they overtook him, they plainly told him that this was their intention; but Christian answered, he could by no means consent to return with them to the City of Destruction. It was, he owned, his *native place*; but now he was most certainly assured, that every individual living and dying there, must sooner or later perish with an overthrow; and therefore, instead of turning back with them, he earnestly invites them to go along with him. In vain does he represent to Obstinate the superior value of the blessings to be gained to those which must be relinquished. In vain does he speak of the goodly inheritance, and appeal to his book, the book of the King, for the certainty of what he says. Obstinate cares nothing for the book that opposes his wishes and inclinations, and contemptuously says: "Away with your book," urging him again to return. But he has laid his hands to the plough and cannot look back. Seeing then that no impression was to be made upon Christian, Obstinate proposes to his comrade Pliable that they leave him, as a weak and foolish person, who was determined to follow his own disordered fancy. But lo! the few good words which Christian had uttered are now found to have made some impression upon Pliable; and instead of joining in the reviling of his comrade, he declares that his heart inclines to go on pilgrimage. The joy of Christian, and the indignation of Obstinate, are about equal at this unexpected declaration. Pliable proposes his resolution to cast in his lot with Christian; and Obstinate returns alone to the city of Destruction. Now Pliable had hastily caught at the good things mentioned by Christian, and desired

to possess them ; but he had no burden upon his back, and he had not counted the cost of the journey upon which he was entering. His conversation evidently savours of one who fondly aspires to the *wearing of a crown*, without any intention of first *bearing a cross*. He inquires first, very properly, if Christian knows the way to the celestial city ; and upon what ground he is assured of the certainty of the things of which he speaks. And with great propriety Christian refers to the instruction of Evangelist, and the testimony of one who cannot lie. But his principal questions refer to the good things to be enjoyed in the better land. When he hears of the everlasting kingdom, and the glittering crown, the wiping away of every tear, and communion with saints and angels in the blissful presence of God and of the Lamb ; when he listens to this, his feelings are highly wrought upon, and he says : “the hearing of this is enough to ravish one’s heart.” He rejoices at the terms on which this goodly inheritance is to be obtained. When Christian tells him, it is recorded in the book, that if we be truly willing to have it, the Lord of that country is truly willing to bestow it upon us *freely*, then his joy is greatly excited, and he proposes to Christian that “they mend their pace.” He heard the word and anon with joy received it, but he had no root in himself, and, as we shall see presently, in time of temptation he fell away. Now, though Christian spoke to him of these glorious promises, it is clearly evident, from the beginning to the end of the conversation, that the main difference between the two consisted in this : “Christian was deeply convinced of sin ; Pliable was not.” When Obstinate went back, Christian said, “Had he but felt what I have

felt, of the powers and terrors of what is yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the back." And when Pliable, excited by the glowing description of the glory to be revealed, proposed to mend their pace, Christian, with great point and humility replied, "I cannot go so fast as I would, by reason of this burden which is upon my back."

(1.) Learn, dear brethren, from all this, first of all, *the necessity of decision*. How did Christian prevail over the arguments of Obstinate and Pliable when they came upon him, resolved to bring him back to the City of Destruction? By what means was he enabled to send one of them back ashamed, and to induce the other to change his resolution, and to profess the faith which he came to oppose? It was by a bold, firm, and unyielding maintenance of the great truths which he had learned from his book, and which he had felt in his heart. Let us seek to have a deep, realizing impression of eternal things upon our hearts, and to have the word of truth well treasured up in our memory. Then we shall not be of the number of those who draw back to perdition; and we shall know how to answer every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. Let us show clearly that we are influenced ourselves by the truth we profess; that, at whatever cost or sacrifice, we have renounced the world and all the vain things of which it can boast, for the service of Christ; and who can tell what shall be the result? We shall at any rate be able to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men; and, for aught we know, they who were most opposed to our principles may be induced to embrace and profess them. It is the decided, uncompromising follower of Christ, that he owns and honours as his

instrument in gathering others to him, besides those that are gathered. If you are a real Christian, your principles are taken from the word of eternal truth. You cannot alter them. You must not flinch from them. Oh do not attempt to make them more palatable to the taste of the ungodly! If you are right, they must adopt *your* principles, while it is at your peril, if you adopt theirs. "Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them."

(2.) Again, let us all learn to distinguish an easy *pliable* disposition from the broken heart of a genuine penitent. You may be very opposite to an obstinate man, with whom you have been associated. You may have a great respect for real Christians; but if you confine your view only to the bright side of religion; if you are carried away by its lively representations of peace and rest, and joy and glory, without any thorough awakening to the power and terror of the unseen world, and without any feeling of the burden upon your back,—I mean a sense of your depraved and sinful state,—if this, I say, be your experience, "your goodness will only be as the morning cloud and the early dew." You are only a stony-ground hearer. Notwithstanding your lively emotions, your ready profession, your joyful feelings, and your hasty movements, you have no root in yourself. You will endure but for a season. When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, you will be offended. Oh the unspeakable blessing of a thoroughly awakened, a deeply humble heart! Let us remember that this is the special work of the Holy Spirit; and however painful or distressing, let us constantly seek, that by his gracious operation it may be actually wrought within us.

III. We come now to consider the next temptation of Christian to turn back. This, as we shall find, proved the unsoundness of Pliable's profession. As they two journeyed on, they drew nigh to a very miry Slough, called the Slough of Despond. They both, through heedlessness, were plunged in the bog, and, to their utter amazement, were left for awhile to stick fast in the mire and the clay, where there was no standing. Christian, however, fared much worse than his new companion in this unexpected trouble. By reason of the burden upon his back, with which the other was unencumbered, he sunk much deeper and was less able to do anything for himself.

This calamity was too much for Pliable. He began to be offended, and angrily spoke to Christian, as if he had deceived and betrayed him. Is this, he said, the happiness of which you have been telling me? Let me only get out of this place with my life, and you shall possess the brave country alone for me. Then, with a desperate effort, he contrived to reach the side of the bog nearest to his own house, in the City of Destruction; managed to extricate himself from the mire, and instantly, with all speed, returned to his home. Not so the poor burdened Pilgrim. Though left alone to sink and stick in that fearful place, and weighed down by his burden into its lowest depths, he has still a greater dread of the place from which he set out, than he has of his present uncomfortable position. And therefore all his efforts are directed to reach the side which was farthest from his house; the side which lay in the direction of the wicket-gate. This showed the uprightness of his heart; for though in his haste, and for want of more diligent heed, he

had missed altogether the STEPS, by which he might have safely passed this dangerous way, he still struggled in the right direction, and entertained not a moment the thought of returning back, to be free from his trouble. He had no power, however, to help himself. "He could not get out, because of the burden that was upon his back." But he found the aid that he required in the midst of his perplexity. A man whose name was Help, came to him, and having asked him a few questions, to ascertain his views and wishes, immediately took his hand and drew him out, and set him on good ground, and bade him go on his way.

When this man, Help, was questioned why the Lord of the country suffered this place to remain unrepaired, to the great annoyance of Pilgrims, he answered the inquiry most wisely. In the first place, the nature of the soil was such, that it could not be thoroughly mended. All the doubts and fears, and terrors and discouragements, of those who were either partially or entirely convinced of sin, descended into this place. And by meeting together, and settling here, they caused the ground to be as it was. The Lord of the country has no pleasure in this bog remaining as a snare and a trap to his Pilgrims. He has charged his servants in all ages diligently to labour for the benefit of travellers, when they approach this region. He has commanded them to show how unfounded are their fears, and how unnecessary it is for genuine penitents to fall into these pits. But after all their labour, the Slough of Despond still remains, and every soul of man, fleeing from the City of Destruction, and striving to enter in at the Strait Gate, is liable for awhile (and especially upon his first setting

out) to slip into this fearful place, and to be plunged in darkness, and doubt, and despondency, respecting his escape. But the good will of the Lord of the country is most especially seen in this. He has caused his gracious promises, like so many steps, to be placed from one side of the Slough to the other. By taking heed to these, and making a proper use of them, all Pilgrims, under their heaviest burdens, might pass over safely without ever being defiled with the mire of despond. Few, however, very few, are so happy as to find these steps, and to use them directly; indeed, there are seasons when they are hardly seen; or if they are, men, through the dizziness of their heads, step beside, and then they sink into despondency, although the steps of promise are hard by.

The application of this part of the allegory must be evident to us all.

If we have set out on the heavenly road, and would not, like Pliable, turn again to folly, let us expect tribulation as we journey on, and be prepared to meet it with unflinching face. What is the meaning of denying ourselves daily, taking up the cross and following Christ? Why has he told us, "In the world ye shall have tribulation?" yea, and that "through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom." Why is all this? and what does it mean, if the life of a Christian consisted in that constant round of business and amusement, in which many consume their days; or if it were consistent with that self-indulgent, self-pleasing life, which all men naturally choose for themselves? Alas, how many Pliables there are in every congregation! As it is expressed in another part of this wonderful allegory, they will be religious as long as religion

goes in silver slippers. As long as they can go safely,—as long as it is sunshine,—as long as they can be flattered and admired by others, and be sure of heaven without a struggle, then they are pilgrims, and none are more alert than they. But when the sun goes down, when tribulation or persecution arises, when self-will and self-importance have to be crossed, when reproach and contempt have to be encountered, when their bright hopes of heaven are overcast, when all their imagined goodness is plunged as it were in the ditch, and all their fine performances covered over with mire and clay; what do they think then? Oh, then they will not believe that this is the way to heaven, or if it be, they will have none of it. They make a desperate effort to raise themselves out of the mire, and to exalt themselves to their former elevation. Their hearts go back after the follies and vanities they professed to have renounced; they withdraw from the afflicted members of Christ, and are again seen to swell the ranks of the ungodly. Seek, my brethren, a broken and a contrite heart, and a resolute determination to follow Christ, from a conviction of the *necessity* of his salvation, and your perishing condition without it. Then you will be turned aside by no difficulties; and though you sink and fall into divers temptations and tribulations, you shall rise at length superior to them all.

(2.) Finally, the experience of Christian in this place is very instructive to the upright soul. Would you avoid the deep waters and the painfully distressing experience through which many have passed in their progress through this sinful world? Be sure that you look diligently for the steps of promise, which alone can bear you up, and keep

you from harm, when painful thoughts and sharp convictions are well nigh ready to plunge you into despair. Search diligently for the exceeding great and precious promises that are made in the Bible, to all that are weary and heavy-laden. And when you have found them, use them. Step, as it were, from one to another, as your circumstances require. Firmly depend on these promises, as made to you, so shall you be established and upheld when you were almost gone, and your feet had well nigh slipped. But if through unwatchfulness, or the pressure of temptation, the power of unbelief, the weight of your burden, or the greatness of your fear, you have already sunk into a dark and desponding frame of mind; be not swallowed up with over-much sorrow, and give no indulgence to hard and bitter thoughts of God. Do not think that a strange thing has befallen you, and that your case is singular, and more desperate and sad than that of any beside. Oh remember the sorrowful complaints that have been uttered so often by the precious saints of God. "Save me, O God," they have cried, "for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing. I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink." And when they thus cried unto him out of the depths, in due time he sent to help them, and saved them out of all their distresses. Thus he will do to you, and to every one cast down under the burden of sin, and ready to sink in the deep waters of despair. Only cast your eye and fix your hope on the way which has been pointed out to you. Look again, and again, to Him who is the *Way*, and the *Truth*, and the *Life*. Never think

of deliverance by turning again to the place from which you have set out. Cry, as you sink, to Him who is able to save you from perishing. And the man, whose name is Help—Jesus, both God and man, upon whom *help* is laid, and who is mighty to save—will stretch forth the right hand of his mercy on your behalf. Then your cheerful song shall be: “I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he has put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God. Many shall see it, and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.”

HYMN.

O God, my refuge and my all,
To thee for help I humbly call;
Where else can wretched sinners fly,
When danger and distress are nigh?

My soul, with conscious guilt opprest,
Can find no comfort, ease, or rest;
O bring thy pard'ning mercy near!
Remove my sin, subdue my fear.

A tempest from the frowning skies
Fills me with terror and surprise;
'The waves of grief like mountains roll,
To overwhelm my fainting soul.

O let my poor distracted mind
In Thee relief and comfort find;
Be thou my rock and refuge nigh,
And save me ere I sink and die.

THE PRAYER.

O merciful God, who hast made all men, and wouldst not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should be converted and live, look down in mercy upon us, who desire now humbly to approach the throne of thy grace. Lord, hear us in the day of trouble, send us help from the sanctuary, and strengthen us out of Zion. Give us, we beseech thee, that deep conviction of sin, and that realizing sense of eternal things, that we may be effectually warned to flee from the wrath to come. And since we are set in the midst of so many and such great dangers, grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations. May we never be turned aside by any of the trials, or snares, or discouragements, that we meet in the way. Teach us to feel that we are escaping for our lives; and suffer us not to linger in all the plain, neither to look behind us. Lord! grant that we may be deaf to every voice that would call us back, and unmoved by all the counsel that would turn us from the narrow way of life to the broad road of destruction. May we look well to our goings, that we may embrace and ever hold fast the blessed hope of everlasting life set before us in the gospel. And if for a season the sorrows of our hearts are enlarged,—if our hope have perished and our way be hid,—if we sink in the mire, where there is no standing, oh be thou our help in trouble, when the help of man is vain! Stretch forth the right hand of thy mercy to save and deliver us. Bring us out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay; set our feet upon the rock, and establish our goings; and put a new song into our mouth; so will we sing and praise thy power. These mercies we ask in the name, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer.

LECTURE III.

THE MOUNT SINAI.

God's holy law, transgressed,
Speaks nothing but despair ;
Burdened with guilt—with grief oppressed,
We find no comfort there.

Not all our groans and tears,
Nor works, which we have done ;
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
Can e'er for sin atone.

Relief alone is found
In Jesus' precious blood :
'Tis this that heals the mortal wound,
And reconciles to God.

HEBREWS xii. 21.

AND SO TERRIBLE WAS THE SIGHT, THAT MOSES SAID, I EXCEEDINGLY FEAR
AND QUAKE.

WE shall find this verse most happily illustrated by considering our Pilgrim's distress at Mount Sinai. It was by the advice of Worldly-Wisdom that he turned out of the narrow way, and was induced vainly to seek relief in this fearful place. When Pliable had recovered from the desperation in which he had fallen, and had returned home, he was applauded by some and laughed at by others. But at length all his ungodly associates joined him in contemning the folly and madness of Christian. Apostates often become the most bitter persecutors of the people of God. The reproach they have got

among the ungodly for having once made a profession of religion, they endeavour to wipe away by speaking more contemptuously of the godly than ever. If we have been once enlightened, and tasted the good word of God, let us constantly cherish a wholesome dread of turning again to folly. Who is it that has said, "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him?"

There are three particulars for our present consideration.

- I. The interview between Christian and Worldly Wisdom.
- II. The counsel given by Worldly-Wisdom to Christian: and
- III. The sad consequences to Christian from following this counsel.

I. We have to consider the Pilgrim's conference with Worldly-Wisdom, through whose advice he was turned aside from the right way. As the Pilgrim was journeying on, a person met him, whose name was Worldly-Wisdom. He dwelt in the town of Carnal Policy, very near the City of Destruction, which Christian had left. The rumour of Christian's setting out had reached his ears, and now that he had actually met with him, he determined to exercise all his artifice to turn him aside, if he cannot prevail upon him to return back.

Noticing the distressed appearance of Christian, the wily deceiver inquires, "Where he is going after that burdened manner?" Christian makes no secret either of his condition or his intention. He confesses that he is indeed a burdened creature; and

that he is making for the strait gate before him, in the hope of deliverance. Worldly-Wisdom betrays himself, by asking immediately, not after Christian's distress or prospects, but after those he had left behind him. He inquires if he has a wife or children? The reply of Christian is deeply affecting. "Yes," he said, "but I am so laden with this burden that I cannot take that pleasure in them as formerly. Methinks," he said, "I am as if I had none." When a person is thoroughly awake to the shortness of time, and the nearness of eternity; and when his conscience is burdened with a painful sense both of the evil and desert of sin, he loses the keen relish which he once had for even the lawful and innocent endearments of life. He is in search of something of a different nature to satisfy his soul, and to make him completely happy. And now Worldly-Wisdom understands clearly the kind of man he has to deal with, and he adapts his counsel in the most artful manner. He advises Christian, with all speed, to get rid of his burden, assuring him, that so long as it hangs upon him, he cannot enjoy any of the blessings of Providence. Who can be more anxious than the Pilgrim himself, to be rid of his burden? But he is deeply convinced that he cannot get it off himself; neither can any man in all the country do it for him. Is not this one main object of his journey to the strait gate, that he may get rid of his burden? As soon as Worldly-Wisdom heard that it was Evangelist who had given these directions to the Pilgrim, he does not hesitate to speak in the most contemptuous manner both of the adviser and his advice. Evangelist and Worldly-Wisdom are sworn foes. Worldly-Wisdom accounts the preaching of Evangelist foolishness; and Evangelist considers

all the boasted wisdom of the other to be foolishness too. The carnal policy and time-serving ways of the one can never be reconciled to the humiliating doctrine and self-denying precepts of the other. This determined enemy to the gospel represents to Christian, in the most discouraging manner possible, all the evils, and pains, and sorrows, and distresses, that will certainly come upon him, in addition to those he has already experienced, if he determines to be guided by the advice of Evangelist, and to persist in striving for the strait gate. But now mark the sincerity of a deeply-convinced sinner, that so evidently appears in Christian's reply, "Why, sir, this burden on my back is more terrible to me than all the things which you have mentioned." Yes, dear brethren, the sense of God's wrath, which his sins have kindled, hanging like a millstone upon his burdened heart, is far more terrible to the truly awakened penitent than all the terrible things put together, that he can possibly encounter in the world. Thus he, too, is ready to add, with our Pilgrim, "Methinks I care not what things I meet with in the way, if I can also meet with deliverance from my burden."

Upon being further questioned, Christian confessed that it was by reading his book that he first obtained the sense of his burden. There is no real conviction of sin, until the solemn truths of the Bible are applied to our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Worldly-Wisdom speaks as slightly of the Bible as he did of Evangelist, and addresses Christian as a weak man, who had been meddling with things too high for him, and whose understanding was clearly injured, because he was willing to run the most desperate ventures to obtain he knew not

what. But Christian well knew what he wanted. It was ease from his heavy burden that he sought. Nothing could satisfy him or make him happy as long as this remained. This was the cry of his awakened heart,

Mercy, good Lord, thy mercy grant,
 This is the total sum
 Of all I seek, of all I want ;—
 Lord, let thy mercy come.

II. Observe now the counsel given by Worldly-Wisdom to Christian, under these circumstances. Perceiving that our Pilgrim is really in earnest for deliverance, and that he cannot be laughed out of the distress which he feels, this subtle adversary changes his mode of attack. He pretends that he can point out to Christian a far shorter and a far better way for obtaining deliverance from his burden, than by following the directions of Evangelist. And here, first, in this interview, Christian betrays infirmity and begins to offend. The man with whom he was talking had ridiculed the notion of his burden. How then should he be able to give any good advice, as to the means of deliverance from it? But in an unguarded moment, Christian requested him to open this secret to him. Instead of striving and toiling any longer after the Wicket-Gate, this is the sum and substance of Worldly-Wisdom's advice to Christian. He directs him to the village of Morality, where a person named Legality would be of the greatest assistance possible, in delivering him from his burden. This would be, he pretended, much better every way than to go to the Gate. Should Legality himself not be found, his son Civility would do just as well.

When his business was done, there would be nothing to prevent Christian settling down there, in the village of Morality, with his family, and living, not only in peace and quietness, but in high respect and esteem with his neighbours. O fatal and treacherous advice! And yet such is the advice that is continually given by the wise of this world, when they speak to those whose conscience by sin is accused. If they cannot laugh them out of their convictions, they endeavour to persuade them that their gloomy fears arise from their too much reading, and thinking of eternal things. Then they confidently pronounce that the best and shortest way to regain their peace and serenity is, to pay more exact attention to the duties of morality, to practise more diligently the forms of religion, doing what they can to make themselves better; and quietly to settle down in the ranks of virtuous, moral, and civil society. Our Pilgrim could not listen to this pernicious counsel without a secret misgiving. When Worldly-Wisdom had ceased to speak, he was somewhat at a stand. But presently he concluded, if all be true which I have just heard, nothing can be better for me than to follow this advice. His mind is now made up. Through a secret shrinking from the cross, he is drawn aside and enticed, and falls into the net of this practised deceiver. Being informed that his way lies directly by the lofty Hill, (it was Mount Sinai,) which was full in his view, in an evil hour he leaves the path in which Evangelist had placed him, and turns out of the way to seek relief at Legality's house. O, my brethren, how immensely important it is for us all, and especially for those who are awakened to a sense of their sin and danger, to be kept from false teachers and blind

guides, who can only pervert the right ways of the Lord! If we have received the truth and simplicity of the gospel, let no man with flattering words, or with the wisdom of this world, prevail upon us to part with it. Why should we so soon be removed from him that called us to the grace of Christ to another gospel? With what fearful vehemence does the inspired apostle speak of those who would act to us in the same way that Wordly-Wisdom acted to Christian? "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached, let him be accursed." Be jealous, my brethren, of all advice given you in spiritual matters by those who have no sense of the burden of their sins; no experimental acquaintance with the preciousness of Christ; no clear perception of the vital doctrine of justification by faith only, without the works of the law. Be more anxious to have your wounds *thoroughly* healed, than to have them *immediately* healed. And whatever advice has a tendency to shake your confidence in the word of God, to make you shrink from your allotted cross, to flatter you with an idea of your own ability or goodness, or to make you a favourite in the eyes of the unconverted, be sure that this persuasion cometh not from Him that calleth you, but is the treacherous counsel of a spiritual enemy.

III. See now the sad consequences that resulted to Christian, from following this advice. When he was got now hard by the hill, it seemed so high, and also that side of it that was next the way-side did hang so much over, that Christian was afraid to

venture further, lest the hill should fall on his head. When persons who have been only a little alarmed, but who have no thorough sense of their guilt and danger as sinners, determine to make themselves better, to be more strict and moral in their conduct, and to quiet their conscience by doing more than they ever yet attempted, they often pass on from a state of open sin or ungodliness, to one of morality and formal attention to religion, with very little trouble. They hope to be saved by their own doings. They are going about to establish their own righteousness. But having no perception of the exceeding breadth and spiritual extent of the law of God, they think that the poor, partial, outward obedience which they pay to it, is all that is requisite. They are "alive without the law." To them Mount Sinai is not a fearful place. Salvation by works, in their eyes, appears to be, not only possible, but plain and easy. The ascent of the hill is not steep. They see no impending rocks ready to overwhelm them. They have nothing to retard their progress. They neither see a lightning's flash to make them pause, nor hear the voice of distant thunder, to fill them with dismay. But oh, how different a process is this from the truly awakened penitent, whom our pilgrim here represents! The more he attempts to make himself better, the clearer conviction he obtains of his own exceeding sinfulness and the deep depravity of his heart. The more he labours and toils to do any thing to recommend himself to the favour of God, the more painful sense he obtains that he can do nothing. Nay, that very law, to which he once looked with hope and confidence, becomes to him now the bitter source of terror and despair. There is one that condemneth

him, even Moses in whom he trusted. The commandment comes in all its length and breadth, and spiritual meaning;—sin revives, and he dies. The obedience which it requires is so vastly different a thing from what he once imagined, that he despairs of ever fulfilling it. And not that only, the fearful threatenings which it denounces against transgressors, are now seen, like impending rocks, ready to fall on his guilty head, and to crush him to atoms if he proceeds further. He is afraid to proceed. He knows not which way to turn. “Wherefore he stands still, and wots not what to do!”

But not yet has the Pilgrim reached the extremity of his distress. His burden now seemed heavier to him than while he was in the way. There came also flashes of lightning out of the hill, that made Christian afraid he should be burned. Here, therefore, did he sweat and quake for fear. And now he began bitterly to repent that ever he had followed the advice of Worldly-Wisdom. Dear brethren, while a poor burdened sinner is seeking the salvation of Christ, though his burden may press heavily before he finds rest to his soul, still he is able to bear it, because he is cheered and sustained, at any rate, with the hope and the prospect, however faint or however distant, of one day finding relief and deliverance. But when he turns from Christ to seek for peace by the works of the law, then there is nothing to exclude the gloom of despair from his sorrowful soul. Then he finds to his dismay that his burden seems heavier to him than when he was in the right way. As long as the convinced sinner persists in going about to establish his own righteousness, what fearful and repeated intimations does he meet of the avenging wrath of

God! These are the flashes of fire that shoot up out of the mountain. This holy law puts in the clearest and most affecting light possible, his multiplied and aggravated offences. "By the law is the knowledge of sin." He may have known something of it before, but how inadequate compared with that which he now obtains! By what other means could he have detected all his crooked and perverse ways, without trying them by this straight and perfect rule? "I had not known sin but by the law." Nay, not only does this holy law discover the depravity of our nature, and the sinfulness of our lives, but it fomented and stirs up that depravity. "Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." Just as forward children cry and long more earnestly than ever for any thing that is positively forbidden them, so the lusting spirit that is in the children of men is stirred up and excited by the very holiness and strictness of the commandments of God. Thus, when sin works death in us by that which is good, "sin by the commandment is shown to be exceeding sinful." No situation can be more dreadful than that of a convinced sinner unacquainted with the gospel, labouring and toiling to work out a righteousness for himself, by his own obedience to the Divine law. The fearful circumstances that marked its first promulgation, again appear to be realized in his experience. He has come to the mount that burns with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice he is utterly unable to endure, and he entreats that it may not be spoken to him any more lest he die. And so terrible is the sight that he is compelled to say, "I

exceedingly fear and quake." Are any of you, dear friends, at all acquainted with such experience as this? Are you seeking relief from your burden by the works of the law? Oh cease at once from the vain, the perilous, the ruinous attempt! Turn your eyes from this burning mountain, to another mountain, even that mountain upon which was offered a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. Christ has borne the fearful curse which this broken law denounces against your transgressions of it. Christ has fulfilled every part of the perfect obedience which this holy, unchangeable law demands from you. Believe on him, and all that he has suffered, and all that he has done, is yours. His atoning blood is yours, to take away the guilt, and the stain, and the curse of your sin: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." And the obedience which he paid, in your nature and as your Surety, is yours, for your complete justification before God: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

THE HYMN.

'Tis not when o'er the trembling soul
The thunder-peals of Sinai roll;
Not when we look with shrinking awe
Upon that unforgiving law:

Not then, though thoughts of anguish dart
Their arrows through the stricken heart;
O 'tis not then we feel within
The full malignity of sin.

'Tis when by faith we turn our eyes
On him, our Priest and Sacrifice;
Mark his mysterious pangs, and know
Our peace was purchased by his wo;

'Tis when, in faith's serenest hours,
 We dare to call that Saviour ours,
 'Tis then our hearts within us burn;
 We look on him we pierced, and mourn;

'Tis then a voice is heard within,
 That breaks the tyrant yoke of sin;
 For he our load of guilt who bore,
 He bids us go and sin no more.

THE PRAYER.

O thou great and glorious Lord God, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and canst not look upon sin, send thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, and enable us to draw near unto thee, looking unto Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. We praise and thank thee, that we are not come to the mount that burned with fire, and that we are not required to approach thee in our own name, or with our own righteousness. In this way we could never come before thee with acceptance. We have offended against thy holy laws. O Lord our God, when we think of thy glorious holiness, and thy terrible justice, and when all our multiplied offences pass before us, we have every one of us reason to say, "I exceedingly fear and quake." But we look to the atoning sacrifice of the cross, to Him who suffered the just for the unjust, to bring us to God, and therefore we have hope. Keep us, we beseech thee, by thy help and goodness, that we may never be turned aside from the hope of the gospel. May we give no heed to flattering words, which can only subvert our souls! May our faith stand, not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God! Reveal in us thy Son Jesus Christ, and grant that we may not confer with flesh and blood. May we seek for pardon and deliverance, only as thou hast appointed in thy holy word, lest thy wrath be kindled, and so we perish from the way. And O grant, that in all our fears and distresses, and whenever our conscience by sin is accused, we may look unto him who is the propitiation for our sins, who bare our sins in his own body on the tree, and who was made a curse himself, to redeem us from the curse of the law. To Him, with Thee, O Father, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE IV.

THE BACKSLIDER RESTORED.

Through all my fainting heart
His secret vigour spread ;
To me his strength he did impart,
And raised my drooping head.

Now will I raise my voice,
In loud and cheerful song ;
With all the saints will I rejoice,
Who to his courts belong.

With them the path I'll trace,
Which leads to his abode ;
With them I'll sing redeeming grace,
Along the joyful road.

GALATIANS i. 6, 7.

I MARVEL THAT YE ARE SO SOON REMOVED FROM HIM THAT CALLED YOU INTO THE GRACE OF CHRIST UNTO ANOTHER GOSPEL: WHICH IS NOT ANOTHER; BUT THERE BE SOME THAT TROUBLE YOU, AND WOULD PERVERT THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

WE left our Pilgrim quaking with fear at the mount that burned with fire. He had been seduced from the right way by the artful representations of Worldly-Wisdom. This man had persuaded him to seek rest and deliverance from his burden by going round to Mount Sinai. We have seen how wofully he was disappointed in his expectation. Instead of finding rest and ease, he found nothing but blackness and darkness, and fire, and storm, and tempest, in the way he went. How was he

delivered from this perilous situation? It was by the arrival, and plain and faithful dealing, of his true friend, Evangelist. We remember the manner in which the apostle Paul acted to the Galatians, after they had been seduced by false teachers from the gospel which he had taught them. Thus did Evangelist act to our erring Pilgrim. He addressed him in the very words which we have selected as the groundwork of the present discourse: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

The instructive interview between Evangelist and Christian will form the entire subject of this lecture. And here there are several particulars that demand our attention. How seasonable was the arrival of Evangelist at such a time; how skillfully did he probe the backslider; how tenderly did he comfort him when ready to faint; how wisely he admonished him; how strongly he confirmed his words; and how happily he succeeded in restoring him into the right way! May the consideration of these particulars prove to us a word in season.

(1.) *How seasonable was the arrival of Evangelist at such a time.* In the midst of his difficulties, when Christian was on the very verge of despair, trembling and astonished, not knowing what to do, or where to turn, he beheld a man advancing towards him, and recognised soon the features of his friend Evangelist. This sight caused the poor backslider to blush for shame. He recollected his disobedience to the plain direction which would have saved him from all his present terror and dis-

tress. He is speechless when Evangelist stands before him, and inquires, with a severe countenance, "What doest thou here?" Alas, he feels that he has nothing to do here, and that he is now out of the way. The further questions of Evangelist are very pointed. "Art not thou," he said, "the man that I found crying without the walls of the city of Destruction? Did I not direct thee to the Wicket-Gate? How is it that thou hast so quickly started and turned aside from the path which I pointed out to thee? Thou art no longer now in the road to the Celestial City." In reply to these questions, the seduced Pilgrim manifests the sincerity of a penitent, by a frank avowal of his sin, and a simple declaration of the steps by which he had been drawn into it. He recounts his meeting with Worldly-Wisdom, repeats the advice and the counsel which that man had given, and concludes by saying, "so, I believed him, and turned out of that way into this, if haply I might be eased of my burden. But when I came to this place, and beheld things as they are, I stopped for fear of danger; and at this moment I know not what to do."

There is much, dear brethren, for our instruction and encouragement in this seasonable meeting. In this way the Lord often graciously interposes on behalf of such as are in distress and perplexity about their souls. He seasonably raises up for them, and providentially brings near to them, pastors according to his own heart, ministers skilful in the word of righteousness, and able to do the work of an evangelist. By the ministry of his own word, in the mouth of such as these, he speaks to the troubled soul a word in season, and shows him the way wherein he should go. The poor wanderer

often finds his deepest distress to be the dawn of deliverance ; and in the mount the Lord is seen. But true comfort frequently comes in a very uncomfortable form. Those who are really in earnest about salvation, sometimes look with fear and suspicion, or even with prejudice, upon those who, in the providence of God, are the appointed instruments for guiding their feet into the way of peace, and establishing them in the true faith of Christ. Think of the disciples, when, in the midst of their distress, they saw Jesus walking towards them on the sea. At the first they supposed it had been a spirit, and they cried out with fear. But how sweetly did comfort dawn upon their sorrowful hearts, as soon as they had received him into the ship ; and immediately there was a great calm. Thus it is with the convinced sinner, when he meets with the ambassador of Christ, whose admonitions he has disobeyed. But if there be true sincerity, as there is in every genuine penitent, the interview that opened with fear and shame, shall end with comfort and satisfaction. Remember, however, that this sincerity must be shown by a free confession of our sin ; and whoever may have been our seducers, or however peculiar may have been our circumstances, we must take the full share of blame upon ourselves, and not endeavour to throw it upon others. We must not hide our transgression like Adam. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

(2.) Consider next, *how skilfully did Evangelist probe the wounds of the erring Pilgrim.* He referred to his book. All the instructions of Evangelist were taken from the book. By two suitable

passages from it, he showed the sin and the danger of drawing back, after a man has once set his face towards the Celestial City. He reminded the transgressor of the impossibility of escaping, if we refuse him who speaketh to us from heaven. At the same time, he described, in its true colours, the aggravated sin of apostasy. This sin he charged home directly upon the conscience of the Pilgrim. "Thou," he said, "art the man who art running into all this misery. Thou hast begun to reject the counsel of the Most High. Thou art turned aside quick out of the way which he commanded thee by my mouth, to the hazardin of thy perdition."

This language, dear brethren, sounds severe, but the occasion called for it. No part of a minister's duty is more difficult, and yet none is more important, than skilfully to probe the wounds of those with whom he has to deal. On the one hand, he fears lest he should drive the trembling sinner to absolute desperation, by a full exposition of his conduct, with all its aggravated circumstances; on the other, he dreads lest the person he is addressing should mistake a flashing pang of natural conviction, for the deep, abiding, humiliating work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. He fears lest by an unwise and unsuitable application of gospel promises to those who are not prepared to receive them, he should be guilty of healing their hurt slightly, and saying peace, when there is no peace. It is generally found that persons with only a very slight sense of their sins, are soon comforted, and readily conclude that all is well, though they show neither the humility nor the consistency of a pardoned penitent. But he that believeth shall not make haste. Genuine penitents, for the most part,

have far more difficulty in applying the promises of the gospel to their own case. They perceive, indeed, that a cold heart and a warm promise may be brought near to each other by the word; but they know, they feel that they cannot unite, and the cheerful blaze of hope and love be experienced within, until faith is given from above, and the promise is applied by a hand Divine. The true evangelist knows well who it is that alone can effectually either heal or wound. And knowing that the Lord's general method is, first to wound and then to bind up, he labours thoroughly to humble, before he attempts to comfort. This process, however, although necessary to a tender-hearted minister, is a painful necessity. He would much rather be otherwise employed. Oh, how much pleasanter does he find it to pour out the precious balm of the gospel to the truly contrite, than to probe the consciences of those of whom he stands in doubt, with the two-edged sword of the Lord, and to terrify and arouse them with the mighty thunderings of Sinai! But it is the profit and salvation of others, not his own pleasure and inclination, that he seeks. Faithful, he remembers, are the wounds of a friend; and he that rebuketh a man shall afterwards find more favour than he who flattereth with his lips.

(3.) Observe now *how tenderly did Evangelist encourage the wanderer when he perceived that he was ready to faint.* The wise reprover is now satisfied that his words have sunk deep into the heart of him whom he is addressing. No sooner has his turning aside been represented to him in its true light by Evangelist, than Christian fell down at his feet as one dead, and cried, *Wo is me, for I am*

undone ! But Evangelist, like his Master, wounds only that he may heal. He therefore caught, immediately, the hand of the fallen Pilgrim, and said, with a distinct voice and solemn tone, "All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven to the children of men." To this he added the earnest exhortation, "Be not faithless, but believing." Then did the fallen one a little revive, and got up, and stood trembling as at the first.

Let us receive, dear brethren, instruction from the behaviour of Evangelist. Our conduct often appears to us in an entirely different light when it is plainly set before us by another, from what it did when we viewed it through the false medium of self-love and self-deception. When the righteous have smitten us, and we see our sin set before us, in all its deformity and all its malignity, where can we turn for comfort, or how can we avoid the blackness and darkness of despair? Nothing but the unfettered promises of free forgiveness, abounding, through the adorable Saviour, to the very chiefest of sinners, can then meet our case. Is there any poor backslider here, now filled with his own way, and tasting the bitterness of his doings? Are you ashamed, yea, even confounded, at the sight and sense of all your sins? And because your back-slidings are increased, is your heart ready to faint within you? Oh! look to the only Saviour of sinners. Through him is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him, all that believe are justified from all things. Through him all manner of sins are forgiven to every one that believeth. With him there is plenteous redemption, and abundant pardon, for sinners of every description.

Pardon for crimes of deepest dye ;
A pardon sealed with Jesus' blood.

Be not faithless, but believing; humbly put your trust in him, and you shall be delivered from the dark gulf of despair, and receive the gracious answer, "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely."

(4.) We proceed to notice further *how wisely did Evangelist admonish the Pilgrim for his future direction*. If his rebukes are salutary, and his encouragements reviving, no less are his admonitions profitable. Evangelist represents, in the most forcible manner possible, what an enemy Worldly-Wisdom must ever prove to all who go on pilgrimage to the Celestial City. He savours only the doctrine of the world, a doctrine which he can profess without any cross; but he cannot endure the doctrine propounded by Evangelist and his fellows. Thus he will not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord. There were three things especially which Christian was admonished utterly to abhor in the counsels of Worldly-Wisdom. His turning him out of the right way; his device to render the cross odious; and his setting him in a way that would only lead to the ministration of death.

These admonitions, dear brethren, are very important to every one of us. We should not be ignorant of the devices of Worldly-Wisdom; and when we understand what he is aiming at, and what is his drift, we shall abhor both the man and his communications. This enemy *would not have us to make for the Strait-Gate*. Has not the Lord, who is the way, and the truth, and the life, expressly told us, that the gate is strait, and the way narrow, that leadeth unto life; and that it is absolutely necessary for us to strive, if ever we mean to enter in? Whoever, therefore, may tell us that

the gate is *not* straight, that the way is *not* narrow, and that so much striving is *not* necessary, we may be confident that this is an adversary; one that would trouble us, and who is only trying to turn our feet from the narrow way of life to the broad road of destruction.

Worldly-Wisdom, again, would make the cross odious to us. By the cross I mean any reproach, or loss, or suffering which we are clearly required to endure for the sake of Christ, or out of attachment to him. True disciples ever account this most precious. Like Moses, they esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. But a religion of this kind, which may lead to such serious consequences, Worldly-Wisdom can never endure; and he accounts it little better than madness and folly. But oh! let us remember who has said, "He that cometh after me, and hateth not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." His love to them must never interfere with what he owes to his Saviour. He must be willing to leave them, to give them all up, and act as if he hated them, sooner than allow them to sever the ties that bind him to Christ. He must be ready to deny himself, to take up his cross, and prove that he is a follower of Him who was crucified. Surely, then, that is not the religion of Christ, whoever may recommend it to us, that costs us nothing,—that is fashionable with the world, and which we can always profess without any cross or any self-denial.

Worldly-Wisdom would send us for justification to the works of the law. Oh! be convinced, this advice will certainly prove the ruin of all those who

persist in following it. None can follow it without being involved, as Christian was, in all the blackness and darkness of terror and dismay. Ever since our guilty first parents were expelled from Paradise, the way to life and happiness, by our own works and obedience, has been bolted and barred, and closed up for ever. All who attempt to climb up to heaven by this way are thieves and robbers, and the porter will not open to them. Nay, the avenging justice of God Almighty stands with his drawn sword, which turns every way, to cut them off, and to exclude them from the tree of life. But another way has graciously been revealed, through the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. No man ever did or ever can find true rest to his soul, or obtain the favour of God, except by faith in the only Saviour of offending men. All, therefore, who would send a burdened sinner to the works of the law for peace of conscience, and who have no better advice to give than to recommend the practice of moral virtues, and civil duties, or outward services, are clearly physicians of no value. Nay, they are worse than that—they are perverters of the gospel. To every poor sinner we may say, Legality is not able to set thee free from thy burden. No man as yet was ever rid of his burden by him, no, nor ever is like to be. You cannot be justified by the works of the law, for by the deeds of the law no man living can be justified. Therefore, Worldly-Wisdom is an alien; Legality is a cheat; and his son Civility is but an hypocrite, who cannot help thee. Believe me, there is nothing else in all that you have heard from this man, but a design to beguile you of your salvation, by turning you from the only right way, in which

you are directed to seek rest to your soul and peace to your conscience.

We cannot fail to remark how well it became Evangelist, in giving these admonitions, thus fully to dwell on the essential difference between the *law* and the *gospel*. No one can do the work of an evangelist—that is, he cannot be a true minister of the gospel—who does not perceive and understand this important distinction. And none of you, dear brethren, can know the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, neither can you offer any obedience to the law that will be acceptable to God, until you come by faith to be justified freely as a helpless sinner, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is not scholarship, but the teaching of the Holy Spirit, that alone can make you feel and know this precious truth. The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Oh! seek to know, and to feel, that you can be saved, not by any thing which you can do yourself, but by what Christ has done and suffered in your stead. Then, while you look unto him as the only ground of your justification before God, by receiving the law in all its extent, as the perfect rule of your conduct, and daily endeavouring to rule your heart and life by it, you will prove yourself to be a justified person before the eyes of all men.

(5.) *The manner in which Evangelist confirmed his doctrine* is the next point for our consideration. He called with a loud voice for a confirmation of the solemn truths which he had delivered. Neither did he call in vain; for lo! fire again was seen to flash from the mountain, and a voice of words was distinctly heard, which proclaimed aloud and said,

“As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.” Christian felt the full import of these words. His own heart condemned him. The hair of his flesh stood up; he looked for nothing but instant death; and bitterly did he bewail his sin and folly, in declining from the right way, merely upon the representations of Worldly-Wisdom, and to avoid his allotted cross in the way to Zion.

Oh, how full of important meaning is all this! They, dear brethren, who preach the true doctrine—that is, death and despair by our own works and deservings, and life and salvation by faith in Christ, are able to give the most undoubted sanctions for the truth of what they proclaim. They can appeal to the awakened conscience of every man born into the world, and say, Are not you condemned by this holy law? If you have to live for ever, or to suffer the bitter pains of eternal death, according to your keeping or breaking this law, is not all hope of your salvation done away, and that for ever? Have you, from the earliest dawn of reason to the present moment, paid an unsinning obedience to these commandments? What! have you loved the Lord your God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and strength; and your neighbour as yourself? Have you never once in your life, by thought, word, or deed, by look, intention, or desire, violated any one of the ten commandments? You dare not say so. Your own heart condemns you. You stand convicted as a transgressor of this holy law. Notwithstanding your morality, and your boasted obedience, there is one

that condemneth you, even Moses, in whom you trust. You see, as it were, the fire flashing from the mount. You hear the voice of words which tell you that you are exposed to the curse of a broken law. The testimony of God is confirmed in you. You feel, when we tell you these things, that these are the true sayings of God. And to cut off your vain expectation, that *partial* obedience will be accepted instead of *perfect* obedience, listen again to the mighty thunderings, that roll so fearfully in heaven above, and echo so mournfully from earth beneath, "All things that are written in the book of the law to do them!" Listen again to the voice of words, so impossible for any child of Adam to endure, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Oh, what could any of us look for, but curses and death, and burning vengeance, and everlasting destruction from the Almighty, if we had no better foundation upon which to rest our hope than our own works and deservings!

(6.) But we have to notice finally, *how happily Evangelist succeeded in restoring our pilgrim into the right way.* The good effect of the interview, and of the wise and judicious treatment of Evangelist, now began to appear. Christian was exceedingly alarmed by the things which he heard and saw. But though greatly cast down, he is not quite in despair. He inquires first, if there be any hope for him; if he may retrace his steps; and if he will not be rejected at the Gate, for what he has done? More fully and distinctly than ever, and with the most unfeigned humility and sincerity, he confesses his error. "I am heartily sorry," he said, "that I listened to the seducer's voice, and

followed his advice ; but may I be forgiven ?” Evangelist, in reply, did not excuse the wanderer’s transgression, but having spoken of it as being most grievous, he declared, to the unspeakable comfort of the poor backslider, “ Yet for all this the man at the Gate will not reject thee, for he has good-will for men ; only take heed that thou turn not aside again, lest thou perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.” This is good news, indeed, to the humbled and the burdened pilgrim. Having received an encouraging smile from his faithful friend, with the utmost care and diligence he addressed himself to retrace his wandering footsteps. He went like one that was all the while treading on forbidden ground, and could by no means think himself safe, till again he got into the way which he had forsaken to follow the counsel of Worldly-Wisdom. So in process of time he got up to the Gate.

Are there any here who have been seduced into some false way ? Have you, either by following the devices and desires of your own hearts, or by listening to the evil communications of others, made for yourselves crooked paths ; and have you learned, by bitter experience, that they who walk therein shall know no peace ? Oh, ponder the path of your feet, that all your ways may be established ! Search and try your ways, and turn again unto the Lord. Cry earnestly unto him to restore your soul, and to lead you in paths of righteousness for His name’s sake. And however multiplied may have been your sins, and however grievous your provocations ; however painfully you may have pierced yourselves through with many sorrows, never say, there is no hope. Hope, indeed, there is none, if

you are determined to keep your sins, to persist in rejecting the gospel of Christ, and so to pursue the ways of death. But what is the gracious message, which the Lord himself addresses to you, in his own most holy word? "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity." Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord. Say unto him, take away all our iniquity, and receive us graciously. If you are heartily sorry for your past transgressions, and truly willing to renounce the counsel of Worldy-Wisdom; and if, looking unto Jesus as a poor helpless sinner, you are determined to press forward in the narrow way, in due time you will come to the Gate, the gate of mercy; and if you knock, it will be opened to you.

THE HYMN.

Just as I am, without one plea,
Save that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt,
Fightings within, and fears without,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, poor, helpless, blind;—
Sight, wisdom, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thou wilt receive,
Wilt pardon, welcome, bless, relieve,
Because thy promise I believe:
O Lamb of God, I come.

Just as I am, thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be thine, yea, thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come.

THE PRAYER.

O Lord, who showest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness, receive our humble petitions, and hearken to the prayer that we make before thee. We have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have broken thy law, we have neglected thy gospel, we have fallen by our own iniquity, we have destroyed ourselves, and we have no power of ourselves to help ourselves. But turn thou us, and so shall we be turned, for thou art the Lord our God. Hast thou not said, Return, ye backsliding children? Lord, we come to thee. Take away all our iniquity, receive us graciously, heal our backslidings, love us freely, and let thine anger be turned away from us. Grant that we may come to thee, just as we are, to partake of the full, the free, and the finished salvation of thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. May it please thee, through the ministry of thy holy word, to impart to us sufficient light for our guidance in the way everlasting. Probe our wounds, and set our sins before us in such a light, that we may abhor ourselves in our own sight. But oh, do thou comfort us again with the hope of mercy, as we look to the great sacrifice of the cross. Make us heartily ashamed of our readiness to start and turn aside from thee, for our proneness to shrink from our allotted cross, and for the remaining pride and self-righteousness that is within us. Confirm thy word unto thy servants; and though it be by terrible things in righteousness, convince us that we can only find peace and rest in Christ. Restore our souls, and lead us in paths of righteousness, for thy name's sake. And mercifully grant that all our lamented sins, negligences, and ignorances, may be overruled to our spiritual good; making us more humble, more watchful, more steadfast in maintaining the truth of thy gospel. These things we humbly beg, in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE V.

THE STRAIT GATE.

Strait is the way—the door is strait,
That leads to joys on high :
'Tis but a few that find the gate,
While crowds mistake and die.

Beloved self must be denied,
The mind and will renewed,
Passion suppressed—and patience tried,
And vain desires subdued.

Lord, can a feeble, helpless worm
Fulfil a task so hard ?
Thy grace must all the work perform,
And give the free reward.

MATTHEW vii. 13.

ENTER YE IN AT THE STRAIT GATE.

THE only Saviour of sinners is frequently represented to us in the Bible under the emblem of a door or a gate. "I," he says, "am the door ; by me if any man enter in he shall be saved." This is the only door of hope that is set before us ; the only means by which a guilty sinner actually enters into a state of acceptance with God. It is a *strait* gate. Not a wide and expanded door, through which we can easily pass, without any effort or any self-denial ; but a little *wicket-gate*, which we cannot find without diligently seeking, and which we

cannot enter without earnestly striving. All our efforts to enter will be in vain, if we carry with us any of our sinful practices, or ungodly companions; any of our worldly idols, or carnal confidences. When a genuine penitent casts himself, by faith, upon the mercy of God, held out to him in Christ, he enters in at the *strait gate*. Having done this, he not only depends upon his Saviour for pardon; he seeks liberty and happiness in his service. Through him, in whom he has believed, he has access by faith into that grace wherein he stands. He goes in and out, and finds pasture. It is immensely important to every one of us, not to be satisfied with any thing short of entering by the true door into a state of acceptance with God. Let us then carefully consider our burdened Pilgrim at the Wicket-Gate. We shall arrange the subject in the manner following, and notice,

I. Christian's application at the Wicket-Gate.

II. The manner in which he was there received.

III. The conversation that passed between himself and the man at the Gate; and,

IV. The directions and instructions which he there obtained for his future guidance.

May the Eternal Spirit enable every one of us effectually to strive for the strait gate!

I. We begin with our Pilgrim's application at the Wicket-Gate. He had now got up to the Gate which had been pointed out to him by Evangelist. The first thing that met his eye was this inscription written over it: "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Without any pause, or a moment's delay he availed himself of this most encouraging

direction. He was told to knock, and he did knock. He knocked more than once or twice, and inquired, if indeed that door would be opened for one so unworthy and rebellious as himself. After he had stood without, and continued knocking for some time, at length there came a grave person to the door, named Good-Will. This man inquired who was there, and whence he came, and what he would have. Christian had a plain and ready answer to give to all these questions. Here is a poor burdened sinner, he said, come from the City of Destruction, and going to Mount Zion, that I may be delivered from the wrath to come. And since I am informed that through this Gate is the way thither, I would therefore know if you are willing to let me in. This was Christian's application at the Gate.

And say, dear brethren, does not this speak to every one of us, with a voice full of instruction? "The door was not opened until he had knocked more than once or twice." It is only persevering prayer that is effectual prayer. St. Paul besought the Lord *thrice* concerning his thorn in the flesh, that it might depart from him. When we humbly come to the throne of grace, and earnestly apply to Christ for pardon and relief, let us not be surprised if our petitions and desires be not granted immediately. Delays are not denials. The blessings we seek are worth waiting for. We must beware of saying, What should I wait for the Lord any longer? We must resolve to take no denial. We must knock, and knock, and knock again, until we are evidently heard. The language of our waiting souls must be :

I'll wait his seasonable aid,
Though oft denied, I'll wait ;
The promise may be long delayed,
But cannot come too late.

It is by repeated knocking, by continual coming, by persevering prayer, that the earnest and upright inquirer is distinguished from the mere hypocrite and dissembler with God. An insincere person may *occasionally*, but he will not *always* call upon God. *When Christian had waited for some time, at length one came and asked what he wanted.* When persons continue instant in prayer, in due time it will be clearly shown that they have not been praying in vain. Some one, as it were, will appear to represent to them the good will of Him who heareth and answereth prayer; who has promised that he will hear the desire of the humble; and who has declared that the prayer of the upright is his delight. By his providential interference on their behalf, or by the secret influence of his Holy Spirit upon their hearts, they will be encouraged to spread more fully all their wants at the throne of grace, and to pour out their hearts before him who sits upon it. He who is the merciful receiver of returning penitents, will stretch out the golden sceptre, and say, What is thy petition, and what is thy request? The Lord our God, dear friends, knows far better than we do ourselves, both who we are and what we want. But he would hear it from our own mouth. To show that we are suitably impressed with our true condition, he requires us humbly to acknowledge our guilt and ruin, both by nature and practice. We must each feel and confess himself to be a poor burdened sinner, come from the City of Destruction. And if he have

given us a hearty desire to pray ; if, by his special grace preventing us, he hath put into our hearts good desires, we must, by prayer and supplication, make known our requests unto God. We must tell him that we would flee from the wrath to come ; and that mercy is the sum and substance of our wishes. And since we have been so distinctly informed in his holy word, that mercy can only flow to us through Jesus Christ ; that there it is treasured up, and there we must come to find it ; that no man can come unto the Father but by him ; and that through him only we can be abundantly pardoned and graciously accepted ; we must humbly state that this is our errand to the throne of grace : We would see Jesus. We would see him with the eye of faith ; we would cast our heavy burden at his feet ; we would thankfully partake of his great salvation.

II. The manner in which our Pilgrim was received at the Gate is the next head for our consideration. This, we shall find, was a most gracious manner. Oh, what a cordial welcome did he receive from the man at the Gate ! Christian had asked with fear and much trembling, whether or not he was willing to admit him. In answer to this inquiry the man said, "I am willing with all my heart ;" and then immediately opened the Gate. As Christian was stepping through, the man who opened it hastily caught hold of him and drew him forward. He knew not at the time for what purpose this was done. But he was soon after informed it was to save him from the arrows of a powerful adversary, whose castle was hard by. From thence he shoots at the pilgrims, while yet they are without, if by

any means he can make them die before they have entered through the gate.

Here, again, let us pause a little to receive instruction. *Was the burdened Pilgrim so heartily welcomed at the Gate?* God our heavenly Father is willing, assuredly willing, to welcome and receive every returning sinner, who comes to him by Jesus Christ. While they are yet a great way off he sees them, and has compassion, and is ready to run and embrace them, and welcome them with joy into the arms of his fatherly mercy. How can a poor sinner doubt for a moment the good will of our heavenly Father to him, if he humbly come, as a genuine penitent, in the name of Jesus? Oh! if sinners were only as willing to come to Christ for mercy, as he is willing to have mercy upon them when they do come, heaven would be full and hell would be empty. The ear of mercy is always open to the cry of penitent sinners; and swiftly will the door of mercy fly open for their admission when they humbly prostrate themselves before it. *Did Christian find friendly aid in the very act of passing through the Gate?* Oh, what an astonishing contrast is to be seen between the kindness and love of God our Saviour and the cruelty and malice of our adversary the devil! When a poor sinner flees from the City of Destruction to find refuge in Christ, he is by no means fully aware of all the dangers and adversaries that oppose his progress, and that are seeking his ruin. But the eye of mercy fixed upon him, sees the danger which he cannot see; and, the Lord being very gracious to him, the hand of mercy is stretched out in his necessity, to deliver him from his unknown foe, to shield him from the arrow that flieth in darkness, to quicken his tardy

footsteps, and to bring him into a place of security. On the other hand, how great is the craft and cruelty of Satan! He chooses alike the fittest time and place for divulging his murderous intentions. He would kill us before we have passed through the Gate. He well knows it must be now or never. When once the awakened sinner, by true faith, has closed with Christ, and the incorruptible seed, by which he becomes a child of God, is safely lodged within his heart, then the adversary well knows that, to a great extent, the prey has clean escaped from his teeth. After this, the believer is furnished with a new principle wherewith to resist sin and temptation, and that wicked one toucheth him not. True, indeed, he will pursue the Pilgrim's steps to the very end of his course; perhaps fiercely assault him, and certainly direct arrows against him at every stage. But now his power is limited. He has only power to tempt, and to vex, and to harass the true believer. Thus, very frequently, awakened sinners, before they have apprehended Christ, and when they are on the point of closing with him by true and saving faith, experience most of Satan's craft and power. When the merciful Saviour had said to the afflicted parent, "Bring thy son hither; as he was yet a coming the devil threw him down, and tare him."

III. The conversation that passed between Christian and the man at the Gate has next to be considered. No sooner had Christian got through the Gate and been informed of the reason why he was hastened forward, than he said, "I rejoice with trembling." He rejoiced at the mercy he had just received; and trembled at the danger which was

still so nigh. Upon being asked what had induced him to come to that Gate, he replied, that it was Evangelist who had directed him to it; and who had also instructed him there to seek for more particular information. Now does the poor pilgrim hear for his encouragement that an open door is set before him, which no man can shut. The joyful intelligence causes him to own that he begins to reap the fruit of his labours. The next inquiry made by the man at the Gate was one very natural for him to make. His name was Good-Will, and his heart overflowed with benevolence to every human being. He inquired therefore of Christian why he had come alone. Christian's reply is simple, but it is full of meaning. Because, he said, none of my neighbours saw their danger as I saw mine. He then recounts how his friends and relations had cried after him, and begged him to return, and how he had resisted all their importunity. He tells too his interview with Obstinate and Pliable; and how the latter had gone on with him a little way, until he drew back at the difficulties he met with at the Slough of Despond. The remark made by Good-Will upon Pliable's turning back is very touching. Alas, he said, poor man, is the celestial glory of so small esteem with him, that he counteth it not worth running the hazards of a few difficulties to obtain it! This observation brings to Christian's mind his own backsliding. With great humility he compares himself to Pliable, and owns that there appears to be little betterment between them. If Pliable had turned back, Christian had been seduced out of the way by the carnal arguments of Worldly-Wisdom. After recounting what had befallen him for following this fatal advice, Christian is informed

that Mount Sinai has been the destruction of many; and that it was indeed a mercy that he had not been dashed to pieces while lingering about it. Christian feels and acknowledges that this was indeed a signal mercy. He owns how seasonable was the approach of Evangelist in the midst of his perplexity, and is deeply affected when he calls his own ways to remembrance, that after all that he had done, entrance had not been denied him through that Gate. When this acknowledgment had been made, he was cheered and encouraged in the most gracious manner by him who had opened for him the Gate. We make, he said, no objections against any, notwithstanding all they have done before they come hither: they are in nowise cast out. Therefore, he continued, good Christian, come a little way with me, and I will teach thee about the way wherein thou must go.

Now, if we only rightly consider it, this conversation may tend greatly to our profit, in a variety of ways. *Christian rejoiced with trembling when he got through the gate.* We, dear brethren, who have fled for refuge to the gospel hope, should serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with reverence before him. "I seek," said an eminent Christian of modern times, "to be not only *humbled and thankful*, but *humbled in thankfulness*, before my God and Saviour continually. I do not undervalue joy; but I suspect it when it is not blended with the deepest humiliation and contrition." As Christian spoke of the benefits he had received from Evangelist, so we shall often find it profitable to look back upon our past progress, and to recall to mind the instruments that were employed in directing our feet into the narrow way of life.

We should be very careful to remember and to follow all the admonitions which they urged upon us from the word of God. When any gracious opening is made for us, we should be diligent in following it up; and if we do this faithfully, we are sure, sooner or later, to be abundantly recompensed for any sacrifice or self-denial which we may have encountered for the gospel's sake. Every believer, ere long, will reap the fruit of all his pains. The reason assigned by our Pilgrim for his coming out alone, is the true reason why such numbers, in every place, neglect the salvation of Christ, and will not be at the trouble to make a single effort to enter in at the strait gate. They do not see their danger as the genuine penitent sees his. Oh how deeply painful it is to think, that all the glories of heaven should be of so little value in the eyes of many; that they will not encounter the least difficulty for the sake of obtaining them! But the sins and inconsistencies of others ought to touch a chord of deep humiliation in our own hearts. They should remind us of our own provocations. They should make us own, with prostration of spirit, that we are by nature children of wrath, even as others; and that if in any thing we differ from the worst of transgressors, it is grace only that has made us to differ. How thoroughly thankful we ought to be, if we have been delivered from the fearful mistake of seeking life from the ministration of death; and how should our hearts overflow with gratitude and praise to remember, that no sinners, whatever they may have done, are rejected, when they come as penitents to the door of mercy! There is no mention or remembrance made of all their multiplied provocations in time past, if only they come, with weep-

ing and supplication, looking unto Jesus. Whoever they be, or whatever they have done, "they are in nowise cast out." Be strong therefore, and of good courage, all ye that hope in the Lord.

IV. We have lastly to consider, the directions and instructions which Christian received at the Gate for his future guidance. He was informed that his path lay on the narrow road, which went from the Gate, as straight as a rule could make it. He could not with care miss the road. There were, indeed, many crooked and wide paths that branched off, on each side of his way; but the road to Zion might always easily be distinguished by these two evident marks, viz. its *narrowness*, and its *straightness*. A very affecting question followed. Christian then asked the man at the Gate, if he could not help him off with his burden; for as yet he had not got rid of it; nor could he by any means be delivered from it without assistance. As to thy burden, said the man, be content to bear it, until thou comest to the place of deliverance, for there it will fall off from thy back of itself. As soon as Christian heard of this place of deliverance, he began to gird up his loins, and to address himself to his journey.

To us, my friends, as well as to him, are these instructions and directions very important. If we have entered in at the Strait Gate; I mean, if, as genuine penitents, we have come to Christ for salvation, we must not think that our toils are ended, or that our warfare is accomplished. Still have we to press forward in the narrow way of life, and to walk by the straight rule of the commandments of God. We shall see many false paths branch off,

on our right hand, and on our left; but we may be sure we are in the way to heaven, if we are still advancing in the straight and narrow path of obedience. This alone is the undoubted proof that we have entered in through the door. This alone is the path that leadeth unto life; all others are the ways of death. But if this Gate represents the merciful receiver of returning sinners, you may perhaps inquire, Can a weary and heavy-laden sinner come to Christ, and not find rest to his soul? Can he enter through the Gate, and still complain that he has not got rid of his burden? The question is very important, and it deserves a distinct reply. Know, then, that a general reliance on the mercy of God in Christ, *if it be sincere*, brings a man into a state of acceptance with God, imparts to the conscience a degree of peace, and kindles within a measure of hope. When Christian got through the Gate he rejoiced, although with trembling; and he confessed, that already he began to reap the fruit of his pains. But more distinct views of the glory of the gospel, and a fuller revelation of the mysteries of the cross, are absolutely necessary, in order to our obtaining abiding, established, and settled peace. We must earnestly pray to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. We must seek to have a more direct and experimental knowledge of him, in his saving office and character. Such a knowledge as this will deliver us from all our fears and all our burdens. Yes, dear brethren, a simple, clear, distinct, believing view of the cross of Christ, will do for a poor sin-burdened soul, what all the world can never do. *The cross of Christ is the place of deliverance.* Oh, be not satisfied with a transient glimpse of hope,

and a peace that is moved at every change, just as the trees of the wood are moved by the wind. As you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted, and built up, and established in the faith, that your peace may flow as a river, and that you may have an abiding, well-grounded, and comforting sense of your pardon and acceptance. Only let us seek to have Christ Jesus the Lord evidently crucified before the eye of our faith; let the divine and glorious mystery of the cross be distinctly shown us by the teaching of the Holy Spirit; let us see the Holy One of God, yea, God himself, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in our place, and in our stead, numbered with the transgressors, groaning under that wrath which our sins had kindled, suffering that penalty which we had incurred, and bearing that curse which otherwise would have rested upon our guilty souls for ever; let us, I say, only realize all this, and then, yes, then indeed, we shall have arrived at the place of deliverance, and there our burden, the heavy burden of our guilt, will fall from us of itself. Oh, let us imitate him, who, with such a prospect, addressed himself to his journey, and went forward. First, and above every thing else, let us be sure that we have really entered through the Gate; that we have come by faith to Jesus Christ for the pardon of our sins, and access to God. And oh, let us not be satisfied without a lively hope, and a comforting sense of our pardon and acceptance! Why should we go mourning all our days, when a full, free, finished, present, everlasting salvation has been provided for us? You have heard of the place of deliverance. Gird up your loins, and press forward to it with unwearying footsteps. Seek not only for salvation, but

for the knowledge of salvation, through the remission of your sins. We desire that every one of you do show the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end : that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

THE HYMN.

Thou art the *way*—to thee alone
From sin and death we flee ;
And he who would the Father seek
Must seek him, Lord, in thee.

Thou art the *truth*—thy word alone
True wisdom can impart :
Thou only canst instruct the mind
And purify the heart.

Thou art the *life*—the rending tomb
Proclaims thy conquering arm ;
And those who put their trust in thee,
Nor death nor hell shall harm.

Thou art the *way, the truth, the life*—
Grant us to know that way,
That truth to keep, that life to win,
And reach eternal day.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and everlasting God, thou hast taught us, in thy holy word, that thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, is the way, and the truth, and the life ; mercifully grant that through him, and by one Spirit, we may now have access to thee. Thou hast made known unto us the path of life ; thou hast set before us a door of hope ; thou hast graciously said, " Ask, and ye shall receive ; seek, and ye shall find ; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." So give now unto us that ask, let us that seek find, open the gate unto us that knock. We come as poor perishing sinners to knock at the door of mercy. Lord, open unto us. We would take no denial ; we would not be sent empty away ; we would continue instant in prayer, until we know that we have the petitions that we

ask of thee. We wait for thy loving-kindness; show us thy mercy, O Lord, and grant us thy salvation. Assure us of thy favour and good-will towards us; and save us, we beseech thee, from the power and malice of our cruel adversary, who desires to have us, and to prevent our approach to the only Saviour of sinners. May we know what it is to have communion with thee, and to pour out our hearts before thee. And when we declare our ways unto thee, do thou graciously hear us, and abundantly bless us. Show thou us the way wherein we should walk, for we lift up our souls unto thee. Make thy way plain before us. Deliver us from turning aside into any crooked path. Oh that our ways were so direct that we might keep thy statutes! Save us, we beseech thee, from all our burdens, and from all our fears. May we not be satisfied with a general hope of pardon, but may we earnestly press after a clearer view and a sweeter sense of our personal interest in Christ. Oh give us the knowledge of salvation through the remission of our sins! May we forget the things that are behind, and reach forth to those that are before, and press toward the mark for the prize of our high calling. Hear us, O Lord, and answer us according to the multitude of thy tender mercies, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; to whom with thee and the eternal Spirit, three persons in one undivided Godhead, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE VI.

THE INTERPRETER'S HOUSE.

Thou great Instructor ! lest I stray,
O teach my erring feet thy way ;
Thy truth, with ever fresh delight,
Shall guide my youthful steps aright.

How oft my heart's affections yield,
And wander o'er the world's wide field !
My roving passions, Lord, reclaim,
Unite them all to fear thy name.

Then, to my God, my heart and tongue
With all their powers shall raise the song ;
On earth thy glories I'll declare,
And heaven my song of joy shall hear.

JOHN xvi. 13, 14.

HOWBEIT WHEN HE, THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH, IS COME, HE WILL GUIDE YOU INTO ALL TRUTH : FOR HE SHALL NOT SPEAK OF HIMSELF ; BUT WHATSOEVER HE SHALL HEAR, THAT SHALL HE SPEAK : AND HE WILL SHOW YOU THINGS TO COME. HE SHALL GLORIFY ME : FOR HE SHALL RECEIVE OF MINE, AND SHALL SHOW IT UNTO YOU.

THE Holy Spirit is the only infallible interpreter of Scripture. None teacheth like him. He it is who opens our eyes, and shows us wonderful things out of the law of God. He shines into our hearts, and disperses the natural darkness in which we are involved ; he penetrates the innermost recesses of our souls ; there he plants eyes, and enables us to see what before was hid from us, especially discovering to us the grace, and glory, and beauty, and excellence of Christ. The manner in which the

blessed Spirit teaches the hearts of all faithful people, and the important lessons which he inculcates, are most happily illustrated in that part of the Pilgrim's Progress now for our consideration. After a person has entered in at the Strait Gate—come by true faith to the Saviour of sinners for salvation—he has much, very much, still to learn, both of Christ, and himself, and the ways of the Lord. His understanding has to be opened, that he may understand the Scriptures. All the eleven disciples, while the Lord was yet with them, were true of heart. But they had much remaining ignorance to be dispersed, and many wonderful discoveries to be made to them. Thus the Lord assured them, “I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit, when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.”

Christian's approach to the Interpreter's house, with some of the wonders that were there shown him, will form the subject of the present lecture. Let us enter upon it by earnestly invoking the special presence and blessing of that gracious Spirit, who alone can make it profitable to our souls.

Come, Holy Spirit, come;
 Let thy bright beams arise,
 Dispel the sorrow from our minds,
 The darkness from our eyes.

Convince us of our sin,
 And lead us to the Lord;
 And to our opening view reveal
 The wonders of thy word.

(1.) We have to notice *Christian's approach to the Interpreter's house*. He had been informed at the Wicket-Gate, through which he passed, that it was necessary for him to call at this house, and to get admittance into it; and that there very excellent things would be shown him. He went therefore direct from the Gate to this famous house, until he had arrived at the door and stood before it. No notice was taken of his arrival until he had knocked. He knocked over and over again. At last one came to the door and inquired who was there. Christian gave a true and simple account of himself and preferred his request, *to speak with the master of the house*. This request was by no means considered a liberty. After it had been reported, the master of the house himself appeared and asked Christian what he wanted.

Under these simple words, dear brethren, there is contained the most important meaning. A deep sense of our remaining ignorance, with a teachable disposition and a hearty desire for further instruction, is a hopeful sign, indeed we may say, a sure mark of grace begun in the heart. If we have been sincere in our application to Christ, we shall follow the gracious directions which he has given us to promote our growth in grace, and our advancement and establishment in the way everlasting. We shall press forward, as it were, from the Wicket-Gate to the Interpreter's house. We shall feel how necessary it is for us to become individually, if I may so speak, the private pupils of the Holy Spirit. When the ascending Saviour assured the disciples that they should be endued with power from on high not many days hence, they continued with one accord "in supplication and prayer" until they

received the promise, in all its rich and unbounded fulness, on the day of Pentecost. So should we plead the gracious promises and the abundant encouragement which he has given us to expect that other Comforter, even the Spirit of truth, to teach us all things. We should pray earnestly that he would open the eyes of our understanding, and be in us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ; that he may glorify Christ in our eyes, and take of the things of Christ and show them unto us. With this object in view, and this hope before us, we must diligently attend to every appointed means of grace. We must resort constantly to the word of truth and the house of prayer; watching daily at the gates of wisdom, and waiting at the posts of her doors. Considering, too, that earnest knocking is the emblem of importunate prayer, and that the Lord has assured us that he will be inquired of by us to fulfil his gracious promise of giving us the Holy Spirit, we must knock over and over again, praying without ceasing, until our petitions are evidently heard. And oh, remember that your business is with the Master of the house. There is nothing like going to the fountain-head. Do not be put off by a servant, as if he could do as well as the Master. The Holy Spirit himself is promised to come to us to be our instructor, and to perform for us the office of an infallible Interpreter, in answer to our humble petitions. The Great Teacher himself is promised as the fruit of the Saviour's intercession, and we ought not to be satisfied with an inferior monitor.

(2.) We have next to see *how Christian got admittance into the Interpreter's house.* The Interpreter had asked him what was his business. 'To

this he replied most simply: "Sir," he said, "I am a man that am come from the city of Destruction, and am going to Mount Zion; and I was told by the man who stands at the Gate, that if I called here, you would show me excellent things, such as would be a help to me in my journey." This account of himself was considered entirely satisfactory. So the Interpreter said, "Come in, I will show thee that which will be profitable to thee."

Here take notice, dear friends, of a most important truth. It is not a vain repetition that our Pilgrim gives in substance the same account of himself to every person of whom he has a request to make. It is to remind us that all the promises and all the encouragements in the Bible are held forth to persons who answer a certain description. There is no promise in the Scripture, from the beginning to the end of it, to the proud, unhumbled sinner, or to the selfish, unawakened worldling, who is seeking his happiness in those things which perish in the using. No, we must feel and confess that we are from the City of Destruction; we must be on the way to Zion, and have our faces thitherward. We must be convinced of sin, and have our desires *directed to Christ* and heavenly things, before we can *come to Christ*, or know any thing of the blessed fellowship of the Holy Ghost. If this be our character, we have nothing to fear. Our earnest cries for more light, and wisdom, and grace will not be rejected. The Spirit himself, in due time, will graciously draw near to us, and make us to understand excellent things. Is it your earnest cry, "Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God: thy Spirit is good: lead me into the land of uprightness?" You shall not be disappointed of your desire. The

condescending love of the Holy Spirit, in readily granting the desires of those who apply for his teaching, notwithstanding their dulness, and prejudice, and slowness of heart to understand, can never be sufficiently admired. "Uphold me with thy free Spirit."

(3.) *The manner in which the Interpreter instructed Christian after he was admitted into the house* is especially deserving of our consideration. He commanded his man to light a candle, and bid Christian follow him. So he led him into a private room. There he directed his man to open the door. He did so; and Christian beheld, hanging up against the wall, a very striking and attractive picture. It seemed to be the likeness either of a man or an angel.

Before we pass on to examine distinctly the features of this wonderful picture, it may be well here to pause for a moment. The blessed Spirit employs generally men as his instruments in giving light and instruction to the souls of those whom he effectually teaches. But it is his secret and gracious power alone that effectually conveys it to the heart. Every true minister of the gospel is the Interpreter's man. He has been moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him that office and ministry. The minister, by explaining and enforcing the Holy Scriptures, may, as it were, light a candle and be of much use to the learner in the school of Christ. But it is only by the command of the Holy Spirit that the light can be produced. It is only by its power that it can shine into the heart; it is only by his gracious influence that we are enabled to see and constrained to follow that light. Without this, the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness com-

prehendeth it not. Or again, as the Interpreter's man did, the minister of Christ may draw forth from the inspired volume many a wonderful and affecting picture, and set it plainly before the eyes of men. But it is only when the Holy Spirit has led us, as it were, into a private room, and unfolds and explains, and applies to the conscience what we have seen and heard, that we derive any spiritual profit and advantage from them. Dear brethren, if you would prosper in your souls, always look up above means and instruments to Him who works by them and through them.

(4.) We proceed now to consider the first great lesson which was taught Christian in the Interpreter's house. This was the fashion of the picture that was shown him. It was the picture of a very grave person; he had eyes lifted up to heaven; the best of books was in his hands; the law of truth was printed upon his lips; the world was behind his back; he stood as if he pleaded with men; and a crown of gold did hang over his head. This picture was designed to instruct the Pilgrim what manner of persons he ought to follow, in spiritual matters, and to show him the features of a true guide to the Celestial City. And here, indeed, we have the true apostolic succession. In every particular that is here mentioned, if we minutely consider them, we see the features of the genuine ambassador of Christ, whose credentials are so clear that they cannot be mistaken.

The true minister of Christ, then, must be a grave person. The awfully important work which belongs to a minister of the gospel, is in no wise suited to a light, trifling and frivolous disposition.

“He that negotiates between God and man,
As God’s ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of *lightness*.”

A person may be grave without being morose, and cheerful without any levity. No one, however, who feels the power of the world to come,—who is impressed in some good measure with the awful realities of eternity, and who is perplexed about his soul, would be able to open his grief to one who was of a light and trifling disposition of mind.

The true minister, again, must have his eyes lifted up to heaven. He must be a man of prayer. His eyes must be ever to the Lord; on him must he wait all the day. Deeply feeling that all his sufficiency is from above, and that without the heavenly influence of the Holy Spirit, all his labour will be of no avail, he looks up in humble, earnest supplication, that the Spirit from on high may be poured both upon him and his people.

The best of books will be in the hands of the true minister. The Bible, or book of books, is the best of books, and this is the constant study of every true minister. He is a minister of the word, and how can he minister to others what he has not received and learned himself? How can he preach the word, or rightly divide the word, if the word does not first dwell in him richly?

The true minister has the law of truth written upon his lips. No one can turn many from iniquity without having the law of truth in his mouth. He appeals to the law and to the testimony for every thing that he delivers to his people, as requisite to their salvation. He knows that Holy Scripture contains all needful truth, and therefore he does

not trouble or perplex his hearers with any thing besides. All other books he only values and uses just as they illustrate, enforce, or explain the Scriptures of truth.

Further, *the true minister has the world behind his back.* A covetous, ambitious, or worldly minister, is a wolf and not a shepherd. He will never be a good minister of Jesus Christ, whose back is not turned to the world, and who does not from his heart renounce all its bewitching pleasures, all its entangling cares, and all its aspiring projects. "Thou, O man of God, flee these things." He must not take the oversight of the Lord's inheritance for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind. Oh what havoc is made of the souls of men, by persons obtruding themselves into the ministry, who are eagerly pursuing, instead of entirely renouncing, the world and the things of the world!

"Ambitious of preferment for its gold,
And well prepared, by ignorance and sloth,
By infidelity, and love of world,
To make God's work a sinecure."

The true minister stands as if he pleaded with men. He cannot sit still and rest contented while souls are perishing in ignorance and sin around him. It is his business to stand pleading with men. He is commissioned solemnly to appeal to their consciences, and to say, Why will ye die? As though God did beseech them by him, he is to pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God. As he feels the importance of his subject, and as his heart is influenced by what he proclaims, he stands,

"Affectionate in look,
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men."

And finally, to complete the picture, and to perfect the whole, *a crown of gold is suspended over the head of every true minister of Christ*. What blessed and sure reward is held forth in the world to come, to every faithful labourer in the Lord's vineyard, to animate his faith, and to encourage his patient continuance in well-doing! Here his trials and discouragements may be very great, and he may have only small reward for his toil. But if he is really ready to spend and be spent in his Master's service, and for the good of souls—a true candle, wasting away himself to give light unto others; if he diligently labours now, and waits for the recompense of reward hereafter, he shall not be disappointed. When the Chief Shepherd shall appear, he shall receive a crown of righteousness, that fadeth not away.

(5.) We have only now to consider *the reason assigned by the Interpreter for showing Christian this picture*. "I have showed thee this picture first," he said, "because the man whose picture this is, is the only man whom the Lord of the place whither thou art going, hath authorized to be thy guide in all difficult places thou mayest meet with in the way. Wherefore take good heed to what I have showed thee, and bear well in thy mind what thou hast seen; lest in thy journey thou meet with some that pretend to lead thee right, but their way goes down to death."

The wisdom and importance, dear brethren, of this admonition, is unspeakably great; and every true Pilgrim, in his progress to the better land, will very frequently be required to reduce it to practice. The true Christian, who has felt the burden of his sins, and who has humbly come to Christ

for salvation, is taught by the Holy Spirit to distinguish between the true and the pretended minister of Christ. He has been commanded to beware of false prophets, who come to him in sheep's clothing ; and not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God. He dare not commit himself to the spiritual guidance of any one, merely because he is officially a minister. Men do not act thus, with regard to their temporal affairs, or their bodily ailments. They do not suffer any one to manage their affairs merely because he is a lawyer ; they will not put themselves into the hands of any one merely because he is a doctor. They consider that all lawyers are not honest ; and that all doctors are not skilful. They want something more than the legal certificate which allows them to practise. Thus it is with the true Pilgrim to the Celestial City. The Lord of the country whither he is going has shown him the features of a true guide, and solemnly warned him of the danger of being led astray by others. He is to follow none implicitly any further than they have the clear warrant of Holy Scripture for what they advance. He is to take heed both how he hears, and what he hears, proving all things by the unerring touchstone of the word of truth. If, therefore, they would obtrude upon him the commandments of men, or any thing upon the authority of councils, fathers, or traditions, as necessary to his salvation, which cannot be proved by Scripture, he remembers, " If they speak not according to this rule, it is because there is no light in them."

THE HYMN.

Come, blessed Spirit, source of light,
 Whose power and grace are unconfined,
 Dispel the gloomy shades of night,
 The thicker darkness of the mind.

To our illumined eyes display
 The glorious truth thy word reveals ;
 Cause us to run the heavenly way,
 Unfold the book, unloose the seals.

Thine inward teachings make us know,
 The mysteries of redeeming love,
 The emptiness of things below,
 And excellence of things above.

While through this dubious maze we stray,
 Spread like the sun, thy beams abroad,
 To show the dangers of the way,
 And guide our feeble steps to God.

THE PRAYER.

O merciful and gracious Lord God, who dost teach the hearts of thy faithful people, by sending to them the light of thy Holy Spirit ; and who hast promised to give this best of all good things to them that ask ; we come before thee in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, humbly to ask for the gift of thy Holy Spirit to be poured into our hearts. May we all be taught of thee ! We feel and bewail our exceeding sinfulness, and our slowness of heart to receive and understand thy blessed word. Oh send thy Holy Spirit, to sanctify and instruct us ; to make us of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, and cause us to receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save our souls ! Give us, we beseech thee, the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. Lord, we would not have thy fear taught us by the precept of man, but by the effectual power of the Holy Ghost. We apply for the great Interpreter himself, and humbly pray that he may come to us, guiding us into all truth, and taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to us. We are poor, blind, and benighted sinner ;

O thou Father of lights, who didst command the light to shine out of darkness, shine into our hearts, and give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Raise up, we pray thee, in every place, pastors according to thine own heart—men of gravity, men of prayer, mighty in the Scriptures, and with the law of truth upon their lips; spiritual men, who are not of the world; who plead earnestly with perishing sinners, that they may be saved by Christ for ever; and who look for their recompense of reward hereafter. And may thy word in their mouths never be spoken in vain! These mercies, for them, for us, and thy whole Church, we humbly beg in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE VII.

THE INTERPRETER'S LESSONS.

The sovereign will of God alone
Creates us heirs of grace ;
Born in the image of his Son,
A new, peculiar race.

The Spirit, like some heavenly wind,
Blows on the sons of flesh,
New-models all the carnal mind,
And forms the man afresh.

Our quickened souls awake and rise
From their long sleep of death ;
On heavenly things we fix our eyes,
And praise employs our breath.

PSALM cxix. 18.

OPEN THOU MINE EYES, THAT I MAY BEHOLD WONDROUS THINGS OUT OF
THY LAW.

EVERY real Christian is under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Very wonderful are the discoveries made to him by the gracious operation of this heavenly guide. Without the unction from the Holy One, we are blind and dark as to the things of God. We may have the clear shining of God's holy word round about us, making it noon as to outward privileges ; and yet, if the veil of nature be upon our eyes, we shall stumble at noon as in the night ; we shall grope as if we had no eyes. It is the impressive and solemn lessons taught by the Holy Spirit upon the heart, that make all the

difference between him that is carnal and him that is spiritual. Just as it is impossible for any man to know what is passing in the heart of another individual, but only that individual himself, "even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God." These things God reveals to his people by the Spirit. We are proceeding with the wonders shown to Christian in the Interpreter's house; in other words, the discoveries made by the Holy Spirit to the hearts of his faithful people.

There are four lessons for our present consideration.

I. A proper view of the human heart.

II. The difference between things present and things to come.

III. The mystery by which grace prevails in the sinner's heart; and.

IV. Lastly, the necessity of decision in order to succeed in the Christian warfare.

We cannot do better than enter upon our subject by offering up the earnest prayer which we have selected as the text for this Lecture: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

I. We have set before us a proper view of the human heart. Having taught Christian to distinguish a faithful shepherd from all false guides, the Interpreter instructs his pupil concerning the wickedness of the human heart, and the only effectual manner in which it can be cleansed from sin. This is represented by a very simple and familiar emblem. He took Christian by the hand, and

led him into a very large parlour, that was full of dust, because never swept. After this had been viewed awhile, a man was called, who began to sweep the room. But no sooner had he commenced his task, than the dust began so abundantly to fly about, that Christian was almost blinded and choked with it. A certain damsel was then desired to bring water, and sprinkle the room. When this had been performed, the dust was allayed, and the room was swept and cleansed with pleasure.

This large unswept room is the unsanctified heart of man. The dust is original sin. The sweeper who raised the dust is the law. The damsel who sprinkled the water and allayed it is the gospel. When a man is in some measure awake to his true condition, he is convinced that his heart and life are not what they ought to be. He feels that his life must be reformed, that his heart must be cleansed, before it can be a suitable habitation for the great King. He sets about the work of making himself better. Before he has come by faith, as a poor undone sinner, to Christ, for mercy and grace, he tries what is to be done by the works of the law. He abstains from the outward act of sin, and commences the performance of many outward duties. If it be only natural conviction, or transient alarm, by which he is influenced, here he stops, and here he is satisfied. He has gone from the ranks of open sinners, or thoughtless triflers, to join the company of pharisees or formalists. But he is as far from the kingdom of heaven as ever. He is yet an unconverted sinner, in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. Very different, however, will be the effect of his attempts to keep the commandments of God, if his convic

tions of sin are the genuine work of the Holy Ghost. Then the more diligently he attempts to make himself better, the more vile and sinful he will appear in his own sight: just as the dust was raised and excited by the sweeping of the room. Every attempt to produce conformity of heart and life to the law of God, in all its spiritual extent, apart from the promises of the gospel, can only excite and discover the evils which before lay dormant in the heart. To use the words of the Interpreter: "The law, instead of cleansing the heart (by its working) from sin, doth revive, put strength into it, and increase it in the soul, even as it doth discover and forbid it, for it doth not give power to subdue it." How wonderfully scriptural is all this! The law, instead of cleansing from sin, revives, and strengthens, and increases it in the soul. "When the commandment came, sin revived and I died. The strength of sin is the law; moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound." It discovers and forbids sin. "By the law is the knowledge of sin, and, I had not known sin but by the law." But it has no power to subdue it. To give peace to the conscience, and break the dominion of sin, this is what the law cannot do. Widely different, however, is the effect of the gospel! Again to recur to the Interpreter's words: "When the gospel comes, in the sweet and precious influences thereof, to the heart, even as the dust was laid by the sprinkling of water, so is sin vanquished and subdued, and the soul made clean through the faith of it, and consequently fit for the King of glory to inhabit." Yes, my brethren, we must come to the blood of sprinkling, to be cleansed from all our sin, and to be effectually delivered from its hated do

minion. "Our hearts must be purified by faith." When the atoning blood of Christ is applied to the conscience, we have not only new motives, but a new principle and new strength with which to strive against sin. When the guilt of sin is purged by the atoning blood of Christ, the power of sin will be subdued by his sanctifying grace. "Christ will dwell in our hearts by faith, and sin shall not have dominion over us." This is a lesson, dear brethren, which we must all be taught, that sanctification follows after justification. Had Christian learned this lesson before, he would never have been seduced out of his way by the arguments of Worldly-Wisdom, nor thought for a moment of finding relief at Legality's house.

II. The next wonder unfolded by the Interpreter was to show Christian the difference between things present and things to come. He was shown two children, Passion and Patience. At this time they were sitting each in a separate chair. Passion was much discontented, but Patience was very quiet. And what was the reason of this difference in their appearance? Their governor had directed them both to stay for their best things to the beginning of the next year. Passion would have them all now; but Patience was willing to wait for his. Passion got his wish, wherein for awhile he greatly rejoiced; but very soon he lavished all away, and was reduced to beggary.

This, dear brethren, is the part acted by the men of this world. Present gratification is every thing with them. They will have their good things now in their lifetime. They have no concern or consideration how it will be with them in the life of the

world to come. Only let them cast off restraint, and do as they please now, that is enough for them. But oh, of what wretched folly are they guilty! Pass but a very little while, and they have spent all; the things which their soul lusted after are departed from them, and a long eternity stretches before them, for which they are altogether unprepared. Say, is not the part acted by the true Christian unspeakably wiser? He looks forward, and walks not by sight nor by sense, but by faith.

“He scorns the trifles of a day,
For joys which none can take away.”

When the poor worldling has spent his all, the Christian has still to receive his portion, a portion which can never be squandered away, but which he will enjoy for ever. How poor was Dives, and how rich was Lazarus, in the eternal world! Oh, how much better it is not to covet things that are now, but to wait for things to come! When Martin Luther had received an unexpected present, he fell down upon his knees, and said, “O Lord, I will not receive my good things now in my lifetime.” It is this lesson, dear brethren, which the Holy Spirit alone can effectually impress upon our hearts. Our worldly hearts are so taken up with things of time and sense, and the great and dreadful realities of eternity are so dimly and indistinctly apprehended by us, that we speak, and think, and act, and plan, as if time was every thing, and eternity nothing. But when the Eternal Spirit is our teacher, he shows us these things in quite a different light. He makes us see, and feel, and act entirely by a different rule. He shows how little it signifies what we suffer in this present life, if only all be well in

eternity. In this sense all is well that ends well. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." If this lesson be thoroughly learned by us, oh! how useful will it be to us through every part of our pilgrimage to the heavenly city.

III. The mystery by which grace prevails in a believer's heart, notwithstanding all the efforts that are made to quench it, was the next wonder shown to Christian. Again the Interpreter took him by the hand, and led him to a place where was a fire burning against a wall, and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it to quench it; but instead of being quenched, the fire only burnt higher and glowed brighter. This fire represents the grace of God, which is kindled in every true believer's heart. The water that was cast upon it signifies all the counteracting influence that grace meets with, from the malice of the devil, the power of indwelling corruption, and the course and current of this present evil world. Surely it is little short of a miracle, that it is not quenched by so many powerful efforts that are made against it. But to see it only rising higher and burning brighter, as if it were fanned and cherished by the very efforts made to extinguish it; this is indeed the most wonderful of all. How can we account for this wonder? A poor, tried and afflicted believer has all the waves and storms of adversity and persecution emptied upon him, and yet his faith holds out; nay, it waxes stronger and burns brighter for all the many waters that try to drown it. See now the explanation of this mystery. The Interpreter led Christian to the opposite side of the wall, where the fire was burn-

ing. There he showed him a man with a vessel of oil in his hand; and this oil he continually, but secretly, cast into the fire. It was this secret oil that counteracted all the influence of the water; yea, which made the very water seem to act contrary to its nature.

Oh, happy and instructive emblem of the manner in which the Lord Jesus graciously preserves and cherishes the spiritual life of his tried and afflicted members! The same almighty hand which was first put forth to kindle in our souls the vital spark of spiritual life, must constantly be exerted in order to its preservation. Which of us must not say to our adorable Saviour,

“Thy grace and mercy first prevailed,
From death to set us free,
And often since our life had failed,
Unless renewed by thee.”

He it is who keeps alive the gracious flame which he first kindled in the hearts of his people. He it is who stands behind the wall of their clay tement, and, though invisible to their mortal eyes, he constantly supplies them with grace and strength according to their need. When their tribulations abound, he makes their consolations abound also. The more grievously they are plunged in outward troubles, the more abundantly he pours into their hearts, in secret, the oil of gladness, giving them more grace; and thus making them more than conquerors over all the powerful adversaries that rise up against them. Well may the true Christian count it all joy when he falls into manifold temptations. Well may he glory in tribulations, and take pleasure in reproaches, and things which in them-

selves are very grievous to flesh and blood, if only he finds, by sweet experience, that this heavenly unction is more largely infused into his soul. It is a hard thing for you, O tempted believer, to see how the work of grace is kept alive within you! You see the many waters that daily strive to quench it. But the oil by which it is fed, and the hand by which that oil is supplied, you cannot see. The man stood behind the wall who maintained the fire. Christ, who has received all the infinite fulness of the Holy Ghost to pour forth upon his believing people, is the King invisible. But he is no less certainly present with all his believing people. He is very nigh to all that call upon him; and he is always at hand to succour and to help those that are tempted. Only let us apply to him, and trust in him, in all our straits and necessities, and we shall know from happy experience that he is indeed near to us, and a very present help in trouble.

“ Then let our humble faith address
 His mercy and his power;
 We shall obtain delivering grace,
 In the distressing hour.”

IV. The necessity of decision, in order to succeed in the Christian warfare, was another wonder shown to our Pilgrim in the Interpreter's house. Again this wise instructor took his scholar and led him to a pleasant place, where was a stately palace, beautiful to behold. The sight of this greatly delighted Christian; and he saw upon the top of the palace certain persons walking, who were clothed all in gold. He was then led to the door of this glorious palace. There he beheld a great company of men, who seemed all desirous to go in but durst not. A

writer sat by the door to take down the names of all who entered. Armed men also stood in the way to oppose and injure all who should enter, in every way they could. The fear of these armed men caused the most to linger, and many to start back in dismay. At length, however, a candidate approached of another spirit. He came up boldly at once to him who took down the names, and desired to have his name set down. This done, he drew his sword, put on his helmet, and rushed towards the door where the armed men were standing to oppose his progress. But all their deadly opposition was in vain. The bold warrior, not at all discouraged, quitted himself like a man. After he had received and given many wounds to those that had attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace. His victory and welcome within the palace were hailed by the pleasant voices and congratulations of those that walked upon the top of it. So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they.

See, dear brethren, the necessity of energy and exertion, of decision and determination in every one that would enter into the palace of the great King. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Many desire the joys and glories of heaven, according to their carnal ideas of them; but few are willing to press into the kingdom of heaven, and to fight the good fight of faith, that they may lay hold of eternal life. But what can be the result of such faint-hearted indecision, and such slothful desires? We shall never get to heaven by wishing ourselves there, if we have not the resolution to make the effort and use the exertion that is requisite. Grace sets a man diligently

to strive for that which he desires ; but “the desire of the slothful killeth him.” The fearful and unbelieving who stand long hesitating, and at last start back from the difficulties and adversaries that stand in their way, shall in nowise enter into the heavenly city. But the penitent believer has counted the cost of the warfare in which he is engaged. He is more afraid of the destruction behind him than of the adversaries before him. His hope in the gospel promises prevails over his fear of difficulties. He does not confer with flesh and blood. His everlasting all is at stake, and go forward he must, be the adversaries what they may. Thus resolved, he makes no secret of his intentions. He requests, as it were, to have his name put down as a soldier of Christ and a candidate for heaven. He professes openly whose he is, and where he would be. He takes the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and the helmet of salvation, which is the hope of glory. Thus furnished, he goes forth, nothing daunted, though an host should rise up against him. Effort and exertion indeed he finds to be necessary ; and pains and wounds he may get in the conflict. But he overcomes at the last, and then he is welcomed into the heavenly kingdom, is clothed in white raiment, the palm of victory is put into his hand, the crown of righteousness is set upon his head, and he is admitted into the blissful presence of those who are before the throne of God and the Lamb, and who serve him day and night in his temple. Oh, dear brethren, let not this animating lesson be lost upon any of us. Let us all be ashamed of the dull and languid manner in which we too often contend for the prize of our high calling. Let us seek for grace to act like good soldiers

of Jesus Christ, and to war a good warfare. Let us say each,

“Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
And press with vigour on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
And an immortal crown.”

And may the Lord himself make every one of us so to run, and so to fight, as knowing that it is for our life! Oh that he may make every one of us winners in the heavenly race, and conquerors in the spiritual conflict, that at last we may receive the animating promise set before us by the Captain of our salvation, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne!”

THE HYMN.

Creator Spirit, by whose aid
The world's foundations first were laid;
Come, visit every waiting mind,
Come, pour thy joys on all mankind;
From sin and sorrow set us free,
And make us temples meet for thee.

Thou strength of his almighty hand,
Whose power doth heaven and earth command;
Thrice holy fount—thrice holy fire!
Our hearts with heavenly love inspire;
Come, and thy sacred unction bring,
To sanctify us while we sing.

Great Source of Life, come from on high,
Rich in thy seven-fold energy;
Give us thyself, that we may see
The Father and the Son by thee;
Make us eternal truths receive,
And practise all that we believe.

Immortal honour, endless fame,
 Attend the Almighty Father's name,
 Let God the Son be glorified,
 Who for lost man's redemption died;
 And equal adoration be,
 Eternal Spirit, paid to thee.

THE PRAYER.

O God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, have mercy upon us, miserable sinners. We are encouraged to pray, in the all-prevailing name of Jesus, for thy marvellous light to be imparted to us. Open thou our eyes, that we may behold wonderful things out of thy law. Teach us, we beseech thee, those things which are foolishness to the natural man, and which we can none of us see or know, without thy gracious light. Oh do thou come as the Spirit of truth, effectually to convince us of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. Show us that the depravity and corruption of our nature is such, that thy holy law can only cause our offences to abound; and that we can never be effectually purged from dead works to serve the living God, without the blood of sprinkling. Purge thou us therewith, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow. Give us, we humbly pray, a right judgment in all things; and do thou deeply impress upon our hearts, that the things which are seen are temporal, and the things which are not seen are eternal. May none of us be satisfied to receive our good things now in our lifetime; but may we hope for that which we see not, and be enabled with patience to wait for it. If thou hast begun the good work in our hearts, oh do thou perfect that which concerneth us, and cherish and maintain thine own work in our souls! Many there be that fight against us, O thou Most High. But, Lord, replenish us with everlasting oil; let thine own most precious and holy anointing abide upon us, that in all our trials and distresses we may rejoice in thy heavenly comfort; and find thy grace sufficient for us, and thy strength perfected in our weakness. Strengthen us with might in the inner man, that we may endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ, and fight manfully under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil, until at last we are admitted to those unspeakable joys which are prepared in heaven for the people of God. We ask this in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ; to whom with thee, O Father, and thee, O Holy Ghost, be ascribed all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

LECTURE VIII.

GODLY FEAR, AND THE SIGHT OF THE CROSS.

The Spirit, by his heavenly breath,
New life creates within :
He raises sinners from the death
Of trespasses and sin.

The things of Christ the Spirit takes,
And shows them unto men ;
The humble soul his temple makes,
God's image stamps again.

Come, Holy Spirit ! from above,
With thy celestial fire ;
Oh come ! with holy zeal and love
Each heart and tongue inspire !

PSAL. cxix. 18.

OPEN THOU MINE EYES, THAT I MAY SEE THE WONDROUS THINGS OF THY
LAW.

VERY wonderful are the things which have already been shown to Christian in the Interpreter's house. All these wonders, it will be remembered, signify the solemn and important lessons which are revealed by the Holy Spirit to the heart of every real Pilgrim to the New Jerusalem, for his direction, instruction, and security in the way everlasting. He is taught to distinguish the true shepherd from all false teachers and blind guides. He is

made to understand that his sinful nature can only be cleansed and subdued by the application of the atoning blood of Christ. He is made to perceive and feel how infinitely better it is to wait for the good things which God has prepared for his people in the world to come, than to receive his portion in this present world. He is instructed in the great mystery, how spiritual life is preserved in the heart of a believer, notwithstanding the desperate efforts that are made to extinguish it. And it is revealed to him how certainly decision and boldness, in the Christian warfare, will break through every difficulty, and at length be crowned with the palm of victory. All these lessons are of an encouraging kind, and calculated to animate the pilgrim's hope. But godly fear, no less than lively hope, is essential to the Christian's perseverance to the end of his course. And we have now to consider two more wonders shown in the Interpreter's house, which are both calculated to impress us with the salutary principle of godly fear.

I. After Christian had seen the victory of the armed man, the Interpreter next took him into a very dark room, where there sat a man in an iron cage. Very fearful was the account which this man gave of himself. "I was once," he said, "a fair and flourishing professor. I thought well of myself, others thought well of me too. I seemed to be in a fair way for heaven, and rejoiced at the thought of getting there. But I am now a man in despair, and am shut up in this iron cage. I cannot get out. Oh, no, I cannot!" And listen to his relation of the sad steps by which he came into that awful condition: "I left off to watch and be

sober. I gave way to my sinful lusts. I sinned against light and love. I grieved the great Teacher, and he is gone. I tempted the grand enemy, and he is come. I have provoked the King to anger, and he has left me. I have so hardened my heart, that I cannot repent." When Christian asked the Interpreter whether there was any hope for this man, for wise and important reasons he declined answering the question; but simply referred him to the man himself. The wretched prisoner himself can only reply: "No, there is no hope for me at all!" But why so? Is not the Son of the Blessed very pitiful? "His pity," he replied, "cannot reach to me. I have crucified him afresh, counted his blood an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of his grace. I have therefore nothing to do with promises; fearful threatenings and fiery indignation now only belong to me." Oh, fearful state, and still more fearful prospect! And what was the bait, the glittering and enticing bait, for the sake of which he plunged himself into all this misery? He had sold himself for a thing of nought. He shall speak for himself: "It was for the lusts, and pleasures, and profits of the world. In the enjoyment of these, I then promised myself nothing but delight; but now every one of them bites and gnaws me like a burning worm." To complete the description of his misery. in answer to the question, whether he cannot turn and repent, he adds: "The King has denied me repentance. His word gives me no encouragement to believe; yea, himself has shut me up in this iron cage, nor can all the men in the world let me out. Oh, eternity—eternity! How shall I grapple with the misery that I must meet with in eternity!" This man's

misery was shown to Christian, to be an everlasting caution to him. And the fearful spectacle was not lost upon him. It taught him how absolutely necessary it was for him to watch, and be sober, and to pray, and to shun the causes of this man's misery.

See, dear brethren, in what an affecting light all the solemn passages of Scripture are here set before us, that speak of the terrible consequences of apostasy, and sinning wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth! The Lord keeps his people from falling away, by keeping them continually in fear of doing so. And this is a wholesome and godly fear; altogether different from the carnal fear of the ungodly. It is true, many persons, when they are tried and tempted, write bitter things against themselves, imagine their case to be desperate, and that they have committed the unpardonable sin, who are afterwards brought out of prison, and made to perceive that their fears were groundless. And it is the duty of ministers, in the most desperate cases, to point out the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world; and to encourage sinners of every description, to cast their guilty souls upon the free and unbounded love of God in Christ, to all who come to him. But every threatening, as well every promise, in the Holy Scripture, is used by the Holy Spirit, as the means of the true believer's perseverance to the end. No part of Scripture is explained away, or considered unimportant, by him who is really under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. When a person has really set out in the narrow way, and the Holy Spirit interprets to him the meaning of these fearful passages, then he gets a sight, as it

were, of the man shut up in the iron cage ; and he is led resolutely to turn away from the downward steps that lead to such misery. How can he sin when he has imprinted upon his heart such a passage as this : “ It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost ; and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.” Oh, let us have the fearful doom of the apostate constantly before us, whenever we are disposed to relax in duty, and to presume that we are safe, when we leave off to watch and to pray, and to strive against sin ! A young man once asked an aged and excellent minister this question—“ Sir, do not you think a saint may fall very low without finally perishing ?” “ I think,” was the reply, “ it is the most awful experiment that can possibly be made.” To keep us humble, and to keep us watchful, let us think of the man in the iron cage ; and let us listen to the Holy Ghost, who speaketh to us on this wise : “ If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversary.”

II. We proceed now to consider the last lesson taught to Christian in the Interpreter’s house. The design of this was very similar to the one we have just been noticing ; only it was enforced by a different emblem. He was led into a chamber where a

man was shown him, who trembled very exceedingly as he put on his raiment. And this was the cause of that individual's alarm: he had just awoke out of a solemn and affecting dream of the day of judgment. All the terrors and glories of that tremendous scene had been so vividly set before him, that he could not shake off the impression which it had produced. He had seen in his dream the heavens passing away with a great noise. He had heard the awful note of the judgment-trumpet; and he beheld the Son of Man coming with ten thousand of his saints to judge the world. He had heard the solemn command given: "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment!" Immediately the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, and the dead came forth. Some of them were exceeding glad, and looked upwards; and some sought to hide themselves under the mountains. The books were opened, and the world drew near. All mankind were assembled before the tribunal of the eternal Judge. He heard the proclamation made, "Gather together the tares, and the chaff, and the stubble, and cast them into the burning lake!" No sooner was this proclamation uttered, than it appeared to the dreamer, that the bottomless pit opened just whereabout he stood; and out of the mouth of it there came forth, in large abundance, smoke and coals of fire, with hideous noises. He heard another command then issued: "Gather my wheat into my garner." And lo! many about him were caught away and carried into the clouds, but he was left behind! Upon this he sought to hide himself, but he could not, for He who sat on the cloud kept his piercing eye fixed upon him. Then all his sins were brought to his recollection; and conscience accused him on every side.

The man whom Christian had beheld trembling was just awakened up from this solemn dream. When Christian asked him, What it was especially that had made him so much afraid at this sight, he replied, "I thought that the day of judgment, had come, and that I was not ready for it! But this frightened me most, that the angels gathered up several and left me behind! Also, the burning pit opened her mouth just where I stood. My conscience too accused me; and, as I thought, the Judge had always his eye upon me, showing indignation in his countenance."

Oh, solemn and affecting representation! well calculated, not only to awaken the careless and unconcerned, but to keep alive in the true believer that realizing impression of eternal things, without which he will never resolutely set his face as a flint, and still hold on his way, and neither turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, until he arrives at his journey's end! Very properly is this lesson placed the last of all those that were taught to Christian in the Interpreter's house. We remember it is mentioned last of the three all-important particulars which our Saviour refers to, as the special subjects of the Holy Spirit's teaching: "When he is come he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." The believer's conviction of sin, and of righteousness, was evidently shown in the emblem of the dusty room, and the sprinkling of water: and now we have his conviction of judgment set before us by this affecting dream. It is by his realizing impression of what God has declared in his holy word, respecting the life of the world to come, and an eternal judgment, that the true believer is distinguished, as much as in any thing,

from the rest of the world. He knows that this is an awful reality. He lives in the expectation of it. He tries to be habitually looking for, and hastening to it. He views all his present plans, and pursuits, and undertakings in the light of it; and frequently does he check his over-anxiety respecting his present concerns, by inquiring what he will think of them, and how much importance they will be shown to possess, at the time of the end, when he takes his place before the tribunal of Christ. And how, dear brethren, is this solemn lesson, this habitual practical conviction of judgment to be wrought in our hearts? I answer, only by the effectual teaching of the Holy Spirit. By education, and outward instruction from the Bible, we may any of us attain to a right knowledge of the doctrine of judgment; and from time to time, we may profess our belief, that the Lord Jesus Christ, who is now at the right hand of God, "shall come from thence to judge the quick and the dead." Or again, a very careless, or a very wicked man, at some intervals, may have a powerful impression upon his mind of the coming judgment. But neither of these individuals, neither the unawakened formalist, nor the startled sinner, can have any proper or sanctifying apprehension of judgment, unless he be taught it by the Holy Spirit. To him only it appertains to convince of judgment. And unless we are convinced of it by his secret power, either we shall coldly profess to believe it, while it has no effect whatever upon our daily walk and conversation, or else we shall powerfully feel it in seasons of terror and alarm, and then relapse again into our former insensibility and unconcern. Oh, let us pray earnestly for the only effectual Teacher to impress this solemn lesson deeply upon

our hearts! Are we not dying sinners, standing on the narrow brink of a never-ending eternity? Is it not appointed for us once to die, and after death the judgment? Let us cry, then, earnestly while yet we are in a world of mercy,

“O God, mine inmost soul convert!
 And deeply on my thoughtful heart
 Eternal things impress:
 Give me to feel their solemn weight,
 And tremble at my lifeless state,
 And wake to righteousness.

“Before me place, in dread array,
 The pomp of that tremendous day,
 When thou with clouds shalt come,
 To judge the nations at thy bar;
 And tell me, Lord, shall I be there,
 To meet a joyful doom!”

III. We proceed now to consider the next affecting event which befell Christian, after his departure from the Interpreter's house. This was indeed a wonder. It was nothing else than the manner of his deliverance from his burden. He took with him the good wishes of the Interpreter, and addressed himself to his journey, greatly pondering in his mind all the wonderful and instructive sights which he had seen. His way was now fenced on either side with a wall that was called Salvation. It was, however, steep, and he found it difficult, by reason of the burden which he still carried. But nothing daunted, he pressed forward until he came to a place where stood a cross, and a little below it, a sepulchre. And now mark the signal benefit which he here received. Just as he came up to the cross, his burden loosened off from his shoulders and fell from his back, and began to tumble, and so

continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the sepulchre, where it fell in, and was no more to be seen! Great was his joy upon this occasion. He knew to whom he was indebted for this deliverance, and cried: "He has given me rest by his sorrow, and life by his death." He was filled with wonder as well as with joy and praise. It was very surprising to him that the sight of the cross should thus have eased him of his burden. He looked to it, therefore, again and again, until the plenteous tears began to flow down his cheeks. As he thus stood, weeping before the cross, he was saluted by three Shining Ones, who each conferred upon him an unspeakable boon. The first assured him that his sins were forgiven. The second stripped him of his rags, and clothed him in a change of raiment. The third set a mark upon his forehead, and gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he was to peruse as he proceeded, and also to present at the Celestial Gate, at the end of his journey. Having bestowed these gifts, they departed. And now was our pilgrim so completely comforted, that he looked like another person. Neither could he suppress the joyful emotion of his heart, but "he gave three leaps for joy, and went on his way walking, and leaping, and praising God."

Nothing, dear brethren, can be more instructive, or more encouraging, than the whole of this most happy representation. All the encouragement, however, is for the true penitent, who is seeking for rest, and liberty, and establishment, according to the gospel. When the affecting truths of God's word have been applied to your hearts, you are more diligent and earnest in running your race. But you still want what Christian wanted, until he





had come to the place of the cross. You want a more full and distinct revelation of the mystery of the cross to your heart, and a sweet and joyful assurance of your own personal interest in Him who died upon it. Every real penitent, looking unto Jesus, trusting for mercy according to the gospel, and actually under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, is certainly on the way of life, and is walled on either side by salvation. Yet is he habitually oppressed with the burden of his guilt, and knows little or nothing of spiritual joy, and peace, and comfort. But when the mystery of the cross is more distinctly and expressly revealed to him; when he can look with faith's unclouded eye to the Lord of glory, bearing his sins in his own body on the tree; when he can understand, and perceive, and believe, with all his heart, and with all his soul, that Christ has stood in his place, and that he stands, as it were, in the place of Christ,—his sin being laid upon Christ, and Christ's righteousness being laid upon him,—as he apprehends this, all the distress which he felt in his mind, as to the punishment of sin, is removed and done away.

There are three unspeakable benefits intimately connected with this simple revelation of Christ crucified to the soul. "Pardon, justification, and sanctification." Each of these was represented by the gifts of the three Shining Ones to Christian. We cannot have Christ distinctly revealed to us, without at the same time perceiving our interest in his blood, his righteousness, and his Spirit. His blood to pardon us, his righteousness to justify us, and his Spirit to sanctify and seal us to the day of redemption. Thus at the same time the true believer has his sin taken away, is clothed in the robe

of his Saviour's righteousness, and is sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the purchased inheritance. Then, as the result of all this, he is filled with comfort, leaps, as it were, for joy, and goes on his way in the gladness of his heart. There is a passage in the excellent Leighton, which answers exactly to the representation which is here given, of the burden falling at the sight of the cross, and joy and gladness resulting from it. "Faith," says the Archbishop, "works this joy in the soul by uniting it to Christ, and applying his merits, from the application of which ariseth the pardon of sin; and so that misery, which was the great cause of sorrow, is removed. As soon as the soul findeth itself lightened and unloosened of that burden which was sinking it to hell, it cannot fail to leap for joy in the ease and refreshment it finds." And, to come to an instance of modern times, how very similar to this was the experience of Mr. Simeon, at the entrance of his bright and blessed course. What a heavy burden did he feel his sins to be, when he could say, "So greatly was my mind oppressed with the weight of them, that I frequently looked upon the dogs with envy; wishing, if it were possible, that I could be blessed with their mortality, and they be cursed with my immortality in my stead!" And how did he find peace, and rest, and comfort, to his soul? Only by the sight of the cross. He shall speak for himself. "As I was reading Bishop Wilson on the Lord's Supper, I met with an expression to this effect: 'The Jews knew what they did when they transferred their sin to the head of their offering. The thought rushed into my mind, What! may I transfer all my guilt to another? Has God provided an

offering for me, that I may lay my sins on his head? Then, God willing, I will not bear them on my own soul one moment longer! Accordingly I sought to lay my sins on the sacred head of Jesus; and on Wednesday began to have a hope of mercy; on Thursday that hope increased; on Friday and Saturday it became more strong; and on Sunday morning, I awoke early with these words on my heart and lips, Jesus Christ is risen to-day: Hallelujah! Hallelujah! From that hour peace flowed in rich abundance into my soul; and at the Lord's table in our chapel, I had the sweetest access to God, through my blessed Saviour." When some one smiled after the communion, at his praying when he received some of the consecrated elements. "I thought," he says, "if he had felt such a load taken off from his soul as I did, and had been as sensible of his obligations to the Lord Jesus Christ as I was, he would not deem my prayers and praises at all superfluous." Truly this was a revelation of Christ to a sin-burdened soul. See, dear brethren, how certain it is, that experimental religion is essentially the same in every individual who partakes of it, however different or varying may be their situations. John Bunyan, Archbishop Leighton, and Charles Simeon were all taught the same truth; and found peace alike in the same manner. They felt their sins, and they looked as perishing sinners to the atoning sacrifice of the Lamb of God. They looked unto him and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. Oh, seek earnestly, above every thing else, to have the mystery of the Saviour's cross revealed to your soul. Seek to find in your crucified Redeemer, Christ the wisdom and the power of God. Never think you

have found Christ, until your burden sinks to rise no more, and tumbles, for ever to remain, in the sepulchre where he was buried. Oh, seek from him the knowledge of salvation, through the remission of your sins; and learn to say, from an experimental sense of his great salvation, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me."

THE HYMN.

Not all the blood of beasts,
On Jewish altars slain,
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away its stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away:
A sacrifice of nobler name
And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While like a penitent I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burden thou didst bear,
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And trusts her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We praise the Lamb with cheerful voice
And sing his dying love.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; hear us, we most humbly beseech thee, when we come before thee in his name. Take from us all hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word and commandment. Save us from the unpardonable sin. If in any measure we have been enlightened, and tasted thy good word, and partaken of the Holy Ghost, and felt the power of the world to come; oh keep us from falling away, and from crucifying the Son of God afresh, and putting him to open shame! May we remember that if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Put thy fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from thee; and keep us by thy power through faith unto salvation. Impress upon our minds the nearness and the reality of approaching judgment. O Thou, whose office it is to convince of judgment, as well as of sin and of righteousness, be pleased to perform this office for us. Make us to perceive and feel our own personal concern in the judgment of the great day; and the solemn account which we must then give each for himself. Oh, may we act and speak, and think and feel, and have our conversation in the world as if the judgment-trumpet were sounding in our ears! May we all find mercy of the Lord in that day! Gather not our souls with the wicked, but grant us to be found among thy people in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment. And, for this end, oh do thou reveal to us *now* the mystery of the cross! Grant that now, in the time of this mortal life, we may come to the place of deliverance. Now may we cast the heavy burden of our guilt upon that precious Saviour, who bare our sins in his own body on the tree. May we look, as genuine penitents, with the eye of faith to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world! May we be washed in his most precious blood; clothed in the robe of his perfect righteousness; and sanctified and sealed by his gracious Spirit unto the day of redemption! Thus may we go on our way rejoicing until we appear before thee, the God of our salvation, in the heavenly Zion! These mercies we ask, looking to the sacrifice, and making mention of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE IX.

SIMPLE, SLOTH, AND PRESUMPTION; FORMALITY AND HYPOCRISY.

Blest is the man who shuns the place,
Where sinners love to meet ;
Who fears to tread their wicked ways,
And hates the scoffer's seat :—

But in the statutes of the Lord
Has placed his chief delight ;
By day he reads or hears the word,
And meditates by night.

He, like a plant of generous kind,
By living waters set,
Safe from the storm and blasting wind,
Enjoys a peaceful state.

1 PETER iii. 15.

BE READY ALWAYS TO GIVE AN ANSWER TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH YOU
A REASON OF THE HOPE THAT IS IN YOU, WITH MEEKNESS AND FEAR.

WHAT various characters does the true Christian meet with, as he pursues his way, through the wilderness of tears to the place of his everlasting rest ! How ought he to act to these different characters when they come in his way ? Surely he is not to pass them in sullen silence ; neither is he to conceal his sentiments as if ashamed of the profession which he has made. As opportunity offers, he is to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support

the weak, and to be patient towards all men. When he enters into conversation with those who are evidently unacquainted with the only sure refuge which can support a sinking sinner, and who are anxious to hear something more respecting the Christian's experience and the Christian's hope, then especially silence would be sinful, and he is to be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in him. The various characters which our Pilgrim met in his progress to the heavenly city, and his interesting and edifying conversation with them, furnish us with many lessons of practical wisdom, and are well deserving of our serious attention.

Three particulars will include the subject of the present Lecture.

I. Christian's intercourse with Simple, Sloth, and Presumption.

II. His intercourse with Formality and Hypocrisy.

III. The end of these two last men at the foot of the hill Difficulty.

I. We begin with Christian's intercourse with Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. You remember how he was eased of his burden at the cross, and how he was there assured of his pardon, and clothed, and sealed in the manner described in our last Lecture. After this, as he joyfully pursued his journey, he had not proceeded far, before he saw, a little out of the way, three men fast asleep, with fetters upon their heels. These were Simple, Sloth, and Presumption. Christian could not pass them by without an effort to benefit them. So he went to them, and faithfully represented to them

their danger; telling them that they were like men that sleep upon the top of a mast; for the dead sea was just under them, a gulf that had no bottom. He therefore earnestly besought them to awake, and come away, and kindly proffered any service he was able to afford, toward freeing them from their fetters. He also represented to them how inevitably they must fall a prey into the teeth of him who goeth about as a roaring lion, should he come, and find them in that unguarded and unbecoming situation! But now mark what Christian gets for his pains, and the reply that was made to his solemn warning and friendly admonition, by these scorers. Simple said, "I see no danger." Sloth said, "Yet a little more sleep." And Presumption said, "Every vat must stand upon its own bottom." And so they lay down to sleep again; and Christian went on his way. Yet he was troubled to think that men in that danger should so little esteem the kindness and aid which he desired to show them.

Oh, dear brethren, how many there are, in every place, how many among ourselves, who answer, in every particular, to this affecting description! How many are ignorant and out of the way, who are lulled to sleep in carnal security, and tied and bound with the chain of sin, and the fetters of Satan! There is only one step between them and death. They are almost gone: their steps are well-nigh slipping! If their soul should be required of them, and they should be summoned into eternity, in their present state, they are ruined and undone for ever? Can nothing be attempted for their benefit? Oh, it is a sad proof of the low ebb of religion in our own souls, that we have so little zeal for the spiritual

welfare of others. Surely if, like Christian, we had really experienced the precious efficacy of the Saviour's cross, to deliver us from the heavy burden of our sin, a burden which was ready to sink us lower than the grave, into the pit of destruction; if, like him, we were assured of our pardon, and were rejoicing in hope of the glory of God, we could not hold our peace as we do now; the spirit within would constrain us, and we should say continually to those that are perishing before our eyes, in awful ignorance of their danger: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity?" "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God, that thou perish not!" How dare you presume upon the goodness and forbearance of God? "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." And what is the reply that the zealous Christian must too frequently be prepared to meet from those whom he admonishes? Men will not believe that there is danger where they can see none. They will not make the least effort to shake off the fatal slumber in which they are held; or else they plainly intimate that they consider all admonitions addressed to them as an unwarrantable piece of interference. Thus the sum and substance of their reply is, "Mind your own business; we see no danger; do not come here to disturb our peace, and make such a fuss about religion; see to yourself, and leave us to ourselves." In such a state as this, unless a miracle of mercy interpose on their behalf, they sleep on till death and judgment awake them. Surely every one who knows any thing of the power of the world to come must be deeply affected at such a spectacle. He cares little for the wrong

motives that are attributed to him, and the rude and uncourteous manner in which he is repaid for his good-will; but he is deeply grieved at the short-sighted folly of those who are determined to slumber on in the fatal sleep, out of which he knows they must be so soon and so fearfully awakened! And he says, from his heart, "Oh that they were wise, that they knew this, that they would consider their latter end!"

II. We pass on now to consider Christian's next intercourse with Formality and Hypocrisy. These two he spied, as he advanced forward, to come tumbling over the wall, on the left hand of the narrow way: and they made up apace to him. He immediately asked them whence they came, and whither they were going. And if every formalist and every hypocrite would speak the truth, they would have to give the same answer to this question that these two men did. They replied, "We were born in the land of Vain-Glory, and are going for praise to Mount Zion." Vain-Glory is the birth-place of every formalist and every hypocrite. And praise, carnal praise, the praise of men, is the great end of the profession which they make. They love the praise of men more than the praise of God. When Christian asked them why they did not enter through the narrow gate, at the beginning of the way, they replied, that the entrance there was considered by all their countrymen too far about: and therefore the usual way with them was to make a short cut of it, and to climb over the wall, as they had done.

Yes, dear brethren, the strait gate of conversion, the only true entrance into the way of life, is con-

sidered as far too roundabout for formalists and hypocrites ; and therefore, without one pang perhaps of godly sorrow for sin, without any personal application to Him who is the door, they come tumbling, as it were, over the wall, no one knows how ; and they imagine themselves to be far advanced on the road to heaven, when in reality they are experimentally unacquainted with the first principles of the oracles of God.

In vain did Christian represent to them, that they would be accounted thieves, and robbers, and trespassers, by the Lord of the city, having violated his express appointment. To this they replied, that they had the custom and practice of large numbers, for a long course of years, to sanction their proceedings. And moreover that, being now in the way (however they had got there) as certainly as Christian himself, they could not see wherein his condition was better than their's. Upon this Christian reminded them, that he walked by the rule of his Master, while they followed only the rude working of their own fancies ; and he expressed his fear, that as they came in by themselves, without the King's direction, so they would have to go out by themselves, without his mercy. This faithful rebuke for a little while seemed to silence these two dissemblers. But advancing a little onward, they soon took heart again, and said to Christian, As to laws and ordinances, they doubted not but that they should as conscientiously do them as he. And the only difference they could perceive between themselves and him, appeared to be this, that his coat was different from their's. Then did Christian first admonish them how utterly impossible it was for any one to be saved by ordinances, who was

neglecting the grand ordinance of all, viz. entrance through the door. This done, he proceeded to give a reason of the hope that was in him. The coat of which they had taken notice, he confessed, had been put upon him by the Lord of the country where he was going. It was given him freely in the day that he was stripped of his rags. And since he is thus clothed, what a comfortable hope he can entertain of the acceptance he will receive, at the end of his journey, from the Lord himself, when he shall stand before him, clothed in raiment which he had received from him. Moreover, Christian has been assured of his pardon, and has been sealed by the Holy Spirit unto the day of redemption. A mark was set on his forehead in the day that the burden fell from his shoulders. And he had then also given him a roll sealed, to read for his comfort as he went on his way, and also to present at the Celestial Gate. "All these things," said Christian, "I presume you want, and want them because you came not in at the gate."

Yes, my friends, all those things which constitute the very essence of vital religion are wanting, and must be wanting in every individual, whatever he may profess, who has not entered by the *gate*. If you have never felt the burden of your sin, and have never personally applied by faith to Christ, for an interest in his great salvation, you have no scriptural evidence whatever to produce of your pardon and acceptance in the beloved. You have no personal interest either in his atoning blood, his justifying righteousness, or his sanctifying grace. Your sins are unblotted out by his atoning blood; your person is unclothed with the robe of his righteousness; your heart is unrenewed by his

Holy Spirit, and as yet you have no inheritance among them that are sanctified.

The awful ignorance of Formality and Hypocrisy, as to these essential matters, is very shortly but most emphatically declared. When Christian had done speaking, they gave him no answer. Only they *looked at each other and laughed*. Oh, what numbers of formal and hypocritical professors would be unmasked, in almost every congregation, if we could see, as God sees, the secret ridicule that rises in their hearts, as they listen to the solemn realities of experimental religion, with which they have no acquaintance whatever!

III. The end of these two men, with the commencement of Christian's ascent up the hill Difficulty, will form the last branch of the present Lecture. For a while, all the three proceeded a little in the same path, without any further conversation. Christian, however, kept before, and communed only with his own heart. Sometimes he went sighingly and sometimes comfortably, and often was he employed in reading his roll, by which he was refreshed. A real Christian ought not to let hypocrites and formalists outstrip him in diligence and zeal. When he has faithfully delivered his testimony to those with whom he has been associated, he should be silent when it is the time for silence, and only commune with his own heart. He must expect changes through every part of his progress. Sometimes he will be able to sing; but more frequently he will have to sigh. Not only the dangers and delusions of those around him, but the remains of indwelling sin within him, will cause him to sigh. Happy indeed it will be for him, if

he can refresh his soul from time to time, by perceiving clearly the evidence of a gracious work upon his own heart; and thus can allay all his earthly cares and troubles by reading his title to a mansion in the skies.

All the three still went on, till they came to the foot of the hill of Difficulty, at the bottom of which was a spring. Here, beside the narrow path that led from the gate and went up the hill, there were two ways that branched off, on each side, to the right hand and to the left. Without turning aside to either of these, Christian went straight forward towards the hill. But before he commenced to climb, he went to the spring, and drank of it for his refreshment, that he might have more strength for the difficult ascent he had now to make. Formality and Hypocrisy approached also the foot of the hill. But seeing a way on each side of the steep hill, and being very glad to avoid the difficulty of climbing, they persuaded themselves that these two ways would both take them, by an easier and better road, round the hill, and would bring them again into the narrow road which Christian was pursuing. They were both, however, fearfully mistaken in their calculations. The name of one way was Danger, and that of the other Destruction. So the one took the way which is called Danger. And such it proved. It led him into a great wood; and what became of him there nobody knows. He was most likely lost. The other took the way of Destruction. And it proved destruction to him. For it led him into a wide field, full of dark mountains, where he stumbled and fell, and rose no more.

Let us all, dear brethren, receive instruction and warning from these affecting particulars. If you

are persevering in the good and the right way, be not surprised if many a steep hill of difficulty come in your path. No progress already made on the heavenly way can exempt you from further trials. Neither can any sweet experience, or joyful seasons, which you may have had in times past, secure you from self-denial, and many things which are grievous to flesh and blood, in time to come. Be sure that you cleave to the Lord, with full purpose of heart, and turn not aside, either to the right hand or to the left. Keep to the narrow road that has been pointed out to you in the Scriptures of truth; yea, though it look steep and difficult, turn not away from it. It is your privilege, as a sincere follower of the Lord, to have the path of duty made plain before your eyes. I do not mean *plain* in such a sense as signifies smooth and easy, but so plain as to leave you in no manner of uncertainty respecting the way you ought to take. Amid all the false ways that you see, on your right hand and on your left, you shall not be misled or deceived by them, but you shall hear, as it were, a voice saying to you, "This is the way, walk ye in it." And though carnal reason, from present appearances, may come to a different conclusion, you are certain to find eventually, that the path of duty is the path of safety. You could not have turned either to one side or the other, without danger or destruction to your soul. There is only safety to be found in keeping to the narrow path. The way may be rough and steep, but only keep to it, "and thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be." As Christian found a spring at which he drank for his refreshment, before he began to climb the difficult hill, so all need-

ful supplies of grace and strength are prepared by the good hand of their God, for all the true pilgrims to the heavenly city. If they have to go through the vale of misery, or to climb up the hill of Difficulty, they shall find some secret spring of consolation which they shall use as a well; and thus refreshed, they shall be prepared to go from strength unto strength. If you have any specially self-denying duty to perform, or any difficult service required at your hands, in one means of grace or another, either while in private prayer, or in the sanctuary of God, or meditation upon the Holy Scriptures, you shall draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation, and thus be specially furnished for the special duty you have to perform, or the special difficulty you have to encounter. "They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength."

But oh, how extremely painful it is to consider the end of hypocrites and formalists, and all such as are merely dissemblers with God! As for such as turn aside to their crooked paths, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity. If people pretend to religion without having any, how surely and fearfully they will be detected at the last! Not having the gracious principle within them, nor the fear of God before their eyes, they will turn aside from the way as soon as the hill of difficulty appears. Either they will be seduced into some dangerous path, where they will be lost amid the mazes of error and uncertainty; or else they will rush blindly in the way of destruction, and perhaps remain ignorant of their fearful situation, until they are involved in hopeless ruin. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." Oh!

let us every one take timely warning from such a fearful end. Let us seek earnestly for the light of God's holy word to direct us in all things, and let us try to be obedient in all things to that light. So shall we be able to say, "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way."

THE HYMN.

Beset with snares on every hand,
In life's uncertain path I stand:
Saviour divine! diffuse thy light,
To guide my doubtful footsteps right.

Engage this wandering, treacherous heart,
Great God! to choose the better part,
To scorn the trifles of a day,
For joys that none can take away.

Then, should the wildest storms arise,
And tempests mingle seas and skies;
No fatal shipwreck shall I fear,
But all my treasures with me bear.

If thou, my Saviour, still art nigh,
Cheerful I live, and joyful die;
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,
To find ten thousand worlds in thee.

THE PRAYER.

O thou Father of lights, we are taught in thy holy word, that if any man lack wisdom he is to ask of God, who giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not; send out thy light and thy truth, and let them lead us. Give us, we beseech thee, a wise and understanding heart. We are indeed beset with snares and dangers on every hand. Lord, grant that we may neither fall from our steadfastness, nor be led astray by the error of the wicked. May we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Number us not with the simple ones, who are void of understanding. Grant that we may be thoroughly delivered from

the power of sloth. Keep back thy servants also from presumptuous sins. Let them not have dominion over us ; that we may be innocent and undefiled from the great offence. Lighten our eyes, that we sleep not the sleep of death. May we know how to answer every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. Oh give us the heavenly wisdom of winning souls ! May we be enabled, with all wisdom and faithfulness, to instruct the simple, to awaken the slothful, and to warn the presumptuous of their awful danger. And, Lord, do thou bless our humble endeavours to benefit others, and to save their souls from death. Send thy Holy Spirit into their hearts ; visit them with thy salvation ; and save them for thy mercy's sake. Oh let our hearts be sound in thy testimonies that we be not ashamed. Deliver us from the fearful mistake of trusting to a form of godliness, while we are ignorant of its power. And may we beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. From pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, good Lord, deliver us ! May we know what it is to come to him who is the way, and the truth, and the life. May we all enter through the strait gate of conversion upon the narrow way of life, and have respect to thy commandments in all things ; that we may not at last be numbered among the thieves and robbers, to whom the porter will not open. Give us all things that accompany salvation ; a penitent heart, a lively faith, and a life ruled by thy holy word. When we meet with difficulties in our heavenly course, grant to us such strength and protection as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations. If troubles abound, may consolations abound also ; and as our day is so may our strength be. Make thy way plain before us ; and grant that when tempted to turn either to the right hand or the left, we may hear a voice, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. Keep us from the way of danger and destruction, and from every false and crooked path. May we follow faithfully thy holy word ; getting understanding through thy precepts, and therefore hating every false way. Hear us, O Lord : hear us, and answer us, through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE X.

ASSURANCE LOST AND REGAINED.

OH, that I knew the secret place
Where I might find my God!
I'd spread my wants before his face,
And pour my woes abroad.

I'd tell him how my sins arise,
What sorrows I sustain;
How grace decays—and comfort dies,
And leaves my heart in pain.

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,
And banish every fear;
He calls thee to the throne of grace,
To spread thy sorrows there.

PSALM li. 12.

RESTORE UNTO ME THE JOY OF THY SALVATION, AND UPHOLD ME WITH THY
FREE SPIRIT.

IT is the concluding sentence in a memorable Sermon of the judicious Hooker, "Therefore the assurance of my hope I will labour to keep as a jewel unto the end; and by labour, through the gracious mediation of his prayer, I shall keep it." David lost all his assurance upon his awful fall. His harp was silent; his peace had vanished; his hope was turned into fear, and all his joyful experience had passed away like a dream. He remembered, however, his pleasant things in the day of his misery; and amid all his sorrowful confessions, and his earnest cries to be pardoned, and washed,

and renewed, he breathes out also his fervent desire for the restoration of the joyful assurance which he had lost: "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free Spirit." We have to consider at this time,

I. How Christian lost his evidence by sleeping in the harbour.

II. How he recovered it again; and

III. How he sought admittance into the house Beautiful.

May we all receive instruction and edification from these interesting particulars.

How did Christian lose his assurance? It will be remembered that he had received this in the shape of a roll, in the day that the burden fell from his back, when he was contemplating the cross. When Hypocrisy and Formalist parted from him at the foot of the hill Difficulty, he was left to toil up the steep ascent alone. He gradually relaxed from running to going, and from going to clambering upon his hands and knees, because of the steepness of the way. Ever mindful, however, of the necessities of his poor pilgrims, the Lord of the country had provided a pleasant harbour for their refreshment, mid-way up the hill. To this Christian repaired; and here he sat him down to rest. He pulled out his roll to read for his comfort, and began to take fresh notice of the garment which he had received at the cross. Thus pleasing himself awhile, he sunk into a slumber, and from that into a sound sleep. In this state he continued till the day was far spent; and in his sleep his roll fell out of his hand. He was not, however, suffered to remain thus, without timely warning. There came one to

him who awakened him, and said: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways and be wise." This admonition thoroughly aroused the sleeper. He suddenly started up, and hastened on his way, and went apace, till he came to the top of the hill. Though, as yet, unconscious of the loss which he had sustained, new discouragements now perplexed him. Two men, Timorous and Mistrust, came running to meet him, in great alarm. Upon being asked the cause of their alarm, and why they ran in the wrong direction, Timorous said, they had been on their way to Zion, and had got up that difficult place, "but the further we go, the more danger we meet; wherefore we turned and are going back again." Mistrust chimed in with the testimony of his fearful companion. Indeed, he confirmed it by saying, "Just before us lie a couple of lions in the way, and we both thought, if we came within their reach, they would presently pull us in pieces." Mark the effect of this discouraging testimony upon our poor Pilgrim. "Then said Christian, 'You make me afraid.'" But mark also the arguing and the conclusion of an upright though a discouraged soul. "Whither," said Christian, "shall I flee to be safe? If I go back to my own country, that is prepared for fire and brimstone, I shall certainly perish there. If I can get to the Celestial City, I am sure to be in safety there. I must venture! To go back is certain death; to go forward is fear of death; and if that be overcome, everlasting life beyond it! I am resolved what to do: I will yet go forward!" O divine and blessed resolution! a resolution which can only be made and acted upon by the genuine Pilgrim. So Mistrust and Timorous ran down the hill, and Christian

went on his way alone. He could not, however, dismiss from his heart the discouraging feeling which had been lodged within it by the evil report of the way which he had just heard. He therefore felt in his bosom for his roll, that he might read therein, and be comforted, as he had done heretofore. But lo! now comes his perplexity indeed. He felt for it; but now, when he needs it more than ever, he found it not. Then was Christian in great distress, and knew not what to do; for he wanted that which used to relieve him, and that which should have been his pass into the Celestial City. He therefore began to be much perplexed, and knew not what to do.

Here, let us pause to reflect for a few moments on all this for our profit. The true believer, who has been favoured with the bright evidence of his pardon, or who has in his possession a glad and scriptural hope of his acceptance, should labour to preserve this as a precious jewel. He cannot keep it without constant watchfulness and prayer, habitual self-denial, and all humility of mind. By a drowsy, prayerless, self-indulgent, or self-satisfied frame of mind, we are sure to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption. All diligence is necessary in order to retain the full assurance of hope unto the end. To do this we must not be slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises. If we delight too much, or linger too long at any of those places which were only designed to refresh us on our way to Zion; if we feel secretly pleased or satisfied with any attainments in religion already made, and gradually sink into a listless, or a thoroughly insensible state of mind, we are sure to lose

our evidence. It will slip, as it were, out of our hand, before we are aware. In mercy, however, to the souls of his erring children, the Lord will not suffer them to sleep on unwarned. He lightens their eyes, that they sleep not the sleep of death. By the voice of some faithful monitor, or by some sharp and providential rebuke, he rouses them out of their fatal lethargy; convinces them that it is high time to awake out of sleep, and makes them heartily ashamed of their inconsistent conduct. Then they press forward, through every difficulty, with renewed zeal. But it is not with them as it was in months past, when the candle of the Lord shone about their head. They are less able now than they were before to escape unhurt from the carnal representations of timorous and mistrustful men, who have turned their backs upon the heavenly city. Their hands are weakened, and their hearts are moved by the evil report which unbelieving men and apostates bring of the good ways of the Lord. They tremble now at the apprehension of dangers and lions in the way, which would not once have frightened them. But amid all this weakness, they give one never-failing proof of sincerity and uprightness of heart; they have no intention whatever of turning back. Whatever dangers they may apprehend before, they are convinced they would find greater behind. Faint and feeble though it may appear, still there is a hope of everlasting life by going forward. But there is no hope, nothing but despair, certain death and certain ruin, by turning back; and therefore, at all events, at any risk, come what may, the believer's choice is made. He has determined he will yet go forward; and forward he goes, though it be alone. Great,

however, is the perplexity of one who has rejoiced in the blessedness of pardoned sin, to find his evidence gone when he wished to cheer and comfort his heart by reviewing it! How wonderful it is that many who are evidently sincere Christians, should look so little, and so seldom as they do, to their evidence! How many fall into the same mistake about assurance that Joseph and Mary did, with regard to the Saviour himself. The child Jesus had tarried behind, and they knew not of it, but they, "supposing him to have been in the company," went a day's journey. Thus many take too much for granted respecting the nearness and presence of Christ. They go for days and days imagining that all is well; but when the searching time comes, then they find their errors, and have with sorrow to retrace their steps. On the other hand, true believers not unfrequently disquiet themselves in vain with regard to the doctrine of assurance. "Faith is essential to our salvation; assurance is essential to our comfort. Clearly there may be saving faith, where there is no comfortable assurance."

II. Let us now proceed in the next place to consider how Christian recovered his lost evidence. At last, he bethought himself that he had slept in the arbour; and falling down upon his knees, he asked forgiveness for his foolish act, and then went back to look for his roll. As he retraced his steps, looking very diligently on either side for his lost roll, the sorrows of his heart were enlarged; and deep and very bitter were the reflections which he made, and the self-reproaches to which he gave utterance. He reflected most severely upon his folly in falling soundly asleep in a place that was

only erected for a little refreshment for his weariness. The sight of the harbour, when he again obtained a view of it from a distance, increased his sorrow still more, and made him feel more keenly than ever the evil of his sleeping. As, therefore, he approached it, he bewailed his sinful sleep, and said: "Oh, wretched man that I am, that I should sleep in the day-time! How many steps have I now to tread in vain! How far might I have been on my way by this time! I am made to tread these steps thrice over, which I need only to have trodden once; yea, now also I am like to be benighted, for the day is almost spent. Oh, that I had not slept!" By this time he was come to the harbour again, where for awhile he sat down and wept. But, at last, looking sorrowfully down under the seat he had occupied, to his unutterable delight, there again he espied his roll! With trembling haste and joy he caught it up and put it in his bosom again. Oh, how happy is he now! This roll was the assurance of his life and acceptance at the gate of the city. With a glad and thankful heart, and a light and bounding step, as if all his grief and fatigue were forgotten; he has nothing now to do but to betake him on his journey. But his joyful feelings were not unmixed with others of an opposite kind. The sun went down upon him before he got to the top of the hill. He did not like the prospect of travelling in the dark. He recalled also to mind what he had heard from Timorous and Mistrust; and he went on in continual apprehension of doleful creatures and beasts of prey that prowl about in the night. As thus he sorrowfully mused and went on, he saw a very stately palace before him. Its name was Beautiful, and it stood by the highway side.

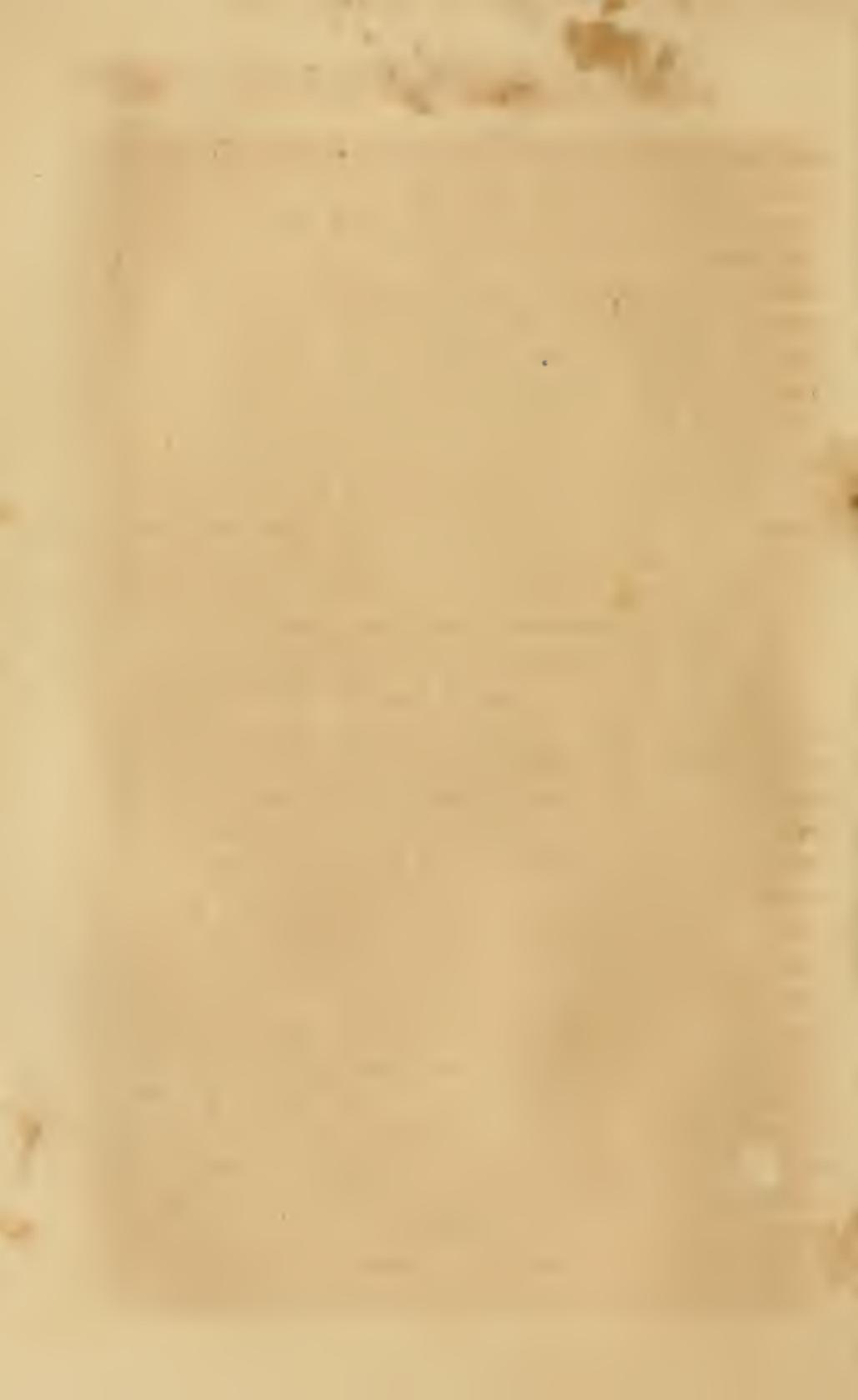
We must not omit to reflect for a few moments on Christian's recovered roll. The believer who has lost his assurance will never find it until he begins seriously to call his ways to remembrance. He must search and try his ways, and turn again to the Lord. As he narrowly reviews his past conduct, and recalls to mind the country through which he has passed, the places where he has tarried, and the people with whom he has conversed, he must solemnly charge his conscience to bring home to his heart and his memory every instance where he walked not uprightly, or acted inconsistently. And when he bethinks him of the fatal harbour; the scene, or the company, or the occasion, when he wounded his conscience, and acted in such a manner as to provoke the Holy Comforter to depart from him, he must humbly confess his particular sin unto the Lord, bewailing and acknowledging all its aggravating circumstances. In this manner the royal penitent poured out his soul unto God, and said, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest." Before he had opened his mouth to give utterance to this full acknowledgment of his guilt, he could find no rest, day nor night, to his dark and burdened heart. "While he kept silence his bones waxed old, through his roaring all the day long: and day and night the hand of his offended God was heavy upon him." But when he confessed his transgressions unto the Lord, he obtained at once the forgiveness of his sins. In this manner, dear brethren, every true penitent must seek for his pardon; and in this

manner, too, the backslider in heart, who is going heavily, and who is filled with his own way, must seek for the renewal of his pardon, and the restoration of his peace and joy. "If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." When a person thus humbles himself greatly before the Lord, renewing his repentance, and, as it were, going over the same ground again and again, determined to be satisfied with nothing short of the pardon of his sin, and the favour of his God, in due time he shall obtain his desire. Let the believer who has lost his assurance, only imitate the diligence, and zeal, and perseverance, of those who have lost any thing which they greatly value, and the result will be the same. Remember the woman who had lost her piece of silver. She begins to seek, and never desists until her efforts are crowned with success; and then she calls together her friends and neighbours, and says, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost." Thus shall it be with every true penitent, who continues weeping, and praying, and seeking, and crying unto the God of his Saviour, "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation." He shall find the jewel which he has lost. The joy of salvation, which had quite vanished, shall again be restored; and the holy Comforter, who had for awhile withdrawn, shall again return to comfort and uphold his fainting soul. He may indeed feel the sad effects of his backsliding, after he has been fully restored to the Divine favour. Perplexing fears and disquieting thoughts may again obtrude into his mind. And while he has the evidence of his pardon and salvation safely lodged in his breast, he may some-

times forget it, or else, through the darkness of the night, or some other peculiarities, he may be unable to read it, or to enjoy the full benefit to be derived from its possession. But he will often find that he has been disquieting himself in vain; and not unfrequently, while he is going on his way, sad and disquieted, he will find himself prevented with the blessings of goodness, and shortly after delivered out of all his fears.

III. Christian's approach to the Beautiful House was to be the last head for our consideration. The sight of this mansion was most seasonable, circumstanced as he was. He made haste and went forward, that, if possible, he might get lodging there. He entered a narrow passage which led to the porter's lodge, and looking very narrowly before him as he went, he spied two lions in the way. What then! Was it indeed a true report which Timorous and Mistrust had given of impassable dangers? Both the lions were chained, but Christian could not see the chains. Here, therefore, again is our poor Pilgrim quite at a stand, and in a very great strait. He was afraid, and thought to go back after the others, for he imagined nothing but death was now before him. But lo, an encouraging voice is heard, which is just sufficient to turn the scale. The porter at the lodge, whose name was Watchful, perceiving that Christian made a halt, as if he would go back, cried unto him, saying, "Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions, for they are chained, and are placed there for trial of faith, where it is, and for discovery of those that have none. Keep in the midst of the path, and no hurt shall come unto thee." Oh, joyful sound! Oh,





welcome assurance! Christian is indeed possessed of faith, and his faith shall stop the mouths of these lions. He ventures forward. They look so fierce and dreadful that it is only in fear and trembling that he advances. But he does advance; and taking good heed to the porter's directions, he got safely by them. He heard them roar as he passed, but no manner of harm did he receive from them. Then did he clap his hands for joy, and came and stood before the gate where the porter was, and inquired what house it was, and if he might lodge there that night. To this the porter answered, "This house was built by the Lord of the Hill, and he built it for the relief and security of pilgrims." Here we must break off for the present.

This Beautiful House is the emblem of any true church, or congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is faithfully proclaimed, and the sacraments which Christ ordained are duly administered. Entrance into this house represents the public profession of religion made by any person, when he casts in his lot among the people of God, and begins to associate among those who constitute the household of faith. A public profession of religion exposes a person to more opposition, and sometimes to more cruel persecution, than a private attention to it. Many who feel the importance of eternal things, have a great dread of making a decided profession of their faith. The ridicule or opposition which they must encounter, in doing this, seems to stand like lions in the way. To sight and sense such a step appears very formidable. Satan magnifies the danger, and to carnal reason it sometimes appears like rushing into the jaws of death. This is especially the case in times of persecution.

Faith, however, can discern the secret restraints which the Lord lays upon the fiercest opposers. All faithful ministers, watching for souls, have a special duty to perform, in encouraging every true-hearted, though fearful pilgrim, boldly to venture forward. If you are united by a true and living faith to Christ, and are pressing forward into his kingdom, why should you not also be united by the blessed bond of Christian love and fellowship with all his people? Think not to pass by the Beautiful House, which the Lord of the Hill has built expressly for the relief and security of poor pilgrims like you! Do you not want relief? Do you not want security? Fear not, then, the dangers and the difficulties that lie in your way, however great and dreadful they may appear to be! The lions are chained! They are formidable in appearance only, not in reality. They are placed there for the trial of faith; to show who has it, and who has it not. Only keep in the midst of the path, and no manner of harm shall in anywise happen to you. You may hear them roar, but that is all. They cannot break their chain. Dismiss, therefore, your unbelieving fears. Be not ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified. Confess him in the midst of this sinful and adulterous generation, and he will confess you before his Father, and the holy angels. Have all your delight in the saints that are upon earth, and such as excel in virtue. Very excellent things will be shown you, and sweet communion and fellowship will be granted you, in the congregation of the faithful. Here you will get a glimpse, however faint and imperfect, of the joy of heaven, and the beauty of holiness. "Beautiful for situation is the Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth. Only

with a true heart cast in your lot among the Lord's people; and continue steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayer, and the heavenly love and blessed unity of the early Christians shall again be seen. The multitude of them that believe, you will find of one heart and one soul; and you will draw water with joy out of the wells of salvation.

THE HYMN.

Oh! for a closer walk with God,
 A calm and heavenly frame;
 A light to shine upon the road
 That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
 When first I saw the Lord?
 Where is the soul-refreshing view
 Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
 How sweet their memory still!
 But they have left an aching void
 The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
 Sweet messenger of rest!
 I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
 And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
 Whate'er that idol be,
 Help me to tear it from thy throne,
 And worship only thee.

So shall my walk be close with God,
 Calm and serene my frame;
 And clearer light shall mark the road
 That leads me to the Lamb.

THE PRAYER.

O God, merciful Father, that despiseth not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful; mercifully assist our prayers that we make before thee, in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us. If thou hast begun thy gracious work in our hearts, and given us the blessed hope of everlasting life, may we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end. May we be kept from grieving thy Holy Spirit and sinning against our own mercies, and piercing ourselves through with many sorrows. Grant that we may not sleep as do others; but may we watch and be sober. May we give all diligence to retain the full assurance of hope unto the end. And if any of us, through the wiles of the devil, or our own sinful negligence, have lost the evidence of our pardon and acceptance, restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free Spirit. Help us to call our own ways to remembrance; to humble ourselves greatly before thee; and never to rest or be satisfied until our peace is restored, and we are enabled to say, O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. May we have the joy of the Lord for our strength. Deliver us from the fear of the wicked. May we trust and not be afraid. May we ponder well the awful doom of the fearful and unbelieving. Make us more afraid of thy wrath than of any thing else. And whatever difficulties may be in our path, may we be more afraid of turning back unto perdition than of all the adversaries we have to face in the way to heaven. May we never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; and give us grace to overcome all the fears and scruples that would deter us from making a public avowal of our attachment to Christ, and our fellowship with his people. Oh grant, that by our own act and deed, we may seek admission into the congregation of the faithful. Show us that every lion is chained; and that there shall no harm happen unto us, if, as genuine penitents looking unto Jesus we walk in the even path of thy holy commandments. Oh grant that we may indeed belong to the household of faith and the Israel of God; that being numbered now among the saints that are upon earth, hereafter we may be numbered with them in glory everlasting. Hear us, O Lord, and answer us, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XI.

THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS.

Oh ! magnify the Lord with me,
With me exalt his name ;
When in distress, to him I called,
He to my rescue came.

The hosts of God encamp around
The dwellings of the just ;
Deliverance he affords to all,
Who on his succor trust.

Oh ! make but trial of his love,
Experience will decide
How blest are they—and only they,
Who in his truth confide.

PSALM LXVI. 16.

COME AND HEAR, ALL YE THAT FEAR GOD, AND I WILL DECLARE WHAT
HE HATH DONE FOR MY SOUL.

BEFORE Christian was admitted into the house Beautiful, he was required to give some account of the state of his mind, and the way in which he had been led. After he had gained admission, very edifying and instructive is the conversation that ensued between himself and the members of that blessed community. When a person makes a public profession of religion, it is very desirable that he should open his mind, and declare his sentiments, to some faithful minister of the gospel, or to

some experienced and judicious Christian; and when, by his own act and deed, he has cast in his lot among the congregation of the faithful, he should endeavour to improve his intercourse with the Lord's people, to let his conversation be that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace to the hearers; and he should endeavour to act as David did, when he said, "Hearken unto me, ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul."

The present Lecture will consist of two parts:

I. The manner in which Christian was questioned before he was admitted into the house Beautiful.

II. His conversation with the members of the family after he had been admitted.

I. His conversation with the porter, and with Discretion, before he was admitted into the house, has first to engage our attention. The porter at the lodge asked him, "Whence he was, whither he was going, and what was his name?" "I am come," he said, "from the City of Destruction, and am going to Mount Zion; but because the sun is now set, I desire, if I may, to lodge here to-night: my name is now Christian, but at the first it was Graceless." Another question was also put by the porter, which touched Christian on a tender point. "How happens it," he said, "that you come so late? The sun is set." Now mark the Christian simplicity and godly sincerity of our Pilgrim in his answer. He does not attempt, as all men do in their natural state, to justify or palliate his errors: he adheres to the simple truth, and takes blame to

himself where his own conscience tells him he is to be blamed. His sleep in the arbour, his losing his evidence, and the long delay occasioned by his sorrowful journey back to seek it,—all this he deliberately confesses. The watchful porter was favourably impressed towards him by this instance of his humility and candour, and summoned Discretion, one of the inmates of the house, to have some further conversation with him, and to admit him, if she thought good, according to the rules of the house, as an inmate. Discretion soon appeared at the summons of the porter. Her inquiries of Christian were very similar to those which had just been put to him by the porter, only they were a little more particular and searching. But in addition to all the other questions, she asked him also, “How he got into the way?” and he told her. Christian now begins to understand the use of the mansion at which he has arrived, and the kind of company he must expect to find within. He relishes the company, and he longs for admission more earnestly than ever. He therefore said to Discretion, “I have so much the more a desire to lodge here to-night, because, by what I perceive, this place was built by the Lord of the hill for the relief and security of pilgrims.” Discretion herself could only rejoice at the expression of such a desire as this. She perceives with joyful emotion the genuine marks of a true pilgrim in the stranger with whom she is speaking. “So she smiled, but the water stood in her eyes.” She was overcome by the joyful sensation produced at the sight of another wanderer on his way to heaven. After a little pause, she said, “I will call forth two or three more of the family.” So she ran and called out Prudence,

Piety, and Charity. These soon, after a little more converse with Christian, admitted him into the family, and united to give him a most hearty welcome. So he bowed his head and followed them into the house.

How well, dear friends, it would be ; how many scandals it would prevent ; and how much it would promote the true prosperity of the church of Christ, if more watchfulness were observed ; if discretion were invariably consulted, and prudence, and piety, and charity, were constantly called forth, before a new disciple is received and ranked among the professors of godliness !

II. We now pass on to the edifying conversation that Christian had with the inmates of the house, after he had obtained admittance there. It was agreed that until supper was ready, some of them should discourse with Christian for their mutual edification and improvement ; and they appointed Piety, Prudence, and Charity, to do this.

(1.) Piety begins. Her first inquiry of Christian is a very important one. "What moved you," she said, "at first to betake yourself to a pilgrim's life?" Christian has a plain answer ready. It was his deep conviction of sin, and his quick apprehension of destruction if he remained where he was. But as many under their convictions run in various directions for relief, Piety next inquires, "How happens it that you came out of your country this way?" Here again our Pilgrim has a most satisfactory answer. He owns that it was entirely through the directions of Evangelist, that he sought relief in that direction. This is quite as it should be. But still, as many run well for a season, who

never experience the gracious teaching with which all the generation of the upright are favoured, Piety again inquires, "But did you not come by the house of the Interpreter?" In answer to this, Christian recounts the memorable lessons which he had there learned—lessons which he declared would be engraved on the tables of his heart to the latest day of his life. There he had been taught how Christ maintains his work of grace in the heart, notwithstanding all the opposition of Satan; how a man may sin himself beyond the reach of mercy; and the fearful situation of one who shall be summoned to judgment in his unprepared state. In addition to these and other wonders, he had seen the bright crown of glory, and the eternal blessedness of him who boldly opposed all his adversaries, and by faith overcame them all. Piety inquires finally, what other things he had seen since he left the Interpreter's house? And here again he simply records his memorable adventures. He tells how wonderfully the cross was manifested to him; and the precious benefits which he there received, when the burden fell from his back; how he was pardoned and justified, and received the earnest or evidence of his adoption. He mentions, too, his interview with the three sleepers, Simple, Sloth, and Presumption; how Formality and Hypocrisy came tumbling over the wall, with their miserable end; how hard a business he found it to toil up the hill Difficulty; and his dreadful fear of the lions, which in all probability would have turned him back, had it not been for the friendly and encouraging voice of the porter at the lodge.

How well it is for the true Pilgrim to the heavenly Zion to remember all the way which the Lord

his God has led him! It is well for himself, and well for others. As for himself, it humbles him and proves him, and shows what is in his heart, making him more deeply sensible that he is still a poor helpless sinner at the best; and that, from first to last, he must depend entirely on free and unbounded grace. Others too are often greatly benefited by hearing a real Christian give some simple account of his fears and hopes, his joys and sorrows, his dangers and deliverances. Many shall hear and fear, and put their trust in the Lord. Can we, dear friends, give a plain answer to the important questions which might be put to us by any person of real piety? What made us first think seriously about religion? How came we to seek salvation in the way we have sought it? Are there any special lessons which have been engraved on our hearts by the teaching of the Holy Spirit? Can we call to mind the season when we first trembled at the sight of our guilt and danger? Or if this was more gradually produced, still have we ever been deeply affected at the sight and sense of our vileness and depravity, and exposure to the wrath of God? If so, is there no faithful minister, or Christian friend, or well-remembered book that did for us the work of an Evangelist, directing us to Jesus, and guiding our wandering feet into the way? Have we really been private pupils of the Holy Spirit since we paid any attention to religion? Has he convinced us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;—showing us how alone the spark of grace can be kindled and kept alive within us,—filling us with godly fear, lest we should sin wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth,—and making us habitually to live as if the

judgment-trumpet were sounding in our ears? Has he shown us the necessity of diligently striving, if we would be crowned with the palm of victory? And above all these things, do we know any thing experimentally of the beauty, and glory, and power, and efficacy of the cross of Christ? Have we had any special revelation of the cross made to our souls? Do we know what it is to come, weary and heavy-laden, to a crucified Saviour? And, as we have contemplated his dying love, by faith, have we ever felt our load remove, and there obtained a good hope of pardon and acceptance with God, and some tokens and earnest of our pardon? These, dear friends, are the questions that real piety would urge upon us; and happy is every one who can reply to them in a satisfactory manner.

(2.) When Piety ceased, Prudence commenced. It is a very solemn thought to consider that men may learn by human teaching to profess any doctrine and relate any experience. This is the fatal rock upon which, it is to be feared, numbers split, in every place where the gospel is preached; and it is the great evil to be guarded against among every society of professors who converse together upon religious subjects. How may we avoid the sad mistake of confounding mere talk and knowledge with vital godliness? Prudence will suggest some searching questions relating to the inward struggle with indwelling sin and our manner of life, which will greatly assist us on this important point. Prudence, when she began to speak, inquired of Christian first, "If he ever thought of the country he had left?" To this he replied, he only thought of it with shame and detestation, desiring a better country. Upon being asked further, "If he had

no remains still of indwelling sin?" he owns that it is too true. Carnal thoughts still lodge within him; but he can testify that they are his grief, and pain, and sorrow, and that he is striving and longing for deliverance from them. He can only very seldom feel as if those things were vanquished, which at other times are his perplexity. They are golden hours, seldom and far between, when this is the case. Prudence then asks him, "If he can remember by what means he finds at times his annoyances vanquished?" Nothing can be more deeply experimental, or more truly scriptural, than Christian's answer. "Yes," he said, "when I think of what I saw at the cross, that will do it; when I look at my embroidered coat, that will do it; when I look at the roll which I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when my thoughts wax warm about whither I am going, that will do it." "And why is our Pilgrim" (it is the last question of Prudence) "so anxious to be at Mount Zion?" Because he longs to see his Saviour; to be rid entirely of all his annoyances; to have communion with saints; and to celebrate, through all eternity, the praises of redeeming love.

What answer, dear brethren, can we give to the searching inquiries of Prudence as to the reality of a work of grace upon our heart? How are we affected towards the sins and vanities, or follies, to which we were once in bondage? Do we think of them only with shame and abhorrence? Do we feel and deplore the law of sin in our members, warring against the law of God in our minds; and is it our constant grief and burden that so much that is carnal and wrong should still remain in us? Do we know, from blessed experience, what alone

can effectually subdue our iniquities and give us some blessed foretaste of our final deliverance? When we obtain a realizing and believing view of Christ crucified, will not that do it? When we can see ourselves clothed in the perfect righteousness of Christ, will not that do it? When we can read clearly our title to the heavenly inheritance, will not that do it? Or when our hearts are drawn out in ardent longings after our complete salvation in heaven, will not that do it? Do not all our corruptions seem to be like dead men, when it is thus with us, in the golden moments of communion with God? And are they really gracious desires that cause us to long for Mount Zion, and the city of the living God? Do we long to be there, not merely to be free from trouble, and to be at rest, but to be free from the hated remains of sin, to be present with that Saviour, whom having not seen we love, and to serve him day and night without defilement and without distraction in his temple above?

(3.) When Prudence was satisfied and held her peace, then, finally, Charity opened her mouth and began to question Christian. But after all that has been said, what can be asked more? What single point has still been left untouched? A very important and most practical point is adverted to by Charity: one which it was exceedingly proper for her to introduce; and by neglecting of which too many high professors, when weighed in the balances, are found wanting. Then said Charity to Christian, "Have you a family? Are you a married man? And why did you not bring them along with you?" There is a beauty, and a propriety, a delicacy, and a meaning in these inquiries of Charity, which can never be sufficiently admired. Their present effect, how-

ever, is only to stir up the grief and the sorrow of Christian's mind. When these questions were put to him, he wept; and said, "Oh, how willingly would I have done it, but they were all of them utterly averse to my going on pilgrimage." "But," said Charity, "you should have talked to them, and endeavoured to have shown them the danger of being left behind." "So I did," replied Christian, "and told them what God had showed me of the destruction of our city; but I seemed to them as one that mocked, and they believed me not." Charity is very loath to give up the precious souls of men, and to conclude that their case is hopeless. She hopeth all things; and while any means for their benefit are yet untried, she will never despair. "Did you pray to God," she said to Christian, "that he would bless your counsel to your family? Did you tell them your own sorrow and fear of destruction?" "Yes," said Christian, "I prayed with much affection, for they were very dear to me. And over and over again I informed them of my certain apprehensions, which they could see plainly enough depicted in my countenance. But love of the world and the foolish delights of youth overcame all my arguments and all my representations." Oh, how unwilling is Charity to give them up! Another most searching question she therefore proposes. "Did you, by your vain life, damp all the fire of your excellent words in their sight?" Christian's reply is with mingled modesty and integrity. He has nothing to commend in his life, for he is deeply conscious of many failings. He knows well that by inconsistent conduct the most powerful arguments to a godly life fall without any effect upon the ears of those to whom they are addressed. Yet,

he has the testimony of his conscience, that he was very careful not to put any stumbling-block of this kind in the way of his family. Indeed, their great objection was, that he was too precise and particular. And what offended them most was his great tenderness in sinning against God, or of doing any wrong to another. There was so much humility, and piety, and tenderness in this answer, that Charity herself is obliged to confess, that under such circumstances Christian had done well to set off alone without his family. "Cain," she said, "hated his brother because his own works were evil and his brother's righteous; and if thy wife and children have been offended with thee for this, they thereby show themselves implacable to good, and thou hast delivered thy soul from their blood."

Will our religion, dear brethren, bear the test of these most important questions of Charity? A saint abroad and a devil at home is one of the most deplorable characters to be met with in the world. To be full of religious zeal everywhere but in our own house, and to profess great anxiety for the spiritual welfare of others, while we are very negligent respecting those who more especially appertain to us, and who are more immediately, by Providence, placed under our care, is a very fearful mark that all is not well. If religion be really begun in our own hearts, it will make us especially anxious about the salvation of those that are nearest and dearest to us. We shall long to take them every one with us to the heavenly city. And we shall use all prudent means that may conduce to so desirable an end. We shall represent to them the amazing importance of eternal things; endeavouring to show, by our whole life and conduct, how

deeply we are affected by those things ourselves. We shall pray earnestly for our households, that they all may be truly converted to God, and brought to belong to the household of faith. But we must take good heed to our ways, that we do not, by our improper tempers, our bitter words, or our inconsistent conduct, in anywise prejudice them against religion or religious professors. We must behave ourselves wisely, and walk in our house with a perfect heart, and not take any wicked thing in hand. And if, after all our care and pains, any for the present are grieved and offended at so much precision and religion, we must take good heed not to be snared by them, and induced to violate our conscience. We must go on our way to Zion alone, without delaying to set out until all that belong to us are ready to set out too. And if we walk uprightly, and act consistently, Charity herself will confess that we have delivered our souls; and in due time the seeds and the prayers, which seemed at the time to be lost, may afterwards spring up with abundant increase, and we, and all that belong to us, may rejoice together in the heavenly Zion.

THE HYMN.

Come, ye who love the Lord,
And let your joys be known;
Join in a song with sweet accord,
While we surround the throne.

The sorrows of the mind
Be banished from this place;
Religion never was designed
To make our pleasures less.

Let those refuse to sing
Who never knew our God ;
But children of the heavenly King
May speak their joys abroad.

The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,
Before we reach the heavenly fields,
Or walk the golden streets.

There shall we see his face,
And never, never sin ;
There, from the rivers of his grace,
Drink endless pleasures in.

Then let our songs abound,
And every tear be dry ;
We're marching through Immanuel's ground,
To fairer worlds on high.

THE PRAYER.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord, send thy heavenly grace into our hearts, and grant that we may receive one another, even as Christ hath received us. And we most humbly beseech thee to inspire continually the universal church with the spirit of truth, unity, and concord ; and grant that all they that do confess thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. May we all be admitted as living members of thy true church. Make us to know the experience of thy genuine disciples, that we may be able to say to others, Hearken unto me, ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul. Purify thy church from heresies and scandals. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all the appointed watchmen of Zion's hill. May they act with discretion in all that they do ; and grant that all those who are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion may eschew those things which are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same. O Thou, whose eyes are as a flame of fire, and who will

make all the churches to know, that thou searchest the heart and triest the reins, forbid it, we humbly beseech thee, that any of us should be satisfied with a name to live while we are dead. May we have the answer of a good conscience to give to every one that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us. May we approve ourselves unto piety, as we recount, with all simplicity and godly sincerity, how first we were moved to think about our souls; what directions we received from the ministers of thy word; and what lessons we have been taught by the Holy Spirit. And oh, grant that we may especially have to record the revelation which we have had of the mystery of the cross! May we approve ourselves to prudence, by seeking a better country, striving against indwelling sin, and constantly desiring the fulness of joy in thy presence. And oh, may we approve ourselves to charity by our earnest longing, and our fervent prayers, and our constant endeavour to advance the salvation of our kindred according to the flesh! May we behave ourselves wisely, and walk in our house with a perfect heart, lest, by our sins and inconsistencies, we should offend those whose salvation we are bound to seek. Hear us, O Lord our God, and bring us at last to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for thy people, when their warfare is accomplished, and the days of their mourning are ended, through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE XII.

GODLY EDIFYING.

My soul shall glory in the Lord,
His wondrous acts proclaim ;
Oh let us now his love record,
And magnify his name.

Mine eyes beheld his heavenly light,
When I implored his grace ;
I saw his glory with delight,
And joy beamed o'er my face.

Oh taste and see the Lord is good,
Ye, who on him rely ;
He shall your souls with heavenly food
And strengthening aid supply.

EPHESIANS ii. 19.

NOW THEREFORE YE ARE NO MORE STRANGERS AND FOREIGNERS, BUT FELLOW-CITIZENS WITH THE SAINTS, AND OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF GOD.

It was a happy day for our Pilgrim, when he gained admittance into the house Beautiful. The edifying discourse which he had with the happy inmates he found there, was the subject of our last Lecture. We have now to consider the further privileges and advantages which he enjoyed during his abode in this fair place. Every poor sinner, convinced of sin, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and who has been enabled to cast the burden of his guilt upon the cross of Christ, and to pursue

his way over every difficulty, to the heavenly inheritance, is a member of the true church, which consists of the blessed company of all faithful people. Though he was far off he is made nigh by the blood of the cross. Through Christ, in whom he has believed, and by the Holy Spirit, he has access unto the Father. But he must belong also to the visible church of Christ upon earth. He believes in the communion of saints, and he must cast in his lot among the congregation of faithful men, where the word of God is faithfully proclaimed, and the sacraments which Christ has ordained are duly administered. It is not the design of his heavenly Master that he should go to heaven alone. He has much to receive, much to learn, and much to enjoy, through the instrumentality of other believers. All true believers are his fellow-citizens, and members of the household to which he belongs. The privileges and advantages peculiar to the community are also his; and all the rules and regulations observed by the rest of the family are binding upon him. As a professed believer in Christ, he is no more a stranger and foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God. What are the privileges and advantages to be derived from fellowship with that goodly society? He celebrates with them the supper of the Lord, he derives a more experimental acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures, he is clad with armour essential for the remaining part of his journey, and he often obtains a clearer view of the blissful home to which he is hastening. All these particulars we shall find instructively set before us in the part of the allegory for our present consideration.

(1.) The celebration of the Lord's Supper is hap-

pily described in figurative language. Christian sat talking with the inmates of the house until supper was ready. And when all was prepared they sat down to meat. The table was furnished with fat things full of marrow, and of wines on the lees well refined. All their thoughts and all their talk were directed to one object. The Lord of the hill, who had built that house, and provided such entertainment for poor pilgrims, was the animating subject of their discourse. They spoke of him as a glorious warrior, who, with a mighty arm, and with bitter sufferings, even the shedding forth of his own most precious blood, had obtained deliverance for them, and rescued them from the hand of all their enemies. They spoke in such a feeling manner of his love and power, his kindness and compassion, until their hearts began to burn with admiration, and to melt with tenderness. What they especially celebrated, was his amazing and unexampled love. Some of the household had conversed with him, after his bitter conflict with their enemies was over, and had attested from his own lips, "that he is such a lover of poor pilgrims, that the like is not to be found from the east to the west. Another topic, too, on which they loved to dwell, was his astonishing condescension, and the exceeding riches of his kindness to the poor and destitute. They had heard him say, that he would not dwell in Mount Zion alone; and he had stripped himself of his own glory, that he might exalt poor beggars unto princes, and take them from the dunghill to inherit the throne of glory. This was their discourse till late at night; then was Christian ushered into a chamber whose name was Peace. It looked toward the rising of the sun; and here he slept until break of day.

See here, my friends, what is the great business before us, and what should be the frame of our hearts, when we meet together with our brothers and sisters, in our Father's house, to celebrate the Lord's Supper. Here is a feast of royal dainties, consisting of every thing that is satisfying to the soul, and reviving to the heart, provided for the strengthening and refreshing of weary pilgrims as they journey on to Zion.

“Hail, sacred feast, which Jesus makes,
Rich banquet of his flesh and blood!”

None but true penitents, who know something of the burden of sin; none but true believers, who know something of the preciousness of Christ, and who are resting, by faith, their everlasting all upon him, are invited as guests to this table, or can in any wise partake of the precious benefits which it imparts to the upright. The self-righteous, the formalist, or the allowed transgressor, may indeed approach the table, and press with their teeth the sacrament of the Lord's body; but they are in nowise partakers of Christ. They do not feed upon him in their heart by faith. The true penitent cannot be satisfied with the sign, except he have the thing signified as well. His language is,

“I eat the bread and drink the wine,
But oh! my soul needs more than sign;
I faint unless I feed on thee,
And drink thy blood as shed for me.”

If we keep the feast aright, and if we come in the marriage-garment, all our thoughts will be directed to Christ, and will fasten and centre upon him alone. Christ is the supper, and he made it. It is the divinely-appointed memorial of his precious

sacrifice, to be celebrated by all his people, in their generations until his coming again. Here he imparts to his believing people the spiritual food of his own most precious body and blood, for the nourishment and revival of their spiritual life. And as the memorials of his broken body and poured-out blood are before them, and they sincerely profess their acceptance of his purchased salvation, and surrender themselves anew to his service, sometimes, as they are musing, the fire kindles, and their cold, hard, and unfeeling hearts begin to burn with love, to glow with admiration, and to dissolve and melt with godly sorrow and contrition for sin. They are in some measure properly, but still very inadequately, affected by the view they get of the bitter sufferings he endured for them, to wash them and to save them from their sins, and deliver them from Satan and from death, and from hell and the grave, for ever and ever. They see, as it were, the full history of his marvellous loving-kindness, his amazing mercy, and his dying love, written out in characters of blood. And when they think that all this was out of love for their guilty souls, for their pardon, and for their salvation; that Jesus might not dwell in Mount Zion alone, but that wretched sinners, such as they, might be washed and made white in his blood, be delivered from going down to the pit of destruction, and made to inherit the throne of glory;—oh! when they realize all this, and perceive their own personal concern in it, they cannot hold out any longer in cold-hearted insensibility. They look unto Him whom their sins have pierced, and mourn. At the same time their hope revives, their zeal and their love is rekindled afresh, a tender and compassionate spirit now possesses them, and

they are furnished with new motives and new strength to strive against sin, and to live no longer to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again. May these precious effects of communion with Christ be produced in us whenever we celebrate our Redeemer's dying love! Then we shall lie down, as it were, in the chamber of peace—we shall rest safely; and when we awake, the cheering beams of the Sun of righteousness will sweetly visit us.

(2.) On the next day, when our Pilgrim awoke from his refreshing sleep, the rarities of the place were shown to him. First, the members of the house took him into the study, where the ancient records were kept; and from these they read for his profit and edification. They showed him the pedigree of the Lord of the hill, proving, from that infallible source, that he was the Son of the Ancient of Days, and came by an eternal generation. In the record from which they read, the noble acts of their King were related; the names put down of numbers whom he had taken into his service; and how he had placed them in such habitations that could neither by length of days nor decay of nature be dissolved. They read, too, of the toils and sufferings, the bitter tortures, the cruel deaths, the astonishing deliverances, and the triumphant victories, accomplished by martyrs and saints of earlier times; not failing to mention the secret spring and hidden principles of all their strength. Again, in another part of the records, it was rehearsed, how exceedingly merciful was their King, and how ready he is to show kindness and compassion, yea, even to the rebellious. Many other affecting narratives were read, and more especially the sure word of

prophecy was unfolded, and its final accomplishment noticed, to the dread and amazement of enemies, and the comfort and solace of pilgrims.

How wonderfully, my brethren, do the Holy Scriptures open out to the view of every true Christian, as he searches them with earnest prayer, converses about them with others more experienced than himself, or listens to the faithful exposition of them in the sanctuary of God! There he is confirmed and established in all saving and essential truth. He learns, from the sure source and fountain of truth, that in resting for salvation upon Christ, he is not trusting in any created being, but in the everlasting Son of the Father, begotten of his Father before all worlds: for who shall declare his generation? A late eminent divine of the Scotch Kirk, the Henry Martyn of Scotland,* has placed this fundamental doctrine in a most striking point of view. "Christ," he says, "did not gain one perfection more by becoming man;" neither could he lose any thing of all that he originally possessed as God. By the union of the Divine and the human nature, God is now manifest in the flesh. "The almightiness of God now moved in a human arm. The infinite love of God now beat in a human heart. The unbounded compassion of God to sinners now glistened in a human eye. God was love before, but Christ was love covered over with flesh." The believer is warned, and encouraged, and directed by what he reads of the Lord's dealings with his people in former times; and he rejoices greatly to find the strong consolation held forth to those who have fled for refuge to the gospel hope.

* McCheyne.

From the word of God he learns the true nature and glorious power of simple faith. He perceives that this was the secret wherein their great strength consisted, and that by faith all their triumphs and wonders were achieved. Here he learns that the King of Israel is a merciful King: that he is the Saviour of all that put their trust in him and humbly cast themselves at his feet, however daring and multiplied their rebellions and provocations may have been. In short, he is made sensible that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. And especially by giving heed to the sure word of prophecy, which shines as a light in a dark place, he is enabled to look forward to the approaching time, when the mystery of God shall be finished, when every adversary shall be cut off for ever, when the Lord alone shall be exalted, and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Let us, my brethren, diligently search the Divine records with these important ends in view, so we shall daily grow in grace, and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

(3.) Christian was next taken into the armoury belonging to the house Beautiful. Here they showed him all manner of accoutrements, which their Lord had provided for pilgrims. Here was sword and shield, helmet and breastplate, trumpet and shoes, meet for the service to which a pilgrim may be called. In such abundance was this heavenly armour here to be found, that there was

enough to harness out as many men for active service as there be stars in the heaven for multitude. Before Christian parted from this house, he took to himself a complete suit of this armour. He was shown some of the engines with which wonderful things had been performed in the times of old. The rod of Moses, which he stretched out over the Red Sea; the pitchers and trumpets with which Gideon put to flight the armies of Midian; the goad which had been used by Shamgar; and the jaw-bone with which Samson did such mighty feats, were all exhibited to his wondering sight. They showed him, moreover, the sling and the stone with which David had slain Goliath; and the sword with which their Lord will kill the man of sin, in the day that he shall rise up to the prey. Other excellent things they also showed him, with which Christian was much delighted. This done, they went to their rest again.

If we, my brethren, would finish our course with joy, we must take to ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day of temptation. Armour is provided for us, exactly suited to our necessities; and if we do not take it, and learn to use it, we shall never be able to stand before our adversaries. All those gracious dispositions and heavenly affections, by the lively exercise of which the Christian prevails over sin, the world, and the devil, must be known and used by us individually. Our loins must be girt about with truth; we must embrace the whole truth of God, and nothing but truth and uprightness must proceed from our lips. We must have on the breastplate of righteousness. Integrity and uprightness must shine forth and appear in all our

dealings. We must have our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, deriving all our motives to zeal and activity from that gospel which has spoken peace to our souls, and delighting, in all our ways, to make peace, and to follow peace with all men. Above every thing else, we must take the shield of faith; a firm and unshaken reliance upon the promises of the gospel, wherewith we shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. We must take the helmet of salvation, cherishing the blessed hope of everlasting salvation, which will prevent us from drooping in the midst of difficulties. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is absolutely necessary. A Christian, unacquainted with the word of God, is like a soldier without a sword in the day of battle. And as the sound of the trumpet collects in battle the scattered forces to the point of danger, so must we, with all prayer and supplication, cry continually for succour and strength from above, in all our straits and necessities. The sight too, of the weak and feeble instruments, so frequently shown us in the church of Christ, by which his servants have achieved such mighty things, is designed to teach us a most important lesson. What poor, weak, and powerless things, for instance, in themselves, were a rod and a pitcher, a goad or a bone, or a stone and sling! And yet, when these were used, as God commanded them to be used, or in entire dependence upon his almighty power, what wonders did they effect! Oh! let us ever remember, that the means of grace are in themselves weak and powerless. They are only made effectual by the power of God. And when we use them in implicit obedience to his appointments, and humbly looking up

in faith to him who appointed them, to make them effectual, then we shall find them wells of salvation, and blessed means of bringing down strength into our souls.

(4.) The sight of the Delectable Mountains was the last benefit conferred upon Christian in the house Beautiful. He was now thinking of proceeding on his journey, but the inmates of the house desired him to delay yet another day, and then they promised, if the day should be clear, to show him the Delectable Mountains. This sight, they informed him, would yet further add to his comfort, because those happy hills were nearer the desired haven than the place where at present he was. Christian consented to remain. So, when the morning was come, they had him to the top of the house, and bid him look toward the south. He did as he was directed; and, at a great distance, he beheld a most pleasant mountainous country, beautified with woods, vineyards, fruits of all sorts, flowers also, with springs and fountains very delightful to behold. That happy country, they told him, was Immanuel's land, and was assigned and allotted to all the pilgrims. "When thou comest there," they said, "thou mayest see the gate of the Celestial City, as the shepherds that live there will make it appear." This happy sight already acted like a spur upon Christian. Now he bethought himself of setting forward indeed, and no objection is made to his doing so. Being therefore completely armed, he walked with his friends to the gate, and having learned from the watchful porter, that another pilgrim, one Faithful, was on the way before him, he was still more wishful to depart; and after taking a kind farewell, and making his grateful acknow-

ledgments to the porter for all the kindness he had showed him, he began to go forward. His more experienced friends, however, knew better than he did what was before him; and therefore Discretion, and Piety, and Charity, and Prudence, would accompany him down to the foot of the hill. So they went on together, still conversing, till they came to the descent of the hill. Then, said Christian, "As it was difficult coming up, so, as I can see, it is dangerous going down." "Yes," said Prudence, "so it is: for it is a hard matter for a man to go down into the valley of Humiliation, as thou art now doing, and to catch no slip by the way." "Therefore," said they, "we are come out to accompany thee down the hill." And though he went down very warily, and with such excellent company, still he caught a slip or two. But being come to the bottom of the hill, they gave him their gifts, and departed.

Have we, my brethren, ever had a glimpse of these Delectable Mountains? It is a sad mark that all is not right, if we rest satisfied with any progress or attainments already made in the life and walk of faith. The real Christian never in this world counts himself to have already attained, either to be already perfect. Still has he to be forgetting the things that are behind, and to be pressing forward to those which are before. By communion with the Lord's people, and a profitable use of the means of grace, he is made deeply sensible that there is a state of privilege and enjoyment, even in this world, very superior to that at which he himself has arrived. He has not yet come to the rest, the abiding rest, the established peace, the prevailing spirituality of mind, and habitual delight in communion with God, after which he aspires. Much

of the land, even on this side Jordan, has still to be possessed. The Delectable Mountains were only to be seen at a great distance from the top of the house, and when the day was clear. Thus believers only at particular seasons, when the mists of doubt and worldliness are dispersed by the clear shining of the Sun of Righteousness into their hearts, are able to realize, and, as it were, get a glimpse of that heavenly life upon earth which it is their privilege to lead. Then they seem to stand in a position similar to that occupied by Moses, when he stood on Mount Pisgah, and viewed thence the land of promise, in all its beauty and glory, stretching before him. Like him, they perceive it to be a good land and a large. They are enabled, for a little while, at least,

“To view the Canaan that they love,
—— With unbeckoned eye.”

It is Immanuel's land upon which they are fixing their ardent gaze—the privileged place occupied by those happy pilgrims, to whom the Saviour manifests himself as he does not unto the world. They walk in the light of his reconciled countenance; and in his name they rejoice all the day. What a happy and what a blessed state is this! Where communion with God like this is sweetly enjoyed, the whole face of the earth seems renewed. Some bright foretaste of heavenly joy is felt even on earth. If that happy place be not heaven itself, the comforts and consolations of heaven there abound, and from thence the gate of heaven is distinctly to be seen. There the Good Shepherd feeds his flock in green pastures, and makes them to lie down beside the waters of comfort. There the believing soul knows

all the blessedness that can be known of communion with God on this side of heaven. The dreary season of distance and alienation between Christ and the soul is over. "For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone." The blessed effects of communion with Christ appear in the sweet and gracious affections that bud forth in the heart. "The flowers appear on the earth." Joys more abiding and established than any that were known before, result from the gracious discoveries that have been made to the soul. "The time of the singing of birds is come." The holy Dove, the gracious Spirit of peace and love, and holiness and adoption, abides continually, and makes his presence to be perceived in Immanuel's land. "The voice of the turtle is heard in our land." The curse of barrenness is removed from the soul that lives in close communion with Christ. To that soul he comes no more searching in vain for the fruits of holiness. "The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs." There is nothing morose or repulsive in the established Christian who lives near to God; but every thing to attract, and invite, and to soften down prejudice, and to win others to the obedience of the faith. "The vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell." This, my brethren, is a glimpse of Immanuel's land. Is it not a good and pleasant land? Ought we not every one to be heartily ashamed that we are still, after professing the gospel so long, at so great a distance from it? Oh! be persuaded that in sweeter and closer communion with Christ, there is far more heavenly joy to be known on earth than any which you have yet experienced. Blessed Lord, reveal thyself more perfectly to our souls, and then we shall love thee more, and be happier far:

“’Tis heaven on earth, ’tis heaven above,
To see thy face, and sing thy love.”

And now let us all bethink ourselves that it is high time to be setting forward indeed, to the happy place of which we have been speaking. Let our zeal be quickened, to think how many faithful ones have passed on before and outstripped our steps. And as we are called to go down into the valley of humiliation, after all we have seen and heard in the holy sanctuary, remembering how liable we are to slip in going down the hill, let us be sure to have discretion and piety, charity and prudence, to attend our steps. If we walk warily, with these for our companions, we shall take no harm, though the way be dangerous. While on the road we may sometimes have to say, “As for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped.” But then we shall have to testify in the end, “When I said, My foot slipped, thy mercy, O Lord, held me up.”

THE HYMN.

Led by a Father’s gentle hand,
Through this dark wilderness of wo,
We long to reach that peaceful land
Where streams of lasting comfort flow.

Oh, may our meetings here be blessed
To fit us for that holy place;
May faith and love inflame each breast
With zeal to run the heavenly race.

Here may the Spirit shed the light
Of truth, to guide us on our way;
God’s word upon our conscience write,
And teach us how to watch and pray.

We would dismiss each worldly thought,
 When thus we commune with our God ;
 Our theme shall be the love that brought
 A Saviour from his blessed abode.

We'll think how Jesus lived and died,
 The pains and sorrows that he bore ;
 The blessings which his love supplied,
 The home to which he's gone before.

Saved by redeeming grace alone,
 There we will hope to rest ere long ;
 And gladly change, before his throne,
 The pilgrim's for the conqueror's song.

THE PRAYER.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire or deserve, through Jesus Christ. Bring us nigh unto thee by the blood of the cross. Grant, Lord, that we may be no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house, they will be still praising thee. Oh, grant that by thy Holy Spirit we may be knit together with all in every place who are joined to the same Lord, both theirs and ours. And may we with one mind and one mouth glorify thee ; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Prepare us, we most humbly beseech thee, with meek heart and due reverence to celebrate the holy communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ. If any of us have hitherto neglected to partake of this heavenly feast, oh, teach our souls what is inwardly signified by those holy mysteries ; and then may we come, with a penitent heart, and lively faith, and in perfect charity with all men, to show forth the Lord's death, in the manner which he himself has commanded. Give us all a larger and more experimental acquaintance with thy holy word. May it dwell in us richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. May it show us more of the glory of Christ as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. May we be instructed by its examples, guided by its precepts, and animated and encouraged by the glorious prospects which it opens to our

view. Lord, arm us with the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Oh, may our loins be girt about with truth, our breasts covered with the breastplate of righteousness, and our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, may we take the shield of faith, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. Endue us with the heavenly principle by which thy blessed saints out of weakness were made strong, and put to flight the armies of the aliens. Finally, we beseech thee to reveal to us, by thy Holy Spirit, those good things which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. As thou didst show to thy servant Moses, in days of old, the goodly land and the glorious mountain beyond Jordan, so that he longed earnestly to go over and possess it; oh, grant us to see with the eye of faith, such a sight of the heavenly Canaan, the incorruptible inheritance, and the glory to be revealed, that we may choose rather to be absent from the body, that we may be present with the Lord, and have a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Now unto Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.

LECTURE XIII.

OUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL.

My soul, be on thy guard,
Ten thousand foes arise ;
The hosts of sin are pressing hard
To draw thee from the skies.

Oh watch, and fight, and pray ;
The battle ne'er give o'er ;
Renew it boldly every day,
And help Divine implore.

Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armour down :
Thy arduous work will not be done
Till thou obtain thy crown.

PETER v. 8, 9.

BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT, BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR: WHOM RESIST, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH.

How little do the generality of professing Christians apprehend from the assaults of their adversary the devil! One great reason of this false security is the extreme craft and subtilty of this practised deceiver. He is too crafty to direct his shafts against his own subjects. As long as men live in sin or unbelief, formality or worldliness, and have never come in earnest, as poor, lost sinners, for an interest in the salvation of Christ, it is no

wonder that they see little to fear from the attacks of the Wicked One. They are bound to his service by chains of darkness, and although they do not think so, they are led captive by him at his will. He is no adversary to these: they are in league with him already; why then should he go forth against them, or shoot out his fiery darts at them? But when a poor sinner becomes a Christian indeed, that is, when he comes by faith to Christ to save him, and actually renounces the devil and all his works, then he begins to find that there is an awful reality in the Scripture representations of the craft and power, the activity and the malice, of his ghostly enemy. He perceives that he has to resist, and to strive against him, to the very end of his pilgrimage; and how seasonable is the admonition, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith."

Christian's battle with Apollyon will form the subject of this lecture. We shall have to consider—

- I. His meeting with this terrible enemy.
- II. The parley that ensued between them: and
- III. The battle that was fought.

Two remarks it may be well to make before we proceed. The first is, that the nature of an allegory required this painful part of a believer's experience to be described under outward emblems; but under these, the inward suggestions of evil spirits are intended. Our author no more meant that the Christian actually sees with his eyes the dreadful enemy in the shape he described, than

Peter intended that we should meet him in the form of a lion. In both places the description is clearly figurative. Again, it may be well to remember, that among real Christians, all are not assaulted alike with the same violence, and under the same distressing circumstances. If God have some special service to be performed by any of his servants, and they are to be eminently instrumental in opposing the kingdom of darkness, as the apostle Paul, or Luther, or even the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, their inward conflicts with Satan's temptations are very frequently both special and peculiar. Our author's temptations were very peculiar, and his recollection of them has evidently given the strong colouring to the description before us.

I. Christian's meeting with this invisible enemy is first described in bold and expressive language. He had not gone far in the valley of Humiliation before he spied a wicked spirit, Apollyon himself, coming over the field to meet him. Then was our Pilgrim sore afraid, and began to cast in his mind whether to stand his ground or to fly. But considering that he had no armour for his back, he concluded that, on mere grounds of personal safety, it was better for him to do any thing than to retreat; and therefore he determined to venture, and to stand his ground. So on he went, and Apollyon met him. "The monster was very hideous to behold. He was clothed with scales like a fish, (and they are his pride;) he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion. When he was come up to Christian, he beheld him with a disdainful countenance."

Every pilgrim to the Celestial City has to go through the valley of Humiliation. A principal part of his journey lies through these regions. He must not expect an uninterrupted course of joy and triumph, peace and assurance; but he must be prepared continually for humiliating scenes, and look forward to trials and conflict. When his sensible joy has vanished, when he seems to be abandoned by prudence and discretion; and when piety and charity are no more at hand to encourage him with their counsels, he is often brought very low, and by giving way to unbelief, and discouragement, and fear, he exposes himself to the advances of Satan, and is open to the wicked suggestions which he infuses into the mind. He sees, as it were, the grand enemy himself coming to meet him. He is dreadfully afraid that, after all, he will fall a prey to the enemy's teeth; or else he has such a vivid perception of the arduous struggle to which he is called, that he is exceedingly perplexed and cast down. Many who have no root in themselves, on such occasions, turn aside out of the way and go back. But the true Christian, though perplexed, is not in despair. He is deeply persuaded that if he turns back, it must be unto perdition, and that regard to his own safety alone requires him to go forward. The enemy whom he has to encounter is very terrible to behold. He is the king of pride, and haughtily claims the allegiance of all mankind. He is terrible as a dragon, cruel as a bear, and devouring as a lion. And as fire and smoke proceeded from him, so he can infuse into the mind either the wildest rage, or the most horrible darkness. What but strong faith can enable the Christian to stand his ground, and not to turn away from such

an adversary as this? We should all pray very earnestly, "From the craft and assaults of the devil, good Lord, deliver us."

II. 'The parley between Christian and Apollyon is very instructive and full of meaning to the deeply experienced Christian. When Christian declared who he was, and where he was going, the adversary claimed him as one of his subjects, and said, he only forbore striking him to the ground as a deserter, in the hope of getting more effectual service from him in the character he had assumed. Christian owned that he was indeed born in the enemy's country, but declared that he had exchanged his grievous service and hard wages for a better master, better wages, and a pleasanter service. And now, at first with gentle words and fair speech, Apollyon expresses his unwillingness to lose his subject, and promises to give Christian whatever he will ask, if only he will be content to turn back. How can Christian do this, when he has deliberately bound himself to the service of another? Mark the craft and malicious wickedness of the adversary's reply. "It is quite common for those who have professed themselves his servants, after awhile to give him the slip and return again to me. Do thou so too, and all shall be well." Without any reference to others, Christian replied, that having sworn allegiance to the Master he now serves, he cannot leave him without being a traitor, and exposed to be hanged as such. In vain does the monster allege that Christian had first acted such a traitor's part to him. This was only in the time of his nonage. His Prince had absolved him for that; and, in short, he loves his service too well to think of quitting it

Apollyon then endeavours to turn Christian aside by a fearful representation of all the dangers and troubles he was likely to encounter by holding on his way; and reminding him how many cruelties and horrors his boasted Master leaves his servants to endure in this present world. But neither will this temptation take with Christian. He knows that the present troubles of the believer only prove the sincerity of his faith and love, and he rests assured that the loving-kindness of their Lord to all his servants will be abundantly manifested when this fleeting scene has passed away, and a never-ending eternity has begun. And now the subtle adversary changes his ground, and after being the tempter, proves himself also the accuser of the brethren. In the most malicious manner he rakes together all the instances of sin, and weakness, and infirmity which Christian had displayed since his first setting out. He omits not to mention his falling into the gulph of despond, his being seduced out of the way by Worldly-Wisdom, his sleep in the arbour, his dread of the lions; and last of all he accused him of vain glory in telling his experience in the house Beautiful. Poor Pilgrim acknowledges that all this and much more is true, but declares that he serves a merciful Prince, who he knows will not reject him for sins and errors confessed, and bewailed, and striven against. This good confession only stirred up the rage and enmity of Apollyon the more, and he said, "I am an enemy to this Prince. I hate his person, I hate his laws, and I hate his people; and I am come out on purpose to withstand thee." Then said Christian, "Beware what you do, for I am in the King's highway, the way of holiness, therefore take heed to yourself." But Apollyon,

with a terrible menace, made it impossible for Christian to proceed, occupying the entire breadth of the way, and said, "I am void of fear; prepare to die, for I swear by my infernal den, that thou shalt go no further; here will I spill thy soul."

It has already been intimated that these speeches of Apollyon point out the suggestions of Satan to the tempted soul; and the replies of Christian as clearly illustrate the manner in which they are to be repelled. How subtile and how various are the devices he uses in order to bring back again to his cruel sway those that have clean escaped from his power! It cannot be safe for any of us to be ignorant of his devices. His original claim, his flattering promises, the apostasy of others, the dangers and difficulties, and grievous things to flesh and blood, to be encountered by the way; our own manifold and grievous sins and inconsistencies since we professed the service of Christ, are suggested to us and brought against us by this practised deceiver, and used as so many arguments to tempt us from the narrow way. If this will not do, and the Christian still determines at any rate, and at any cost, to hold fast his integrity, and to cleave to his Saviour, the great adversary may only be moved to buffet him the more, and to make his way to heaven as grievous and difficult as possible, if he be not able to turn him back on the road to hell. But how, dear brethren, is the tempted Christian to resist the wicked insinuations that are injected into his mind by his adversary the devil? We reply in the same spirit, and nearly in the same language, that Christian here did. Let not the Christian, in the evil day of temptation, attempt to deny whose he is, and whom he serves. Let him boldly maintain that he

comes from the City of Destruction, the place of all evil, and that he is going to the City of Zion, the place of all good. If his original sin and natural depravity be alleged against him, let him never cease to maintain, that although by nature he is a child of wrath even as others, yet, having fled as a poor perishing sinner by faith to the Saviour of sinners, "he has been turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God." If the pleasures of sin and the vain delights of this present evil world are held out as a bait or a bribe to seduce him from Christ, let him remember the apostate traitor's doom, and let him say: "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back from it." If he be pressed sore with hard and discouraging thoughts when he sees the prosperity of the wicked, and thinks of the painful trials, the grievous sufferings, and sometimes the cruel deaths of the Lord's people, so that he is ready to say, "Then verily have I cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency," oh, let him seriously ponder the end of these men—the end of the ungodly after all their prosperity, the end of the righteous after all their afflictions; then surely his conclusion will be, "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us." If all his manifold sins and backslidings are urged against him, to shake his confidence, let him plead guilty to all this with every aggravation. But if he bewails and strives against these, let him believe firmly that the Master he serves is full of pity and of love; that "there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit;" and that "if any man sin, we have an advocate with

the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Finally, if trial, and danger, and death, in its most dreadful form, oppose the pilgrim's progress to the better land, only let him be sure that he is in the King's highway, the way of truth, of obedience, of holiness; and what has he then to fear? "Who shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

III. After this parley, the conflict itself with Christian and Apollyon is described. Following up his threatening words with deeds, Apollyon threw a flaming dart at Christian's breast. But he had not in vain sojourned in the house Beautiful. He had a shield in his hand, with which he caught the dart, and so prevented the danger. Then did Christian draw for his defence, for fiery darts, as thick as hail, were hurled against him. And though he made a brave defence, and was saved from all mortal injury, still his adversary wounded him in his head, his hand, and his foot. These wounds caused him to give back a little, while the adversary pressed him still closer. But Christian took courage again, and resisted as manfully as he could. The conflict lasted so long that Christian, growing weaker and weaker from his bleeding wounds, was almost entirely exhausted. His wary enemy, spying his opportunity, then came close up to Christian, and wrestling with him, contrived to give him a dreadful fall. With that Christian's sword flew out of his hand. Then said the insulting adversary, "I am sure of thee now;" and with that he almost pressed him to death, so that Christian began to despair of life. But man's extremity is God's opportunity. As God would have it, while Apollyon was lifting up his hand to give the finish-



ing blow, Christian nimbly stretched out his hand for his sword, and caught it, saying, "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall I shall arise;" and with that he gave the enemy a deadly thrust, which made him give back as one that had received a mortal wound. Following up his advantage, Christian made at him again, saying, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Upon this Apollyon spread forth his dragon wings, and sped him away, that Christian saw him no more. Such was the end of this dreadful fight. Then did Christian heartily give thanks to him who had delivered him from the mouth of the lion, and saved him from the hand of his strong adversary. His wounds were soon healed by some of the leaves of the tree of life. He also sat down to eat of the provision which had been supplied him from the place where he had last rested. And so, being revived and refreshed, again he proceeded on his journey, with sword drawn, as if apprehensive of another attack. But he met with none quite through the valley.

It is not, dear brethren, in vain and for nought that it is said to the true Christian soldier: "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." We mentioned in our last Lecture what it is that constitutes the Christian armour. We must take to ourselves this armour of God, before the evil day of temptation comes. Yes, while you are enjoying the days of the Son of man—while

you have Sabbath privileges—while your eyes behold your teachers, and you have the uninterrupted privilege of searching the Scriptures, and frequenting the throne of grace—this is the time for your girding on the Christian armour. Take it now, that you may have it when you want it. A Christian in the day of temptation without armour, resembles the foolish virgins, who had oil to seek when the cry was heard, “Behold, the bridegroom cometh!” How well it was for our Pilgrim that he was furnished with the shield of faith, when the fiery darts of the Wicked One were hurled as thick as hail at his breast! And what shall we do when painful and distressing thoughts and feelings and apprehensions are injected into our minds, unless we are enabled to oppose to them a firm dependence upon the precious promises of the gospel? This is the only shield “which is able to quench all the fiery darts of the Wicked One.” The use, too, of the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is absolutely necessary, if we would not be overcome by the violence of Satan’s temptations. Every wicked and cruel suggestion by which he may endeavour to drive us to despair and to destroy our souls, will eventually be foiled, if only we are skilful in the word of righteousness, and are able to reply to every temptation, as the Captain of our salvation did—“It is written.” But because of the sin that dwelleth in us, we cannot come in contact with temptation without suffering loss. Something of the temptation generally adheres, and leaves its humiliating traces behind, even though it has been resisted. As Christian was wounded in his head, his hand, and his foot, by the darts of Apollyon, so the tried believer, by the harassing temptations

which he endures, is not unfrequently impaired in various ways. He cannot understand, or work, or walk, with the same facility as before. He often loses ground from the effects of these wounds. Some of his temptations may not only be very painful, but of long continuance. One principal mark, however, of Christian sincerity will ever be, that though faint or weary, or well nigh overcome, the true soldier of Christ never yields, but continues to resist. Great and continual watchfulness he has to use, lest Satan get an advantage over him. And with all his watchfulness, this will occasionally be the case. He will sometimes fall before the craft or violence of his powerful enemy. And pitiable indeed will his situation be, and apparently desperate, if his fall be such as to make the sword of the Spirit fall out of his hand. I mean if the Christian be so far overcome by the violence of temptation as to be unable for a while to make any use of, or derive any advantage from, the word of God. Then indeed it is well nigh all over with him. There appears to be only one step between him and everlasting ruin. Now his exulting adversary feels sure of him; and even, to his own sorrowful apprehension, all hope of his salvation is for a while taken away. But the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake. Just as they are about to fall a prey into the teeth of the grand enemy, they are marvellously strengthened with new strength and power from on high, their soul escapes as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and their soul is delivered. Though they had fallen, grievously fallen, they rise again. They lay hold again on the word of God, or rather it lays hold upon them, with new power, and they are enabled to use

it for all the blessed purposes for which it was given. They manfully resist, with all the simplicity of faith, their raging adversary, and he cannot withstand them any longer. He is disappointed of his prey at the very moment when he was most confident; and baffled, and foiled, and evidently defeated, he is compelled to retreat. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." After all his sore conflicts and distressing experience, the true believer is more than conqueror through Him that loved him. His wounds are healed, his comforts are restored, his heart revives, and all his dark forebodings and distressing fears are turned into songs of praise and thanksgiving and triumph. He is enabled to go on his way rejoicing, without any further attacks, for a season, from his defeated adversary. Oh, let every tempted believer, however painful and long his trials may be, and however near he may apparently be to destruction, "hope still in God," and continue to resist the adversary to the last. The bitterness of the conflict will only make the song of victory more sweet in the end. God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. We have a merciful and compassionate High Priest; and seeing that he hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

THE HYMN.

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace:
Might more of his salvation know,
And seek more earnestly his face.

'Twas he who taught me thus to pray,
 And he, I trust, has answered prayer;
 But oh, it was in such a way,
 It almost drove me to despair.

I thought that in some favoured hour,
 At once he'd grant me my request;
 And, by his love's constraining power,
 Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, he made me feel
 The hidden evils of my heart;
 And let the angry powers of hell
 Assault my soul in every part.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried,
 "Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death!"
 "'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
 "I answer prayer for grace and faith!"

These inward trials I employ,
 From pride and self to set thee free;
 To break thy dreams of earthly joy,
 And bid thee seek thy all in me."

THE PRAYER.

O God our Saviour, who for our sake wast forty days in the wilderness, tempted of the devil; who wast in all points tempted like as we are, and yet without sin; and who art still a compassionate High Priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and ready to succour them that are tempted; mercifully look upon us, to save and defend us from our ghostly enemy. Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from the craft and assaults of the devil. Blessed Lord, when the Prince of this world came, he had nothing in thee: for though found in the likeness of sinful flesh, thou wast holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. There was nothing in thee, thou immaculate Lamb, upon which the Wicked One could fasten his temptations to evil. But it is not so with us. We were conceived and born in sin, our nature is corrupt and depraved; our hearts are naturally inclined to evil; and there is no sin, however dreadful, which we may not commit, if left to ourselves. Oh how soon are

we drawn aside, and enticed into sin, by our own lust. We feel that we are no match for our strong adversary. Our first parents, though made upright, did not stand before him: how, then, shall we stand? Oh save us from the very approach of the enemy. May we watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. Keep us, we beseech thee, from the sore conflicts and terrible assaults of Satan, to which many of thy precious saints have been exposed. But if indeed we are called to the painful encounter, may we be found with the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. May we know how to silence the accuser of the brethren. May we resist him, steadfast in the faith. Teach us how to repel the wicked suggestions which he puts into our mind, and may we not be ignorant of his devices. Grant that with the shield of faith we may be able to quench all his fiery darts, and by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, may prevail over all his craft and power and cruelty. And forasmuch as we cannot always stand upright, because of the frailty of our mortal nature, oh do thou gird us with strength for the battle that is against us. Bring forth the spear; stop the way against them that persecute us, and say to our soul, I am thy salvation. Gracious Saviour, by thine own most precious death, and rising to life again, thou hast bruised the head of this old serpent, the devil; and thou hast promised that he shall never finally prevail against any that truly believe in thee. Oh stretch forth thy right hand to keep and deliver us in all our dangers and necessities. When Satan desires to have us, hold us by thy right hand, and suffer not our faith to fail. May we know, from sweet experience, if we are sifted and tempted, that thou dost save to the uttermost, seeing thou ever livest to make intercession for us. Bruise Satan under our feet shortly, and suffer him not to have any advantage over us. Hast thou not said in thy holy word, Resist the devil, and he will flee from you? Lord, in thy name and in thy strength, we will resist him. Grant that we may fight manfully, and endure hardness as good soldiers of thine; and may we never cease or desist until the enemy is cast down, and we have overcome him by the blood of the Lamb and the testimony of our mouth. And now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make us perfect in every good work to do his will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XIV.

THE REGION OF DARKNESS.

Hear, gracious God, my humble moan,
To thee I breathe my sighs :
When will the mournful night be gone ?
And when my joys arise ?

My God—O could I make the claim—
My Father and my friend—
And call thee mine, by every name,
On which thy saints depend !

By every name of power and love,
I would thy grace entreat :
Nor should my humble hopes remove,
Nor leave thy sacred seat.

LAMENTATIONS iii. 2.

HE HATH LED ME AND BROUGHT ME INTO DARKNESS, BUT NOT INTO LIGHT

How very varied, and how deeply affecting, is the experience of the Christian pilgrim, as he pursues his way through this worldly wilderness to his heavenly home ! When God brought his people out of Egypt, and led them by a right way to a city of habitation, sometimes they passed through pleasant places, but more frequently their journey lay through a painful and difficult region. “He led them through the wilderness, through a land of deserts and pits, through a land of drought and of the shadow of death, through a land that no man

passed through, and where no man dwelt." The Christian pilgrim, as well as Israel of old, is to remember all the way which he has been led through the wilderness. To him also it is said, "Thou shalt consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee." As he reviews his steps from some of the places where he tarries for a season, he can say, "I am the man that hath seen affliction, by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, and not into light." The painful experience of our Pilgrim in the region of darkness will form the subject of the present Lecture. We shall consider,

- I. His entrance into this dark region.
- II. His distresses in the midst of it, and
- III. His deliverance from it.

I. We begin with Christian's entrance into the region of darkness. Just after his painful conflict with Apollyon, our Pilgrim arrived at a dark and gloomy glen or cavern. He must needs pass through this, because the way to the Celestial City lay through the midst of it. Just on the borders of this region, there met him two men, children of them that brought an evil report of the good land, who were making haste to go back. These men were not pilgrims, but spies. They spoke in the most discouraging and exaggerated manner of what they had seen and heard; urging Christian, if he had any regard either for his life or his peace, to turn back. "The valley itself," they said, "is as dark as pitch: we saw also there hobgoblins, satyrs, and dragons of the pit. We heard also, in the valley, a continued howling and yelling, as of people

under unutterable misery, who there sat bound in affliction and iron. Confusion and death are there, and it is every whit dreadful, being utterly without order." This dismal description, however, though much distorted, could not convince our Pilgrim that his way did not lie through that dreadful valley. While, therefore, the affrighted spies hurried past him, on their way back, Christian pursued his journey, but still with his sword drawn in his hand, for fear lest he should be assaulted.

This land of darkness, into which our Pilgrim now entered, seems to represent the dark and unhappy frame of mind into which a true believer may fall. While in such a state, he is dull and reluctant in the performance of religious duties, and exposed to a great variety of alarms and temptations. The absence of all sensible comfort, the trouble that is caused by the hiding of the Lord's face, the inability to find any spiritual communion with God in the use of ordinances, a dark and desponding feeling pervading the mind, bodily languor, and Satan's temptations, may all unite to make this region of darkness. Very frequently in the Holy Scriptures, and especially in the Psalms and the book of Job, we read the sorrowful complaints that have been uttered by the Lord's people on such occasions. "When I looked for good," says Job, "then evil came unto me; and when I waited for light, there came darkness. I went mourning without the sun. I am a brother to dragons, and a companion to owls. My harp also is turned to mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep." Very much to the same import are many of the sorrowful expressions of the Psalmist. He remembered God, and was troubled; he complained,

and his spirit was overwhelmed. He was laid in the lowest pit, in darkness, and in the deeps. He had to say: "While I suffer thy terrors, I am distracted. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cut me off. The enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath smitten my life down to the ground; he hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. Persons in this painful situation often increase and prolong their difficulties by the unscriptural notions which they form, and unfounded expectations which they entertain. They are apt to look for uninterrupted enjoyment; to consider sensible comfort as the only evidence of a gracious state; to confound assurance with saving faith; to expect the witness of the Spirit in voices, and visions, and strong impressions. The evil reports, too, which are brought by fearful and unbelieving men, and the extravagant and exaggerated way in which they speak of the dreadful things which they have witnessed among professors of religion, form another sore discouragement to the tempted Christian. Such men pretend to have made trial of religion, and to have found it a comfortless and dreary pursuit. Not having tasted that the Lord is gracious, they are unable to give a true report as to the comfort of serving God. And having never experienced the convincing work of the Holy Spirit upon their hearts, they are unable to understand the language or enter into the feelings of genuine penitents. Neither can they make any allowance for the strong expressions and figurative language in which convinced sinners describe their experience. Thus they give an inflated account of the sighs, and groans, and terrors, and distresses of pious people. By this means they excuse

their own apostasy, and endeavour to bring reproach upon the cause they have abandoned. Seeing now that these spies do so much mischief by their reports of what they witness among the people of God, professors should be very careful to give them no handle or occasion for what they say. The deepest experience of the Holy Spirit's work upon the heart is in no way inconsistent with the utmost sobriety and decorum of conduct. But whatever reports the true Christian may hear of the way to heaven, and in whatever strange light religion and religious people may be represented to him by such as turn aside, he must by no means be intimidated by what he hears, or induced by it to turn back.

II. Let us now proceed to consider the difficulties and dangers that Christian met with in this dark valley. On each side there was danger, a deep ditch being on the right hand, and a miry quag on the left. Moreover, the way was so very narrow that it required the utmost circumspection to avoid one of these dangers without falling into the other. In addition to this, it was so dark that Christian could not see a step before him; he therefore sighed bitterly as he took his uncertain footsteps. There was also a dreadful pit, which yawned in the midst of the valley, hard by the way, and flame, and smoke, and hideous noises proceeded from it. Nothing but all prayer could preserve our Pilgrim here, and to this he applied himself with unceasing voice. What with the dreadful sounds which he heard, the terrible sights which he beheld, and the fearful shapes that flitted before him, he was sorely distressed. Sometimes he had half a mind to go back, but he repelled the thought and pursued his

way, though terrors came round about him like water. In his greatest extremity he cried out: "I will walk in the strength of the Lord God;" and by this means he was enabled to advance. During his progress through this dreadful region he was so confounded that he did not know his own voice. And when one of the phantoms from the burning pit got softly behind him, and whispered some dreadful blasphemies in his ear, he verily thought that he had uttered them himself. This thought distressed and afflicted him more than aught beside; but he had not the discretion either to stop his ears, or to know from whence these blasphemies proceeded.

Dear brethren, what an affecting picture we have here, in all these particulars, of a soul temptation-tossed and half a wreck! How numerous are the dangers and temptations that beset the Christian's path, and especially at some particular stages of his journey!

"Dangers of every shape and name
Attend the followers of the Lamb,
Who leave the world's deceitful shore,
And leave it to return no more."

Did our Pilgrim here find a deep ditch on his right hand, and a dangerous quag on the left? Presumption or unfounded confidence is the deep ditch; desperation is the dangerous quag. Some people say there is no fear, and fall headlong into the deep ditch of presumption; others say there is no hope, and down they plunge into the quag of despair. The narrow way to Zion lies between these two; and it is often with extreme difficulty that the Christian pilgrim is enabled to persevere in it. You have felt something of the power of the world to come; had some experience of eternal things upon

your heart ; you have begun to think, to read, to pray, to make a profession of religion ; and perhaps you have done this for a long time. Oh, take care, after all this, that you do not settle down in a state of carnal presumption and false security. Do not depend upon any strong impressions you may have had in time past, and be confident that all is right, and that you are in the way to heaven, if you are not now living a life of faith and prayer, looking unto Jesus, and striving against sin. On the other hand, though you may have lost the lively impressions you once had, and, what is worse, though you may have fallen grievously into sin and pierced yourself through with many sorrows, still do not say, "There is no hope, Beware of coming to desperate conclusions, and plunging into the dangerous quag of despair. There is no hope indeed, if you continue in sin, and refuse to look again to the atoning sacrifice of Christ. But if you repent and believe the gospel, there is pardon for crimes of deepest dye. Let it be your constant endeavour to avoid alike presumption and desperation.

"See that the balanced scales be such
You neither fear nor hope too much."

And though your way be narrow and dark, and terrors and distresses of the most appalling kind impede your progress, still hold on your way, and entertain not for a moment the apostate thought of turning back. Only give yourself unto prayer, and hope still in God, and in due time you will come to the end of this dark and painful part of the road. "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Cry unto Him who is able to deliver you out of all your fears: "Let not the

deep swallow me up, neither let the pit shut her mouth upon me." And though your experience may be very distressing, and, to your terrified conscience, the fire of the pit may seem kindling before you, and the pains of hell may take hold upon you, still go on in the strength of the Lord God. Though deep may call unto deep, and the noise of the water-spouts may be very fearful, and all the waves and storms of temptation may go over you, hope still in God, and you shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. "The Lord will command his loving-kindness in the day-time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life." And be not cast down overmuch on account of any wicked and distressing thoughts that may occasionally be darted into your mind. If you give no entertainment to these, if they are pain and grief to you, if you really hate and abhor them, you may rest assured that an enemy hath done this, and that these things will not be laid to your charge.

III. We now proceed to consider in the last place, *Christian's deliverance from this place of darkness and horror*. When he had gone on for some time, in a desolate condition, he heard the voice of one going before him, saying, "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." He was exceedingly cheered by this voice. He rejoiced to think that some who feared God were in that valley as well as himself. He was quite revived with the consideration, which now flashed upon him, that God might really be present with a poor disconsolate pilgrim, though

the pilgrim himself was in a very dark and dismal situation, and unable for a while to perceive the Divine presence. In addition to all this, the hope of Christian fellowship, in his present circumstances, was very sweet. As he went forward with this hope, the day broke. Then said Christian: "He turneth the shadow of death into the morning." And now that the day had dawned, and the shadows fled all away, when Christian surveyed the region he had just passed, he was able to comprehend, at one glance, all the accumulated dangers and horrors of that dreadful vale. When he saw the ditch and the quag, and the narrow space between them, through which he had gone in the dark; and when he beheld at a distance the doleful creatures that shrunk from the light, and crowded together in that place of darkness, he was deeply affected at the wonderful deliverance which he had experienced. He had greater fear of these, now he could see them more perfectly, because the light of day made them more conspicuous. He felt at this time what an unspeakable mercy was the light of day which he now enjoyed; for though the first part of the valley which he had passed was very dangerous, yet the second, which was still to be traversed, was, if possible, more so. From the place where he now stood, all the way to the end of the valley, every side was beset with snares, and traps, and gins, and nets; and at every step he had to beware of pits and pitfalls, deep holes and shelving declivities. Had he now been enveloped in darkness, as he had been a little while before, it had been absolutely impossible for him to escape destruction. But in the cheerful light of day, he went with far greater security over this, the most dangerous part of the valley.

He said, as he went right onward: "His candle shineth on my head, and by his light I go through darkness."

Here let us pause, and endeavour to bring home to our own hearts the instruction and the encouragement that is presented to us. Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? As you pursue your way and mourn, tossed with the tempest and not comforted, you feel lonely and sad, and your heart within you is desolate. You think verily that never a true pilgrim to the Heavenly City was vexed and perplexed, tempted and tried, as you are. You are ready to say: "Hath God forgotten to be gracious?" and are induced almost to conclude, that the conflicting doubts and fears that assail you are sufficient to prove that you are destitute altogether of one spark of saving faith. But look very diligently if you cannot trace the footsteps of the flock, yes, the steps of the precious sheep of Christ, who have trod before you that painful path. Listen, moreover, attentively, if you cannot hear the voice of those who have been comforted and supported, and enabled to sing of the presence of the good Shepherd, even in that dark valley. Oh, be persuaded that many of the precious saints of God have experienced exactly all the sorrows and distresses of which you complain. They have been brought into darkness and not into light; they have been bowed down and gone heavily all the day; they have passed through fire and water; men have been made to ride over their heads; they have been sorely buffeted by the messenger of Satan; and the most painful and harassing thoughts have been obtruded into their minds. And yet, after all this, they have been brought into

a wealthy place ; and there they have been constrained to sing of the goodness and mercy of Him who led them through the wilderness. Thus it will assuredly be with you, and with every genuine penitent, if only you trust in the name of the Lord, and stay your soul on the God of your salvation. It is in the night, the deep and the dark night, when the beasts of the forests creep forth. But when the sun ariseth they get them away to their dens. And thus it is with the tempted believer. During the night, the long and moonless night of his temptation, fears and sorrows of the most distressing kind haunt his steps and fill him with dismay. But when the sun ariseth, when the Lord lifts up upon him the light of his reconciled countenance, all these fears and distresses get them away together. Cry, dear brethren, earnestly out of the depths of your sorrows, to the compassionate Redeemer, to be merciful to you, and to cause his face to shine upon you.

“ In darkest shades, if he appear,
Our dawning is begun ;
He is our soul's bright morning star,
And he our rising sun.”

Only trust in his promises and call for his help. Let your language be, “ I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, I say, more than they that watch for the morning ;” and in due time, the light and consolation and deliverance, for which you are longing and thirsting and praying, shall surely come. And then, when comfort and peace are returned to your sorrowful soul, and you look back

upon the way in which you have been led, and the dangers which you have escaped, you will be compelled to confess that the Lord was surely in that place to preserve and keep you, though you knew it not. Your heart will overflow with love and gratitude to Him who has led you by a way that you have not known, who has made darkness light before you, and crooked things straight. What though difficulties and dangers of the most appalling kind may still be thickly spread in your path, and constant watchfulness and circumspection be still necessary to enable you to escape them; oh, give thanks unto the Lord, he does not leave you any longer to grope your way in the dark through so many and such great dangers! How seasonable are the communications of heavenly grace! If you cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and walk in the right way as well as you can in the dark, still crying for more light to be given to you; when more light is absolutely necessary for you, it shall certainly be given you. To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness. "His going forth is prepared as the morning."

THE HYMN.

God of my life, to thee I call!
Afflicted, at thy feet I fall.
When the great water-floods prevail,
Leave not my trembling heart to fail!

Friend of the friendless and the faint,
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where, but with thee, whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor?

Did ever mourner plead with thee,
 And thou refuse that mourner's plea?
 Does not thy word still fixed remain,
 That none shall seek thy face in vain!

That were a grief I could not bear,
 Didst thou not hear and answer prayer,
 But a prayer-hearing, answering God
 Supports me under every load.

Fair is the lot that's cast for me;
 I have an Advocate with thee:
 They whom the world caresses most
 Have no such privilege to boast.

Poor though I am, despised, forgot,
 Yet God, my God, forgets me not;
 And he is safe, and must succeed,
 For whom the Lord vouchsafes to plead.

THE PRAYER.

O God, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful; mercifully assist our prayers that we make before thee, in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us. Save us, we most humbly beseech thee, from all the evils that we feel or fear. Bring us into light, and not into darkness. Blessed Lord, hast thou not said, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life? Oh send out thy light and thy truth, and let them lead us! If it please thee, guide us through every part of our journey, without suffering us even to enter upon the dark and slippery way which has been trod by many of thy people. Suffer us not to be distracted with thy terrors: and cause not thy fierce wrath to go over us. Let not the enemy persecute our soul, nor smite our life to the ground, nor make us to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead. In compassion to our frailty, and our manifold infirmities, save us from every trial which is too hard for us. But whatever be the path wherein we should go, grant, Lord, that we may not turn away from it. May we give no heed to the evil report which is brought of the good ways of the Lord, by unbelieving peo-

ple. Whatever dangers may surround us in our appointed path, mercifully grant that we may be preserved from them all. And if we are called to walk in darkness, and have no light, may we trust in the name of the Lord, and stay our souls on the God of our salvation. Let not the deep swallow us up, neither let the pit shut her mouth upon us. Lead us on in the narrow path to Zion. Keep back thy servants from presumptuous sins; and save us from the dangerous downfall of despair. May we pray always, with all prayer and supplication, and watch thereunto with all perseverance. Enable us to detect the wiles of the devil, and to close our hearts against the wicked suggestions which he puts into our minds. May we wait for the Lord, more than they that watch for the morning, until the time of deliverance shall come. Help us to discern the footsteps of the flock in the darkest shades through which we have to pass. And, oh, grant that we may be cheered with the presence of the Chief Shepherd himself, and know that thou art with us. Be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause thy face to shine upon us, that we may pass on safely through all the snares and traps that are set for our feet. Lord, let thy candle shine on our heads, and by thy light may we go through darkness. And mercifully grant, that after all our painful trials and narrow escapes, we may be brought at last to the heavenly Canaan, where our sun shall no more go down, neither shall our moon withdraw itself, but the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended. Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

LECTURE XV.

THE POPE'S CAVE, AND FAITHFUL'S EXPERIENCE.

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love !
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers ;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims, are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes ;
Our mutual burdens bear ;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

ECCLESIASTES iv. 9, 10.

TWO ARE BETTER THAN ONE; BECAUSE THEY HAVE A GOOD REWARD FOR THEIR LABOUR. FOR IF THEY FALL, THE ONE WILL LIFT UP HIS FELLOW: BUT WHO TO HIM THAT IS ALONE WHEN HE FALLETH; FOR HE HATH NOT ANOTHER TO HELP HIM UP.

WHAT a delightful privilege is the communion of saints ! Those who have for some time been deprived of it, as soon as they are permitted to enjoy it again, feel and understand its exceeding sweetness. They can say, from a sense of what they have tasted and enjoyed,

“ Christian fellowship how sweet ! ”

As they pursue their way together to the Celestial City, and converse together of their past trials and

conflicts, and their future hopes and prospects, they feel that "as iron sharpeneth iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." They have a practical proof that "two are better than one;" and in the mutual comfort and help which they receive and impart, "they have good reward for their labour." The true Christian is continually liable to mistakes and errors and falls. In the midst of these, oh, what unspeakable advantage does he derive from the counsel and aid and advice of a faithful companion! "If they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but wo to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."

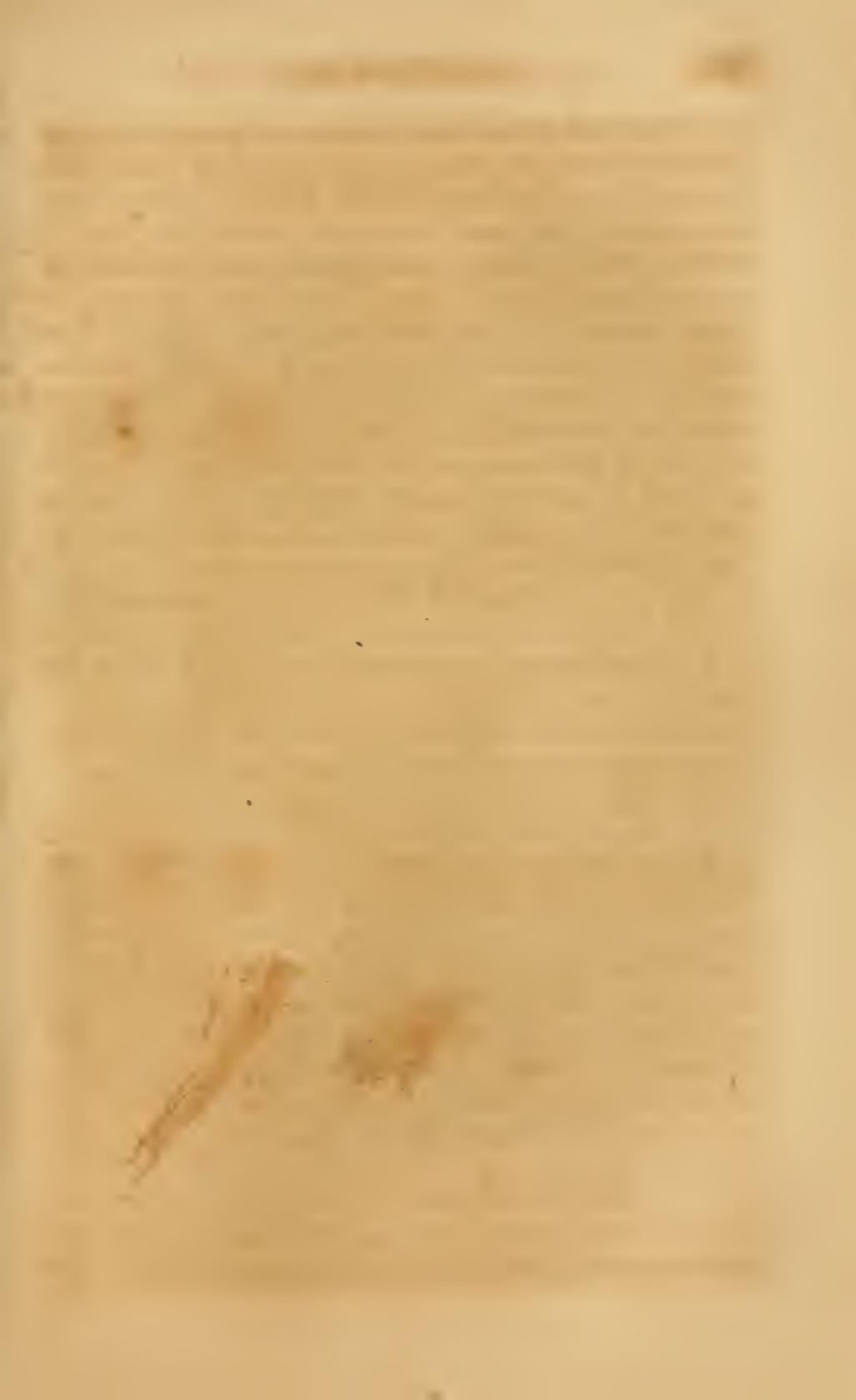
We have to consider in the present Lecture,

I. Christian's journey past the Pope's Cave before he overtook Faithful.

II. Faithful's experience from the City of Destruction to the valley of Humiliation; and

III. His experience in that valley.

I. We begin with Christian's journey past the Pope's Cave, before he overtook Faithful. He had scarcely come to the end of the region of darkness before another mournful spectacle was presented to his view. He came to a place that was all covered over with blood and bones and ashes, and the mangled bodies of pilgrims who had gone that way in earlier times. Hard by was a cave, which had once been the residence of two giants, Pagan and Pope. It was by the tyranny and cruel persecutions of these two that the pilgrims of bygone time had been massacred and burnt, and their remains left in the manner which Christian beheld. He





passed by this dismal place without let or hindrance. And this was the reason that he did so: the elder giant, viz. Pagan, had been dead for many a day, and his destructions had come to a perpetual end. As for the other, though he was still alive, yet by reason of age, and also of the many shrewd brushes he had met with in his younger days, he had grown so crazy and stiff in his joints, that he could do little more than sit in his cave's mouth, grinning at pilgrims as they passed, and biting his nails because he could not come at them. Wonderfully striking and fearfully ominous are the words uttered by the aged and infirm giant, Pope, as Christian passed by his cave. "You will never," he said, "mend till more of you be burned!" Christian, however, held his peace, and so passed by without injury. Past this cave he came to a little ascent, which was cast up on purpose that pilgrims might see before them. From this elevation he espied a man named Faithful before him, and he called on him to wait until he should come up to him. But Faithful replied, "No, I cannot stay. I am upon my life, and the avenger of blood is behind." Christian was so affected by this reply, that he strained every nerve until he had outstripped Faithful. Then smiling because he was the first, he stumbled and fell, and could not rise up again, until Faithful came up to help him. Being, however, raised, they both went very lovingly together, and had sweet discourse of all the things that had happened to them in their pilgrimage.

We may all, brethren, derive much important admonition from what is here recorded. In our happy country, blessed be God, we have nothing to fear from Pagan persecutions. That giant has long

been dead. The altars erected by our idolatrous ancestors to the Sun and to the Moon, to Woden and to Thor, to Friga and to Saturn, the abominations of the Saxons, have long been overthrown. Their names, which still distinguish our weekdays, just serve to remind us, in what a dark and dismal night our forefathers were enveloped. But the slaughters and burnings made by the other monster, Papal Rome, were far more extensive; and the proofs of them are to be found in almost every city and every town of England. Until the glorious Reformation was fully established in England, this giant reigned in all his strength, and made himself drunk with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, burning and destroying on every side. At that eventful period, he was shorn of his strength. The blows and shocks which he then received were the shrewd brushes that stiffened his joints, and curtailed his power, and reduced him to the condition of a feeble old man, who is unable any longer to perform the dreadful feats in which he had formerly delighted, in the days of his youth and the time of his strength. But his spirit was unchanged with his changed condition. His malice remained, though his strength was gone. It was power, not will, that he wanted, to act more cruelty. He could not persecute true Christians unto death, as he had done before; but he showed the teeth of his malice as they passed, and bit his nails with envy and vexation that he could not molest them. Nay, more than this, he uttered those ominous words, which clearly showed what he would do if he had the power; and what was the sovereign medicine, in his estimation, for the cure of heretics: "You will never mend till more of you be burned."

How many are labouring, in various ways, again to involve us in the Babylonian wo! We have no sympathy with the false brethren that speak so disdainfully and contemptuously of the glorious Reformation, and so tenderly and so smoothly of the great harlot,

“Drunk with the blood of martyrs and of saints.”

Not so much by burnings and slaughters, as by craft and subtlety, and the spread of doctrines essentially Popish, though disguised, he is now working his way, and has overthrown the faith of some.

II. We now come to consider the first part of Faithful's experience. In answer to the questions of Christian, Faithful relates the principal events that had befallen him since his first setting out from the City of Destruction. He had heard of Christian's departure from the same place, and had hoped to have overtaken him before. He said that after Christian's setting out, there was much talking among the people about the danger of the city. But while others were excited and talked about this report, he himself believed it, and set off on pilgrimage. There was much talking also in the city about Pliable, after he had returned to it again. All united to despise and deride him as a turncoat. So little did he get for his apostasy, that he found even in this life it would have been better for him not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after having known it, to turn from the holy commandment. The experience of Faithful had been very different from that of Christian. He escaped the troubles in which Christian was plunged at the

Slough of Despond, having found the steps and got over safely. But another bewitching adversary, whom Christian had never met, had laboured hard to draw him aside. A person named Wanton, with flattering words and fair speech, and promise of all carnal and fleshly delight, endeavoured to allure him into the pit of destruction. But he was preserved from this fatal snare. He cleansed his way by ruling himself according to the Divine word. He remembered that it is written: "Her steps take hold on hell." So he shut his eyes, because he would not be bewitched by her looks. Then she had railed on him, while he went his way. But escaped from this snare, Faithful was soon assailed by another. An old man named Adam, who dwelt in the town of Deceit, had come to meet Faithful at the foot of the hill Difficulty. This old man left no effort untried to engage his services. He, too, promised all the dainties and delights of the world; and engaged that if Faithful would serve him, he should marry his three daughters: "The lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life." Poor Faithful felt at the first a secret inclination to go with this man. But seeing it written on the wrinkled forehead of his tempter, "Put off the old man with his deeds;" and feeling a powerful persuasion that he only wanted him for a slave, Faithful bade him forbear to talk, for he would not come near the door of his house. Then did the old man revile, and threaten what he would do to make his way bitter. And as an earnest of it, when Faithful turned to go away, he felt him take hold of his flesh and give him such a deadly twitch back, that he seemed to pull away after him a very part of himself. This caused him to cry out, "O wretched

man that I am !” So he went on his way up the hill. He had not proceeded far before he was overtaken by a severe schoolmaster, one Moses, who came and inflicted a terrible blow upon him, which knocked him down as one dead. He said this was for his secret inclination to go after the old Adam. With that he repeated his blows, and would soon have made an end of him, had not one with holes in his hands and in his side bade him to forbear. Faithful remembered the terrible face of the schoolmaster, who has no mercy or pity for them that break his rules. He had felt his power before. It was this Moses who had threatened to burn his house over his head, while he was yet in the City of Destruction, if he stayed there any longer. He knew his deliverer also. By the wounds and marks of suffering which he beheld, he knew well who it was that had saved him from the terrible lashes of Moses. Faithful, after this, had gone by the house Beautiful, without calling there, and consequently without being at all molested by the lions.

Let us pause here to receive instruction. When a thoughtless sinner is awakened out of his carnal security, and sets his face decidedly and resolutely, as Christian had done at the first, to the heavenly Zion, if he act consistently and hold on his way, his conduct will excite attention. Some convictions will flash across his worldly associates; and although many may be satisfied with a little talk and noise, it will have a more powerful and abiding effect upon others. They, through grace, will be faithful to their convictions, and then they will linger no longer in the City of Destruction. The trials and temptations of one believer may be very different from those of another. We need not doubt the reality of our

religion, merely because we have not been tried and assailed exactly in the same way as some of our brethren have been. If we are not tempted in one way, we shall be in another. One may be especially tempted to despair, and another to carnal indulgence. It is only, however, by a proper use of the warnings and promises, the precepts and examples of the Bible, and by earnestly seeking for sanctifying grace, that we shall be enabled to prevail over our special and peculiar temptation. Every believer who treads the way to Zion will learn something of the deceit and strength and power of the old man. Indwelling sin will often dispose him secretly to hanker after forbidden objects. And though he may be enabled not to comply with the outward act, oh, what a wrench, what a tearing of himself will he often find it to be, to mortify, and cast off, and to crucify the old man! This cruel adversary will mar his peace, if he cannot destroy his soul. And by the terrible lashes of the law, which reach to the "thoughts and intents of the heart," the believer will often be painfully reminded that his secret desire to comply with the old man brings him in a transgressor in the sight of God, and justly exposes him to righteous condemnation. When under this painful and distressing experience, it is only as the gracious Saviour is spiritually revealed to his heart, that the believer finds relief. When, self-convicted and self-condemned, he is enabled to look with the eye of faith to Him who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, he is delivered from the curse and condemnation of the broken law. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The real Christian eminently dis-

plays his candour and charity by giving the right hand of fellowship to all faithful men, though they have been led in a way different from himself. He may regret that they have not enjoyed all the outward privileges and advantages which he has found so precious to himself. This, however, will not break the bond of brotherhood between them. He that is spiritual judgeth all things. He knows how to distinguish that which is circumstantial in religion, from that which is essential. Where he finds the essence, he is not troubled overmuch by the absence of the rest. He knows that the kingdom of heaven is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

III. We come now to the experience of Faithful in the valley of Humiliation. Discontent and Shame were the principal adversaries that he met with here. He saw nothing of the terrible Apollyon, with whom Christian had so severe a conflict; and instead of the sad passage of Christian through the dark and dreadful valley, he had sunshine all the way through that part of his journey. The adversaries, however, that Faithful had encountered, were both subtle and difficult to cast off. The man Discontent would willingly have persuaded him to go back. He represented that the journey was altogether without honour, and that it would be utterly impossible for him to wade through that humble vale without offending all his best and noble-minded friends, such as Pride, Arrogancy, Self-Conceit, and Worldly-Wisdom. But Faithful replied that all these relations had disowned him since he became a pilgrim, and that they were now nothing whatever to him. How then should he at

all be influenced by the judgment they might pass upon him? And as for the want of honour, he was quite willing to sacrifice the honour that cometh from men, that he might obtain that which comes from the King. This he was convinced could not be obtained without pursuing his way through the valley of Humiliation, since "before honour is humility." Discontent fled away upon these representations. The next adversary that he met was Shame. This man he found it very difficult to cast off. It seemed as if he would never have done, and would not be said nay. He objected to religion and a tender conscience, as being pitiful and unmanly, and exposing a person to the ridicule of the times. He urged, too, how very few of the rich, and mighty, and wise, paid any serious regard to religion. He laughed at the idea of being affected under a sermon, and thought it monstrously absurd to become strange and cool to the great and learned, for their want of religion, and to love and reverence the meanest person that you take to be a true pilgrim. Representations like these were made with such vehemence and confidence by this Shame, that they actually fetched up the blood into the face of Faithful; and at the first he was almost beaten off from the right way. But when he compared the representations of Shame with the true sayings of the King recorded in his holy word; and above all, when he vividly set before his eyes the judgment of the great day, and the different characters to whom will be then assigned eternal glory, and everlasting shame; when he thought of this, it was enough. And he said, "Shame, depart! Thou art an enemy to my salvation. Shall I entertain thee against my Sovereign Lord? How then shall I

look Him in His face at His coming? Should I now be ashamed of His ways and servants, how can I expect His blessing then?" But even after such a noble rebuke, this bold-faced Shame would hardly be gone. If beaten off for a while, he would constantly return, and continually be whispering in the ear something of the infirmities that attend religion. He was only quite vanquished when Faithful told him plainly, "It is vain for you to make another attempt; for those very things which you so greatly disdain, in those I see the greatest glory." Christian congratulated his brother Faithful upon the noble victory he had obtained over this importunate foe; and they both agreed that it was absolutely necessary for every one who would be valiant for the truth upon earth, to cry earnestly for strength and power to overcome Shame.

Let us, dear friends, every one, with all good resolution, set our faces as a flint against these two formidable adversaries, Discontent and Shame. We are sure to meet them in our way to the Celestial City, if so be that we are faithful followers of the Lamb. In compassion to our weakness and frailty, and manifold infirmities, the Lord whom we serve may graciously spare us the terrible conflicts with Satan, which some of our brethren have had; and we may know little of the most distressing experience of those who have been brought into darkness, and not into light. But the sinful and discouraging representations of Discontent, and the plausible arguments of Shame, we shall certainly have to encounter. These foes are both hid in our own hearts, and they only wait for a suitable opportunity to lift up their voice, and to exert their power. Few believers walk far in the valley of

Humiliation, or keep for long “the noiseless tenor of their way,” without, as it were, the man Discontent coming to meet them, and employing all his power to turn them back. Like Israel of old, “their soul is discouraged because of the way.” They feel an inward shrinking from the daily cross they are required to bear, and for a time it is grievous in their sight when they think of the friends they must lose, and the ties they must burst, in order to persevere in the cause they have chosen. When you, dear brethren, are tried with such a temptation, consider how Faithful chased away Discontent from his side. Think of the honour and glory that await you at the end of your course, if only you are faithful unto death. Will you not bear a cross for a little while now, when you are to wear a crown for ever hereafter? Is it not better for you to become a stranger to your brethren and an alien to your mother’s children, rather than deny the Lord that bought you? Be humbled now, and you shall be exalted hereafter. Walk now patiently in the valley of Humiliation, and in due time you shall be exalted to the throne of glory. How can discontent remain with you, if you meet his complaints with such considerations as these? The conduct of Faithful will also serve for your example, if like him you are assailed by Shame. Does he dare to suggest that the pleasures of piety, and of a good conscience, are not to be enjoyed without being little in your own sight, and perhaps ridiculous in the sight of others; does he tell you how unfashionable it is to be troubled with such things, and that there is a deal of cant and hypocrisy among people who pretend to be so much better than others; and are you sometimes so moved by

all this, that you feel the blood mount up to your cheek? Oh, be sure that you weigh all this in the even balances of eternal truth! Think of the judgment, and the honour, and glory, and immortality, that shall be assigned to the faithful followers of Christ, who have confessed Him before men; and the terrible doom of the fearful and unbelieving, who have basely denied Him, and been ashamed of Him! Who would not be among the wise? Who would have their lot among the fools in that day? "The wise shall inherit glory, but shame shall be the promotion of fools." You cannot get free from shame without firmness and decision. Tell him plainly to depart from you as the enemy of your soul. Nay, mortify and lay him as low as you possibly can. Tell him that you and he are at complete issue; that you despise that in which he glories, and glory in that which he despises. You will have this answer to give, if you have learned to glory supremely in your Saviour's cross. Then you will pour contempt on all your pride; and you will not scruple to sacrifice all the vanities in which you once delighted, to Him who sacrificed himself for you. Act in this manner, and Shame will be compelled to leave you, and will never give you any more trouble. And when you have tasted the preciousness of bearing reproach for Christ's sake, you will esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world.

THE HYMN.

Great the joy when Christians meet;
Christian fellowship how sweet;
When, their theme of praise the same,
They exalt Jehovah's name!

Sing we then eternal love !
 Such as did the Father move ;
 He beheld the world undone,
 Loved the world, and gave his Son.

Sing the Son's unbounded love !
 How he left the realms above ;
 Took our nature and our place ;
 Lived and died to save our race.

Sing we too the Spirit's love !
 With our stubborn hearts he strove
 Chased the mists of sin away ;
 Turned our night to glorious day.

Great the joy, the union sweet,
 When the saints in glory meet ;
 Where the theme is still the same,
 Where they praise Jehovah's name.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful Father, we bless and praise thy holy name that we are taught to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent. What shall we render unto thee, for thy blessed word and thy Holy Spirit, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of thee, and of thy Son Jesus Christ ! Oh grant that we may walk in the light, and have fellowship one with another. Make us truly thankful that pagan darkness has passed away from our native land, and that the true light now shineth. And, we most humbly beseech thee, cast the bright beams of thy glorious gospel upon the nations that are still sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. May it please thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived. Arise, O Lord, and plead thine own cause. Let not the malice of sin prevail. Disappoint the efforts of all who are labouring again to entangle men in the cruel yoke of superstition. Teach us ever to hold out the right hand of fellowship to all faithful brethren. May we be warned and encouraged, comforted and edified, by the communications of all such. Make us all faithful to the convictions wherewith we are visited ; and lead us by the right way to the heavenly habitation. And grant that we may be kept from every snare,

delivered from every adversary, and preserved in every temptation, by taking heed to thy holy word. May we know what it is, when we feel the strength of indwelling sin, and when our hearts accuse us of violating thy holy law, to thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Save us from a dissatisfied, repining spirit. As we journey on through this worldly wilderness, may we be content with such things as we have, and let not our soul be discouraged because of the way. Whoever we may offend, only do thou never leave us, nor forsake us, and then we will boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man doeth unto me. Turn away the reproach which we fear. May we never be ashamed of Christ, or of his words, before men, lest he should be ashamed of us before his Father, and before the holy angels. Teach us to glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and grant that by its effectual power, the world may be crucified unto us, and we unto the world. May we ever esteem the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of the world. Hear us, O Lord our God, and fulfil all our petitions, through Jesus Christ our Saviour; to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XVI.

THE CHARACTER OF TALKATIVE.

In all my vast concerns with thee,
In vain my soul would try
To shun thy presence, Lord, or flee
The notice of thine eye.

Thy all-surrounding sight surveys
My rising and my rest,
My public walks, my private ways,
The secrets of my breast.

My thoughts lie open to the Lord,
Before they're formed within;
And ere my lips pronounce the word,
He knows the sense I mean.

JOB xi. 2.

SHOULD A MAN FULL OF TALK BE JUSTIFIED?

THE pilgrim to the Celestial City meets with strange characters, as well as passes through strange scenes, on his way to Zion. A character is now introduced to us for our warning and instruction, that is drawn with singular wisdom and propriety. This is a man whose religion consisted entirely in talk, and in nothing besides. With regard to religious conversation, we are exposed to mistakes both on the right hand and on the left. Because we meet with many unruly and vain talkers, unsanctified

professors of religion, we must not, on that account, resolutely close our lips on religious subjects, as if it were a sure mark of hypocrisy to speak in the name of the Lord. A person who has saving grace in his heart will have his speech also seasoned with grace. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Our first main concern should be, regarding ourselves, to experience the power of Divine truth in our hearts, and then a suitable conversation will follow. "We cannot but speak of the things which we have seen and heard." If the kingdom of heaven be within us, and we have experienced in our hearts the power of God, we shall speak of his kingdom and talk of his power. In judging of others, we should be very slow indeed to set down any, who speak the language of Zion, as mere hypocrites and dissemblers before God. The friends of Job fell into this mistake, and were far too censorious in the judgment which they passed upon him. His religion consisted in something more, far more than talk. When Zophar said to him, "Should not the multitude of words be answered? and should a man full of talk be justified?" it was truth that he spoke, but it was truth misapplied. Had Job really been such a character as the happy genius of our author has described under the name of Talkative, (and such characters are too common in every place,) then it would have been truth properly applied, to have asked him, "Should a man full of talk be justified?"

The consideration of a man full of talk will form the subject of the present Lecture.

I. Let us notice what is hopeful and promising about such a man.

II. The Christian testimony given concerning him by one who knew him ; and

III. The manner in which his hypocrisy is detected.

May we every one be warned and admonished by the important subject.

I. What is there fair and promising in such a character? As Christian and Faithful went on, the latter chanced to look a little on one side, and saw a man whose name was Talkative walking at a distance from them. He was a tall man, and more comely at a distance than near at hand. Faithful joined himself to this man's company, entered into conversation with him, and was mightily taken with his talk. He said that he was going to the same place as Faithful, and that with a very good will he would be his companion. When Faithful proposed that they should discourse together of things that were profitable, his new companion expressed the greatest delight, and said it had been quite a trouble to him, that so very few that he met with had any heart for such employment. They agreed entirely that it was the glory of the tongue to be employed in speaking of God and the things of God. Talkative was extremely fluent in descanting particularly both upon the pleasure and profit of such conversation. He spoke so much to the point, and so well, on each of these heads, that even Faithful could not refrain from expressing his satisfaction, and said, "All this is true, and I am glad to hear these things from you." A slight doubt, however, came into his mind, when his fluent companion seemed to intimate, that the want of religious conversation was the cause of all the ignorance and fearful mistakes

which so many make in spiritual matters. Faithful therefore ventured to say, but still as if speaking to one more advanced than himself, "By your leave, heavenly knowledge of these is the gift of God. No man attaineth to them by human industry, or only by the talk of them." His ready companion not only assented immediately to the important declaration, but he quoted a very suitable passage of Scripture in confirmation of it, and said he could give a hundred more. Then said Faithful, "What is the one thing upon which we shall at this time found our discourse?" Talkative's answer to this question is wonderfully in character with the man himself. All subjects were alike to him. He was as much at home upon one as another; and therefore he said, "I will talk of things heavenly, or things earthly; things moral, or things evangelical; things sacred, or things profane; things past, or things to come; things foreign, or things at home; things more essential, or things more circumstantial; provided that all be done to our profit." This unexpected volley, concluded in the manner it was, increased the wonder without exciting the suspicion of Faithful; and stepping up to Christian, whom he had left for a season, he said to him softly, "What a brave companion we have got! Surely this man will make a very excellent pilgrim."

Here let us take our breath for a moment, and turn over in our minds the question of Zophar, Should a man full of talk be justified? Are we to conclude that a man is certainly on the way to heaven, and that he will make an excellent pilgrim, because he has a clear knowledge of doctrinal truths, and can speak well on religious subjects? No, dear brethren. Knowledge is one thing, and sanctifying

grace is another thing. A heart practically influenced by the power of Divine truth, and a tongue very fluent in the discussion of it, are not unfrequently the most opposite things in the world. A faithful man may be deceived in the opinion he forms of another, when he hears his excellent speech, and knows nothing of his private life and character. And this mistake is very pardonable. Charity, which hopeth all things, and thinketh no evil, may induce us to make it. Greater experience, however, will teach us not to be too hasty in forming our opinion of others. We shall for a while withhold our judgment, until we have something more than hopeful appearance and outward profession upon which to found it. But with regard to ourselves we cannot be too severe in pronouncing our religion to be nothing but a cheat and a delusion, if we know well in our own conscience that it consists only in empty breath and hollow sound. No knowledge, however clear, no gifts, however shining or attractive, must pass for a converted heart. A converted heart, dear friends, alone can be the dwelling-place of that gracious principle of charity, which makes us humble and little in our own sight; which makes us strive against every known sin, and follow after every known duty; and which disposes us to be kind and courteous, pitiful, loving, and tender-hearted to all with whom we have to do. If this gracious principle be wanting, every thing is wanting; and all that we have, or seem to have, is false and hollow, and good for nothing. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all

knowledge ; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing."

II. Let us now proceed to consider the testimony given by Christian concerning this man Talkative. He modestly smiled at the admiration expressed by his brother and said, "This man with whom you are so taken will beguile, with this tongue of his, twenty of them that know him not." Christian knew all about him, and was not to be deceived with good words and fair speeches. He had been, as it were, behind the scenes, and was not to be imposed on by the fair representation that appeared upon the stage. He knew what the man was in his dealings with others, and at home, where he was best known. He had seen him without his mask. He was like a miserable painting, which, viewed at a distance, may pass for the work of an artist, but which, when you approach nearer and begin to examine, you discover in a moment to be only a most wretched daub. He was for any company, and for any talk. He could be as fluent and as acceptable to the thoughtless, and the gay, and the vain, as he had just been to Faithful. Religion had no place in his heart, or house, or daily conduct. It was all only in his tongue ; it consisted in nothing but noise and talk. Faithful was greatly amazed at what he heard, and could scarcely credit so evil a report of one who had spoken so fair. But the testimony of Christian was too painfully true to admit of contradiction. The cause of truth clearly required the detection of this man's hypocrisy ; and he proceeded in the most decisive terms to describe his real character. He was clearly to

be ranked among the numbers of those who say and do not. He could talk about prayer and repentance, and faith, and the new birth; but he had no experience of these things. He only knew them to talk about them. Christian had been in his family, and had observed that every thing there was as destitute of religion as the white of an egg is destitute of taste. No voice of prayer, nor mark of contrition, was there to be witnessed. His conduct was such that he brought a reproach upon religion in the eyes of all who knew him. He verified the fearful saying, "A saint abroad, and a devil at home." His family found it so to their continual torment. He was such a son of Belial that no one could speak to him. He was ungovernable in his temper, and unreasonable in his demands. He was hard and overreaching in his dealings with men; tyrannous and ungodly in the bringing up of his children, and absolutely ridiculed any appearance of tenderness of conscience which he witnessed in any of them. In short, Christian declared, "I am of opinion that he has, by his wicked life, caused many to stumble and fall, and will be, if God prevent not, the ruin of many more." This painful testimony, and much of the like kind, convinced Faithful of the error in judgment into which he had fallen, and induced him to say, "Well, I see that saying and doing are two things: and hereafter I shall better observe this distinction." After this, very close and instructive are the remarks made by the two real pilgrims respecting the essential difference between a dead profession of the truth and unreserved obedience to it. They agreed that, in the day of doom, men must be judged according to their works. It will not be said then, "Did you

believe?" but, "Were you doers, or talkers only?" Not that any thing can be accepted which is not of faith, but saving faith, in every instance, will be shown to have been a fruitful working principle, and widely distinct from barren notions and empty sound. Under the law, the animal was not clean that chewed the cud if it did not part the hoof. So a man with religious knowledge may seem to chew the cud upon God's word, but that will not number him among the generation of the upright, if he be destitute of that sanctification which distinguishes the people of God from a world that lieth in wickedness. And as things without life give sound, a carnal professor, dead in trespasses and sins, however eloquently he may discourse on religious subjects, is only like sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. In order to be rid of so worthless a companion as Talkative, Christian suggested, that if Faithful would only put to him a few pointed home questions about the power and practical effects of true religion, he would soon retire from their company of his own accord. We shall see presently how exactly this was the case. But let us first pause to reflect for a few moments upon the sad character of Talkative.

We can now have no difficulty in answering the inquiry, "Should a man full of talk be justified?" If this be his true character, and these glaring inconsistencies and dark spots be found upon him, how should he be justified on account of his fine speeches and excellent sayings? Talkative is evidently an unconverted and a wicked man; and we are by no means to justify the wicked. True indeed it is, that the Judge himself has declared, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words

thou shalt be condemned.” The upright believer will be justified by his words. Notwithstanding all his deeply lamented transgressions, by thought, word, and deed, it will be found, in the great day of account, that the saving grace which was in his heart regulated his speech, as well as influenced his life. He is an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile. He speaks to God in secret prayer, as well as speaks of the things of God before men. And the words which he has spoken in secret, where no eye, but the eye of God could behold, as well as the good confession which he has made of his faith before men, will alike be produced as the evidence of his sincerity, and the proof of his justification in that day. In this sense the believer shall be justified by his words. On the other hand, the barren professor will be condemned by his words in the day of judgment. He has never come as a genuine penitent, by true faith, for an interest in that atoning blood which cleanses from all sin; and therefore all his sins—the sins of his mouth as well as the sins of his life—will be found unpardoned in that day. He must give account for every idle word which he has ever spoken. Although he seemed to be religious, his religion will then be proved to be in vain, because it will be evident, when the book of remembrance is opened, in which all his words are recorded, that he bridled not his tongue. In addition to this, the solemn truths which he has spoken and professed before others will also be produced; and when the good words which he has spoken shall be put in contrast with the bad life which he has lived, he will hear the affecting sentence, “Out of thine own mouth will I condemn thee, thou wicked servant.” Oh let us

all beware of the common error of mistaking knowledge and talk and profession, for pure and undefiled religion. True religion is a practical thing; and if our religion does not influence our conduct, it has done nothing for us. There may be light in the understanding, and good words on the tongue, without any saving grace in the heart. If the heart be not right, every thing will be wrong. "If any one's head or tongue should grow apace, and all the rest stand at a stay, it would certainly make him a monster; and they are no other who are knowing and discoursing Christians, and grow daily in that respect, but not at all in holiness of heart and life, which is the proper growth of the children of God." Yes, dear brethren, holiness of heart and life, practical godliness, purity of heart, and holiness in all manner of conversation, is the proper growth of the true Christian.

III. We have lastly to notice the manner in which the hypocrisy of Talkative was detected. Faithful followed the suggestion of his more experienced companion; and having joined Talkative again, he proposed as the subject of their discourse, "How does the saving grace of God discover itself when it is in the heart of man?" Talkative was quite ready to discuss this all-important question. He mentioned as the first mark of saving grace, A great outcry against sin. But Faithful corrected him, by showing him he ought rather to have said, "By inclining the soul to loathe and abhor sin; for," he said, "there is all the difference in the world between inwardly turning from the love of sin, and outwardly making an outcry against it." The next sign he mentioned was great knowledge of gospel

mysteries. Here again the unsoundness of a nominal professor was manifested. Faithful very properly showed, that as far as knowledge is a sign of grace, it should have been mentioned first, since it is by the gracious light communicated to the heart, that the penitent sees the true nature of sin, and is properly affected by his guilt and danger, as well as understands the way of escape. But this is widely different, as he clearly showed, from great knowledge of gospel mysteries. A person may understand all mysteries, and be able to speak of them to others, and yet be destitute of saving grace. He ought to have distinguished this gracious knowledge from the knowledge of barren speculation. One may make a talker, but only the other can make a Christian. Gracious knowledge is accompanied with faith and love, and puts a man upon doing the will of God from the heart. It was for this that David prayed : " Give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. These undeniable truths pressed hard upon Talkative, insomuch that when he was requested to give his third sign of grace, he declined to do so, saying he perceived they should not agree. Upon this Faithful took up the word, and with great force pointed out the true manner in which grace discovers itself, both to him who has it, and also to others. To him who has it, it is discovered by his deep conviction of sin, especially the sin of his nature and the sin of unbelief ; and after this by the revelation of Christ in his heart, and his actually closing with him by faith, in his saving office and character, to be a Saviour to him. To others, saving grace in a believer shows itself by an experimental confession of his faith in Christ, and by a life answerable to

that confession. After enlarging a little upon this most scriptural definition of saving grace, Faithful then proceeded, with the boldness and plainness of one who was indeed faithful, to press the following inquiry upon his talkative companion: "Do you experience this first part of the description of saving grace? And does your life and conversation testify the same, or standeth your religion in word and in tongue, and not in deed and in truth." He begged him to answer this question, as in the sight of Him who knoweth all things. Then did Talkative begin to blush, as well as he might. He positively refused to answer any such questions, and was only anxious to know why they were proposed to him. Faithful told him why. He had seen him forward to talk, and knew not that he had any other evidence to give of his conversion. In addition to this, he told him faithfully what a bad character he heard of him, as one who brought only a reproach and a scandal upon religion, by his profession of it, and talking about it. This was too much for this empty boaster. And therefore, pretending that Faithful delighted to take up evil reports, and to judge rashly, he called him a peevish, melancholy man, not fit to be discoursed with; and so he left his company. It was clear he had rather leave such company than reform his life. When Faithful joined Christian, he had the satisfaction of thinking, that by his plain dealing with such a character, he had, at any rate, delivered his own soul. And Christian said, "I wish that all men would deal with such, as you have done."

Suffer me, dear brethren, in the conclusion of this Lecture, to act the part of Faithful to the hearts and consciences of every individual here

present. Do not think me peevish or melancholy, or ready to take up ill reports, and to form rash judgments, if I put a few plain and pointed questions to you. Believe me when I tell you, that love for your souls is the secret spring of all the home questions which I press upon you. Say then, have none of you fallen into the mistake of him we have been considering? Are not the only marks of saving grace which you have to produce—making a great outcry about religion, and perhaps having great knowledge in gospel mysteries? Are you not mistaking the talk of the lips, which tendeth to poverty, for that humble, contrite, penitent sense of your guilt and vileness, without which you are nothing? Are you not mistaking a barren and unfruitful knowledge of the gospel for an experimental acquaintance with it, and a practical submission to it? Do you know any thing of a real work of grace, manifesting itself to your heart, by producing in you a deep sense of your vileness and depravity, as a ruined, perishing sinner? Do you know any thing of a personal application by faith to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of the ruined and the lost? Do you confess his name before men? And are you daily endeavouring to frame and to fashion your own life, and the lives of all that appertain to you, according to that holy profession? Is the sanctifying power of heavenly grace to be seen in all you do, in all you say, and wherever you go? Or, while you talk about religion and profess it, do you bring a reproach upon it, by a violent temper, an unruly tongue, and unchristian deportment? To use the emphatic words of Faithful, “Do you experience this description of true grace, and doth your life and conversation testify

the same? or standeth your religion in word and in tongue, and not in deed and in truth?" Oh, let not the reply of your conscience be any thing but what the great God, who knoweth all things, knows to be true! If our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth. Let us never think ourselves possessed of true religion, if we have not a faith which purifies the heart, overcomes the world, bridles the tongue, and works by love. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him."

THE HYMN.

Almighty God, thy piercing eye
Strikes through the shades of night,
And our most secret actions lie
All open to thy sight.

There's not a sin that we commit,
Nor idle word we say,
But in thy dreadful book 'tis writ,
Against the judgment day.

And must the crimes that I have done
Be read and published there?
Be all exposed before the sun,
While men and angels hear?

Lord, at thy feet ashamed I lie;
Upward I dare not look;
Pardon my sins before I die,
And blot them from thy book.

Remember all the dying pains
That my Redeemer felt,
And let his blood wash out my stains,
And answer for my guilt.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, maker of all things, Judge of all men, thou hast appointed a day in which thou wilt judge the world in righteousness; we must all appear before thy dreadful bar, and there give an account for every idle word which we have ever spoken. We prostrate ourselves now before the throne of thy grace, before we are summoned to the seat of thy judgment. We acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we, from time to time, most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy Divine majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We would especially confess, and be deeply humbled for the sins of our mouths. How often have we offended with our tongue! How often hast thou been near to our lips, and far from our reins! If thou, Lord, shouldst be extreme to mark iniquity, who may abide? Enter not into judgment with us, for in thy sight we can never be justified. Oh may we not be satisfied with knowing the truth of thy holy gospel, and being able to talk about it, without receiving the truth in the love of it, that we may be saved by it. May our whole life and conversation be habitually regulated by the solemn truths which we profess. Deliver us from the condemnation of those who say and do not. Forbid it, Lord, that any of us, after professing thy holy truth before many witnesses, should ever cause thy good ways to be reproached and blasphemed, by our unsanctified tempers, and our inconsistent lives. Set a watch, O Lord, upon our mouth; keep the door of our lips. Deliver us, O thou heart-searching God, from deceiving ourselves, and thinking that our state is good, if in thy sight our religion is vain. Make us all the subjects of thy saving grace. May we know ourselves that it has indeed visited us, by the deep sense which we have of our vileness and depravity, the preciousness of Christ to our souls, and the peace and rest which we find in looking unto Jesus. And may we prove to others that we are thy children, by constantly professing the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully fighting under his banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and continuing his faithful soldiers and servants to our lives' end. Hear us, O Lord, and answer us according to the multitude of thy mercies, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour; and let the words of our mouth, and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE XVII.

VANITY FAIR.

Far from my thoughts, vain world, begone,
Let my religious hours alone :
From flesh and sense I would be free,
And hold communion, Lord, with thee.

My heart grows warm with holy fire,
And kindles with a pure desire,
To see thy grace, to taste thy love,
And feel thine influence from above.

When I can say that God is mine,
When I can see thy glories shine,
I'll tread the world beneath my feet,
And all that men call rich and great.

PSALM CXIX. 37.

TURN AWAY MINE EYES FROM BEHOLDING VANITY; AND QUICKEN THOU ME
IN THY WAY.

WHAT a suitable prayer, my brethren, is this for the Christian pilgrim, at every step which he takes in his progress through this world of sin and vanity to the place of his everlasting rest! We have already had set before us, in a strong light, what the believer may encounter from the assaults of his adversary the devil; and we have now to direct our thoughts to the treatment he may expect from another adversary, even this present evil world. This is admirably depicted by our author in his description of

Christian and Faithful in Vanity Fair. May we all perceive and understand the important truths which this figurative representation is calculated to convey ! We have to consider in our present Lecture,

I. The interview which our pilgrims had with Evangelist, before they entered the town of Vanity.

II. A description of the fair which was held at that place ; and

III. The reception which the pilgrims there met.

I. As to their interview with Evangelist. Soon after Talkative had parted from them, they were both much overjoyed at the sight of Evangelist coming to them. They welcomed him with the sincerest affection, and he breathed out for them the expression of his unfeigned love and good will. At his desire they each related all the travail that had befallen them by the way, since he last parted with them. When he heard of this, he congratulated them both for having continued in the way, notwithstanding the many infirmities which they had betrayed. And he added a most animating exhortation to continue steadfast and unmovable, even unto the end. He pointed out how necessary it was for them, in their further progress, to watch and strive, as they were still (to use his own expressive term) within gunshot of Satan. Moreover, Evangelist being a prophet, he warned the pilgrims what they must expect presently from this evil world. The town to which he pointed, and which they would soon have to enter, would prove to them a scene of severe trial and suffering. There

he forewarned them, one of them would be put to death, and intimated that the martyr would be more favoured than his fellow. Earnestly therefore did he exhort them to be strong, to quit themselves like men, and not to be moved by any of the things which they should suffer, but to endure as seeing Him who is invisible.

We may here briefly remark, that the Lord generally prepares his believing people for approaching trials by special privileges and special communications of his grace. If you, dear brethren, are pursuing your way to Zion, and any special dangers and difficulties are in your path, wait only upon God in the diligent use of every appointed means of grace, and you shall be strengthened and prepared for the approaching conflict. While you diligently ply the throne of grace, prayerfully study the Holy Scriptures, or faithfully attend to the ministry of the word, you shall receive the light and instruction, the warning and encouragement, which you need. Many things which were too hard for you shall be made plain when you go into the sanctuary of God. You shall know from your own experience that a faithful ambassador is health. The precious truths which he proclaims to you shall be health to your soul. When he warns you of the craft and subtilty of the devil, puts you on your guard against your indwelling foe, or sets before you what you have to expect from the pleasures and the cares, the business and the amusements of the world, you shall find his exhortations a word in season. And though bonds and afflictions may await you, when you listen to the animating words of the Captain of your salvation: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer;" and, "Be thou faithful unto

death, and I will give thee a crown of life," your courage and your faith will alike revive, and you will feel that you "can do all things through Christ who strengthens you." The solemn admonition of Evangelist will sink deep into your heart, when he says, "Let the kingdom be always before you, and believe steadfastly concerning things that are invisible. Let nothing that is on this side the other world get within you. Look well to your own heart. Set your face like a flint; and remember you have all power in heaven and earth on your side."

II. We pass on now to the description of Vanity Fair. When the two pilgrims had got out of the wilderness, they beheld the town of Vanity before them. In this place a fair is held all the year long. And this is of very ancient standing. From the earliest times there were pilgrims to the Celestial City; and the great enemy perceiving that they passed through this town of Vanity, determined to set up a fair here, that he might entice and seduce them from the narrow way. The merchandise sold at this fair is of the most various kinds. There is something adapted to the almost endless variety of human tastes and inclinations and passions. There are houses and lands, places and honours, titles and preferments, countries and kingdoms, carnal delight, and that of all sorts, set out and displayed in the most enticing form, silver and gold, pearls and precious stones. In short, all sins, all follies, all vanities, all pleasures and pursuits, that can ever entice the heart from God, are here exhibited. Here presumptuous sinners are seen to draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart-rope.

Here the votaries of superstition are taken with superstitious vanities. Here the god of this world maintains his sway by filling the minds of men with worldly objects, and blinding their eyes to the amazing realities of eternity! And here the generalities walk in the vanity of their minds, too busy or too thoughtless to attend to the one thing needful. The peculiar sins and vanities of every separate nation were exposed for sale; and the wares of Babylon were greatly promoted by the fair. Our pilgrims were obliged to go through the midst of this fair. In order to avoid it a man must needs go out of the world. The Prince of princes went through it himself, in the days of his humiliation, but he had no mind for any of its merchandise; and he passed through it without casting so much as the slightest wish or thought after any of the glittering attractions which it spread before him.

Here let us pause to commune for a little while with our own hearts. Have we, my brethren, made a proper estimate of things temporal and things eternal? In what light do we regard this present evil world? Do we love it, and walk according to the course of it, and are we seeking our happiness in the attainment of any of the glittering and enticing objects which it spreads before us? Or are we evidently people of another spirit, not of the world, even as our Divine and glorious Master was not of this world—having our conversation in heaven, and setting our affections on things above, not on things of the earth? The true Christian, my brethren, as he becomes spiritually-minded, and conformable to his Saviour's image, looks upon the world, with all its pomps and vanities and empty show, in some such light as a grave and wise person regards the

bustle and the baubles, the stir and excitement, the dissipation and the noise, of a country fair. In the believer's eyes, the whole world is the town of Vanity. He sees mankind, in general, walking in vain show and disquieting themselves in vain. All ranks and degrees of men, as they are uninfluenced by true religion, are walking in vanity. "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie: to be laid in the balance they are altogether lighter than vanity. All the strivings of ambition, the contentions of avarice, the vices of the wicked, the frivolities of the gay, and the decorations of the vain, make up the fair of vanity. Ever since our first parents forsook the fountain of living water, it has been the fatal propensity of all their descendants to hew out for themselves broken cisterns, which can hold no water. People try, in the endless variety of pursuits, to fill up the aching void which they have in their hearts. But their efforts are in vain. They weary themselves in the fire for very vanity. The more they try, the more they are convinced that the "bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it, and the covering narrower than that a man can wrap himself in it."

"In vain we hope from earth to find
Some solid good to fill the mind;
We try new pleasures, but we feel
The inward thirst and torment still."

All the sinful lusts and pleasures of the world, all the attractive and alluring objects which it has to present, are but the different stalls in the fair of vanity. But however largely we may trade in any of its merchandise, or with whatever variety of it we may load ourselves, we are sure to find, and

pronounce in the end, that all is vanity. Neither sin, nor pleasure, nor business, nor riches, nor honours, nor all the delights of sense combined, can impart solid satisfaction to the immortal soul. "Vanity of vanities," says one who spoke from experience, "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." But this is not all the mischief. This keen pursuit of temporal things not only yields a certain harvest of disappointment to all who engage in it; in addition to this, it is the grand device of the Wicked One, to withdraw the attention of mankind from the consideration of their everlasting interests. By decking out temporal objects and pursuits, and carnal gratifications, in bewitching array before them, he succeeds in diverting them from the things which belong to their eternal peace. Oh, what vain and empty objects are a sufficient bait to entice the children of men from resolutely pursuing the chief good! How do they sin against their own mercies by following after lying vanities, empty delusions, and hurtful lusts, which cannot profit! The merchandise of Rome, the lightest of all vanities, which consists in

"Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,"

was more suited to a dark and ignorant age. Oh, if men felt the preciousness of the vital truths which burst forth so brightly at the glorious Reformation; if they knew from experience the sufficiency of holy Scripture to make them wise unto salvation, how little store would they set by the wares of Babylon! There is little danger that the true Protestant, whose heart is established with grace, should be carried away with these delusions. "Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon, which

cometh from the rock of the field? Or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?" But however it may be with those that are naturally inclined to superstitious vanities, we have perhaps more to apprehend from profaneness and ungodliness, and the impious productions and perverse reasonings of skeptics and infidels, and oppositions of science, falsely so called. Let us constantly recollect, how easy a thing it is for our light and carnal minds to be drawn aside and enticed by the various allurements which will be presented to us in this deceitful and ensnaring scene. Whatever be our peculiar weak point, or special infirmity, we are sure to meet with some object which will especially appeal to it. We cannot doubt for a moment, that all who are living in known sin, and thus indulging their unruly wills and affections, are lifting up their souls unto vanity. Neither can there be less hesitation in pronouncing the same sentence upon all who are evidently "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." In addition to all this, let us every one tremble to think that things, lawful in themselves, when sought or possessed in a manner which is inconsistent with "seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," even these become the snares of Satan, to draw our souls in the downward path. And if we are loving or pursuing any object, however lawful or innocent in itself, so as to transgress this rule, we too have been drawn aside, and we also have lifted up our soul unto vanity. The true Christian must needs pass through Vanity Fair. But while in the world, he must not be of the world. He must dare to be singular. He must follow the steps, and bear the image, and breathe the spirit

of Him who endured the cross and despised the shame. Oh! if you would know the felicity of communion with God, and rejoice with the gladness of his people, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds."

*Christ tempter
must needs go through it -*

III. The reception which our pilgrims met in the town of Vanity was to be the last head for our present consideration. As they entered into the fair, all the people were moved, and the town itself was quite in an uproar about them. There were especially three things which excited the astonishment of the people with regard to Christian and his faithful companion, viz., their dress, their speech, and their contempt for the merchandise that was sold at the fair. Their dress was wholly different from the raiment worn by all the people who traded at the fair. This caused them to be people wondered at, as if they were outlandish men. The like impression was also produced by their language. Very few could understand what they said. The pilgrims spoke the language of Canaan, but they that kept the fair were men of this world, so that they seemed barbarians each to the other. And what still more struck all the traders at the fair, was the indifferent eye with which the pilgrims viewed all the glittering and attractive objects that surrounded them on every side. Those same wares, which shone so bright and looked so enticing in the eyes of the multitude, had no attraction for our pilgrims. They cared not so much as to look upon them; and when they were called upon to buy, as if conscious that the avenues to temptation must be closed, they would put their fingers in their

ears and cry, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity!" Then they would look upward, as signifying that their trade and traffic was in heaven. Being asked "what they would buy," they replied, "We buy the truth." This strange answer, as well as their strange appearance, and their non-compliance with the customs of the fair, caused them to be mocked and derided. They were soon after taken up, and had to their examination. The pilgrims gave a plain and faithful account of themselves. But in spite of this, they were considered by their examiners as mad, or people who came to make nothing but confusion. Thus they were shamefully treated, and put into a cage to be reviled; while the lord of the fair laughed, and rejoiced at what was done to them. But the persecuted pilgrims behaved with such meekness and wisdom, and patience and kindness, that they won by this conduct a party to favour them, even from some men of the fair, who were less prejudiced than the rest. When this party ventured to speak on their behalf, violent altercations took place, and blows ensued. All this commotion was laid to the charge of the pilgrims, though they had not taken the slightest part in it. Upon this they were severely beaten, and treated with the utmost rigour. But in the midst of this they behaved themselves yet more wisely, and bore what they suffered in such a manner, that several others (though few in comparison to the rest) were won to their side. This only increased the rage of their adversaries; and they threatened that neither cage nor iron should serve their turn, but that they should die for what they had done, and for deluding the men



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of the fair. Thus were they thrust into the prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks.

See here a specimen of the spirit of the world, and the manner in which it shows its hostility to the true-hearted followers of Christ. The nominal Christian and the mere formalist, whose faith is dead, escape all this opposition. The world cannot hate them, for they are of the world, and the world will love its own. But if you are a Christian indeed, and faithful to Him who has called you to be his soldier, the reproaches of them that reproached Him will come upon you. When you pass through Vanity Fair—I mean, when you are necessarily brought in contact with the thoughtless triflers who have no practical fear of God before their eyes, men of the world, who have their portion in this life, and who are spending their days in vanity, and who are expending all their energies in pursuing the honours or the riches, the pleasures or amusements of life—when, I say, you come in contact with these, if you are true to your principles, you are sure to be wondered at and reviled. The offence of the cross is not ceased, yea, and “all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” Satan is the lord of Vanity Fair. He is the god of this world, who blinds the eyes of them that believe not. And all who throng the broad road of destruction, and walk according to the course of this world, are actuated by “the prince of the power of the air.” He it is who works upon their pride and envy, and thus stirs up their opposition and hatred to the people of God. If they see you manifesting the spirit of a Christian, and resolutely setting your face as a flint against all the sins and follies, and vanities and delusions of the age and

the place where you live, they will think it strange that you run not with them into the same excesses. Those who know nothing of the power of true religion will be especially amazed at your dress, your speech and your indifference to the things in which they so greatly delight. By your dress, I mean that raiment which you have put on by faith, and which you avow as the only ground of your acceptance before God—the righteousness and atonement of your divine Saviour. You have given up the vain effort of establishing your own righteousness. As a self-despairing sinner, you have fled for pardon and acceptance to Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin, and whose obedience is a robe of righteousness to all that believe. You can say,

“ Since the dear hour that brought me to thy foot,
And cut up all my follies by the root,
I never trusted in an arm but thine,
Nor hoped but in thy righteousness divine.”

Now, this entire renouncing of our own works, and single dependence for justification on Christ alone, gives wonderful offence to the self-righteous, the worldly, and all who have never been thoroughly convinced of sin. It is an astonishing fact, that notwithstanding their wicked lives, their habitual neglect of known duty, their love of pleasure and of amusement, the great bulk of unconverted people are still hoping to be saved by something that they do, and cannot entertain the notion of being saved in any other way. Again, when the men of this world meet with a true Israelite coming, as it were, out of Egypt, and delivered from the yoke of Satan and the bondage of this present evil world, they “hear a language which they under-

stand not." If you speak the language of Canaan, and have your speech seasoned with grace, when you speak of the things which are known to all the children of God—the wickedness of the heart, the preciousness of Christ, the evil of sin, and the difficulty of believing—you will appear to many as one that speaks a foreign language. But it is especially by your holy indifference and superiority to the vain delights and entangling cares of this present evil world that you are to prove yourself to be numbered among the peculiar people. You must let your moderation be known unto all men. You must show that you are crucified to the world; that you set very light by the glittering and enticing objects which others so eagerly pursue; that your real business is about heavenly things; and that you are taught

"To scorn the trifles of a day
For which none can take away."

Learn, however, a lesson of caution from the conduct of our pilgrims. The Prince of this world has so much in you, that you cannot be exposed, without danger, to the special temptations which you will meet. Stop up, therefore, the avenues of temptation. Shut your eye to every sight, and stop your ear to every sound, that would allure you from the right way; and cry earnestly to the God of your salvation, "Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity." Still look up, as you proceed on your way, for larger supplies of heavenly grace, and show plainly that your citizenship is above. Remember that the truth of God is all that is really worth your possessing. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Buy it at any price, and sell it at no price

And if you be reproached or reviled, and all manner of evil spoken of you, falsely, for Christ's sake, care not for it. Only be anxious to suffer as a Christian. Endeavour to manifest the meekness and forbearance and forgiveness of Him by whose name you are called, and all shall be well. The example which you show of patience, and of suffering affliction, shall stop the mouths of gainsayers; and by God's blessing, some who obeyed not the word, shall, without the word, be won by the behaviour which they witness. Whatever reproaches may be laid upon you, and whatever false charges may be brought against you, see that you behave yourself wisely in a perfect way. When you are reviled, revile not again. When you suffer, do not threaten, but commit yourself to Him who judgeth righteously. Be not overcome of evil. Let not the evil treatment which you receive stir up a revengeful, angry spirit in you. "Love ye your enemies, and pray for them which despitefully use you. Such a testimony is sure to speak powerfully and effectually to the consciences of some who witness it. Satan may rage and stir up his adherents to greater violence, when he perceives that through your means his party is weakened; and you may be brought into great outward distress. But as Paul and Silas, when they had been beaten and thrust into an inner prison and their feet made fast in the stocks, were still joyful and happy, and were enabled to make the gloomy cells of their prison echo at the midnight hour with the hymns of praise which they chanted together; so shall it be with you, in every trouble which you encounter for conscience sake. If your sufferings abound for Christ, your consolations shall abound by Christ. And if

he bless you, and give you inward peace, and cause his face to shine upon you, what have you then to fear from outward trouble? You shall have a song in the night, and you shall sweetly sing,

“ Let earth against my soul engage,
And fiery darts be hurled,
Now I can smile at Satan’s rage,
And face a frowning world.”

God grant that we may all obtain this inward peace, this sweet sense of our personal interest in Christ, and then we shall be no more moved by any outward distress than those who are comfortably sitting inside the house are moved by the rattling of the hail upon the outside of the tiles !

THE HYMN.

Let worldly minds the world pursue,
It has no charms for me ;
Once I admired its trifles too,
But grace has set me free.

Its pleasures now no longer please,
No more content afford ;
Far from my heart be joys like these,
Now I have known the Lord.

As by the light of opening day
The stars are all concealed ;
So earthly pleasures fade away
When Jesus is revealed.

Creatures no more divide my choice,
I bid them all depart ;
His name, and love, and gracious voice,
Have fixed my roving heart.

Now, Lord, I would be thine alone,
And wholly live to thee ;
But may I hope that thou wilt own
A worthless worm like me ?

Yes ! though of sinners I'm the worst,
 I cannot doubt thy will ;
 For if thou hadst not loved me first,
 I had refused thee still.

THE PRAYER.

O merciful God ! We bless and praise thy holy name for the gift of thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father. Send thy Holy Spirit into our hearts, and grant that we may all partake of the precious benefits which the Redeemer of the world has procured for his people. We are fallen, guilty, and depraved sinners, surrounded with objects on every side, that strive to entice us from the narrow way of life. Turn away our eyes from beholding vanity ; and quicken thou us in thy way. Thou knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and such great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our mortal nature we cannot always stand upright ; give us, we most humbly beseech thee, all needful instruction, and all sufficient supplies of grace and strength, to support us in every trying scene through which we are appointed to pass. We know not what is before us : but Thou knowest. And thou hast warned us that in the world we shall have tribulation, and that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution. May we set our faces as a flint, and in thy name, and in thy strength, may we overcome not only all the wiles of the devil, and the lusts of the flesh, but all the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. Oh ! teach us to make a proper estimate of the life which now is, and the life of the world to come. While we are in the world may we declare plainly that we are not of the world. May we have our conversation in heaven, and set our affections on things above, and not on things on the earth. There be many that say, " Who will show us any good ? " but Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou only art a suitable portion for our souls. Thou only art able to satisfy us, and make us happy both here and for ever. Except thou bless us, what good will our life do us ? We shall but walk in a vain show, and disquiet ourselves in vain. Oh ! turn us from all our idols and vanities ; and grant, Lord, that there may be nothing, either in heaven above or in the earth beneath, to occupy that place in our hearts which belongs to thee. May we never be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified,

and may we declare plainly whose we are and whom we serve. Grant that as strangers and pilgrims we may abstain from fleshly lusts, not fashioning ourselves according to the children of this world; but may we put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and know nothing as the ground of our hope but his atoning blood and his justifying righteousness. May we speak the language of the heavenly city to which we are tending; and may our speech be always with grace seasoned with salt. And grant, Lord, that we may always manifest a holy indifference to every thing which this world has to bestow, that we may never follow after any of its carnal delights, or be led by any of its covetous desires. Hear us, O gracious Father, and uphold us by thy right hand, amid all the snares and temptations that we meet on our pilgrimage, until we are brought to the heavenly Canaan, to see thy face and sing thy praise for ever, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XVIII.

THE FAITHFUL MARTYR.

Why should I shrink at pain and wo,
Or feel at death dismay?
I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
And realms of endless day.

Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
Around my Saviour stand;
And soon my friends in Christ below
Will join the glorious band.

Jerusalem! my happy home!
My soul still pants for thee;
Then shall my labours have an end,
When I thy joys shall see.

REVELATIONS ii. 13.

I KNOW THY WORKS, AND WHERE THOU DWELLEST, EVEN WHERE SATAN'S SEAT IS: AND THOU HOLDEST FAST MY NAME, AND HAST NOT DENIED MY FAITH, EVEN IN THOSE DAYS WHEREIN ANTIPAS WAS MY FAITHFUL MARTYR, WHO WAS SLAIN AMONG YOU, WHERE SATAN DWELLETH.

It is remarkable that so little is said in the Holy Scriptures concerning the noble army of martyrs. The Spirit of God well knew the tendency there is in man unduly to exalt his fellow-man, and to regard with something of superstitious veneration those who have laid down their lives in testimony of the truth. For this reason, it is probable, a wise silence is generally observed in the Bible concerning the numbers that in every age, and especially in the first age of the gospel, resisted unto blood. Here

and there, it is true, this silence is broken ; and as a specimen of the rest, we have the individual martyr brought before us. The verse which has just been read is an instance of this kind. The great and busy city of Pergamos was so completely given to sin and wickedness, idolatry and secularity, that the Lord testifies concerning it, that it was Satan's seat. Here, however, he had a faithful remnant of upright followers, who shone as lights in a dark place ; but so violent was the persecution excited by Satan and his adherents against the Christians, that here Antipas, the Lord's faithful martyr, was put to death. His death, however, did not induce the rest of the Christians to renounce their profession. " They held fast their Saviour's name, and did not deny his faith, even in those days wherein Antipas had been slain among them, where Satan dwelt."

You will perceive at once how easily all this may be applied to our present subject—the martyrdom of Faithful in the town of Vanity. The trial to which he was brought clearly shows that he too dwelt where Satan's seat was established. He, like Antipas, suffered for the truth ; and Christian was encouraged, by the martyrdom of his fellow, to hold fast his Saviour's name, and not to deny his faith. We shall consider,

- I. The trial of Faithful in the town of Vanity.
- II. The manner in which he suffered ; and,
- III. The effects that resulted from his sufferings.

May the consideration of these particulars turn to the profit and edification of every one of us !

I. The trial of Faithful is first to engage our attention. This is described by our author with his own peculiar genius; and the iniquity of the whole proceeding is well calculated to impress upon our minds, that the place where it occurred, viz., the town of Vanity, was indeed the seat of Satan.

When the two pilgrims were in the prison, they recalled the intimation of Evangelist, that one of them should suffer death in this place; and they each secretly wished that it might be his lot here to finish his course. They left this, however, to the wise Disposer of all events. The judge that was to try them was called Hate-good. They were accused of disturbing the fair, causing commotions, and making a party in opposition to the interests of the lord of the place. Faithful, whose spirit was stirred within him, boldly answered in their defence, and concluded by defying the king of that town, as the enemy of the Sovereign whom they served. The witnesses that appeared to testify against them were Envy, Superstition and Pickthank. Envy brought the most grievous things to the charge of Faithful; especially that he diffused certain disloyal notions, and that he had heard him affirm, that Christianity and the customs observed in the town of Vanity were diametrically opposite and could not be reconciled. Superstition testified that he knew little, and wished to know less, of Faithful; but that he was a pestilent fellow, who had said, that the religion of the town was nought, and that no man by it could please God; thus making all their worship in vain, and implying that the citizens of that good town were in a state of rebellion, and as such were exposed to the vengeance of the great

King. Much to the same purpose was the evidence of Pickthank. He accused Faithful of having railed against their sovereign prince, and having spoken contemptuously of their chief nobles, Old-Man, Carnal-Delight, Luxurious, Vain-Glory, and others of the like kind, who were great men, and high in authority in the town of Vanity. In addition to which he deposed, that his lordship himself, Judge Hate-good, then presiding in court, had not escaped the slanderous tongue of the prisoner at the bar. After this evidence had been given, the judge addressed Faithful in the most enraged manner, and only permitted him, as a signal favour, to speak for himself. Well was Faithful able to make his own defence. As to the charges of Envy, he declared he had only said: "Whatever customs were contrary to the word of God, were contrary to Christianity." To the testimony of Superstition this was his reply: he had said, "Saving faith must rest upon the Divine word; and whatever is thrust into the worship of God, which is not agreeable to that word, will not be profitable to eternal life." The evidence of the last witness he treated in a different manner; boldly affirming (not in a railing manner, but with all gravity) that the prince and the nobles and the judge of that town, were all the enemies of his Sovereign, and that they deserved to be banished from the world, and shut up in the Tophet prepared of old for the king and all his adherents! The judge then addressing the jury, summed up the evidence, and reminded them of the confession of the prisoner. He then instructed them concerning the law in such a case, and cited the persecuting edicts made by tyrants of former times as so many precedents for the kind of verdict they were bound

to give. The twelve jurymen who sat on this trial were admirably adapted to receive, without a doubt, the testimony of Superstition and Envy, and to bring in a verdict that would be most agreeable to such a judge as Hate-good. Blindman was their foreman, and Malice and Heady, Liar and Cruelty, Hate-light and Implacable, were very conspicuous in the business. These gentlemen of the jury were all agreed in their verdict, which was that Faithful was guilty, and deserving of death. They mutually confirmed each other in this sentence by every one expressing his private opinion. Blindman said, "I see clearly this man is a heretic!" Malice said, "I hate the very looks of him!" Heady repeatedly cried out, "Hang him! hang him!" Enmity declared, "My heart riseth against him!" Cruelty thought hanging was too good for him; and Implacable declared, that might he have all the world, he could never be reconciled to him. What chance had poor Faithful, when he had fallen into such hands? He was condemned to die a most cruel death.

What an affecting view does this trial afford of the enmity of the world to the faithful follower of Christ! From the very beginning has this been evinced. In every age, he that was born after the flesh has persecuted him that was born after the Spirit; and so is it now. Why are children of this world so ready to judge and condemn the harmless and unoffending followers of Christ? Why do they speak of them so cruelly, so spitefully, and so disdainfully? And why do they act towards them in the manner that they do? The great root of all this lies in an unconverted heart, which is enmity against God. All unconverted men are opposed to the per-

fect character of God. His truth and his justice, his holiness and his sovereignty, they cannot endure. But all faithful people bear some resemblance, however faintly, and reflect something, however dimly, of the image of their Father who is in heaven. The sight of this stirs up the secret enmity of their hearts. "The wicked seeth the righteous, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth." In addition to this, the daily life and conversation of a true believer is a constant reproof to those who are living in pleasure and vanity, and worldliness and sin. "He that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked." Those, my brethren, who are uninfluenced by true religion, summon up the people of God to a tribunal of their own erecting. They exalt their own carnal reason to the judgment-seat. That carnal reason which is enmity to the law of God, that reason they make to sit in judgment, which left to itself can do nothing else than hate every thing that is good. Such a judge as this is determined beforehand to condemn the faithful. He records with pleasure, and sums up with emphasis, the testimony borne by envy and superstition and men-pleasers, against the people of God. By witnesses like these, faithful men are charged with turning the world upside down, thinking nobody right but themselves, and condemning most of the noble-minded people in the world because they do not subscribe to their peculiar views and opinions. This unjust judge will scarcely suffer the voice of truth to speak a word in defence of the accused. Or if a faithful voice be raised in self-defence, the explanation that he makes is unheeded, while his bold and unhesitating condemnation of every thing condemned by the word of God is hastily caught

up as a confession of his guilt. The bad passions that are called into exercise, when truth is condemned upon such evidence, like a corrupt and biassed jury, are all ready, from a variety of motives, to speak the fatal sentence and to condemn the innocent. Seeing, my brethren, that we are all liable, from our depraved and fallen nature, to form such a corrupt judgment, to be abused by such false witnesses, and to be actuated by such unholy passions, oh, how earnestly ought we to pray for the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to be exerted upon our soul, that we may be renewed in every part! Oh, remember that if we are misled by a wicked judgment, perverted by false appearance and false testimony, and corrupted by sinful and depraved affections, remember, I say, that this cannot in the least extenuate our guilt. "Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; who justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him."

II. We proceed now from the unrighteous sentence which was pronounced upon Faithful, to direct our thoughts to the execution of it. No sooner had the wicked judge pronounced upon him the sentence of death, than the men of the fair were all eager to have it instantly inflicted, in the most cruel manner that could be invented. They brought him out, therefore, to do with him according to their law. He was literally in his death conformable to Him who for our sake endured the cross and despised the shame. "The disciple is not above his Master; but every one that is perfect shall be as

his Master. First they scourged him, then they buffeted him, then they lanced his flesh with knives; after that, they stoned him with stones, then they thrust him with their swords, and last of all they burnt him to ashes at the stake. Thus came Faithful to his end. In one sense only he came to his end, but not in another. He came indeed to the end of his painful pilgrimage, and the end of his bitter sufferings and persecutions. But in the highest and noblest sense this was not his end. The end of his earthly trials was only the beginning of his heavenly triumphs. Lo, there stood behind the assembled multitude, a chariot and a couple of horses waiting for him, and the moment when his adversaries could hurt him no longer, he was taken into the chariot, and straightway was carried up through the clouds with the sound of a trumpet, the nearest way to the Celestial Gate. Like Antipas, the faithful martyr of Christ, he was slain among them where Satan dwelt. Like Antipas, he endured as seeing Him who is invisible, and was faithful even unto death; and like him he received from the gracious hands of his Saviour a crown of life.

How animating, my brethren, it is to our faith, to contemplate the abundant grace which has constantly been exhibited by the martyrs of Jesus, when they were delivered up unto death for Jesus' sake! They have solemnly appealed from the unrighteous judgment passed upon them by their fellow-men, to a higher tribunal, and they have committed their cause to Him who judgeth righteously. But they have done this without any other feeling towards their cruel and enraged persecutors than that of love and compassion, and pity and for-

givenness. Because they were abundantly comforted within, and the Spirit of glory and of God rested upon them, they could smile at death in its most terrific form. They could smile at death, because their Saviour smiled at them. "They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover, of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword." The ancient church has furnished her full quota towards the formation of the noble army of martyrs. It was wonderfully augmented in the early ages of the Christian era, when heathen emperors and pagan priests, excited by the dragon, which is the devil, strained every nerve to extirpate the new religion from the world. And far more largely were the ranks of the army increased, when the apostate church made herself drunk with the blood of saints, and of the martyrs of Jesus. The final complement has yet to be made. Are we arming ourselves with a martyr's mind? Have we been instructed, with the piercing eye of a strong and steadfast faith, to look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen? Can we look further than the fire and the fagot, the mocking and the scourging, the edge of the sword and the violence of the fire, and all the tortures that hellish rage can invent, or human cruelty can inflict? Can we, I say, look beyond all this, and see, as it were, behind the multitude, the chariot and the horses, waiting to convey, with the sound of a trumpet, the souls of the faithful to the Celestial Gate? Yea, can we see heaven opened, and the glory of God, and Jesus

standing on the right hand of God? Can we see him ready to receive the immortal spirit, the moment that it is released from its fetters of clay, and waiting to crown it with glory and honour for ever and ever? Can we see the glorious manner in which all sufferings endured for Christ shall surely terminate—all believers come out of their great tribulation, and forming so vast a multitude, that they seem, with their shining garments, like a cloud of glory before the throne of God and the Lamb? Say, my brethren, should not a sight like this reconcile us to any present sufferings that we meet in our way to Zion? “Wherefore, seeing we also are encompassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us.”

III. The effects that resulted from the death of Faithful was the last head for our present consideration. Christian was no unconcerned spectator of what had befallen his faithful companion; but he held fast the profession of his faith, and denied not his Master. He felt keenly the separating stroke which had parted them asunder. The delightful intercourse which these two had long enjoyed in the ways of Zion, and the sweet counsel which they had taken together, was now terminated. One was taken and the other was left. As for Christian, he had some respite, and was remanded back to prison. He only remained there for a little season. He who overrules all things, so restrained and controlled the rage of the adversary, that Christian, for that time, escaped out of their hands and proceeded on his journey. Deeply as he felt the loss

of his beloved comrade, he could not forbear rejoicing greatly on his account. He rejoiced in the noble profession which Faithful had witnessed ; and he rejoiced in thinking that he was now far removed beyond the reach of all the rage and violence and malice of his adversaries. And thus he said, as he parted from the place where his brother had resisted unto blood,

“ Sing, Faithful, sing, and let thy name survive ;
For, though they killed thee, thou art yet alive.”

And now observe the unexpected manner in which the void occasioned by the death of Faithful was happily supplied. Christian went not forth alone from the town of Vanity. There was a man called Hopeful, (so made by the things which he had just witnessed in the fair,) who joined himself to Christian's company, and entering into a brotherly covenant, told him he would be his companion. Thus one had died to bear testimony to the truth, and another rises out of his ashes to cast in his lot with Christian, and to be the companion of his pilgrimage. Neither was the happy determination of Hopeful the only good that resulted from the martyrdom of Faithful. An impression had evidently been produced in the town by what had occurred. Hopeful told Christian, “that there were many more of the men in the fair that would take their time and follow after.”

See here, my brethren, an affecting view of the wonderful manner in which the Sovereign of the universe overrules all events, even the most painful and afflictive, for the good of the real Christian and the enlargement of his true Church. Without being exposed exactly to the same fiery trial which met

our pilgrims and separated them in the town of Vanity, all who are engaged in the Christian race are tried continually by the stroke of death removing their beloved companions out of their sight. The nearest and most faithful of all Christian friends are not suffered to continue, by reason of death. One after another they drop off, and are carried away, like leaves in autumn. But however painful may have been their passage, and however severe their struggle with the last enemy, if only they have departed in the true faith of Christ, we ought to rejoice, rather than to weep, on their account. What is death in its most dreadful form to all faithful people?

'Tis but the voice which Jesus sends
To call them to his arms."

We should remember that to die is gain; and knowing surely that the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity with their Saviour, we ought to dry up our tears, and only be excited by what we have seen, to hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, and to be followers of them "who through faith and patience inherit the promises." He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restraineth. How continually are the devices of the wicked one made to recoil upon himself! He thinks to ruin the cause of Christ by stirring up wicked men cruelly to persecute the people of God, and causing some of them to be put to death by way of intimidating others. But widely different does the result prove. If Faithful dies, Hopeful springs up, as it were from his ashes, to supply his place. Nay, so power

fully and conspicuously is the spirit of Christ seen to rest upon his suffering saints and servants, and such a strong contrast is their meekness and patience and resignation, to the fury and rage and cruelty of their adversaries, that the blood of the martyrs has ever proved the seed of the church. Not only are individuals induced, from what they behold, to burst the cords which have hitherto separated them from the people of God, and to choose them, henceforth, as their companions and associates, but the town of Vanity is shaken by the witnessing of such behaviour, and numbers there seem only waiting for a favourable moment to turn their backs upon the sins and follies and vanities of the world, and to unite themselves to the Lord and his people, "in a perpetual covenant never to be forgotten." Oh, if you would be eminently useful in your day and generation—if you would stop the mouths of gainsayers, and be the honoured instruments of convincing others of the reality and blessedness and excellence of true religion, endeavour to suffer as a Christian, and exemplify the spirit of a faithful martyr, in all the trials and persecutions and contradictions that you meet with in this vain world. Show such a spirit as this in your daily walk and conversation, and in all the little trials and annoyances that you have to encounter, as well as in your severer and more pressing calamities. Such a spirit as this can neither be hid nor lost. When you never thought that any one was taking notice, it will afterwards be found to have been the happy means of kindling the beam of heavenly hope in some who witnessed it, and powerfully bringing home conviction to the hearts of many beside. And be sure, every one of you,

when good resolutions are put into your hearts, to act upon them immediately. Imitate the promptness of Hopeful, who went out immediately to Christian, and not the hesitation of those men in the fair, who would take their time and follow after Hopeful, who acted immediately upon his convictions, accompanied Christian all the way to the Celestial City; the men that waited for a more convenient season, for aught that appears to the contrary, continued to linger in the town of Vanity, and their good resolutions and convictions were choked and stifled by the hurry and bustle and fascinations of the fair. Act while the impression is strong. Strike while the iron is hot. Rise up and walk on the way to Zion while your conscience is awake, and do not, by delaying, suffer it to slumber again. Delays are dangerous.

“Hasten, O sinner, to be wise,
And stay not for to-morrow’s sun!”

Imitate him who said, “I will arise and go to my father.” And no sooner said this than it was done; he arose and came to his father. Imitate him who testified, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments.”

THE HYMN.

Lo! round the throne, at God’s right hand,
The saints, in countless myriads stand;
Of every tongue redeemed to God,
Arrayed in garments washed in blood.

Through tribulation great they came,
They bore the cross, despised the shame;
From all their labours now they rest,
In God’s eternal glory blessed.

Hunger and thirst they feel no more ;
 Nor sin, nor pain, nor death deplore ;
 The tear is wiped from every eye,
 And sorrow yields to endless joy.

They see their Saviour face to face,
 And sing the triumphs of his grace ;
 Him, day and night, they ceaseless praise,
 And thus the loud hosannas raise :

“ Worthy the Lamb for sinners slain,
 Through endless years to live and reign ;
 Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood,
 And made us kings and priests to God.”

THE PRAYER.

O Lord, who hast prepared for them that love thee such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, or deserve. Thou hast assured us, that in the world we must have tribulation ; yea, that through much tribulation we must enter into thy kingdom. Grant, O Lord, that in all our sufferings here upon earth, for the testimony of thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed ; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of thy first martyr Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those that suffer for thee. Whatever trials or persecutions we may be called to endure, Lord, grant that we may hold fast thy name, and not deny thy faith, even though we dwell in the place where Satan retains his seat. If it please thee, deliver us from the persecutions of men. But if we are reviled and persecuted for righteousness' sake, and have all manner of evil spoken against us falsely, enable us to suffer as Christians, and to witness a good confession. May we constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake. Grant that we may never shrink from any sufferings which thou hast appointed for us on our way to heaven. May we endure as seeing Him who is invisible. Oh ! may we never accept of deliverance got by sinful means, that we may obtain a better resurrection. May we be followers of them who

through faith and patience now inherit the promises; and reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Only bring us at last to the happy company, that have come out of great tribulation, and washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, and are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and then we shall be abundantly comforted for all our sorrows and distresses in this vale of tears. Lord, arm us with a martyr's spirit, in which to meet all the trials and calamities of life, whether great or small; that we may glorify thy holy name, and not only with well-doing put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, but be the honoured instruments of convincing the gainsayers, and winning some to the hope of the gospel who have hitherto neglected thy great salvation. And oh! make us all faithful to our convictions. When we feel our danger, and hear of the only remedy, may we remember that now is the accepted time, and the day of salvation; and may we make haste and delay not to keep thy commandments. Hear us, O Lord, and bring us all to thy blissful presence, where we shall join the whole company of the redeemed, and say: "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Amen.

LECTURE XIX.

BY-ENDS, OR THE DOUBLE-MINDED MAN.

If once I wander from thy path,
I think upon my ways ;
Then turn my feet to thy commands,
And trust thy pardoning grace.

Now I am thine, for ever thine,
O save thy servant, Lord !
Thou art my shield, my hiding-place,
My hope is in thy word.

Thou hast inclined this heart of mine
Thy statutes to fulfil ;
And thus till mortal life shall end
Would I perform thy will.

JAMES i. 8.

A DOUBLE-MINDED MAN IS UNSTABLE IN ALL HIS WAYS.

IF there be one feature which more eminently than the rest distinguishes the true Christian, it doubtless is simplicity of purpose, or singleness of mind. The true Christian has one great object in view, which is the ruling principle of his life :—To obtain the end of his faith, even the salvation of his soul. So to run that he may obtain the prize of his high calling, is, in his estimation, the one thing needful. This conviction is deeply wrought in his mind, and he acts upon it. Thus, &c. he pursues

his way, he is taught to turn from all those things which are contrary to his profession. As a true believer, he has the law of God written in the fleshly tables of his heart. This inward principle regulates his habitual conduct. It enables him to escape the snares and overcome the stumbling-blocks which are the occasion of falling to others. "The law of his God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide." He goes forward in a consistent course, because he is a man of a single mind. It is otherwise, however, with the hypocrite, and all such as make a profession without this simplicity of purpose, and without any intention of letting religion be the ruling principle of their lives, and making all things else give place to this one grand and all-important concern. If a person be not simple and sincere in the purpose of his mind, inconsistency is sure to mark his steps. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." We shall see this most strikingly illustrated in the case of By-ends, whose character has now to pass before us.

I. We have to notice how such a character cannot endure the company of the true Christian.

II. The kind of company in which he delights.

Let us all, my brethren, seek earnestly for that singleness of heart and simplicity of purpose without which we can never run with patience the Christian race.

I. We have to show that a double-minded man—that is, such a person as is intended by By-ends—cannot endure the company of the true Christian.

As Christian and Hopeful pursued their way from the town of Vanity, they overtook one that was going before them, whose name was By-ends. Upon being questioned, he told them he came from the town of Fair-speech, and that he was going to the Celestial City; but he did not tell them his name. Christian doubted whether any good could come from such a place, but By-ends hoped there could. He was ashamed of his name, but boasted that the town to which he belonged was very wealthy, and that he had many rich kindred there. He was connected, he said, with all the honourable people there, whose names intimated that outward show and fair pretence was their principal object. He spoke much of his marriage alliance with Dissimulation, the daughter of Feigning. "It is true," he said, "we somewhat differ in religion from those of the stricter sort, yet only in two small points. First, we never strive against wind and tide. Secondly, we are always most zealous when religion goes in his silver slippers; we love much to walk with him in the streets, if the sun shines and the people applaud him." This was speaking out, and it began to open the eyes of Christian as to the kind of companion with whom he was conversing. Therefore, stepping aside a little to his fellow, Hopeful, he said, "It runs in my head that this is one By-ends; and if so, we have as bad a man in our company as dwelleth in all these parts." It was agreed between them that Christian should return to him again, and ask him plainly if he were not By-ends of Fair-speech? When this question was proposed to him, he denied that it was his true name, but only applied to him by way of reproach.

Christian asked him if he had not, by his conduct, given occasion for men to call him by this name? To this he replied, "Never, never!" professing that he had always had the good fortune to let his judgment coincide with the times, whatever they might be. And thus, whatever changes took place, it was always his lot to be a gainer, and on the right side. This declaration induced Christian to say, "I fear that the name of By-ends belongs to you more properly than you are willing that we should think it does." He regretted that suspicions should be held towards him, and declared that they would find him a fair companion, if they would admit him as their associate. This induced Christian to propound the only terms upon which they could receive him. "If," he said, "you will go with us, you must go against wind and tide. You must own religion in his rags, as well as when in his silver slippers; and stand by him when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause." This was coming to the point, and making the way far too narrow for such a character as By-ends to walk in it. "You must not," he replied to Christian, "impose, nor lord it over my faith; leave me to my liberty and let me go with you!" But Christian could not recede one jot nor one tittle from the terms he had mentioned, which are no other than the terms of the everlasting gospel. "Not a step further," he said, "can we take together, unless you will do, in what I propound, as we do." "Then," said By-ends, "I shall never desert my old principles, since they are harmless and profitable. If I may not go with you, I must do as I did before you overtook me, even go by myself, until some over-

take me that shall be glad of my company." Upon this Christian and Hopeful separated from By-ends.

Here let us pause for a few minutes to be warned and cautioned against such principles as these, and such a character as this. This By-ends was a double-minded man. His principles were unsound, and it was impossible for his life to be consistent. No man can rise above his principles. "A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways." For a little while he may join the company of real Christians, but he will not long abide with them. His sentiments and theirs, on the most important points, are diametrically opposite. How then, should they continue to walk in the same narrow path? "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" The true Christian seeks salvation by his religion. But a person like By-ends only professes religion in order to obtain by it reputation, or credit, or some worldly advantage. The true Christian follows the Lord fully and habitually, at every risk, and at every cost; but the other conceals or denies his profession when it would expose him to reproach or persecution. Remember, my brethren, good words and fair speeches are not sufficient to make a true pilgrim to the heavenly Jerusalem. The man whose heart is not right with God sees little difference between outward profession and inward conversion. He is ashamed, however, of his real name; and has no objection to the company of the upright, if only he may be left to his own principles. He thinks much about great people and great connections, if he happens to have any; and is evidently most at home among those smooth and easy people, who, in a very different manner to what was meant

by the apostle, become all things to all men ; not that by all means they may save some, but that by any means they may keep fair with all. A person who has By-ends in view when he professes religion, is bound for life, as it were, by the marriage-tie to Dissimulation. And the artifice of his wife appears in all he does. They never strive against wind and tide. When religion is fashionable and profession is cheap, they love then to bask in its sunshine, and none are more loud in their plaudits of it than they. But let the weather change, and they are neither to be seen nor heard. And yet still, the person who can act in such a way as this will not own that his name is By-ends. He calls this a term of reproach that is unjustly applied to him. And though his opinions can change and vary about in any direction, and he is so clearly a time-server that he can

“ fawn and seek for power
By doctrine suited to the varying hour,”

he will not be convinced of his real character. He still thinks he can go to Zion, and, by prudent management, avoid the cross and keep fair with the world. He counts it little short of madness to go all lengths with decided followers of Christ.—Will our religion stand such a test as this? Are we ready to go against wind and tide ; to own religion in rags, as well as in silver slippers ; and to stand by Christ, and profess our adherence to him, when despised and reproached by the world, as well as when admired and commended by the multitude? Do we account this a hard saying, and a grievous imposition, and quite an infringement upon our liberty? Then not a step further need we pretend

to go on the way to Zion. Here we must part with the true pilgrims. It is all in vain to pretend that we will not desert our old principles. These principles are utterly at variance with the first principles of the oracles of God. Instead of being harmless and profitable, they are wicked and destructive. They are wicked, inasmuch as they prove plainly that we prefer the friendship of the world to the favour of God. "Whosoever will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." And they are ruinous, inasmuch as they are leading us down to the chambers of death, while they cheat us with the delusive hope that we are in the way of life. "There is a way that seemeth right to a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." We may, if we please, part from the company of the upright, as far too narrow-minded and strict for us, and we may find many others that will be glad of our company; but these others will only hush our convictions, beguile and flatter us in a false way, and increase our prejudices against the upright.

II. We now proceed to consider the kind of company in which such a person as By-ends can take delight, and the characters that are glad to have him for their companion. Christian and Hopeful straightway forsook him, after what they had heard, and kept at a distance before him. But three notorious characters, with whom he had long been on the most intimate terms, came up to By-ends, and they mutually saluted each other in the most friendly manner. These three persons were Hold-the-World, Money-Love, and Save-all. By-ends had been brought up in the same school as these men, and the great lesson which they had all learned most

effectually was this—to get and retain whatever they could, without being over-scrupulous as to the means. None of them thought it wrong to put on the guise of religion, for the sake of securing present gain. All the four, therefore, were meet companions well met. As Christian and Hopeful were still in sight, walking on before, the men who had just joined By-ends naturally inquired who those two persons were. The description he gives of them is very striking, and clearly puts before us the light in which double-minded men and worldly professors, for the most part, regard true Christians. He said they were two far countrymen, that, after their own peculiar mode, were going on pilgrimage. Money-Love thought it was a pity they did not wait until they all got up to them, as he hoped they were all alike, making the same journey. But By-ends declared, “The men before us are so rigid, and love so much their own notions, and so lightly esteem the opinions of others, that let a man be ever so godly, yet if he squares not with them in all things, they thrust him quite out of their company.” Save-all thought that very bad; but reminded his friends that some people are righteous overmuch; and wished to know more particularly what were the things in which By-ends had differed from those two men. To this he answered in full: “After their head-strong manner,” he said, “they conclude that it is their duty to rush on their journey all weathers, but I am for waiting for wind and tide. They are for hazarding all for their prince at a stroke, and I am for taking all advantages to secure my life and estate. They are for holding their notions, though all other men be against them; but I am for religion in what, and so far as, the times

and my safety will bear it. In short, they are for religion when in rags and contempt; but I am for him when he walks in his silver slippers, in the sunshine and with applause." Here this hollow pretender had uttered all that was in his heart, and mightily was his doctrine approved of by all the rest. Hold-the-World, in a kind of transport, besought him still to adhere to this doctrine, and declared that for his part he counted that man for a fool, who, having liberty to keep what he has, should be so unwise as to lose it. Much he added to the same purpose, perverting and misapplying the words of Scripture, to varnish over his base idolatry. Save-all thought they were all perfectly agreed in this point, and that no more words were necessary about it: while Money-Love did not scruple to assert, that both Scripture and reason were clearly in favour of their principles. By-ends then proposed this question for their discussion; "Suppose a man can only secure some great temporal advantage by appearing to be more zealous in religion than he had ever been before, may he not use this means to attain his end, and yet be a right honest man?" Money-Love undertook to give the reply to this question. After a long train of ingenious and plausible arguments (just what might be expected from a man who wished to be thought religious, while love of money was the ruling principle within) he arrived at the conclusion that it was lawful for a man, without any impeachment of his honesty, to assume such an appearance of sanctity or zeal, for the sake of the proffered advantage. So thoroughly satisfied were all his three friends with the soundness of his conclusion and the strength of his argument, that they were quite anxious for the conviction of Chris-

tian and Hopeful, who were still within call, that the same question should be proposed to them. They called, therefore, to Christian and his fellow; and Hold-the-World proposed the question to them, bidding them to answer it, if they could. And now mark what a different solution they heard to their question from the lips of Christian! He put before them, in its true light, the dreadful sin of making religion a mere stalking-horse to preferment. This he declared to be the very practice of heathens and hypocrites, devils and sorcerers. And he instanced a clear proof of what he said from the Holy Scriptures. The heathen Shechemites were willing to submit to a religious rite, that the cattle of the Israelites might be theirs. The hypocritical Pharisees, for a pretence, made long prayers, that they might devour widows' houses, and only secured greater damnation. Judas the traitor appeared to be religious, that he might get money, when, in reality, he was a thief and a robber and a devil. And Simon the sorcerer only desired the gift of the Holy Ghost, that he might get money by working miracles. Thus came Christian to this unanswerable conclusion: "The man who takes up religion for the world will throw down religion for the world. As surely as Judas, for the love of money, associated with Christ and his disciples, so surely did he sell religion and his Master for the same. To answer, therefore, the question, as you have done, is heathenish, hypocritical and devilish; and your reward will be according to your work." Hopeful approved entirely of Christian's reply, but the others stood staring one at the other, and had not a word to answer. At length By-ends and his company lingered and kept behind, that

Christian and his comrade might pass on before. Then said Christian, "If these men cannot stand before the sentence of men, what will they do with the sentence of God? And if they are mute when dealt with by vessels of clay, what will they do when they shall be rebuked by flames of devouring fire?"

How much there is in all this for our warning and instruction and direction! People who cannot endure sound doctrine, and who think those that make conscience of vital godliness far too precise and particular, are ready to associate in the most familiar manner with men of the world, and to choose for their companions those whose first and leading object evidently is to get and retain all that they can. Never let us be so foolish as to think, with By-ends, that there are different modes of going on pilgrimage. We must either cast in our lot with the true-hearted disciples of Christ, and follow him fully, or else it will be in vain to suppose that we are in the way to heaven, while we are walking by a widely different rule. We should be fully sensible of the blinding influence of deceitful and uncertain riches. Poor Money-Love was so blind and infatuated as confidently to hope that he and his companions were all in the right way! And so, dear friends, it is now with numbers who make haste to be rich, and who are evidently setting their affections on things below, and addicted to that "covetousness which is idolatry." Notwithstanding their idolatrous attachment to the world, they still presume that they are in the way to heaven. When faithful ministers and true Christians insist upon the absolute necessity of sitting loose to the things of the world, and making

every thing else give place to Christ and his salvation, we must not think that these are the peculiar views of narrow-minded men, who think nobody right but themselves. We must remember these are the true sayings of God; and that the Lord himself has assured us, "strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life." There is, indeed, such a thing as being righteous overmuch. But this favourite text is wrested by ungodly men, as also are the other Scriptures, to their own destruction. The true design of it seems to be, to caution us against excessive zeal for some detached parts of religion, to the neglect of others; and to warn us from unrequired austerities and fanciful delusions, which invariably divert the mind from the essentials of vital godliness. The particulars in which the single-hearted follower of Christ and a double-minded man differ from each other, are the same in every age. The one has his treasure in heaven, and is prepared to suffer the loss of all things that interfere with his salvation, and the allegiance which he owes to Christ; and all these things he counts but dross and dung, so that he may win Christ and be found in him. The other has his treasure upon earth; and in his opinion, it is madness and folly, and directly contrary to his principles, to profess religion or attachment to Christ, when shame and reproach, or any temporal loss and disadvantage, would certainly result from doing so. People of the world, who have their portion in this life, with the most unanimous consent will approve of such sayings. "Men will praise thee when thou doest good to thine own self." Men whose hearts are glued to the world, and who hold it fast in their covetous grasp—men who are for

saving all they can, and who look upon every thing as entirely lost, that is not hoarded up for themselves or their families—men who are evidently lovers of money,—all these, with one consent, will consider him a wise and happy man who never lets his religion interfere with his temporal interest. They determine to keep what they have, at any rate, and to get more if they can, without open scandal. They never consider that they are stewards of all the advantages which they possess; and that the day is coming when they must give a solemn and strict account of the use or abuse which they have made of these. We have all reason to watch and pray against a covetous and worldly spirit manifesting itself in one way or another. Who has not need of the prayer, “Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness?” But though such a spirit, when we see it walking forth in open day, without any concealment or disguise—though, I say, such a spirit is very painful to witness, it is still more odious when it assumes the garb of superior piety and sanctity, and men make profession of it merely to gain credit among religious people, or to advance their temporal interests. Let us, dear friends, diligently consider the integrity and uprightness which ought to characterize all our goings, as professing subjection to the gospel of Christ. Let us abhor from our hearts the detestable and crooked doctrine of By-ends, however it may be applauded and admired by those who would make a gain of godliness. Let us remember that all outward profession of religion, for any temporal advantage, is heathenish, hypocritical and diabolical. Let us seek to have our hearts right, and our motives pure, in the sight of God. Let all our views

of right and wrong be drawn, clear as crystal, from the fountain-head of eternal truth. Then we shall learn to approve what is excellent, and abhor what is evil. "Through thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way. And if hypocrites and dissemblers are often put to silence, now, by the plain declarations of their fellow-men, how speechless must they be, and how utterly unable to lift up their heads, when they appear before the dreadful tribunal of God, the Judge of all! Oh! let us prove the reality of our faith in Christ, by walking even as he walked, and becoming more and more, by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, conformable to his image. So shall "we abide in him, and when he shall appear, we shall have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming."

THE HYMN.

Lo! on a narrow neck of land,
 'Twixt two unbounded seas, I stand
 Secure, insensible!
 A point of time, a moment's space,
 Removes me to that heavenly place,
 Or shuts me up in hell.

O God! mine inmost soul convert,
 And deeply on my thoughtful heart
 Eternal things impress:
 Give me to feel their solemn weight,
 And tremble at my lifeless state,
 And wake to righteousness.

Before me place in dread array
 The pomp of that tremendous day,
 When thou with clouds shalt come
 To judge the nations at thy bar;
 And tell me, Lord, shall I be there
 To meet a joyful doom!

Be this my one great business here,
 With serious industry and fear,
 Eternal bliss t' insure :
 Thine utmost counsel to fulfil,
 And suffer all thy righteous will,
 And to the end endure.

Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,
 Transported from this vale to live,
 And reign with thee above ;
 Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
 And hope in full supreme delight
 And everlasting love.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name. Search us, O God, and know our hearts ; try us, and know our thoughts ; and see if there be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlasting. May our hearts be right with thee. May we none of us be double minded persons, appearing with a character before men that we do not really possess. May we have no by-ends in view, in professing subjection to the gospel of Christ. Oh, grant that integrity and uprightness may always preserve us, and that simplicity and godly sincerity may appear in all we do. May we approve things that are excellent, and be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ, being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God. May we never be offended in Christ, or induced to separate ourselves from such as are of a true heart. May we count the cost of professing ourselves the soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ. And oh ! grant that we may have such a realizing sense of the nearness and importance of eternal things, of the evil of sin, and the absolute necessity of obtaining salvation, that we may be ready to part with all, to bear any reproach, and to endure any present loss, rather than kindle thy displeasure, and be cast into that fearful place where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. May we have all our delight in the saints that are in the earth, and such as excel in virtue, and go not into the way of evil men. Deliver our souls from the wicked—from men of the world, which have their portion in this

life. Deliver us from that love of money which is the root of all evil; and keep us, we beseech thee, from covetousness, which is idolatry. May we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. Lord, keep us from ever joining with those who speak grievous things and contemptuously of the righteous. May we never approve of the maxims and sayings of men of corrupt minds, supposing that gain is godliness. Forbid it, Lord, that we should ever be so blinded by the god of this world, as to think that we may assume an appearance of religious zeal or sanctity, for the sake of advantage. Oh, may we keep the judgment of the great day constantly before us, and the solemn account we must then give. In that day may we be found among the generation of the upright, and be admitted to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for thy faithful people. These things we ask in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE XX.

THE CHARACTER OF DEMAS.

My God, permit me not to be
A stranger to myself and thee ;
Amid a thousand thoughts I rove,
Forgetful of my highest love.

Why should my passions mix with earth,
And thus debase my heavenly birth !
Why should I cleave to things below,
And let my God, my Saviour, go ?

Call me away from flesh and sense ;
One sovereign word can draw me thence ;
I would obey the voice divine,
And all inferior joys resign.

Be earth, with all her scenes withdrawn ;
Let noise and vanity be gone ;
In secret silence of the mind,
My heaven, and there my God, I find.

2 TIM. iv. 10.

DEMAS HATH FORSAKEN ME, HAVING LOVED THIS PRESENT WORLD.

How various are the temptations and the ensnaring objects that unite their influence to draw the Christian pilgrim from the narrow way of life Demas appeared to have set out on pilgrimage From the manner in which the Apostle mentions him, it is evident that he had made a profession of religion, and outwardly, at least, cast in his lot

among the true disciples of Christ. But love of the world proved a fatal snare to him. When the apostle Paul was in very trying circumstances, and was about to struggle with the difficulties and persecutions that beset the end of his well-run course, just before he attained his crown of righteousness, Demas, who had been his companion, forsook him in his perilous situation. He had not courage to venture his life, by continuing with the Apostle under his persecutions. He loved the world too well to give up all for Christ; and it is most likely, that while he was seeking for an opportunity to avoid the cross, some prospect of worldly gain was presented to him. With this bait he was caught, and departed, in pursuit of it, to Thessalonica. The character of Demas will form the subject of the present lecture.

I. We have to notice the meeting and conversation of our pilgrims with him.

II. His successful efforts against By-ends and his fellows; and

III. The reflections of Christian and Hopeful upon the character of Demas.

May the solemn admonition be deeply engraved upon all our hearts: "Love not the world, neither the things of the world!"

I. Where did our pilgrims meet with Demas? Having left By-ends and his company, they came to a delicate plain called Ease. They went over this with much content; but as the plain was only narrow, in a short time they had to leave it behind them. At the farther side of the plain was the hill

of Lucre ; and in the hill, a silver mine. This was so strange a sight to such as were on the way to Zion, that many in former times had turned aside to see it. But for the most part they had paid dear for doing so. Going too near the mouth of the pit, the ground being deceitful under them, it gave way, and many of them were slain ; while others were so wounded, that they went maimed ever after. This was the place where Demas dwelt. Here he stood, a little off the road, calling passengers from the way, to turn aside, and come and see. Such an invitation he addressed to Christian and his companion. Christian inquired what thing was so deserving as to be worth their while turning out of the road to see it ? Demas replied, " Here is a silver mine, and some digging in it for treasure ; if you will come, with a little pains, you may richly provide for yourselves." Then was Hopeful inclined to comply with this invitation ; but his more experienced companion rejected it, and said he knew well what a fatal place this had proved to pilgrims, and asked Demas if it were not dangerous ground, and if it had not hindered many in their pilgrimage. The unhappy man replied, " Not very dangerous, except to those that are careless." But he blushed as he spoke. Then did the pilgrims resolve not to stir a step out of the road, but to keep still in the way. Demas, however, repeated his invitation. But Christian addressed him as an enemy to the right ways of the Lord. He told him also that he had been condemned already by one of the King's judges, and that he was now trying to make others apostates like himself. This frightened him, for the man was not quite past feeling, and he said that he was one of their frater

nity, and that if they would tarry a little, he also would walk with them. He was obliged to confess that his name was Demas, but withal he added he was a son of Abraham. Christian, however, knew the man better than he knew himself, and classed him with Judas and Gehazi. Suspecting, too, that what he said was a mere pretence to entice them into the dangerous ground, he said, "Assure thyself that when we come to the King, we will tell him of this thy behaviour." Thus they went their way. Here let us pause to receive instruction.

As the delicate plain of Ease was narrow and soon passed, so is it, for the most part, with those intervals in the Christian course that are free from trials and annoyances. The hill Lucre, with its silver mine, will try to entice us before we have quite left the delicate plain. But oh, let us remember, however near it may seem to us in times of peace and prosperity, that at the very best it is a little out of the pilgrim's path. Why should a pilgrim to the heavenly city lade himself with the clay of earth? How can he retain his integrity, if he is at all attracted by the glittering hill? Oh, remember, that having food and raiment, the traveller to Zion should be therewith content. We cannot indulge the desire for riches, without deviating from the narrow path of the Divine commandments. "He that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent." We should seriously consider, that the ground all about the hill is deceitful and uncertain. If we once venture near, before ever we are aware, we may be drowned in perdition and destruction, or find to our cost that we have erred from the faith. Let us shut our ears to the false and flattering invitations of such men as Demas. Why should we

have any desire, or any curiosity, about aught which he can show us? "What thing is so deserving, as to turn us out of the way to see it?" What is silver and all earthly treasure, in the estimation of one acquainted with the true riches, and aspiring after the heavenly treasure? Let no Demas persuade the hopeful disciple, that with a little pains, he may richly provide for himself without injury to his soul. But let him receive counsel from more experienced Christians, and attend diligently to the solemn admonitions contained in the Bible concerning the danger and deceitfulness of riches. How many, who once seemed really on the road to heaven, have made shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, by following after them! What a snare have they proved to others, and how fearfully have they been hindered by them on their heavenly way! What numbers, who had once deep convictions of sin, and strong desires after the salvation of Christ, by the cares of life and the deceitfulness of riches have choked all their religious impressions and feelings, and sunk down again into worldliness and indifference to spiritual enjoyments! What deep blushes would cover the face of many a former professor of godliness, were he to say that riches are only dangerous to those that are careless! To say nothing of the temporal losses and sad disappointments which many have suffered by running to the hill Lucre, how many have lost, by catching at this seducing bait of Satan, what is far worse, their peace of conscience and their spiritual desires! When these glittering delusions are spread in our path, let us not stir aside an inch, but still keep on our way. "Thou, O man of God, flee these things." Every Demas is condemned already, and we cannot follow

their pernicious ways without involving ourselves in the like condemnation. If covetous men, and lovers of this present evil world, beg us to tarry a little, and promise that they will then go with us, let us consider that by tarrying in such a place we are sure to injure ourselves, without doing the least good to them. If they are sincere, it is their duty immediately to come after us, and by no means is it ours to attend to their vain pretences and their infamous delay. We see at once the presumption of a wicked and covetous Jew, resting in his descent from Abraham, while he is clearly destitute both of the faith and the works of Abraham. Equally absurd it is for any of us to rest upon our Christian name and baptismal profession, if we are clearly violating our baptismal vow, which requires us to renounce the world, with all covetous and carnal desires. Remember how much is comprised in the solemn declaration: "The love of money is the root of all evil." And let the leprosy of Gehazi, and the despair and the dreadful end of Judas, deeply imprint upon our minds the solemn admonition, "TAKE HEED AND BEWARE OF COVETOUSNESS!"

II. We now pass on to consider the more successful attempts of Demas against By-ends and his company. The two pilgrims had expressed to each other their undoubted conviction that By-ends would turn in to the invitations of Demas, as his principles led him that way; and they thought it by far most probable, that in these regions he would end his days. Their suspicions were too well founded. No sooner had By-ends and his companions approached to the place, than at the very first appearance of an invitation, they ran eagerly

out of the path to go over to Demas. Their end was involved in some uncertainty. Whether they fell into the pit by looking over its brink; or whether they went down to dig in the mine, and continued toiling there for many years; or whether they were smothered in the bottom by the noxious damps that usually arise from so great a depth in the bowels of the earth,—which of these three events befell them is unknown. Certain, however, it is, that this place was the end of them all. They got not a step beyond the hill Lucre, on the way to Zion. Christian and Hopeful never saw them again in the way!

All this is deeply affecting, and full of meaning. If our principles are unsound, and we regard iniquity in our hearts, a time is sure to come, when a suitable bait will be presented to us, to develop that unsoundness, and to make manifest that hidden iniquity. If we are double-minded men, and have taken up a profession of religion, not to obtain the salvation of our souls, but to make a fair show in the flesh; if we are vainly attempting to serve God and Mammon, while we hold to this present evil world; if we are addicted to the love of money; or if the principal object we have in our view be to save all we can;—if, I say, this be our real character, we are sure to be drawn aside and enticed to the glittering hill of Lucre. Our principles will lead us that way. Some fair prospect of becoming rich, or attaining to easy and comfortable circumstances, will induce us to turn aside quick out of the narrow way. We shall be situated as Demas was, before he departed from St. Paul. That is, we shall be placed in such circumstances as will compel us to show whether Christ or the world be the supreme

object of attraction to us. And if our principles be like his, our behaviour will be the same, and our end the same. Consider for a moment what a fearful end that must be. If you profess godliness, and determine to be rich, your end will be like the end of a man who falls headlong into a burning volcano, by approaching too near the mouth of the pit. You will not believe, although you have been assured, that the ground upon which you stand is deceitful and uncertain. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." Or else you have doomed yourself to a life of innumerable evils and piercing disappointments and bitter sorrows, like to those who spend their days without hope, while toiling in a mine. "The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." If neither of these events befall the professor of godliness who makes haste to be rich, there is but another alternative. All his religious impressions, and hopes, and desires are doomed to certain death. The fatal damps that rise out of the most poisonous mine are not more injurious to the natural life than the intoxicating fumes of deceitful and uncertain riches are destructive to wavering and unestablished Christians. "The deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful." Again let the prayer ascend from our hearts individually: "Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness."

III. The last head for our consideration is the reflections of Christian and Hopeful upon the charac-

ter of Demas. Not far from the residence of Demas, our pilgrims discovered an ancient monument, as it had been of a woman transformed into a pillar, and upon it were the words written, REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE! What a seasonable admonition was this, just after leaving the hill Lucre! They confessed, that had they complied with the invitation they had just refused, they, too, might have been made a spectacle to those who should come after. Hopeful especially was deeply humbled for his inclination to comply. They determined to take warning from the monument before them, and to recollect, that having escaped one judgment, they might fall into another. But what especially moved the wonder of Hopeful was this. "Above all," he said, "I muse how Demas and his fellows can stand so confidently yonder looking for treasure, when this woman, for but looking behind her, was turned into a pillar of salt. How can they act in the way they do, with such an example before them! for they cannot help seeing it, if only they lift up their eyes." Christian acknowledged this to be a wonder, and to argue the desperate hardness of their hearts; he likened them to those incurable and daring offenders, who pick pockets in the presence of the judge, or steal under the very gallows itself. "Those," he said, "who sin in sight, and, as it were, in despite of terrible examples of judgment, bring upon themselves the most aggravated condemnation." Hopeful acknowledged it to be a signal mercy that he had not been made a monument similar to the one before them, confessing that his sin had been very similar. Lot's wife had only looked behind her, and he had a desire to go and see. He felt now, more deeply than ever, that the

going out of the heart after forbidden objects is sinful and displeasing in the sight of God, even though the outward sin be not actually committed.

We may all pause to reflect, with profit, within sight of the hill Lucre and the mine of silver. How many affecting monuments do we continually meet, which stand like so many beacons, to warn us of the fearful consequences of inclining to any evil thing, or regarding iniquity even in our heart! The love of money, manifesting itself in a longing, lingering look towards the hill Lucre, has had in reality the same blasting effect upon many a flourishing professor of religion, that the backward look of Lot's wife to the cities of the plain had upon her. There is many a man, and many a woman, who appeared to have left, for ever, the city of Destruction, that afterwards were involved, by a worldly heart, and by covetous desires, in the most fearful destruction. At one time they seemed to be religious; their faces were set to the heavenly city; their places were never empty in the sanctuary of God; they were deeply affected by the solemn truths which they there heard; they came to the communion; and, to judge from outward appearance, all was fair and flourishing as a green bay-tree, that strikes its deep roots into the ground, and spreads out its green boughs to the sky. But they felt the attraction of the glittering hill. They desired to be rich. They cast an eager, longing eye after the distinctions, and luxuries, and elegancies of life, and then their religion was over. Their leaf withered, their branches fell, and they remained, like an oak blasted by the lightning, a melancholy wreck of their former selves, a touching monument to record the effects of covetousness. Oh, my

friends, let us be deeply humbled for the sins of our hearts, as well as for those which have actually appeared in our lives! The commandment which forbids us to covet, is enough to fasten conviction upon every soul of man, and to close in silence every mouth that would open in self-justification. The sincerest Christian and the most hopeful characters must here alike plead guilty. Oh, when we think that "the thought of foolishness is sin," and the roving of the desire after any thing forbidden is a violation of the divine commandment, who must not put his hand upon his mouth, and his mouth in the dust, and cry out, Unclean! Who must not say, "Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified!" Surely, had any of us been dealt with according to strict justice, and had the Lord been extreme to mark what we have done and said and thought amiss, we every one might have been made monuments of his righteous displeasure against sin! Let us seriously lay to heart all the instances that are recorded in the Bible, of the divine vengeance overtaking sinners, considering "that these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." Let us make also the same use of every similar instance that we have met with in our progress through the world. These, too, are intended for our admonition. It argues great hardness of heart, and obduracy in sin, to persist in any evil way, when we have many sad examples before us of the fatal consequences of pursuing that way. The money-loving, scheming, speculating age in which we live, affords us many affecting examples of the sad effects of hastening to be rich. Let us

be warned by them, and not blindly rush on in the same steps, until we are involved in the same ruin. Nay, let us watch very diligently against the first rise of covetous, worldly, and aspiring thoughts and wishes in our hearts. Whenever we feel disposed to indulge a wish after carnal objects, or possessions, or pleasures, let us *remember Lot's wife*. Are we really the true subjects of Him who was crucified ?

“ And shall we, then, with fond affection cling
To the vile earth, which crucified our King ? ”

Have we felt any thing—yea, but a little—of the attractive power of the Saviour's cross, and is not the world crucified unto us, and we unto the world ? Why should an heir of eternal glory be anxious about any thing which this poor world can bestow ? What do you want more for the days of your pilgrimage than food and raiment ? “ Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have ; for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee ; ” so that we may boldly say, “ The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me. ”

THE HYMN.

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed, no man knows ;
I see from far thy beauteous light,
And inly sigh for thy repose :
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till it find rest in thee.

Is there a thing beneath the sun
That strives with thee my heart to share ?
Ah ! tear it thence, and reign alone
The Lord of every motion there.

Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it has found its all in thee.

Oh! crucify this self, that I
No more, but Christ in me, may live;
Bid all my vile affections die,
Nor let one hateful lust survive:
In all things, nothing may I see,
Or aught desire, or seek, but thee.

Lord, draw my heart from earth away,
And make it only know thy call;
Speak to my inmost soul, and say,
"I am thy Saviour, God, thine all:"
Oh! dwell in me, fill all my soul,
And all my powers by grace control.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty Father, who of thy tender love hast given thine only Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, mercifully look down upon us, and bless us, for his sake. Give us, we beseech thee, such a spiritual apprehension of the surpassing glory of the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be crucified unto the world, and the world unto us. There be many that say, "Who will show us any good?" but, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, and thereby put joy and gladness into our hearts. We feel and bewail the sad propensity of our corrupt nature, to put the creature in the place of the Creator, and to seek from those things which perish in the using, that satisfaction which is only to be found in thee. Our soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou us according to thy word. We would be deeply humbled for the lusting spirit that is within us, and confess with shame and sorrow that we have offended against thy holy laws. Oh let all our guilt be purged and done away, by the effectual application of the blood of sprinkling to our hearts. And save us, we beseech thee, by the power of thy Holy Spirit, from the dominion of sin. Incline our hearts unto thy testimonies, and not unto covetousness. May we never be drawn aside from the narrow way of life, to seek after deceitful and uncertain riches. Save us from the temptations and snares, and the many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

Deliver us from loving this present world, lest we be found among the enemies of God. Deliver us from that love of money which is the root of all evil, lest we should err from the faith, and pierce ourselves through with many sorrows. May we often consider how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven. O Lord our God, may our hearts be sound in thy statutes, that we be not ashamed. Grant, Lord, that we may never look back, with lingering desire, after any of the vain things which we profess to have renounced. May we remember Lot's wife. Let none of the mournful monuments which record the effects of covetousness be lost upon us. Instead of lusting after any thing that is evil, may we only love what thou commandest, and desire nothing but what thou dost promise. Oh grant, that as genuine pilgrims to a better country, we may be satisfied with pilgrim's fare. Gracious Father, may our conversation be without covetousness, and make us content with such things as we have. Only do thou give us bread to eat, and raiment to put on, until the days of our pilgrimage are accomplished, and we are brought in peace and safety to our Father's house in heaven. Grant this, O heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, to whom, with thee and the Holy Ghost, be might, majesty, dominion and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXI.

DOUBTING CASTLE.

Soldiers of Christ, arise,
And put your armour on,
Strong in the strength which God supplies
Through his eternal Son;

Strong in the Lord of Hosts,
And in his mighty power,
Who in the strength that Jesus trusts
Is more than conqueror.

Stand then in his great might,
With all his strength endued;
But take, to arm you for the fight,
The panoply of God.

That having all things done,
And all your conflicts past,
Ye may o'ercome through Christ alone
And stand entire at last.

JER. ii. 17.

HAST THOU NOT PROCURED THIS UNTO THYSELF, IN THAT THOU HAST FOR-
SAKEN THE LORD THY GOD WHEN HE LED THEE BY THE WAY?

WE shall find this affecting passage of Scripture strikingly illustrated by that portion of the Pilgrim's Progress which comes now under our consideration. We cannot shun our allotted cross, or swerve from the right ways of the Lord, without procuring to ourselves darkness and doubt, and perhaps, for a

season shutting ourselves up in a prison-house of despair. We are sure to smart for what we have done. In the bitter effects of our transgression, our own wickedness will correct us, and our backslidings will reprove us, and we shall learn by painful experience what an evil and bitter thing it is to have forsaken the Lord our God. There are two particulars for our present consideration.

I. How Christian and his companion forsook the Lord their God, when he led them in the way; and

II. The bitter sufferings that they procured to themselves by doing so.

May this affecting subject be made really profitable to all present.

I. The transgression of the pilgrims has to be considered. For some time after they had left Demas, their way lay through a most delightful country. A peaceful river glided all along the path; and trees, with the most grateful shade, and delicious fruit, were growing on every side. They drank of the stream, ate of the fruit, and rested under its shade; and all was safe and pleasant and well. But they were not yet at their journey's end. Very soon the river and the way parted. This was a great trial to them. And when the road became rough and hurt their feet, "their souls were discouraged because of the way." At length, to the left hand, they espied a stile and a by-path across the adjoining meadow. Christian hastily concluded that the path went all along by the appointed road; and as it was the easiest way, he invited his com-

rade to go with him over the stile. Hopeful modestly suggested, "What if this path should lead us out of the way?" But Christian overruled his objection, and over they both went into By-path Meadow. They found it much easier for their feet; and seeing a man walk before them, whose name was Vain-Confidence, and who assured them that was the way to the Celestial Gate, they followed him without fear, and Christian regarded this as a certain proof that they were right. Soon, however, it grew dark, and they lost sight of the man who went before. Not seeing his way, but urging on, he fell into a deep pit, and was dashed in pieces with his fall. The pilgrims heard him fall, and called to know what was the matter. But there was no voice, and none to answer. Only they heard a groan. It was the dying groan of Vain-Confidence! Now did Christian begin to suspect the fatal error which he had committed. The terrible scene which he had formerly witnessed at Mount Sinai was renewed. It began to rain and thunder in the most dreadful manner, and the swelling floods lifted up their voice. Hopeful himself was cast down, but not in despair. He told his companion that from the first he was jealous of that by-path, but gave way to the counsel of one older than himself. He did not, however, say this in an angry or reproachful spirit. For when Christian candidly acknowledged his fault, and craved forgiveness, in the most beautiful manner, and in the true spirit of his character, Hopeful said, "Be comforted, my brother, for I forgive thee, and believe, too, that this shall be for good." Then did they resolve immediately to retrace their steps, and a loving and a most affecting controversy rose be-



tween them, which of them should lead the way. Christian thought that, as he had been the means of their getting out of the way, he ought to be the first in facing any danger they might incur in getting into it again. But Hopeful was determined to go before, and said, that the troubled and anxious state of Christian's mind rendered him, for the present, not so good a guide. Thus they began to return. But it was a far more difficult thing to get into the road when they were out of it, than it had been to get out of it when they were in it. The night was so dark, and the waters were so high, that in going back they only very narrowly escaped being drowned several times. With all their efforts, they could not get to the stile that night. Finding, therefore, a little shelter, they sat down there, intending to watch and wait until the break of day. But instead of watching, being wearied and fatigued, they both fell asleep. It was in the grounds of Giant Despair that the pilgrims now lay sleeping. He found them in this situation early in the morning. With a grim look and a surly voice, he called them to awake, accused them of trespassing on his grounds, and told them that they were his prisoners. The pilgrims could make no resistance, for the giant was much stronger than they. So he drove them before him to Doubting Castle, his gloomy habitation, and there he thrust them into a dark and dismal dungeon.

All this, dear friends, is very instructive, and full of the most important meaning. When true Christians act uprightly, and withstand temptations, (as Christian and Hopeful withstood the temptations of Demas,) their consolations sometimes greatly abound. They lie down in green pastures and are

led beside the waters of comfort. They are favoured with the special presence and cheering communications of the true Comforter. The Holy Spirit, as a river of living water, refreshes and consoles them on the way to Zion. They find Christ, the tree of life, in all the ordinances and means of grace to which they resort; and they are able to testify, "I sat down under his shadow with great delight and his fruit was sweet to my taste." Such happy spots as these, however, are for the most part seldom met with in the pilgrim's progress. The Christian has not yet come to the end of his journey. The gladdening river and the way to Zion soon part. We cannot perceive and feel the presence of the Holy Spirit all the way to heaven. Sensible comfort is withdrawn, and the road becomes rough and discouraging as before. But however rough or painful the appointed path may be, oh! let us beware of turning aside into by-paths. When we want to shun the cross, and to seek a smoother and an easier way, our wishes wonderfully warp our judgment, and we are easily induced to believe what we greatly desire. It is by no means certain that the easiest road is the right one; and we should thoughtfully ponder the suspicion, whoever may suggest it, that the smooth path we have selected may lead us wrong. Nothing can be more dangerous than to follow either the advice or the steps of Vain-Confidence. We cannot have a worse instructor, or a worse guide. We shall lose sight of him as soon as ever the shadows of evening are stretched out, and it begins to be dark; and the only real benefit we can derive from such a character is this, to learn from his awful end, and the sudden destruction that comes upon him unawares,

to ponder the path of our feet, and be convinced that in following his steps we have wandered out of the way. How painful is the situation of the backslider, when thus convinced! He is often led to fear that his faith is dead—that he is still in bondage to the covenant of works, exposed to the condemnation of a broken law; and thus he is again brought back, as it were, to the blackness and darkness, and tempest and thunder, of the mount that burned with fire. In this condition, those who have transgressed together should not upbraid or criminate each other, but bear one another's burdens, and use their best endeavours to return into the right way. Transgressors find how hard is their way when they begin to retrace their backsliding steps. It is easier, oh! much easier, going out of the way, when we were in it, than going in when we are out. Nothing, however, can be done, and peace can never be restored, until we return, as genuine penitents, by true faith, unto Him from whom we have deeply revolted. In order to this, all difficulties must be braved, and all dangers must be faced. But especially must the returning backslider beware of settling down wherever he can find a little shelter, and giving way to slumber and sleep, when he ought to be watching and praying, and letting his heart be to the highway, even the way which he went. We must not be satisfied with any thing short of a full and complete restoration. Had Christian and his fellow continued toiling their way back, without first lingering, and then sleeping in the little shelter they found in the grounds of the giant, all their bitter sufferings, and the cruel treatment they were about to undergo in Doubting Castle, would have been avoided, and in

due time they would have safely reached the highway. Their stay and their sloth in this place was unseasonable and wrong in the extreme, and very dearly had they to pay for it. Thus, dear friends, it will be with us, if we linger in all the plain, before we have returned right humbly to the God of our salvation, and had our peace restored through faith in the blood of the cross. Be not satisfied with a little shelter from your present distress, if conscience testifies you are out of the way. Do not mistake a slumbering conscience for a peaceful conscience. Though your way be dark and rugged, still resolutely pursue it. Wait and pray for a returning sense of your pardon and acceptance. The proper language for a returning wanderer is, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in his word do I hope. My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they that watch for the morning; I say, more than they that watch for the morning." If, instead of this, you settle down in carnal security, while yet you are upon forbidden ground, terrible indeed will be the result. Very soon Despair, like a giant, will rouse you out of your slumber; you will have no power to resist him, but be wholly in his hands; and find, to your dismay, that you must go with him, and remain his prisoner. Remember Peter slept for sorrow, when he had been solemnly warned to watch and pray; and how fearful was the fall, and how bitter was the distress which soon succeeded! What the Lord said unto him and the rest of the disciples, he says to us and to all—
Watch!

II. We now proceed to consider the cruel treatment which our pilgrims found from the giant into

whose hands they had fallen, and in whose castle they were confined. Very sorrowful was their habitation in the miserable dungeon where they were thrust. They were kept, as long as life could endure, without food, or water, or light; and what was worse than all this, their inward comfort and peace had vanished like a dream. Christian especially had sorrow upon sorrow, for he regarded himself as the cause of their being brought into this distress. Giant Despair was united in marriage to Diffidence, and they conversed together about the pilgrims. Diffidence counselled that they should be beaten without mercy; and fiercely did the grim giant execute upon the poor pilgrims the cruel counsel of his wife. Finding, however, that they still survived, she next desired him to use every argument he could, to induce them to destroy themselves. He came, therefore, and represented to them, as they were certain to remain his prisoners for life, nothing was better for them than at once to put a period to their sufferings with their own hands. Instead of complying with his advice, they desired him to let them go. This so excited his rage, that he rushed upon them with violence, as if determined to kill them himself. But he was not permitted to do so. Being subject to certain fits at particular seasons, just as he was about to wreak his vengeance upon the pilgrims, he was suddenly seized with one of these, and lost for a time the use of his hands. Thus was he obliged to retire, and left his prisoners to consult between themselves as to what they should do. Christian felt, more keenly than Hopeful, the horrors of their situation, and the tyranny of Despair. He was even tempted for a moment to adopt the dreadful counsel of the giant, and said

with Job, "My soul chooseth strangling rather than life." But his younger and more buoyant companion, Hopeful, pointed out, in the most forcible manner, the awful sin and fearful consequences of such a step, and rejected it with instinctive horror. It was evident from his words, that the giant had not been able to lay his hands so heavily upon him. He suggested to his fellow several distinct grounds for encouragement, notwithstanding their present forlorn and distressing condition. "Others," he said, "have been prisoners here, and yet have by some means contrived to escape. Why may not we? The giant may die: we have just seen that he is subject to fits, and why not also to death? He may forget to lock us up, or he may become so infirm and paralyzed that we may easily effect our escape. Why did we not make the attempt the last time, when he lost the use of his hands, and could scarcely have retained us, had we acted with vigour and courage?" Thus did the happy spirit of Hopeful rise superior alike to the suggestions of Despair and the cruelties of Diffidence, and could even find ground for future encouragement by what he witnessed amid the chilling damps and the gloomy darkness of Doubting Castle. Again did the giant visit them in the evening, and told them, in a grievous rage, that, seeing they had disobeyed his counsel, it should be worse with them than if they had never been born. Then was Christian again well nigh overcome, and on the eve of yielding implicitly to the bidding of Despair; and again he was indebted to the representations of Hopeful, who reminded him how nobly he had played the man on former occasions, and exhorted him still to bear up with patience under their present suffer-

ings. The next expedient for driving the pilgrims to desperation was, to show them the bones and skulls of those who had been destroyed by Despair. But this, like every thing else, failing of the desired effect, it was thought that they lived in expectation of some one coming to their rescue, or else that they had pick-locks about them, by means of which they were hoping to effect their escape. The suspicion of this made the giant resolve that next morning he would search them. But before the morning dawned the pilgrims had clean escaped from his horrible castle, and, safe beyond his hated dominions, were proceeding together over the King's highway to Zion.

Reserving the consideration of their happy and unexpected deliverance to a future opportunity, let us now endeavour to derive some improvement and instruction from the things which they suffered in Doubting Castle.

The imprisonment of our pilgrims in Doubting Castle, and what they suffered in it from the cruelty of Despair and the machinations of Diffidence, is intended to instruct us in several important truths. It represents to us the sad and distressing situation of a real Christian, when, having deviated from the right path, and having sunk for a while into slothful negligence, at length he awakens out of it, only to become the prey of despair. Then is he driven, as it were, by a stern tyrant, and made to dwell in desolate places, as those that have been long dead. He is oppressed with the most dismal and gloomy doubts. He can derive no benefit nor advantage now from the remembrance of his past experience. He is in the region of Doubting, and he doubts every thing. He doubts that his past experience

was all a delusion ; doubts that he ever prayed in earnest, or ever received an answer to prayer in his life. He doubts whether he ever possessed a single grain of saving faith ; and fears that he was deceiving his soul, when he imagined that he was a child of God and a partaker of the Holy Spirit. Or else, what is still more painful and distressing, he fears that he has sinned against the Holy Ghost, that he has committed the unpardonable sin, that his doom is sealed, and that there is no help for him in his God. As long as he remains in this desolate place, his soul is deprived alike of meat and drink and light. Doubt deprives him of the spiritual food and sustenance which heretofore he derived from the word of God. Doubt robs him of the precious promises of the gospel, which so often had been to his thirsty soul as rivers of water in a dry land. Doubt extinguishes the cheerful light that springs up from a sense of reconciliation with God, and clothes every object around in gloom. But this is not all. Though the prisoners of Despair are involved in darkness, and excluded from comfort all the days of their captivity, at certain seasons they feel more severely than at others the power of their tormentor. He pays them, as it were, continual visits, and compels them to feel and tremble at his gigantic strength and malicious wickedness. At one time he upbraids them with the repetition of all their past sins, and makes them smart under the lashes of an accusing conscience. At another time he sets before them, in the most frightful colours, the hopelessness of their state, and the utter impossibility of their deliverance, leaving no effort untried to make them destroyers of themselves. Then is the poor Christian brought low indeed. While he

suffers these terrors, he is distracted and ready to die. He is a burden to himself and weary of life, and his painful language is, "My way is hid, and my hope has perished."

"The lying tempter would persuade
There's no relief in heaven;
And all my swelling sins appear
Too great to be forgiven."

If the power of Despair be limited, and he is unable to prevail against the trembling and afflicted Christian, still does he breathe out threatenings, and intimate to those whom he has seized that it had been good for them had they never been born. How well is it for the Christian, when sorely tempted, to have for his companion and counsellor one of a more hopeful spirit than himself! The full benefit of Christian fellowship is only learnt in seasons of trial and temptation. Then it is that the sovereignty of Divine grace is often seen in making the younger and less experienced believer the supporter and helper of his elder brother. Then we are shown that no member in the mystical body of Christ can say to other members, "I have no need of you; and that those members which seem to be more feeble are necessary." God often comforts and strengthens his desponding servants by the instrumentality of those who, in many respects, are inferior to themselves. Oh, let us all, in our deepest spiritual distresses, diligently cherish a believing, hopeful frame of mind, and repel with all our might the gloomy suggestions and dark forebodings of despair. Remember that "to him that is joined to all the living there is hope," and it is the enemy who says, "Persecute him and take him, for there is none to deliver him!" If you are unable at present to rise

superior to your painful situation, and your soul is in prison and in darkness, instead of conferring with your painful doubts, or yielding to diffidence and tamely submitting to the bidding of despair, listen to the more hopeful language of those whose faith is not so utterly cast down as your own. Consider that others, as well as you, have been for a season the prisoners of Despair, and as sorely handled by him, and yet at length have burst their chains and regained their liberty. Consider that despair in this world is not immortal. Like every other adversary, it has bounds which it cannot pass. It sickens and grows feeble with reviving faith; and when faith increases, and becomes lively and strong, despair expires, and his prisoners are set free. Terrible indeed may be the end of apostates and hypocrites, and such as return again to wilful sin and persist in it, after they have professed subjection to the gospel. These may be the victims and the trophies of despair; but no true penitent, who humbly applies to Christ, shall ever be numbered among them. And oh! remember that when your trial has come to its extremity—when the help of man is vain, and Despair is plotting against you his last and most desperate effort—remember, I say, that such an alarming crisis is often found to be the eve of the trembling Christian's deliverance. It will be so, it must be so, if you give yourself unto prayer, and earnestly renew your application to the throne of grace. Think of Peter, sleeping in the prison, and bound between the soldiers, and how he was delivered from Herod and the expectation of the Jews. Wait therefore on the Lord, be of good courage, and he will strengthen your heart, and break your bands, and bring you out of prison, and

deliver you out of all your fears. Say, as others have said before you, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

THE HYMN.

Look down in pity, Lord, and see
The doubts and fears that burden me;
Among the wounded and the slain,
Far from thy presence I remain.

This I procured when from thy way
My roving footsteps dared to stray;
The path of peace I once forsook,
And now I feel thy just rebuke.

In crooked paths no peace is found,
No pleasure on forbidden ground;
What bitter pains transgressors meet!
What sorrows find backsliding feet!

Now former comforts all have fled,
While hope no more exalts his head,
And sweet experience, once enjoyed,
Is all like blighted bloom destroyed.

Lo, stern Despair, with gloomy brow,
Detains me fast his prisoner now;
And Satan, from his dark abode,
Whispers, "There is no help in God!"

But, Lord, how long? Oh, bring my soul
Safe from the tempter's fierce control;
Unloose my bonds, and set me free,
Let thy salvation visit me.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and ever-living God, in knowledge of whom standeth our eternal life, whose service is perfect freedom, look upon us in great mercy, for the sake of thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, and through him communicate to our souls, not the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Though we

be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, let the pitifulness of thy great mercy loose us. O God the Son, Redeemer of the world, do thou set us free, and then we shall be free indeed. O God the Holy Ghost, do thou dwell in our hearts, and constantly abide with us, and then we shall know the glorious liberty of the children of God; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. Keep us, we beseech thee, in the good and the right way; so shall we not go back from thee. Suffer us not to forsake the Lord our God, who leadeth us in the way wherein we should go, lest our own wickedness should correct us, and our backslidings should reprove us, and we should know and see, from sad experience, that it is an evil thing and bitter that we have forsaken the Lord our God, and that thy fear is not in us. Oh keep us from turning aside into any by-path, or making to ourselves crooked paths, in which they who go can find no peace. May we never be misled by vain confidence, lest we should suddenly perish and come to a fearful end. And if we have wandered out of the way, and our soul has forgot prosperity, cast us not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with thy free Spirit. May we not be satisfied with a little shelter, or any thing short of a full return to thy favour. Deliver us not over to the will of our enemies, nor leave us in the hand of such as breathe out cruelty. Lord, save us from the power of despair. However grievously we may have wandered from thee, may we never say, There is no hope. Though our strong adversaries may lay in wait for our souls, and take counsel together, saying, God hath forsaken him, persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him, O Lord, be not far from us; O our God, make haste for our help. May we remember the works of the Lord, and call to mind thy wonders of old. May we hope still in our God, and believe verily to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Thou which hast showed us great and sore troubles, quicken us again, and bring us up again from the depths of the earth. Bring our souls out of prison, that we may praise thy name. We wait for the Lord, our soul doth wait, and in his word do we hope. Our soul waiteth for the Lord, as those that watch for the morning; yea, more than they that watch for the morning. Oh satisfy us with thy mercy, and that soon, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days. And now the God of hope fill us with all joy and peace in believing, that we may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost, to whom, with the Father and the Son, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXII.

THE DELECTABLE MOUNTAINS GAINED

Children of the heavenly King,
As we journey sweetly sing;
Sing our Saviour's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways.

We are travelling home to God,
In the way the fathers trod;
They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see.

Fear not, brethren, joyful stand
On the borders of our land,
Jesus Christ, our Father's Son
Bids us undismayed go on.

Lord! obediently we go,
Gladly leaving all below;
Only thou our leader be,
And we still will follow thee.

ISAIAH xlix. 8, 11.

THUS SAITH THE LORD, IN AN ACCEPTABLE TIME HAVE I HEARD THEE, AND IN A DAY OF SALVATION HAVE I HELPED THEE: AND I WILL PRESERVE THEE, AND GIVE THEE FOR A COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE, TO ESTABLISH THE EARTH, TO CAUSE TO INHERIT THE DESOLATE HERITAGES; THAT THOU MAYEST SAY TO THE PRISONERS, GO FORTH; TO THEM THAT ARE IN DARKNESS, SHOW YOURSELVES. THEY SHALL FEED IN THE WAYS, AND THEIR PASTURES SHALL BE IN ALL HIGH PLACES. THEY SHALL NOT HUNGER NOR THIRST; NEITHER SHALL THE HEAT NOR SUN SMITE THEM: FOR HE THAT HATH MERCY ON THEM SHALL LEAD THEM, EVEN BY THE SPRINGS OF WATER SHALL HE GUIDE THEM. AND I WILL MAKE ALL MY MOUNTAINS A WAY, AND MY HIGHWAYS SHALL BE EXALTED.

THIS is one of the precious promises made by the eternal Father to the Lord our Redeemer. He is heard at all times, whenever he intercedes on behalf of his people; and for his sake, wanderers of

every description, when they come to the throne of grace, are heard and answered, obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every season of need. Christ is the surety of the new covenant for the benefit of sinners in every part of the world; and when those that were sitting in darkness are truly converted unto God, he "inherits the desolate heritages." He says to poor sinners and grievous backsliders, that were tied and bound in the gloomy prison of sin and despair, Go forth, and show yourselves. And when he has set them at liberty he deals with them in the most bountiful manner. By the means of grace, the ministrations of faithful shepherds, and the supply of his Holy Spirit, he feeds them and satisfies them, guides them and instructs them, and leads them on in the way everlasting. They are raised above the petty concerns of this fleeting scene, brought, as it were, to the delectable mountains, where they breathe a purer air and get a clearer view of heaven itself, as well as learn very excellent things which are needful for their future progress.

We have to consider

I. The manner in which our pilgrims escaped out of Doubting Castle.

II. Their approach to the Delectable Mountains, and

III. The excellent lessons which were taught them by the shepherds there.

I. As to the manner of their release. Whilst the Giant was meditating against them further severities, they began to pray, and continued instant in prayer for some time. Then, in the most sudden

manner, Christian broke out and expressed amazement at his folly in remaining so long in that wretched dungeon, as he had just discovered he had within his bosom a key which would open every lock of their prison, and thus would certainly restore them to liberty. The name of this key was Promise. Hopeful was overjoyed at this intelligence, and begged his companion immediately to pluck it out of his bosom and try. He did so; and as he applied the key to the dungeon-door, the bolt immediately turned back and the door flew open. Then did they both go forth; and though they had more difficulty in opening the outer door, and its bolt went more hardly, yet Christian's key unlocked that door also. The creaking noise made by the opening of this door awakened the owner of the Castle; but he was unable to overtake them, or even to pursue after them. Thus they went on, and came to the King's highway, and so were safe, because they were out of the Giant's dominions. They were very anxious to save all succeeding pilgrims the distressing experience which they had just undergone. With this intent, as soon as ever they had re-crossed the fatal stile that brought them out of By-path Meadow into the high road, there they put up a notice signifying the gloomy regions to which that by-path would lead.

Learn, dear brethren, from all this, the only means by which we can be effectually delivered from all our gloomy fears, and all the despairing and painful thoughts that have lodged within us, and which have for a season shut us up in the prison of despair. We must give ourselves unto prayer; we must lay hold of the key of promise, and use it aright; and we must retrace our backsliding steps

until we have returned into the way of righteousness. If any one of these be neglected, we can never be brought into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It is by disposing us earnestly to pray for the blessings he is about to bestow, that the Lord graciously prepares us to receive them. As long as we keep silence, and restrain prayer, we cannot expect any mitigation to our distresses, however painful or severe they may be. But when we begin humbly and earnestly to cry unto God, and say as the Psalmist did, "Bring my soul out of prison," we shall soon find that we have not prayed in vain.

"Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw,
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw."

And sometimes, in the most unexpected way, our humble petitions will be abundantly answered.

Before, however, this answer can be received, our slumbering faith must be awakened. We must find, as it were, the key of promise in our breasts, and pluck it forth, and use it, and apply it to the relief of our necessities. There is no sorrow, nor doubt, nor fear, nor trouble, into which we can possibly be plunged, for which there is not a promise, as exactly adapted to it as the key is adapted to the lock for which it was made. Select some precious promise which is best adapted to your peculiar circumstances. Embrace it and hold it fast, and believe firmly with all your heart, and with all your soul, that as a penitent sinner, looking unto Jesus, this promise belongs to you, and is intended for you; and the door of your prison will fly open, you will behold the cheerful light, every difficulty will give way, and the fiercest of all your adversaries shall

be unable to harm you, or to bring you back again under bondage.

But oh, remember also the part that is ever acted by one whom the truth makes free. The liberty of the believer is not the liberty of wantonness. Being delivered from the hand of the enemy, and from those that hate him, he returns straightway into the path of obedience, and longs and strives to walk before the Lord in righteousness and true holiness all his days. Cheerful and unreserved obedience to all the Divine law, is the liberty after which he aspires. "I shall walk," he says, "at liberty, when I have respect to all thy commandments." He retraces his backsliding steps, without any more complaints about the roughness of the road; and he never feels himself secure, until he is humbly walking again in the good paths. Having learned from painful experience, that the way of transgressors is hard, he does all that lies in his power to deter others from venturing into those crooked and by-paths, which can only lead them into darkness and sorrow, if not to despair and death.

II. We proceed now to consider the pleasanter path pursued by our pilgrims, after their escape from the hand of Despair, and their return to the ways of Zion. They went straight forward until they came to the Delectable Mountains. They ascended these exalted heights, and found themselves in a new and most delightful climate. There were gardens, and vineyards, and orchards, and fountains of water; and they drank and washed, and freely ate of the vineyards. The glowing language of the prophet, which we have selected for our text, was fulfilled in their experience: "They shall

feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he hath that mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of waters shall he guide them. And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted." In these delightful regions there were shepherds feeding their flocks; and our pilgrims, leaning each upon his staff, entered into conversation with them. These mountains, they were informed, were Emmanuel's land; his city was within sight; and the sheep before them were his, for whom he had laid down his life. When the travellers inquired of the shepherds about the way before them, they were told that they were now in the right road to the Celestial City, but that it was still too far for any but those who should get thither indeed; and that it was only safe for the upright, but transgressors would fall therein. When the shepherds learned that our pilgrims were weary, not being forgetful to entertain strangers, and soon perceiving that they were wayfaring men, whose faces were steadily set towards Zion, they invited them to stay and refresh themselves, and welcomed them very lovingly to the Delectable Mountains. The names of the four shepherds were Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere. How safe were the pilgrims in such company as this! The shepherds said, "We would that you should stay here awhile, to be acquainted with us, and yet more to solace yourselves in these mountains." And the pilgrims were content to stay; so they went to their rest that night, because it was late.

What, dear brethren, is signified by this arrival at the Delectable Mountains? It seems to repre-



sent that state of calm enjoyment and established peace which the mature and consistent Christian is permitted to attain. He has learned now to distinguish between natural excitement and spiritual enjoyment. He is established by reason of use in the simplicity of faith, and habitual endeavours after unreserved obedience. The life which he lives in the flesh is a life of faith in the Son of God. He depends unreservedly for pardon and acceptance on the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of the Divine Redeemer. He washes every day, by renewed acts of faith, in the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, and he goes on in the strength of the Lord God, making mention of his righteousness, even his only. At the same time he cries earnestly for the renewing power of the Holy Ghost to be more and more exerted upon his heart. He pleads the promise that sin shall not have dominion over the believer, and that the law of the Lord shall be written in his inward parts, and that he shall keep the statutes and the commandments and the judgments of the Lord, and do them. Nothing but universal obedience, inward delight in communion with God, and a walk and conversation ruled by his blessed word, can satisfy him. Habitual obedience and increasing conformity to the Divine image, he knows to be the only satisfactory proof of saving faith, the proper expression of love, and the true progress of a pilgrim to the Celestial City. Thus, as he hearkens to the voice of the Lord his God and walks in his way, his peace flows sometimes as a river, and his salvation as the waves of the sea. He climbs, as it were, into higher skies, and breathes a purer air. He lives above the world, and has his conversation in heaven. He finds from

sweet experience, that the nearer he lives to God, and the closer he walks with God, the more he knows of the delight of his service and the joy of his salvation. He whom his soul loveth has brought him to the place "where he feeds, and where he makes his flocks to rest at noon." His acquaintance enlarges with other Christians, whom he had not hitherto known. He sees now that the Redeemer of the world has other sheep, which are not of this or that fold, nor of the particular fold to which he belongs. When he considers that they were purchased with the same precious price as himself, that they are equally dear to the Chief Shepherd, and that they love him in sincerity, and follow him unreservedly, how can he fail to acknowledge them as the Lord's, or hesitate to say, from the bottom of his heart, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity?" When the believer attains to such a state, he is not only in the way to heaven, but he is, as it were, in sight of it. Still, however, he can by no means dispense with godly fear; for whatever attainments in religion a man may have made, or appear to have made, he only will be saved by enduring to the end; and it is only by walking uprightly in the path of obedience, that he avoids the stumbling-blocks over which transgressors fall. It is painful to think what numbers are offended and stumble and fall long before they give any evidence of being consistent and established Christians. So true it is, what the shepherds told the pilgrims, "But few of them that set out on pilgrimage ever show their faces on this mountain." Dear brethren, be not content with setting out on pilgrimage, but be fired with a holy ambition to "show your faces on the Delectable

Mountains." Seek not only to be real Christians, but eminent and exemplary Christians. Be not content to go doubting and hesitating all your days; but seek earnestly to have the witness in yourself, and the earnest of the Spirit in your heart, that you may know that you are of God, that the hope of glory may be full in your view, and that you may be rooted and established and built up in the faith, even as you have been taught. We must observe, too, that the names given to the shepherds upon these mountains are full of instruction, both to ministers and people. If those whose office it is to feed the flock of Christ have no knowledge of the gospel of the grace of God, if they have no experience of the Spirit's work upon their heart, if they make it no part of their business to watch for souls as those that must give account, and if they do not manifest sincerity both in life and doctrine, they cannot be true shepherds of Christ. In that case they cannot search out for his sheep that are dispersed abroad in this naughty world, that they may be saved for ever by Christ. They cannot lead them to the blessed heights of sanctification and spirituality, and so prepare them for the heavenly fold. Pray, my brethren, for those that have the oversight of your souls, that they may be distinguished by knowledge and experience, by watchfulness and sincerity: so shall your prayers for them return with blessings upon your own head, and you shall never attend their ministrations without being instructed or edified, warned or admonished, by what you hear.

III. Let us now proceed to notice the important

lessons which our pilgrims received from these faithful shepherds.

(1.) First of all, they were shown an affecting example to instruct them in the fearful consequences of erring from the truth. This was especially the lesson of Knowledge. They were led by the shepherds to the top of a hill called Error. It was very steep on the furthest side; and when Christian and Hopeful looked down, they saw at the bottom the remains of several men who had been dashed to pieces by a fall from that dizzy height. These, they were informed, were the bones of men who had presumptuously wandered into the paths of error, following their own fancies and their own notions, instead of walking by the light and being directed by the lantern, which the Lord of the way has hung up for the guidance of his pilgrims. These victims to their own presumption were left unburied, for an example to others, to take heed how they climb too high or approach too near the brink of Error. We should all, dear brethren, be solemnly warned by such examples. It is a false and wicked notion to suppose that it matters little what we believe, provided our life be right. No man's life can be right whose belief is essentially wrong. To disbelieve any thing which God has plainly revealed in his Holy Word, evidently betrays a wrong state of heart; and to prefer the dim twinkling of our reason or fancy to the clear shining of Scripture truth, is sinful and presumptuous in the extreme. Believers are sanctified through the word and belief of the truth. Some errors, indeed, may consist with saving faith; but no deviation from the revealed truth of God is harmless, and some deviations are absolutely incompatible

with a state of salvation. If once we presume, in any particular, to diverge from the plain declarations of Scripture, there is no knowing where it will lead. It may soon bring us to the edge of the dreadful precipice of Error, and there we may be dashed to pieces by a fall. To avoid such a fearful end, take warning from the sad example of others, and cry earnestly, "Oh! send out thy light and thy truth, and let them lead me."

(2.) A solemn caution was next given to the pilgrims, to deter them in future from turning aside to any by-path. They were led to the top of another mountain called Caution. From this they beheld several men that were blind, walking up and down among the tombs, and beheld them continually stumbling among the stones, and quite unable to get out from among them. Those poor unhappy men, they were informed, (the shepherd whose name was Experience being evidently the speaker,) those men among the tombs once set out on pilgrimage, and proceeded a good way; but when the road became rough, they turned aside from the right way into a by-path, which was easier for their feet. By this means they were taken prisoners by Despair, who very cruelly treated them, and at length put out their eyes, and left them to wander in that forlorn and bewildered manner among the tombs, according to the saying that is written, "He that wandereth out of the way of understanding, shall remain in the congregation of the dead." When Christian and Hopeful had seen and heard this, they looked upon each other with gushing eyes; but they held their peace, and said nothing to the shepherds. See here, my brethren, a most happy illustration of what is meant by experimental

preaching. Christian and Hopeful had not told their experience to these shepherds, and yet, in this affecting manner, their own transgressions, their own sufferings, and their own narrow escape, were vividly set before them. Thus it is when an experienced minister rightly divides the word of truth, describes the various devices of Satan, the different sins and errors to which men are liable, and the painful consequences of deviating from the right path. The hearts and consciences of some that are present are made bare and disclosed. It seems as if the preacher were fully acquainted with their whole past history. "As face answereth to face in a glass, so doth the heart of man to man." They are compelled to acknowledge their own likeness in the picture that is held up to their view; and with a beating heart and a gushing eye, they are ready to say, "Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did."

(3.) The next affecting lesson shown to the pilgrims was to inculcate the necessity of sincerity. This was evidently the instruction of Sincere. They were bid to look through a door in the side of the hill. It was very dark, and they heard a doleful cry, as of some tormented. This, they were informed, was a by-way to hell, the way trodden by hypocrites. People who professed to be pilgrims, and who held on their way for a long time, without ever having their hearts properly affected towards the Lord of the country, went in a quiet way through this secret door to the world of punishment. Several had passed through this door that were considered to have reached the Celestial Gate. This, as well as the other lessons, made a powerful impression upon the pilgrims. And they said one

to the other, "We have need to cry to the Strong for strength." They were told that they would have to use that strength when they had obtained it. Oh, my brethren, what a solemn thought it is, that hypocrites and dissemblers with God must certainly sink into the regions of eternal wo, though numbers, who judge only from outward appearance, confidently believe that they are gone to heaven! How earnestly we ought to seek that our hearts may be right with God, and that integrity and uprightness may always preserve us! For this end let us often pray with the Psalmist, "Oh, let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed."

(4.) One sight more was only shown to the pilgrims, and then they proceeded on their journey. Watchful wished them to have a glimpse of the regions of eternal day. They were taken to the top of the hill Clear, and a prospective glass was put into their hands by the shepherds, that by looking through this they might get a sight of the gates of the Celestial City. But when they attempted to do this, the remembrance of the last thing they had seen (viz. the hypocrite's doom,) made their hands to shake in such a manner that they could not look steadily through the glass. They thought, however, they saw something like the gate, and some of the glory of the place. Then they went on their way. How difficult, dear brethren, it is, even for real Christians, to keep their eye steadily fixed on the invisible land, and to rejoice in hope of the glory to be revealed! We are prone to make mistakes, both on the right hand and on the left. When we rejoice in hope, we are apt to be deficient in reverence and godly fear. And

when we tremble with godly jealousy at the probability of our coming short at the last, and receiving the hypocrite's doom, this weakens our confidence, and dims our prospect of the heavenly inheritance. The union of the two, lively faith and godly fear, form the safest state for the Christian. If you cannot get a full sight of the heavenly gate, and a clear view of the glory of God, be content to discern something like the gate, and some of the glory of the place. If only you are excited by your godly fear to tremble at the hypocrite's doom, more diligently to search your heart, and to try your ways, and to be afraid of every thing that is displeasing to God and contrary to your profession, this is well. "Blessed is the man that feareth always."

THE HYMN.

From cruel bondage come,
 Where death and darkness reign;
 We seek our new, our better home,
 Where we our rest shall gain.
 Hallelujah! we are on our way to God.

To Canaan's sacred ground,
 With joyful songs we haste,
 Where light and love and peace abound,
 And everlasting rest.
 Hallelujah! we are on our way to God.

There sin and sorrow cease,
 And every conflict 's o'er;
 There we shall dwell in endless peace,
 And never hunger more.
 Hallelujah! we are on our way to God.

We soon shall join the throng :
Their pleasures we shall share ;
And sing the everlasting song
With all the ransomed there.
Hallelujah ! we are on our way to God.

How sweet the prospect is !
It cheers the pilgrim's breast ;
We're journeying through the wilderness,
But soon shall gain our rest.
Hallelujah ! we are on our way to God.

THE PRAYER.

O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. We come before thee in the name of Jesus, and we desire to pray in the Holy Ghost. Thou hast said in thy Holy Word, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in a day of salvation have I succoured thee;" and thou hast graciously assured us, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation:" now, therefore, let our prayer be acceptable in thy sight; now let thy tender mercies come unto us, even thy salvation, according to thy word. We humbly beseech thee, O Father, for the sake of thy dear Son, deliver us from all our gloomy fears, and all the spiritual bondage wherewith we are enthralled. Say to the prisoners, Go forth; and to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves. Bring our soul out of prison, that we may praise thy name; turn us from darkness to light, and make us to know the glorious liberty of the children of God. Oh, grant that in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us, we may give ourselves unto prayer, apply by true faith thy precious promises to our own individual case, and humbly return to thee in the way of obedience. Give us pastors according to thine own heart, to feed and direct us in the heavenly way; shepherds that have knowledge of the gospel mystery; who have experience of the Holy Spirit's work upon the heart; who watch for souls as those that must give account, and who manifest, in doctrine, uncorruptness and sincerity. And give us grace, with all readiness of mind to receive the important lessons which they urge upon us in thy name and from thy blessed word. May we learn the danger of erring from the faith; and do thou mercifully keep us from all false doctrine, heresy and schism. May we have

constantly before us the sad effects of being seduced into by-paths, and grant that we may hate every false way. May the awful doom of the hypocrite fill us with godly fear, and cause us diligently to look to ourselves, that we may be found at last among the generation of the upright. Finally, do thou give us a cheering prospect of the glory that awaits us at the end of our pilgrimage, that we may be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in thy work, for as much as we know that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord. These prayers and supplications we humbly offer at the throne of grace, in the name and mediation of Jesus Christ, our most blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XXIII.

IGNORANCE, TURN-AWAY, AND LITTLE-FAITH.

Alas! what hourly dangers rise!
What snares beset my way!
To heaven, oh let me lift my eyes,
And hourly watch and pray.

How oft my mournful thoughts complain,
And melt in flowing tears!
My weak resistance, ah! how vain!
How strong my foes and fears!

O gracious God, in whom I live,
My feeble efforts aid;
Help me to watch and pray and strive,
Though trembling and afraid.

HEBREWS x. 38, 39.

NOW THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH: BUT IF ANY MAN DRAW BACK MY SOUL SHALL HAVE NO PLEASURE IN HIM. BUT WE ARE NOT OF THEM WHO DRAW BACK UNTO PERDITION; BUT OF THEM THAT BELIEVE, TO THE SAVING OF THE SOUL.

THE possession or the absence of simple faith in the Son of God makes all the difference between the heirs of everlasting salvation and the rest of the world. Every true believer is a justified person, and he lives by his faith. But every one destitute of true faith, if he make a profession of religion, is sure to draw back, and that unto perdition. And as the true believer is distinguished by the reality

of his faith from all others, so the degree of his faith makes all the difference between one believer and another. The person whose faith is strong will rise superior to all the trials and temptations that beset him, and, for the most part, will be enabled to go on his way rejoicing. But he whose faith, though real, is feeble, will often be plunged in doubt and fear; at times he will be ready to halt, and sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before him. But even he, because his faith is real, will eventually be found not to be of them that draw back. All this will be affectingly evident in the course of the present Lecture. There are three distinct characters for our consideration—Ignorance, Turn-away, and Little-faith.

I. We begin with Ignorance. When Christian and Hopeful parted from the shepherds at the Delectable Mountains, very instructive was the parting salutation which they received from those four excellent instructors. Knowledge gave them a note or map of the way. Experience bid them beware of the Flatterer. Watchful told them to take heed that they slept not on the Enchanted Ground. Sincere very heartily bade them good speed. Thus the pilgrims went down the mountain, along the highway, towards the city. Not far down the mountain, at the left hand, there came into the way a crooked little lane, from the country of Conceit. Here our pilgrims met with one Ignorance. He said he was born in the country to the left; that he was going to the Celestial City; and that he hoped to get in at the gate, as other good people do. Being asked what he had to show, at the gate, to gain him admittance, he replied, "I know my

Lord's will, and have been a good liver. I pay every man his own. I pray, fast, pay tithes, give alms, and have left my country for whither I am going." When it was intimated to him, that he had not come into the way by the narrow gate, and a fear was expressed that he would be disappointed at the last, he said he would follow the religion of his country, and hoped that all would be well. As for the wicket-gate, he said it was so far off, that few in those parts knew the way to it; and that it was quite unnecessary to them, since the lane by which he had come was so much readier. Then did our pilgrims judge it best to pass on and leave him for the present, hoping at another time to renew their conversation with him.

True Christians and the most hopeful characters have reason to rejoice that their great High Priest can have compassion on the ignorant and them that are out of the way. This is the state of us all until, through grace, we obey the heavenly calling.

"Buried in ignorance and sin,
At hell's dark door we lay."

If the true light has dawned upon us, we should be compassionate to those who are now in the condition from which we have been delivered, and we should use every means in our power for their benefit. It is painful to think what numbers are confident they are in the right road, who are ignorant of the first principles of the oracles of God. They have been born, as it were, in the country of Conceit, and they are wise in their own conceits. They hope to go to heaven, as other people do, trusting in outward forms, harmless lives and good intentions. They are quite satisfied with the reli-

gion of the generality. As for true conversion of heart, a sense of sin produced by the Holy Spirit, and a personal application by faith to Him who is the door and the way, this is a religion that they know nothing about ; and none of their worldly or self-righteous neighbours can give them any information respecting it. We should do all we can to instruct and undeceive such persons, showing them the utter impossibility of entering into the kingdom of heaven without a title to it and a meetness for it. But we should observe time and judgment in the instruction that we impart ; neither overdoing nor underdoing, but here a little and there a little, waiting for the best opportunity to speak a word in season, and speaking to men as they are able to bear it.

II. We proceed now to speak of the character of Turn-away. Very fearful was the manner in which he was forced upon the notice of our pilgrims. Not far from the place where they left Ignorance, they entered into a very dark lane. Amid the gloom of this passage they met seven wicked spirits in charge of a prisoner, whom they had tied and bound with seven strong cords. They were carrying him back to the door which Christian and Hopeful had seen on the side of the hill, and which they had been informed was the by-way to Tophet. Deeply were they affected at this spectacle. They had some difficulty in discovering who the unhappy man was, as they could not perfectly see his face, his head being hung down as they passed. But afterward, when they had a little recovered from their dismay, as they looked back, they discovered him to be Turn-away, from the town of Apostasy. Hope-

ful espied his real character inscribed upon him. He was a wanton professor of godliness, a dreadful apostate from the holy commandment delivered to him.

Instances, my brethren, like these, are very alarming, and they are not unfrequently witnessed by true pilgrims to the Celestial City. Their effect ought to be salutary and lasting. True Christians in their way to Zion have to pass through many a dark lane. When they live in those times, or pass through those places where iniquity abounds, or tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, their way is dark. Then what distressing instances do they often see of once-flourishing professors drawing back unto perdition and being conveyed to their own place! Many a person makes a fair profession of religion, and forsakes his open and gross vices, who never possessed a single grain of saving faith. The unclean spirit goes out of him for a season. His life is decent and respectable, he learns the language of piety, he mixes among the people of God, he frequents the ordinances of God, and in the judgment of charity he is taken for what he professes to be. All the while, however, his heart was never right with God. He was still in his natural, unconverted state. When a convenient time has come, the evil spirit which had left him for a season returns with seven-fold power and violence to his former habitation, as if he were now in league with seven spirits more wicked than himself. The hypocrite's heart being never changed, and destitute of all saving grace, there is nothing there to prevent the re-entrance of the evil spirit in this terrific manner. Nay, it seems swept and garnished, as if prepared for his reception. He enters

in and dwells there, and the last state of that man is worse than the first. And now he is prepared to commit all iniquity with greediness. A suitable occasion is soon presented for developing his true principles. Iniquity abounds, religion becomes unfashionable, or cannot be professed without danger, and he openly abjures his profession, and acts in such a way as plainly to show that he is in the power of the Wicked One, and going to his own place. Oh, let us ever remember that nothing but a living faith, forming a vital union between our souls and Christ, can surely preserve us from the awful doom of the apostate! If we are of those that believe to the saving of the soul, we shall not be of them that draw back unto perdition. Wherever there is true faith in the Son of God, the Holy Spirit is given to sanctify and renew the nature. But where there is no such faith, the nature remains still unchanged, still in love with sin. And, in due time, this sinful nature will show itself, however it may be hid or adorned for a season. When professors turn from the holy commandment, and are again entangled and overcome by their sinful lusts, their latter end is worse than their beginning, and it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, "The dog is returned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire." Oh, my brethren, if you would not prove a base apostate, stand in awe and sin not! Say unto God, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe; and keep me by thy power through faith unto salvation."

III. The character of Little-faith has next to engage our attention. It is introduced here because

the adventure recorded of him occurred in this part of the road, and here it was told by Christian to his fellow. This Little-faith was a good man, and from the town of Sincere. Proceeding on his pilgrimage, when he came to that dark lane, he had chanced to sleep. And here, just as he was awaking, three robbers—Faint-heart, Mistrust, and Guilt—had set upon him. Great was the alarm of Little-faith at the appearance of these three evil brothers. Faint-heart called him to give up his money; Mistrust pulled a bag of silver out of his pocket; and Guilt struck him on the head, and left him bleeding on the ground. As the thieves stood by their prey, they heard the footsteps of some one on the road. They thought it was Great-grace, and instantly fled. After a while the wounded man revived, and getting up, he contrived to scramble on his way.

The two pilgrims entered upon an interesting conversation respecting this history of Little-faith. Hopeful inquired if the thieves had taken from him all that ever he had. To this it was replied, No: the place where his jewels were they never ransacked; so those he kept still. He retained also his certificate, by which he was to receive his admittance at the celestial gate. It was, however, entirely owing to the care of Providence, and not to any skill of his own, that the thieves missed any thing that was good. In the state he was in, he had neither skill nor power to hide any thing. But though he kept these, his state ever after was very uncomfortable. All his ready money being gone (as he might not sell his jewels) he went hungry, and was often in great straits as he proceeded on his journey. Neither could he derive the comfort

he might from the possession of his certificate. He made but little use of it, because of the dismay he felt at the loss of his money. He forgot it entirely a great part of his way; and if now and then a ray of comfort beamed upon him by the recollection of it, it was soon dispelled by the painful thought of his loss. He breathed out his sorrowful complaints as he proceeded, and told what had befallen him to all he met; minutely recounting where he was robbed, and how; who they were that did it, and what he had lost; how he was wounded, and had hardly escaped with his life.

Hopeful next expressed his wonder that poor Little-faith had not been induced by his necessities to sell or to pawn some of his jewels for his present relief. But this supposition was sharply condemned by Christian as childish in the extreme. He pointed out that his jewels were disregarded, their value being unknown in all that country; hence no ready money would be advanced upon them. In addition to this, the poor man himself knew well enough, that if these should not be forthcoming at the celestial gate, he would be undone for ever. Notwithstanding his infirmity, Little-faith was not a man like Esau, to sell spiritual blessings for a morsel of meat. He was a man of another spirit. He was a spiritual, not a carnal or profane person. His faith, though little, was real. His mind was on high and heavenly things, and nothing but things of this nature could satisfy his soul or relieve his necessities. How, then, could he even think of selling his jewels to fill his mind with empty vanities?

Hopeful confessed his mistake, and next intimated his belief that the thieves which set upon Little-faith were only three cowards, as they had so

hastily taken alarm ; and he conceived that if only they had been manfully resisted, they would have fled at the first. Christian replied that Little-faith was not the man to act a valiant part. At the same time, he reminded his fellow how much easier it is to be valiant when danger is at a distance than when it is actually present. He bade him also consider that these thieves have for their captain the king of the bottomless pit, who comes to their aid as occasion requires. He spoke from experience when he said, "No man knows the dreadful nature of a spiritual conflict, but he who has himself been in the battle." They fled, indeed, at the sound of footsteps ; but then they supposed they were the footsteps of Great-grace, the King's Champion, that they heard. Little-faith loved the King, and desired with a true heart to keep his laws, but then he was not the King's champion. "Every true subject of the King is not the King's champion." Some are strong, some are weak ; some have great faith, some have little. This was one of the weak. The adversary knew his man, and practised upon him what he durst not even attempt against another.

Then said Hopeful, "I would it had been Great-Grace, for Little-Faith's sake. To this benevolent aspiration Christian replied in the fullest manner. He showed that there are times when Great-Grace himself is sorely handled by these villains. As long as he keeps them at sword's point, all is well ; he waxes valiant in the fight, and easily repels them. But if Faint-Heart, or Mistrust, or Guilt, any one of them, succeed in getting within him, the other two are immediately admitted, and then does it go hardly with this valiant champion. Like the ma-

riener in a storm, his soul is melted because of trouble, and he is even at his wit's end. Christian instanced, too, the example of several eminent saints, especially David and Peter, who had been in such a case. Faint-Heart and Mistrust and Guilt succeeded for a while in gaining entrance into both these. Their success was mainly owing to the craft and power and activity of their invisible captain. Though out of sight, he is always at their whistle; and when at any time they be put to the worst, he comes, if not restrained by the hand of the Almighty, to accomplish what his emissaries failed to effect. This being the case, and such mighty champions being sometimes foiled, Christian pointed out very forcibly that such footmen as himself and his comrade should never wish for an adversary or boast of their strength. Two things rather, he said, were much more befitting for them. In the first place, when they heard of such robberies being committed on the King's highway, they should go harnessed and prepared for an attack; above all things taking the shield of faith, for want of which Little-Faith had been so sorely handled, and by the use of which they would be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. In the second place, they should earnestly desire of the King a convoy, that he would go with them himself. This had supported David in the shadow of death; and without this Moses would not stir a step in the way to the land of promise itself. "Oh, my brother," he continued, "if he will but go along with us, what need we be afraid of ten thousand that shall set themselves against us? But without him, the proud helpers fall under the slain." "I, for my part," he concluded, "have been in the

fray before now ; and though, through the goodness of Him that is best, I am, as you see, alive, yet I cannot boast of my manhood. Glad shall I be if I meet with no more such conflicts, though I fear we are not got beyond all danger. Since, however, the lion and the bear have not as yet devoured me, I hope God will deliver us from the next adversary."

There is much, my brethren, very much, for our instruction and encouragement in this history of Little-Faith, with the remarks of Christian upon it. How many members in the household of faith are brought into fear and trouble and danger, by reason of the smallness of their faith ! They are sometimes betrayed into sinful compliance or slothful negligence, when they ought to have been especially watchful and wary. In time of danger they betray the smallness of their faith. If iniquity abound, they are drawn into a snare by the fear of man. They conceal or deny their profession, are slothful in duty, or in some way contract guilt upon their conscience. Then comes the fatal attack. A faint heart assaults them ; mistrust robs them of their present peace and comfort ; and conscious guilt beats them down, and renders them for a season unable to rise or to lift up their head. Very painful and apparently desperate is the situation of the fallen believer in such a case. Like him who really fell among thieves, he is stripped of his raiment and wounded, and left on the wayside half dead. But though he cannot help himself, he shall not be entirely deserted in his necessity. Some established believer, strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, shall mercifully be sent to restore him in the spirit of meekness, and cause, by his seasonable counsels, the robbers of his peace to fly before

they have proceeded to the last extremities. How pleasant it is to perform the part of the good Samaritan to a fallen and wounded brother; to raise him from the low ground of despair; to pour into his bleeding wounds the precious balms of heavenly consolation; to chase away faintness and mistrust from his mind, and the painful sense of guilt from his conscience; to strengthen the things which remain that were ready to die; and to enable him again to proceed on his way to the new Jerusalem! You see at once that the Holy Spirit alone is sufficient for this; but the Holy Spirit, for the most part, does it by blessing a wise and seasonable application of the promises and invitations and examples of his own most holy word.

The true believer, however small his faith, however severely assaulted, and however entirely stripped of present comfort, has still hidden jewels and a heavenly document about him which no man can take away from him. His union with Christ secures to him unsearchable riches; and the gracious work of sanctification commenced in his heart is the gracious certificate of his meetness for heaven, which no hypocrite can forge, and of which no adversary can ever rob him. He may go mourning for many days, because of the spiritual joy which he has lost, or the assurance of his acceptance. Through the smallness of his faith, he may be forgetful of the living union that exists between him and his Saviour, and by virtue of which his soul is bound up in the bundle of life. Through the prevalence of fear, or the remains of a legal spirit, he may have no comforting sense of the Spirit's work upon his heart. But notwithstanding all this, in his inward thought and estimation, the salvation of

Christ and the influence of the Holy Spirit is dearer to him than thousands of gold and silver. Amid all his sorrowful complaints, he can sometimes entertain a secret hope of pardon and acceptance, which he would not part with for all the glittering toys which the wide world can afford. He hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and with any thing short of righteousness he refuses to be satisfied. Oh, my friends, have a true faith in the only Saviour of sinners, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, if you would not be of them that draw back unto perdition! And never boast of your own strength, for by strength shall no man prevail. It is our wisdom to pray to be kept from temptation. We, none of us, know how we should act in the time of conflict. Great grace alone can make us champions of our King. And should a faint heart and its consequences once get within us, how sorely we shall be put to it! Think of Peter, and learn to be humble. Think of Satan's power, and take unto you the whole armour of God; above all, the shield of faith. Desire of the King a convoy. Pray earnestly that the Lord himself will be your keeper. Say not with Peter, "I never will deny thee;" but rather say, O Lord, grant me grace that I never may. If the Lord himself be on our side, and go with us, to uphold and strengthen us at every step, we have nothing to fear. He who has been with us in six troubles will not leave us in the seventh. We may sing at every stage of our pilgrimage :

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

THE HYMN.

Jesus! lover of my soul,
 Let me to thy bosom fly,
 While the raging billows roll—
 While the tempest still is high!
 Hide me, O my Saviour! hide,
 'Till the storm of life is past;
 Safe into the haven guide;
 Oh, receive my soul at last!

Other refuge have I none,—
 Hangs my helpless soul on thee!
 Leave, ah! leave me not alone!
 Still support and comfort me!
 All my trust on thee is stayed;
 All my help from thee I bring:
 Cover my defenceless head
 With the shadow of thy wing.

Thou, O Christ! art all I want;
 All in All in thee I find:
 Raise the fallen, cheer the faint,
 Heal the sick, and lead the blind:
 Just and holy is thy name,
 I am all unrighteousness,
 Vile and full of sin I am—
 Thou art full of truth and grace.

Plenteous grace with Thee is found—
 Grace to pardon all my sin:
 Let the healing streams abound;
 Make and keep me pure within:
 Thou of Life the fountain art!
 Freely let me take of Thee!
 Spring thou up within my heart,—
 Rise to all eternity!

THE PRAYER.

Lord of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things, we are taught in thy holy word that the just shall live by faith, and that if any man draw back thou wilt have no pleasure of him; mercifully grant that being justified by faith, we may have peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord; that we may not be of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the

soul. Give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ. May the eyes of our understanding be enlightened, that we may no longer be alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts. O that we may all be taught of thee, and become wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus. May we never turn away from the holy commandments delivered to us. Save us, we most humbly beseech thee, from making profession of thy holy truth while we are destitute of saving faith, lest we should again be entangled and overcome by our besetting sin, and our last state shall be worse than our first. Lord, increase our faith. We are far, very far, from resting upon thee by a firm and steadfast faith, as we ought to do. Thou mightest justly reprove the very best among us, as being possessed only of little faith. We have often been exposed by the weakness of our faith to faintness of heart, to sinful mistrust, and to all the darkness and sorrow of guilt. Oh grant that if our faith be little, it may still be real. Strengthen that which thou hast wrought in us. Though stripped in comfort, and peace, and joy, may we still cling, by fixed believing, to the rock of our salvation; counting all things but dross, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. Hear us when we call, O King of Heaven; and if we may not be ranked among thy valiant champions, oh grant that we may indeed be found among thy true subjects. May we watch and pray, that we enter not into temptation. When we think of the dreadful falls of many of thy precious saints, and the power and craft of our adversary the devil, and our own frailty and weakness, our hearts are ready to faint. But we humbly look up unto thee, to strengthen us with might by thy Holy Spirit in the inner man. and to keep us by thy power through faith unto salvation. And Lord, we pray thee, go thou with us, to guard and direct us through every part of our journey in the wilderness, until we are brought to the place of our everlasting rest. Make us meet, by the sanctifying power of thy Holy Spirit, for the heavenly inheritance; and oh, grant that an abundant entrance may be administered unto us into thy everlasting kingdom. Hear us, O Lord, and answer us for his sake in whom we have believed, thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

LECTURE XXIV.

THE FLATTERER, ATHEIST, AND HOPEFUL'S EXPERIENCE.

Increase my faith, increase my hope,
When foes and fears prevail ;
And bear my fainting spirit up,
Or soon my strength will fail.

Whene'er temptations fright my heart,
Or lure my feet aside,
My God, thy powerful aid impart,
My guardian and my guide.

Oh keep me in thy heavenly way,
And bid the tempter flee ;
And let me never, never stray,
From happiness and thee.

1 THESS. v. 11.

WHEREFORE COMFORT YOURSELVES TOGETHER AND EDIFY ONE ANOTHER,
EVEN AS ALSO YE DO.

THE edifying conversation that took place between Christian and Hopeful, as they walked over the enchanted ground, will be the principal subject of our present Lecture. This conversation will form a pleasing illustration of the manner in which the Thessalonians edified one another, and of the profitable kind of discourse in which the apostle required

them still to persevere. Before they came to the Enchanted Ground we have to notice their interview first with the Flatterer and then with Atheist.

I. We begin first with the Flatterer. When they had finished their reflections upon the history of Little-Faith, they went on till they came to a place where the road before them branched into two, and one seemed as straight as the other. Here, therefore, they were at a loss which way to take, and they stood for a while to consider. As they were standing, a person really dark, but covered over with a white garment, came to them. They told him their perplexity. Upon which the stranger said immediately, "Follow me; I am going to the Celestial City." Then they followed him into the way that now came into the road. They had not proceeded far upon it, before it began gradually to turn and wind, and in a short time they were walking with their backs to the city, quite away from it. Still, however, they followed their deceitful guide. He allured them on until he had completely entangled them in a net. Then his white garment fell off, and they beheld his true features, while they were left crying out in distress. Upon this Christian bewailed his folly in so soon forgetting the admonition of the shepherd, who had bade them beware of the Flatterer. Now he found by painful experience the truth of the declaration: "A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet." Hopeful, too, acknowledged their strange infatuation, in following the advice of the deceiver, instead of consulting their map. Had they done this, they would have been kept from the path of the destroyer. They were only relieved from their

bondage by a shining Visitor, who appeared to them with a scourge in his hand. Having questioned them, and told them the true character of their deceiver, he broke the net, and led them back into the right way. But while doing this, he made them blush at the remembrance of the little use they had made of the shepherd's directions. And before he departed from them, he corrected them with the scourge that he had in his hand, saying to them, as they smarted under the stroke, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten." The humbled pilgrims accepted the punishment of their transgression, thanked their corrector for his kindness, and then proceeded on their way.

Let the true Christian, as he proceeds on his way to Zion, constantly beware of the Flatterer. If at any time you are really in perplexity as to the right path for you to take, oh, consult your map, and give no heed to flattering words that are addressed to you. The word of God is a perfect map of the way to heaven. Let this be used and studied and acted upon, at every turn and in every doubt, and you are sure to be directed right. But do you ask how you are to know the Flatterer when he comes to you? You must not be carried away by good words and fair speeches and a plausible outside. Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. You may know the Flatterer by his high pretences to knowledge, and his confident promise to lead you right, without any reference to the law and the testimony. Be sure of this, that whoever undertakes to lead you, and cannot refer you to the words of Holy Scripture for all that he advances, is a flatterer and a deceiver. If unhappily you have followed such a treacherous guide, you are sure to

smart for it, soon or late. If you are destitute of the root of the matter, and in love with error, you will be entangled in some pernicious doctrine, or some sinful practice, and there you may remain until you are summoned, all unprepared and unpardoned, into the eternal world. And even if, upon the whole, your heart be upright, and you have been beguiled from the simplicity that is in Christ—not until you have been deeply humbled and sorry for your faults, can you expect the Lord to appear for your help, and pluck you out of the net that has been privily laid for you. When you have acknowledged your transgressions, and cried earnestly for deliverance, in due time he will set you at liberty; but he will visit your transgression with the rod and your iniquity with stripes. Oh, submit to his fatherly correction, and think how much better it is to be driven, even with many stripes, in the way everlasting, than to be let alone, and to go on uncorrected in the road to ruin!

II. We have next to consider the pilgrims' interview with Atheist. They saw a man coming to meet them, with his back directly turned towards the city. After the things they had suffered, Christian and his comrade were now on their guard. The man came up to them, and asked whither they were going. As soon as they told him, "To Mount Zion," he burst into a fit of laughter, derided them for their pains, and assured them there was no such place as the city to which they said they were journeying. He said, moreover, that he once thought even as they, and that none had been more zealous that way than himself: but after twenty years' seeking it in vain, he was now convinced it

was all a delusion. Therefore he was now going back, and was resolved to refresh himself with those substantial things which he had once been so foolish as to cast away, in hope of that which he now found to be unreal. Then said Christian, (to prove his companion,) "Is it true which this man hath said?" But Hopeful most nobly bore the proof. "What!" he cried out, "No Mount Zion! Did we not see, from the Delectable Mountains, the gate of the city? Are we not now to walk by faith? Oh, let us cease to hear the instruction that causeth to err! Let us reject this man as a flatterer and a liar; and, in spite of his wicked report, let us believe to the saving of the soul." Christian applauded the honest and holy zeal of his brother. He knew well that the wretched man before them was blinded by the god of this world. And his buoyant companion, feeling his spirit wonderfully refreshed by the good confession of his faith which he had made, was enabled to add: "Now do I rejoice in hope of the glory of God." So they turned away from the man, and he, laughing at them, went his way.

Oh, my brethren, what a deplorable character is Atheist! A man who has actually believed the lie which the father of lies has hatched for the ruin of sinners, but which he cannot swallow himself: such a man is the astonishment of the universe! Angels in heaven believe and adore; devils in hell believe and tremble. None but fools in this ruined world say in their heart, "There is no God." Have we, my brethren, never met with such a character—a man who actually laughs at the true Christian's hope of heaven and fear of hell? How is such a desperate character generally formed? He sets

out with a dead faith and a worldly heart, and at length occupies the seat of the scorner. The man was always a hypocrite, even when he professed to be seeking after God. He never sought, sincerely and truly, the renewing power of the Holy Spirit to be exerted upon him. Thus he has never experienced those effects from the truth which the Holy Scriptures assign to it. He knows nothing of a sense of sin, a lively hope in Christ, and supreme longing for spiritual blessings. If every syllable of the Bible be true, he knows that he is in an evil case. He has seen much folly and wickedness and delusion among many who have professed high, and talked much about religion and experience. Leading the life that he leads, he feels it would be well for him if there were no day of account, no place of torment, no righteous Judge to reward his people and to punish his adversaries. His secret wish prepares him to receive the lie of Satan. He loved not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness; and therefore he is left, in righteous judgment, to believe a lie. And now—like his father the devil, who was first an apostate and then a seducer—he tries earnestly to corrupt others, and tells those whom he meets that all religion is only a cunningly devised fable. The young and unestablished may be turned aside or injured by this deadly poison. But the experienced Christian, who knows in whom he has believed, cannot be hurt by it. There is no arguing against experience. If we have the witness within us—if we feel the preciousness of Christ to our souls—if we have cast our burden of sin upon his cross, and have obtained a good hope of pardon and acceptance, even though we have never seen the celestial gate—how

can we be stumbled or turned aside by the evil report of apostates, or suffer any injury from the cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive?

III. We come next to the edifying conversation of Christian and Hopeful over the Enchanted Ground. As they journeyed onward, they came into a country where the air naturally tended to drowsiness. This was the Enchanted Ground. Here the eyes of Hopeful became so heavy that he could scarcely keep them open, and he proposed to his brother that they should take a little rest. But now Christian acted the part of a faithful friend. He reminded Hopeful how the watchful shepherd had warned them to beware of sleeping in the Enchanted Ground; and by way of keeping off drowsiness, he proposed that they should enter into some profitable discourse. Hopeful acknowledged the faithfulness and the wisdom of his companion's rebuke, and agreed to his proposal with all his heart. Then did Christian begin with a deeply interesting question, and asked his fellow "how he came at first to look after the good of his soul." Hopeful answered, that he continued a great while delighted with those things which were sold in Vanity Fair, and enumerated the sins and follies to which he had been addicted. But at length, from what he heard from Christian and Faithful, he began to think that the end of these things is death, and that they exposed him to the wrath of God. He owned, however, in reply to another question of Christian, that he had struggled hard against conviction. He was unwilling to know all his guilt and danger, and endeavoured, when shaken a little by the word, to

shut his eyes to the light. A variety of causes united to make him act in such a manner. He knew not at first that these awakening fears were produced by the Holy Spirit. He was loth to part with sin. He could not break with ungodly companions. The pangs of conviction were so painful that he would gladly escape them by any means. For these reasons, he had sought a little relief wherever he could, but again and again his distress had returned upon him. When Christian inquired what it was especially that had brought his sins again to mind, very affecting was the reply: The sight of a good man in the street, the feeling of bodily pain, the sound of the tolling bell, hearing of a sudden death, or the thought of dying and coming to judgment himself, any one of these was sufficient to give him the alarm, and recall his distress. Upon these occasions he had great difficulty in removing the uneasiness that weighed upon his conscience. He thought that he must mend his life, or else perish for ever. "And did he endeavour to amend?" Yes, truly. He fled from his sin and sinful company, and betook to religious duties, and for a while began to think well of himself. But all would not do; iniquities still prevailed against him, and trouble and distress increased upon him.

Christian asked, How was this, since his life was now reformed? To this he replied, as every deeply experienced person must reply. The solemn passages of Scripture, which declare the sinfulness and worthlessness of all we do, sank deep into his heart. Thus he argued: If a man runs a hundred pounds into debt, and after that shall pay for every thing that he gets, while the old debt is uncrossed out, he may still be sued and cast into prison till he

shall pay the debt. Thus he considered, that by his sins he had run a great way into the book of God, and that his present amendment could make no satisfaction for sins that are passed. In addition to this, with his increasing light, he began to discover the iniquity that defiled his best performances, so that he was obliged to conclude, that, without any reference to his well-remembered sins, there was enough sin in any one duty to send him to hell, even though his former life had been faultless.

“And what did he do then?” In this dilemma he broke his mind to Faithful, who told him plainly that unless he was saved by the righteousness of another, and not by his own, he could never be saved at all. Had this been told him before he had been convinced of sin, he would have laughed at it; and though now, at the first, it sounded strangely to him, he was soon convinced that such a righteousness must be found for him, or else he must perish. He was directed where such a righteousness was to be found, and shown how it was made available for the sinner’s justification. He was assured that the atoning blood and perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ alone could meet his necessities; and that if only he would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he should be saved, all his sins should be freely forgiven, and he would then have a perfect righteousness, even the righteousness of Christ, in which to stand before God.

Hopeful had many scruples and many objections before he could avail himself of this wonderful and glorious plan of salvation. But he had a wise adviser in Faithful, who well replied to his objections. Moreover, he set before him the free pro-

mises and the gracious invitations of the gospel, and earnestly besought him to apply to Christ in heartfelt prayer, and to cast himself unreservedly upon what he had done for the salvation of sinners.

Christian next inquired, "And did you do as you were bidden?" Hopeful replied, "Yes, over, and over, and over." Christ was not revealed to him in his saving office and character upon the first application. No; he had very repeatedly to ply the throne of grace before any light or comfort broke in upon him; and very often had he serious thoughts of desisting, and giving up in despair. But a deep persuasion, that nothing but an interest in the righteousness of Christ could save him, convinced him that to leave off was to die, and that he could but die at the throne of grace. In addition to this, a secret hope would now and then spring up in his mind, that though the fulfilment of the promise might tarry long, in due time it would come, if he continued to wait for it. And he was not disappointed.

Christian then asked, how at length Christ was revealed to him. And deeply affecting, as well as very scriptural, was the reply of Hopeful. It was by no voice or vision, but by the opening of the eyes of his understanding, and the apprehension of Christ by faith, that Hopeful at length found peace and rest to his soul. One day, as he was very sad, and the remembrance of his sins sat heavily upon him, and he was looking for eternal damnation, he thought of the glorious Redeemer saying to him, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. When he objected the greatness of his sin, the cheering assurance was given, "My grace is sufficient for thee." When

he asked what it was to believe, he was made to understand that COMING AND BELIEVING ARE ALL ONE; AND THAT WHOEVER RAN OUT IN HIS HEART AND AFFECTION TO CHRIST, AND RESTED ON HIM FOR SALVATION, DID REALLY BELIEVE ON HIM. Then did the water stand in his eyes, and he asked again, if indeed such a wretched sinner as himself would be accepted. The gracious reply was given, "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out;" and he was taught how to regard the Lord Jesus Christ, that he might rightly believe in him. He saw that he must look for righteousness in his person, and satisfaction for his sins in his blood; that what Christ did and suffered in our nature was not for himself, but for him that will accept it for his salvation, and be thankful. This was sufficient for Hopeful. He set to his seal that God was true. And now was his heart full of joy, his eyes full of tears, and his affections running over with love to the name, and people, and ways of Jesus Christ.

Christian acknowledged (and what Christian can do less?) that this indeed was a revelation of Christ to the soul. And only once more did he ask his comrade what effect this revelation of Christ had upon him. Hopeful replied, "It made me see that all the world, with all the righteousness of it, is in a state of condemnation; it made me see that God the Father, though he be just, can justly justify the coming sinner; it made me greatly ashamed of the vileness of my former life, and confounded me with the sense of my own ignorance. Never before had I such a view of the beauty of Jesus Christ; it made me love a holy life, and long to do something for the honour and glory of the Lord Jesus; yea, I thought that had I now a thousand gallons of blood

in my body, I could spill it all for the sake of the Lord Jesus."

This was the conversation with which our pilgrims edified one another, and kept off drowsiness, as they walked together over the enchanted ground. The use to be made of all this is very apparent. Let true Christians copy this example to keep themselves watchful in seasons of drowsiness; and let us all carefully examine ourselves by the experience of Hopeful, and seriously put the question to our heart, if we have ever had a revelation of Christ to our souls.

(1.) In the first place, then, let the believer seek, by Christian fellowship and communion, to keep himself awake over the enchanted ground. When the church has rest, and the rod of God is removed from us, and we can profess our religion without any cross or reproach; or when we are obliged to dwell among those who are not alive to eternal things, who have perhaps a great deal of natural kindness, but who are not spiritually-minded; then we are passing, as it were, over the enchanted ground. The very air disposes to drowsiness. Then, it is probable, we shall feel a strong propensity to slumber and sleep, to relax in our zeal and diligence and activity, and to engage in spiritual exercises in a listless manner, without any life or fervent affection. To keep off so unbecoming a frame in this dangerous ground, "they that fear the Lord should speak often one to another." Have any of you, my brethren, felt the fatal influence of the enchanted ground, so that you have lost your first love, and feel extreme difficulty in keeping your spiritual affections at all awake? Call to remembrance the former days, when you were first

enlightened. Say with the Psalmist, "I will remember the works of the Lord; surely I will remember thy wonders of old." Begin where God began with you. Consider yourself, or recite to a pious friend, what made you first think about the salvation of your soul. And as you recal to mind how you went mourning when the burden of your sin pressed heavily upon you, and how the tear of joy gushed from your eye, and the beam of hope dawned in your breast, as you were enabled to look unto Jesus, try if this will not cause your heart to burn within you, and carry you safe, and keep you awake, over the enchanted ground.

(2.) But are there not many here who have never had Christ Jesus the Lord revealed to their hearts? Oh, I am afraid that very many are still loitering in Vanity Fair, and know nothing of bringing a poor perishing soul by faith to Christ, to be saved by him for ever! Remember that the end of a sinful, ungodly life is everlasting ruin. Think of death and judgment, and the terrible consequences of dying in an unpardoned state. Break off your sins by repentance, and set yourself in earnest to seek after God. But trust not in aught you do. Think not by present amendment to make restitution for past offences. Christ alone can take away your guilt. Christ alone must be your righteousness. If you are not saved by Christ, you cannot be saved at all. But to be saved by him, you must apply to him. Humbly and earnestly, heartily and repeatedly, upon your bended knees, you must cry for an interest in his great salvation. Go, therefore, to him as a perishing sinner, and cry for mercy. And be not discouraged if your request is not granted at the first. Go over and over and over again. Your

everlasting all is at stake. If you succeed not, you are undone for ever. If you do perish, resolve to perish at mercy's gate, and in the act of knocking for admittance at it. Form this resolution and act upon it, and the business is done. Whatever he may have been, Jesus will in nowise cast out a poor sinner who thus continues to apply to him. "Look," he says, "unto me, and be ye saved." All that he has done, and all that he has suffered, is yours, if only you will accept it for your salvation and be thankful. Will you accept it? Then will your heart be full of joy, and your eyes of tears, and your affections will run over with love to the name and people and ways of Jesus Christ.

THE HYMN.

Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
 Come in mercy's gracious hour ;
 Jesus ready stands to save you,
 Full of pity, love and power :
 He is able, he is willing, doubt no more.

Let not conscience make you linger,
 Nor of fitness fondly dream ;
 All the fitness he requireth,
 Is to feel your need of him.
 This he gives you: 'tis the Spirit's rising beam.

Come, ye weary, heavy-laden,
 Lost and ruined by the fall ;
 If you wait till you are better,
 You will never come at all :
 Not the righteous,—sinners Jesus came to call.

Saints and angels, joined in concert,
 Sing the praises of the Lamb ;
 While the blissful seats of heaven
 Sweetly echo with his name :
 Hallelujah ! sinners here may sing the same.

THE PRAYER.

O God, the strength of them that put their trust in thee, who dost never fail to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love, we prostrate ourselves at thy footstool, humbly to implore thy blessing upon what we have heard. We ask for thy heavenly blessing in the name of Jesus, and we pray that thy Holy Spirit may help our infirmities, and seal to our souls the instruction which has been set before us. Oh that we may all be comforted and edified together, and that we may be able also to exhort and admonish one another. Keep us, gracious Father, from all the snares and adversaries to which we are exposed in this sinful world. May we never be enticed from the narrow way by deceitful lips or a flattering tongue. Mercifully grant that we may be preserved from every net which the flatterer may spread for our feet. And if we have been beguiled and entangled therein, do thou, by thy gracious rebukes, and thy loving correction, deliver our souls and set us free. May we know how to answer the wicked falsehood of infidelity, and be able to put to silence the scorners, whose words are stout against thee, and who have presumed to say, "It is in vain to serve God; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance; and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?" May we know the certainty of those things which are most surely believed among all thy people. May we have the witness in ourselves, and be able, through the Spirit which dwelleth in us, to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Oh give us the earnest of the Spirit, in our hearts, that we may be always confident, and declare unto others what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life. Merciful Lord, be pleased to grant, that like thy people of old, who feared thy name, we may speak often one to another, and be able to tell what thou hast done for our souls. When we cleave unto the dust, and when spiritual drowsiness is stealing over us, and we are walking, as it were, upon enchanted ground, may we shake ourselves from the dust, and be preserved from slumber and sleep, by recalling thy wonders of old, and talking of all thy marvellous acts, thy long suffering, and thy great goodness to our guilty souls. And if any of us have hitherto neglected the one thing needful, oh, make us willing, now in the day of thy power and of thy grace, to seek after God, that our souls may live. May we be thoroughly convinced of our guilt and danger. May we break loose from all the cords of vanity

which bind us to the world. May we cease at once from the vain attempt of establishing our own righteousness. May the only Saviour of perishing sinners be spiritually revealed to our hearts ; and may we receive him by faith, to be all our salvation and all our desire. To him, with thyself, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, be honour and glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXV.

IGNORANCE QUESTIONED AND ADMONISHED.

And what am I? My soul awake,
And an impartial survey take:
Does no dark sign, no ground of fear,
In practice or in heart appear?

What image does my spirit bear?
Is Jesus formed and living there?
Say, do his lineaments divine
In thought, and word, and action shine?

Searcher of hearts, O search me still;
The secrets of my soul reveal;
My fears remove; let me appear
To God and my own conscience clear.

ROMANS x. 2, 4.

FOR I BEAR THEM RECORD THAT THEY HAVE A ZEAL OF GOD, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE. FOR THEY BEING IGNORANT OF GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND GOING ABOUT TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN RIGHTEOUSNESS, HAVE NOT SUBMITTED THEMSELVES TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH.

THE instructive conversation of our pilgrims with Ignorance, and their reflections upon such a character, will form the subject of the present Lecture. The persons here described by the apostle would have argued exactly in the same way as Ignorance. It might have been supposed that Self-Righteousness, and not Ignorance, was the person here speaking; but the characters belong to the

same family. Ignorance is the parent of Self-Righteousness. It was so with the blinded Jews, spoken of by St. Paul. Ignorance of God and of themselves—ignorance of the divinely-appointed method for a sinner's acceptance with God, and of the means by which we are actually admitted into his favour, induced them to reject the gospel plan of salvation. We shall find that it led virtually to the same unhappy result in the character now to be considered.

I. We have to consider the manner in which our pilgrims questioned Ignorance ; and

II. Their reflections upon such a character.

I. We begin with the questions which they put to him. When Hopeful had finished the affecting relation of his experience to Christian, they looked back and saw Ignorance behind. As they intended to renew the conversation with him which they had formerly commenced, they determined now to wait for him. He did not, as they expected, manifest much desire for intercourse with them, and plainly said that he preferred solitude to company that he did not like. But when Christian had given him a friendly greeting, and asked, "How stands it between God and your soul now?" he replied, "I hope well, for I am always full of good notions that come into my mind to comfort me." By these good notions he meant that he thought of God and of heaven ; that he thought of them with desire ; and he even went so far as to say, that he left all for the sake of them. Christian told him that evil spirits and the lost think about God and heaven ; that the sluggard desires, and has nothing ; but

greatly doubted that he gave up all for God. Ignorance, however, was so foolish as to trust in his own heart, and declared that this assured him he had left all for God. He thought he had no reason to mistrust his heart, because it was a good one, and he knew that his heart was good because it comforted him with hopes of heaven. In vain did Christian suggest, that this might be owing to nothing but its extreme deceitfulness, and that those who have the least ground for confidence are often the most confident. Ignorance still asserted that his confidence was well grounded, because his heart and life agreed ; but he had no better evidence to furnish, that this was the case, than the testimony of his own deceitful heart. Christian very properly pointed out how vain is the testimony of our heart, unless it coincide with the word of God. Ignorance, however, would not be driven from the opinion which he had of his own goodness, and asked if that were not a good heart which has good thoughts, and that a good life which is ruled by the Divine law? This Christian freely admitted ; but remarked pointedly, what a different thing it is to have these, from only thinking we have them. Really to have good thoughts, he showed, was to think of ourselves, of God, and of Christ, as God has declared in his holy word. For instance, he said, we have good thoughts of ourselves when we think and feel that we are depraved and sinful both by nature and practice. Such thoughts as these are good, because they accord with the word of God, which assures us that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Ignorance could not receive this humiliating statement, and replied, "I will never believe that my heart is thus

bad." Then said Christian, it is plain he had never had one good or right thought concerning himself in his life. He thought differently, both of his heart and ways, from what God declared in his holy word; how, then, could his thoughts be right? He then proceeded, in like manner, to show what it was to have right thoughts of God: "It is to think of him as he has revealed himself in his holy word, as knowing us far better than we know ourselves, seeing sin where we cannot see it, and being so holy that he abhors, as filthy rags, the best performances that we can produce for our acceptance in his sight."

Upon this, even Ignorance declared that he was not depending for his acceptance upon his own performances, and that he knew he must believe in Christ for justification. But when Christian reminded him that this was impossible, as he had no feeling sense of his need of Christ, Ignorance declared what he meant by believing in Christ. "I believe," he said, "that Christ died for sinners, and that I shall be justified before God from the curse, through his gracious acceptance of my obedience to his laws. In other words, Christ makes my religious duties acceptable to his Father by virtue of his merits, and so shall I be justified." This was speaking out, and fully developed the ignorance and self-righteousness that were in this man. Christian well declared that such a faith was fanciful and false, confused and deceitful. It was fanciful, as having no warrant from the word of God. It was false, inasmuch as it was virtually resting in his own obedience, instead of the obedience of Christ, for justification. It was confused, as it made Christ not the justifier of his person, but of his

actions; whereas the believer's person is justified by Christ, and then his actions accepted for his sake. And finally, this faith was deceitful, for it buoyed him up with a false hope. He would find himself, in the day of doom, destitute of the true wedding garment. He was confident of his salvation, although he had never come as an undone sinner to the only Saviour of the lost, to answer for him. Christian went on to show that God the Father has accepted at the hands of the Divine Surety all the satisfaction and all the obedience which his law demands; so that what the sinner has to do is humbly to accept what Christ has done and suffered in his stead, and to rely upon this as all his salvation and all his desire. The obedience paid by Christ is the robe of righteousness for the complete justification of his people. Faith accepts this righteousness, puts it on, and so arrayed, the soul is not only acquitted from condemnation, but accepted and presented as spotless before God. To this statement, as might be expected, Ignorance strongly objected. He urged the old objection, that such a doctrine must necessarily lead to careless and profane living. "For what does it matter," he said, "how we live, if we may be justified by Christ's personal righteousness from all things, when we believe it?" Christian gave the true answer to this objection. He showed that it resulted entirely from the gross darkness in which he was enveloped. He was grossly ignorant alike of the nature of this justifying righteousness, and the means by which it is secured to us, as well as the sanctifying effects which invariably result from its apprehension. When did a sinner ever depend by faith upon Christ for justification, without his heart

being won to God in Christ, to love his name and his word, his ways and his people? Then Hopeful suggested the inquiry, whether or not Ignorance had ever had Christ revealed to him; and said that we can have no true knowledge of the Saviour, unless God the Father reveal him to us by his Holy Spirit. But Ignorance derided such a notion, as only springing from a disordered brain, and still persisted in declaring that his faith was right. Christian, however, entirely vindicated what his brother had stated, and then earnestly called upon Ignorance to awake to a sense of his wretchedness, and to flee by faith to Christ, that being interested in his righteousness, which is the righteousness of God, he might be delivered from condemnation. Upon this Ignorance declared that they both got on far too fast for him, and that, as for him, he must stay a while behind. So they left him.

Dear brethren, how painful it is to think, what numbers are puffed up with the confidence of ignorance! Self-righteousness, springing from ignorance, is one of the most common and the most determined enemies to the gospel of the grace of God. No real Christian has gone at all among such as profess and call themselves Christians, and conversed with them as to the ground of their hopes, without finding how awfully common are such characters as the one here described. When you have taken away such as are openly vicious, or evidently careless, the great bulk of the remainder will generally consist of persons who think and speak exactly like Ignorance. They hope their soul is prospering, because they have good thoughts. They have desires and wishes after heaven, and many things they are willing to do and renounce

for the sake of it. But whatever they give up, one thing they have no intention whatever of giving up, I mean, their self-righteousness. They can speak much of impressions and comforts; and influenced by these, they pass the most favourable judgment upon their state and their doings. But they do not see through the proper medium. They do not weigh themselves in an even balance. The veil that is upon their eyes prevents their seeing sin where God sees it. The pride and self-love that fill their hearts, induce them to thank God that they are not as other men, when they ought to be crying for mercy as miserable sinners. They will by no means own that their hearts are deceitful and wicked, or that their ways have been crooked and perverse. Whoever such charges may refer to, they cannot believe that they refer to them. They have never had such a view of their guilt and misery, as to despair for ever of being saved by their own works and deservings. They think verily that the great and glorious God is altogether such an one as themselves. Their eyes have never seen the King, and consequently they have never said, "I am undone!" They have never had such a sight of the greatness and justice, the holiness and the omniscience of God, as to make them loathe themselves in their own eyes, and perceive "that they are altogether as an unclean thing, and all their righteousnesses as filthy rags." And yet while their eyes are thus darkened, they imagine that they are depending on Christ to save them. Though they never had any feeling sense of their spiritual necessities, they still think that they believe well enough for all that. If they think at all about Christ, it is merely to make up their deficiencies.

Without any vital union existing between their souls and Christ, they presume to think that for his sake their works will save them. Thus, while they profess to believe in Christ, they are really seeking to be their own saviours. They are going about to establish their own righteousness, and have not submitted to the righteousness of God. To transfer all their guilt to Christ, and have his righteousness imputed to them, and laid to their account by faith, and to be accepted in this without any reference whatever to their own works and ways, this is a doctrine that they can neither relish nor understand. And in the blindness of their hearts, they imagine that this is a doctrine which makes men indifferent to good works. They know not the invariable connection that exists between sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. The notion of Christ being revealed to the soul, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, they conceive to be visionary and delusive, although it be the special office of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ, and to reveal him in his saving office and character to the souls of men; and although we are expressly assured that no man can say, that "Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." We should be very faithful, very plain, and very solemn, when called to address such characters as Ignorance. We should labour to convince them that they are building upon a wrong foundation; that their faith is fantastical and false, delusive and ruinous; and that as sure as God is true to his word, unless they obtain a better hope than this before they die, they will be miserably disappointed and entirely speechless, when they appear in judgment before God, the Judge of all. Then they will find that no righteousness but what

is absolutely perfect, and in every particular what His law demands, can stand the scrutiny of His piercing eye. Is there no ignorant person, turned aside by a deceived heart, here present? Oh that you would be awakened to a sense of your true character and your real danger! What must become of you, if you remain in that blind and benighted state much longer? "He that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." But God's word tells you whither. The end of such a course is everlasting ruin. Consider and awake! and fly for refuge, before it is too late, to the only Saviour, whose precious death and everlasting righteousness are now freely held out for your acceptance. His death has made reconciliation for all your past offences. He has paid

"The rigid satisfaction—death for death!"

His obedience is perfect, everlasting, divine; and it is provided and set forth as the only robe in which you can be accepted and be faultless before God. Only believe, and all things are yours. He who knew no sin has become sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

II. The reflection of the two pilgrims upon such a character as Ignorance was to form the second branch of our present consideration. As they proceeded onward, while Ignorance was left behind, Christian said to his companion, "I am much concerned for this poor man. It will certainly go ill with him at the last." Hopeful regretted, that in his own town of Vanity, whole families, nay streets of them, were to be found, even among such as professed to be pilgrims. Hence he inferred, the vast numbers

of them that must be congregated together within the crowded city of Conceit, the native place of Ignorance. Then they entered upon an interesting discussion, respecting the inward experience of such men. Have they, at any time, true conviction of sin, and consequently any fear that their state is dangerous? Christian thought decidedly, that at times they were a little shaken out of their presumptuous confidence; but not understanding the benefit of such convictions, they desperately stifle them, and continue to flatter themselves in their own eyes. Hopeful knew well the vast importance of fear, and its influence in causing men, at first, to set out on pilgrimage. Then he begged his companion to describe right or godly fear. Christian well described it by its rise, its use, and its effects. It rises from the Holy Spirit, showing both the evil and danger of sin. Its principal use is to drive the convinced sinner for pardon and acceptance to Christ. While its invariable effect is, to produce in the conscience, great reverence for God, submission to his holy word and ways; separation from every known sin, and constant jealousy of every thing which may be displeasing in his sight.

The pilgrims had still above two miles further to journey, before they came to the end of the Enchanted Ground. For their mutual edification they continued the discussion upon which they had entered. At the request of Hopeful, Christian related how he conceived the ignorant and self-righteous stifle the fears and convictions, which, if duly cherished and followed out, would certainly have led to a different result. Many fight against them, because instead of considering that they are produced by the Spirit of Truth, they regard them as

coming from the enemy of their souls. They think such fear overthrows their faith, and, therefore, they will not be moved by it. They vainly think that they ought not to fear, and thus desperately determine that they will not fear. Above all, they perceive clearly that the admittance of these fears would entirely demolish that self-righteousness which they so dearly love, and, therefore, they oppose them with all their might. All this Hopeful understood well by painful experience. "As face answereth to face in a glass, so does the heart of man to man." He freely admitted, "Before I knew myself it was so with me." Then did they leave the subject of poor Ignorance, and entered upon another profitable topic of conversation, which engaged their attention all the way to the end of the plain.

Let us review, for our profit, these weighty and important reflections upon such a character as Ignorance. Have we been truly enlightened and taught by the word and Spirit of God? Then surely our tenderest sympathy must be excited towards every individual that we meet, who is evidently walking in darkness, ignorant, and out of the way. The true Christian will ever be ready deeply to pity all such. But true Christian pity must flow from a pardoned sinner, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and who is yearning for the same blessings to be diffused on every side. It must flow from one who has done, or who is longing to do, whatever he can, for the benefit of those over whom he laments. How zealously had Christian laboured for the benefit of Ignorance! In the same way St. Paul acted to similar characters. While he had continual sorrow and heaviness on their account,

his heart's desire and prayer to God, and his unwearied efforts, were all united that they might be saved. When prayer and effort unite with pity, then is it really Christian and genuine. The most hopeful spirit cannot fail to discover objects on every side to call forth this tender feeling. What numbers in every place and in every direction are blinded by the god of this world, and have never been turned from darkness to light! To say nothing of those whose life and conduct plainly declare that they are in the broad road to destruction, how extremely painful it is to think that multitudes who profess and call themselves Christians, who think well of themselves, and who make a fair show to others, are tied and bound with the chain of darkness. Remember, O self-confident professor, to boast of your knowledge, while you neither feel the power of the gospel in your heart, nor exemplify it in your life, is only a fearful aggravation of your guilt. Did not the Lord say to the Pharisees, "Ye were blind ye should not have sin, but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth." Beware of a misplaced confidence. A surer mark on natural ignorance can scarcely be given, than a self-satisfied and boastful spirit. "If any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing." We cannot be too suspicious of our own deceitful hearts. Be not wise in your own conceits. Conceit is the native place of ignorance, and until you come forth from this place—I mean, until you leave your own wisdom, and are content to receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child—you cannot take one step on the road to Zion.

Again, let every ignorant and self-confident person receive the word of instruction. There are

seasons, (your own conscience tells you it is so,) when you are shaken a little out of the fatal security in which you generally indulge. You cannot always maintain unbroken the deep sleep in which you are cast. By night, on your bed, when you could not sleep, your thoughts have troubled you. When you have had some affecting instance brought before you of the shortness and uncertainty of life; or else when a thrill of sudden pain has darted through your frame, and you had a solemn thought of your own approaching dissolution, a secret fear and perhaps a painful dread has crept over you, in spite of your boasted confidence, and has taken possession of your heart. Then you felt that you were not prepared to die. As the solemnities of death and judgment and eternity passed before you, fear came upon you and trembling, which completely dispelled for a while your presumptuous confidence and made all your bones to shake. Oh, why did you strive against the salutary conviction? Why did you not cherish it? Why did you resist, as a dreadful enemy, what came to do for you the office of the kindest friend? It came to you, indeed, in a startling form, and addressed you in a rough voice; it took hold of you with a violent hand, but kindness was in its heart; and it was a visit of mercy that was paid to you. It might have proved to you that fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom, and have effectually induced you to set out in the way everlasting. How do you know, if you have properly cultivated that secret conviction, that it would not have stripped you of your false confidence, moved you to fly to the only sure refuge, and made you afraid of sin all the days of your life? Oh, remember that genuine conviction

of sin is produced by the Spirit of Truth. Do not resist this, as if it came from the enemy of your soul. Do not think that the destruction of false confidence is the overthrow of faith. The sooner false confidence is overthrown the better. Sav not, I have no need to fear and therefore I will not fear. Our danger is often the greatest where our fear is the least. Self-righteousness, it is true, cannot stand, if you grant admittance to godly fear. It will soon undermine it, and lay it prostrate in the dust. But let that go too. Nothing that is valuable or enduring can be built upon it. It is a foundation of sand, and the higher you build upon it the greater will be your fall. However humbling to your pride, if you have never come as a helpless sinner for an interest in Christ, oh, admit the secret whisper of the Holy Spirit to your conscience, that you are still an unpardoned and unconverted sinner! Endeavour to deepen, rather than to stifle, this salutary conviction. You cannot be too deeply conscious of your guilt and danger. But then remember, your utmost necessities can all be supplied, and abundantly relieved, from the all-sufficiency and the fulness of Christ. Despair of yourself, and put your trust in Him. For sinners of every description, who no longer go about to establish their own righteousness, but apply by faith to Christ for all they need, a full, a free, a finished, a present, an everlasting righteousness is provided. Only receive it, and it is actually your own, both now and for ever.

THE HYMN.

Rock of ages ! cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee ;
 Let the water and the blood,
 From thy wounded side which flowed,
 Be of sin the double cure,
 Save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labours of my hands
 Can fulfil thy law's demands ;
 Could my tears for ever flow,
 Could my zeal no languor know,
 That for sin could not atone,
 Christ must save, and Christ alone.

Nothing in my hands I bring ;
 Simply to the cross I cling ;
 Naked, come to thee for dress ;
 Helpless, look to thee for grace ;
 Vile, I to the fountain fly :
 Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
 When mine eyelids close in death,
 When I rise to worlds unknown,
 And appear before thy throne—
 Rock of ages ! cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful Father, who of thy tender love hast given thine incarnate Son, to be smitten for us, that a cleansing fountain might flow from his wounded side, and that perishing sinners might find in him a sure refuge, and a safe hiding-place ; mercifully look upon us, who desire to flee to Christ, as our rock and our fortress and our only deliverer. We are naturally blind and dark, foolish and deceived. But, Lord, thou canst have compassion on the ignorant, and such as are out of the way. Send us, we beseech thee, the light of thy Holy Spirit, and give us the true knowledge and understanding of thy blessed word. Oh do thou effectually

deliver us from self-righteousness. Give us such an affecting sight of our true character, and natural depravity, that we may no longer go about to establish our own righteousness. Make us to know that our hearts are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Show us that we are altogether as an unclean thing, and that all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We know that we shall never heartily apply to the great Physician of souls, until we perceive our spiritual sickness. Lord, make this needful discovery to us, however we may be pained or humbled by it. Show us that we are unholy, unclean, and undone ; without strength, without righteousness, without any good thing. And, oh grant, that Christ Jesus the Lord may be revealed to our hearts, by the special teaching of the Holy Spirit, as made unto us of God, wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. May we seek above all things to know Christ, and to be found in him : not having our own righteousness, which is by the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. And may it please thee, gracious Lord, to enlighten and convert all those who are walking in darkness, and not knowing whither they are going. Oh, do thou bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived. Show them their guilt and their danger, and direct them to the only sure refuge, before their feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and they perish without remedy. Let not the god of this world blind their eyes, but let their eyes be opened, and let them be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in thee. And grant, O Lord, that none of us may quench or resist the motions of thy good Spirit within us. May we all be effectually convinced of sin ; may we plead guilty ; and not be satisfied to have our hurt slightly healed. But may we come as genuine penitents, by true faith, to Him who alone can thoroughly heal and restore our sin-sick souls ; and bring us, we beseech thee, to that happy land, where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick : " where the Lord shall be our everlasting light, and the days of our mourning shall be ended ; through Jesus Christ our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE XXVI.

THE CHARACTER OF TEMPORARY.

Born by a new celestial birth,
Why should we grovel here on earth?
Why grasp at transitory toys,
So near to heaven's eternal joys!

Shall aught beguile us on the road,
When we are walking back to God;
For strangers into life we come,
And dying is but going home.

Welcome, sweet hour of full discharge,
That sets our longing souls at large,
Unbinds our chains, breaks up our cell,
And gives us with our God to dwell.

LUKE viii. 13.

THEY ON THE ROCK ARE THEY, WHICH, WHEN THEY HEAR, RECEIVE THE WORD WITH JOY; AND THESE HAVE NO ROOT, WHICH FOR A WHILE BELIEVE, AND IN TIME OF TEMPTATION FALL AWAY.

THE character of Temporary will form the subject of the present Lecture. He is evidently to be classed with the stony-ground hearers. It is plain, both from the parable of the sower and other parts of Scripture, that there is a kind of belief wholly different from saving faith, which appears to take men a great way in religion. It is said, indeed, of those represented by the seed sown upon the rock, that "for a while they believe;" but this is clearly

a superficial and unsound faith, because they are described as having no root. So, also, was the case of Simon Magus. Of him it is written, "Simon himself believed also, and was baptized;" but in the sight of God he was never a partaker of true and saving faith, whatever he might appear to the eyes of men. Thus, when his hypocrisy was detected, the Apostle assured him, that he had neither part nor lot in the matter, and that his heart was not right in the sight of God. Saving faith is especially distinguished by its endurance. The true believer holds fast the beginning of his confidence steadfast unto the end. He is faithful unto death; he endures to the end; and thus he believes to the saving of his soul. But the dissembler with God is only a temporary professor, and having no root, he only for a while believes, and in time of temptation falls away.

We have to consider—

- I. The description of the temporary believer.
- II. The reason of his falling away.
- III. Lastly, the manner in which he actually falls away.

Let us pray earnestly that none of us may be numbered among such characters as the one for our present consideration. Instead of believing only for a while, and then making shipwreck of faith and a good conscience, let us be satisfied with nothing short of a vital union between our souls and Christ. Then, being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope and rooted in charity, we shall so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that at the last we shall come to the heavenly kingdom.

I. The character of Temporary is brought before us in the conversation of the pilgrims as they journeyed over the last part of the Enchanted Ground. Christian asked his companion if he knew any thing of one Temporary, who about ten years ago was a great professor of religion. Hopeful remembered him well. He had dwelt in the town of Graceless, which is at a considerable distance from Honesty; and his next door neighbour was Turnback. Christian at one time had dwelt under the same roof with him; and had no doubt, from what he then witnessed, that the man was much awakened at that time. He believed he had then both a sight of his sins, and some sense of the wages due to them. Hopeful had thought the same respecting Temporary. He, too, had several opportunities of seeing him. When under his convictions, Temporary had several times found his way to Hopeful's house, although it was by no means near. He had come to him with many tears, as one in great distress about his soul. What wonder that Hopeful not only pitied him, but was quite inclined to judge favourably of his case? The result, however, of this beginning had painfully reminded him, that not every one that says, Lord, Lord, is certainly journeying to the celestial city. In addition to this, Christian declared that Temporary told him once, that his resolution was formed; and that he had actually resolved to set out on pilgrimage. And what prevented the fulfilment of his resolution? Why did he not leave for ever his native place, the town of Graceless, and cast in his lot among such as were journeying to the city of the living God? This was the reason: he suddenly became acquainted with one Save-self. And then

farewell Christian! Farewell Hopeful! He had no relish for their conversation after that. So infatigating was the influence of his new acquaintance, that all at once he became entirely a stranger to Christian, and he never paid Hopeful another visit.

Let us look, my brethren, for our warning and instruction, a little more closely at the features of Temporary. How little dependence is to be placed on conviction and knowledge, strong feelings and good resolutions! All this we may have, and still be destitute of the root of the matter. What numbers have their breasts wrung with remorse, feel the weight and see the desert of their sins, who never effectually close with Christ! How many understand clearly the doctrines of the gospel, who continue strangers all their lifetime to its sanctifying power! How many have their warm affections excited, receiving the word with joy, who have no root in themselves! And how many resolve and re-resolve to give up their sins, to serve the Lord, and to seek their happiness in his favour, who never live to fulfil their intentions, and who show that their goodness is only as the morning cloud and the early dew! One very common reason why so many are satisfied with their state, before they have experienced the great change, is this: they think to do for themselves what none but Christ can do for them. They become acquainted with one Save-self. They listen to the false and flattering representations of physicians of no value. They ground their confidence upon impressions, or duties, or penances, or sacraments, and not upon Christ. They have never thoroughly ceased from their own wisdom. They have never absolutely despaired

of their own resources. They have never heartily renounced their own righteousness and their own strength. In short, emptied entirely and stripped completely of self, they have never gone by simple faith, as perishing sinners, to the only Saviour of the guilty and the lost, with the humble petition, "Lord, save, or I perish." Resting short of this, they have no root in themselves. Their hurt is only slightly healed. They speak to themselves peace, when there is no peace. And now they have no relish for the searching conversation of the real Christian, or the humiliating truths declared by such as would direct them to the only true ground of hope. If you would not be deceived by a false hope, and disappointed of salvation at the last, oh, beware of concluding your state to be good before you have fled as a self-despairer to Christ, and obtained an humble hope of your personal interest in the free pardon and plenteous redemption which he bestows upon all who truly turn to him. No flesh must glory in his presence. Christ must be all in all. You must look to him for wisdom to instruct you, for righteousness to justify you, for sanctification to renew you, and for redemption to save you.

II. We proceed now to the next topic discussed by our pilgrims. They conceived it would be very profitable to inquire into the reason of the sudden backsliding of such characters as the one they had been considering. At the request of Christian, Hopeful stated his views on this subject. There were four reasons, he conceived, which induced them to act in such a way. An unconverted heart, slavish fear, sinful shame, and love of ease.

(1.) An unconverted heart is the first reason of

turning away. Though the conscience of such persons is awakened, their heart is unchanged. As long as their alarm lasts, they are anxious about religion; but when that subsides, and the cause of it is removed, they relapse again into their former ways. Like Pharaoh, they seem to relent, and submit and promise, while smarting under the plague; but, like him, as soon as they see there is respite, they harden their heart and repent of their repentance. The dog that is sick and the sow that is washed, remain still, the one a ravenous and the other a filthy animal. Neither the sickness of the former nor the washing of the latter has changed its nature. The one has received only an incidental check to his greedy propensity; the other has undergone an outward process, which has altered its appearance without changing its habits. In both, nature will be nature still. The sickness subsides; the washing is forgotten. The dog returns to his greedy ways, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. Thus it is with convinced but unconverted sinners. They only abstain from sin while their conscience is sick with the apprehension of approaching wrath. The reformation which they have made is only outward; it reaches not to the heart. Thus their strong feelings soon subside. Their desires of heaven and happiness vanish with vanished fears, and then they return again to folly.

(2.) Slavish fear is another reason that induces temporary believers to apostatize. They cannot break through the snare that comes from the fear of man. Having never set their faces as a flint to the Celestial City, nor resolutely determined to give up all for invisible objects, when their terror has

subsided, and they count the cost of a pilgrim's life, "by and by they are offended." They begin to think that it is good to be wise, and not to run the hazard of losing all. Why should they displease their best friends? Why should they bring themselves into unavoidable and unnecessary trouble? Thus, conferring with flesh and blood, they fall in again with the world.

(3.) Intimately connected with this slavish fear is carnal shame. When a man no longer feels vividly the power of the world to come, and his heart has never been changed, he cannot brook the reproach and contempt that is inseparable from a pilgrim's life. When this comes in his way, he turns aside to avoid it, and ere long he is seen again in the broad road.

(4.) Love of ease was the last reason of apostasy mentioned by Hopeful. It is a grievous thing to have before us the sight and sense of our sins. Many, therefore, are more anxious for ease than for holiness. They try, no matter by what means, to hush their conscience, and are only anxious to say to themselves, Peace and safety. If they contemplated their guilt aright, it might make them flee to Him who would give them peace, and make them safe indeed. This is the only way effectually to ease a burdened conscience. But this is a way that they do not like. They seek ease by drowning reflection, and shutting out thought, mixing in company, or launching out into amusement. By these means, they soon get rid of their serious impressions, and walk no more with the pilgrims of Zion.

Christian fully acceded to what his companion had advanced. He knew well that an unconverted

heart is the principal reason of declension and apostasy. While this remains, any of the things which Hopeful had mentioned were amply sufficient to turn the professor aside. A man whose heart is wrung with remorse, while it is yet unchanged, is only like a criminal trembling and promising before the judge that passes upon him the sentence of death. Were he set at liberty, the slightest temptation would be sufficient to draw him again to his former crimes. Thus the terrified and excited sinner, who promised and vowed every thing while he apprehended punishment near, is soon after, by the influence of fear, or shame, or love of ease, enticed back into his ungodly ways.

Let these important truths, my brethren, have their due weight upon every one of us. Remember, if your heart be not right with God, there will be no steadfastness in your goings. Let it be your first care to have the heart of stone exchanged for the heart of flesh; and then keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. If you profess religion with an unconverted heart, you may for a while deceive both yourself and others. Because of the strong emotion which you have occasionally felt, or the decent attention which you have paid to the forms and ordinances of the gospel, you may take for granted that all is well, and, after a certain manner, you may for a while believe. But if there be no true sense of the evil of sin within you—if there be no vital union between your soul and Christ—if the law of the Lord be not written, by the Spirit of the living God, upon the fleshy tables of your heart, inclining you to love holiness and to delight in the law of God after the inner man—if this be wanting, all is false and hor-

low in the sight of God, and it may be, ere long, that the unsoundness of your profession will be manifest to all. The heart-searching God cannot be deceived with strong language, fair speech, or outward appearance. He knows the very secrets of the heart. Many who pass for righteous or truly converted people before men, are seen and known as being far otherwise by his unerring glance. And that all the churches may know that he searches the heart and tries the reins, he is sometimes pleased to make manifest the hidden wickedness of a fair pretender to religion. In his providential dealings, he sets a stumbling-block before that man; that is, he places him in such circumstances, and exposes him to such temptations, as tend to draw forth the insincerity of his heart, and to manifest his true character. He is exposed to the scorching heat of tribulation or persecution because of the word, and he cannot stand the fiery trial. Like a green herb without any root, exposed to the noonday's sun, he dries up and withers away. He cannot brook the fear of man; he cannot bear the reproach of the cross: he cannot submit to the self-denial to which he is called. He turns aside from the holy commandment delivered to him; and separating himself from the true people of God, he declares plainly that he was never really and truly united to them. "For if he had been of them, he would no doubt have continued with them." How deeply important to every one of us is the fervent petition, "Oh, let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed!" Sooner or later we are sure to be ashamed, if our heart be not sound in the Divine statutes. Nothing but the implantation of the law of God within us,

by the power of the Holy Spirit, can preserve us in peace, and deliver us from all the stumbling-blocks by which others are offended. "Great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." None but the upright will pass unhurt through all the snares and temptations that beset the path of the traveller to Zion. "The law of his God is in his heart, and none of his steps shall slide."

III. We have lastly to advert to the manner in which the temporary believer draws back unto perdition. As Hopeful had so fully described the reason of this, it was the turn of Christian to describe the way in which it is done. He did this in short and simple terms, and well described the downward path by which a man passes from false profession to open apostasy. He begins by drawing off his attention from serious thoughts of death, judgment and eternity. He neglects prayer, private prayer and private duties. Then he begins to avoid the company of lively and zealous Christians. Public duty then becomes a burden. After this he proceeds to find fault with professors, as if there was no sincerity or uprightness among them. Then he goes into the way of the wicked and profane, begins to trifle and play with little sins openly; presumptuous offences soon follow, which clearly show his real character; and unless a miracle of mercy prevent, he perishes everlastingly in his own deceivings.

Oh, fatal and desperate process! Growing blacker and blacker, until at last it terminates in the regions of blackness and darkness and despair, for ever and ever! Beware of the first entrance upon such

a path! If you are a true believer, your course will be the complete opposite of the one just described. The way of the wicked is as darkness; they know not at what they stumble. But "the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The hypocrite, notwithstanding his profession, does not like to retain God in his knowledge, and often strives to banish solemn thoughts from his mind. The upright soul does what he can to cherish and deepen his impression of eternal things. He is often amazed and distressed at his insensibility to the awful reality of what he believes and hopes for; and he cries from the bottom of his heart—

"O Lord, my inmost soul convert,
And deeply on my trifling heart
Eternal things impress."

The hypocrite will not always call upon God. With true prayer he was never acquainted. True it is, that after some sort, he poured out a prayer when the chastening of God was upon him; but when the cause of his distress is removed, it seems from his conduct as if he had no further need for prayer. The believer, though often hindered and humbled beyond measure on account of the defilement and distraction of his prayers, still perseveres in prayer. He dare not give up secret prayer. Though he often draws it feebly, and, as it appears to himself, in a very languid manner, he feels that prayer is his vital breath, and that to give up praying would be to give up all. While the hypocrite cannot bear the company and the conversation of zealous and lively Christians, the upright believer, notwithstanding his languor and lamented dulness, rejoices greatly in their society; he finds it both

pleasant and profitable to be with them, and he can say with sincerity, "My delight is in the saints that are on earth." While the hypocrite takes pleasure in speaking of the falls and infirmities of the godly, this is a subject of real pain to the upright. He considers himself; his own liability to fall, and his grievous infirmities; and he makes every possible allowance for the falls of others, exercising that charity which covereth a multitude of sins. While the hypocrite goes to associate with the profane and the worldly, the believer goes not into the way of the wicked, but avoids it, turns from it and passes away. And instead of trifling and playing with little sins until his heart is hardened, and he is led on to the most daring offences, and he becomes a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction, the true believer hates every approach to sin. He recollects that whosoever despiseth small things, shall fall by little and little; and that the only way to be certainly kept from presumptuous sins getting the dominion over him, is to watch and pray against his secret faults. Thus watching and praying and striving against sin, he grows in grace and in the knowledge of his Saviour. He goes from strength unto strength. He holds on his way, and waxes stronger and stronger; and as he approaches his journey's end, he becomes more and more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. May our course be the course of the upright, the complete opposite of that of the hypocrite's. And that this may be so, first let us seek, before all things, the renewal of our hearts, that our feet may be directed in the way everlasting; and then let us cry at every step: "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe!"

THE HYMN.

When any turn from Zion's way,
 (Alas, what numbers do!)
 Methinks I hear my Saviour say,
 "Wilt thou forsake me too?"

O Lord, with such a heart as mine,
 Unless thou hold me fast,
 I feel I shall, I must decline,
 And prove like them at last.

Yet thou alone, O Lord, I know,
 Canst save a wretch like me;
 To whom, my Saviour, shall I go,
 If I should turn from thee?

Lord, I believe, and rest assured
 Thou art the Christ of God,
 Who hast eternal life secured
 By promise and by blood.

The help of men and angels joined
 Could never reach my case;
 And refuge nowhere can I find,
 But in thy boundless grace.

No voice but thine can give me rest,
 And bid my fears depart;
 No love but thine can make me blessed,
 And satisfy my heart.

What anguish has that question stirred,
 "If I will also go?"
 Yet, Lord, relying on thy word,
 I humbly answer, No.

THE PRAYER.

O merciful Lord God, who dost never fail to help and govern them whom thou dost bring up in thy steadfast fear and love, look down from thy holy habitation upon us, and have compassion upon us and save us. Gracious Lord, we are taught in thy holy word, that there are those who hear the word, and with joy receive it, but have no root in themselves, and in time of temptation fall away. Save us, we most humbly beseech thee, from being numbered with such. Oh, may a vital union indeed be formed between our souls and Christ, the true and the living Vine. May we be grafted into his mystical body by a true and living faith, wrought in our hearts

by the power of the Holy Ghost. May we abide in him, and partake of his Spirit, and live by him, as living and fruitful branches, which are never to be cast off. May we prove that we are partakers of Christ, by holding fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end; and show that we are indeed alive unto God through Jesus Christ, by bringing forth all the fruits of righteousness, which are by him, to the glory and praise of thee, our God. Oh grant that as we have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so we may walk in him, rooted and built up and established in the faith, even as we have been taught. May we none of us be satisfied with conviction and terror and joy, if we have not become new creatures in Christ Jesus. May we despair of ourselves, have no confidence in the flesh, and put not our trust in any thing that we do. Deliver us from applying anywhere, or going to any one, for help and salvation, save only to Christ. Lord, to whom shall we go! Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Save us, we beseech thee, from all the causes which induce others to be offended and turn away, and make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. Save us from an unconverted heart; and grant that we may be truly renewed in the spirit of our mind. Save us from the fear of man, which bringeth a snare; and put thy fear in our hearts, that we may not depart from thee. Save us from the power of carnal shame, and make us true followers of Him who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross and despised the shame. And oh, save us from the love of present ease; enabling us to endure as seeing Him that is invisible, and making us heartily willing to deny ourselves, and to suffer affliction now, that we may be comforted and exalted hereafter. Mercifully grant, O Lord our God, that we may dread every approach to the path by which hypocrites and dissemblers depart from thee. May we never seek to banish from our minds a realizing sense of death, judgment and eternity. May we never cease calling upon thy name, in earnest prayer, either secretly or in the congregation. May we never be offended at any of thy faithful followers, or decline from any of those means of grace which thou hast graciously appointed for the benefit of thy people. Cleanse thou us from secret faults; keep back thy servants also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over us, that we may be upright and innocent from the great transgression. Hear us, gracious Father, and support and uphold us in all our dangers and necessities, until we are brought to thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.

LECTURE XXVII.

THE LAND OF BEULAH.

Shout ! for the blessed Jesus reigns !
Through distant lands his triumphs spread ;
And sinners, freed from endless pains,
Own him their Saviour and their head.

His sons and daughters from afar,
Daily at Zion's gate arrive ;
Those who were dead in sin before,
By sovereign grace are made alive.

Oh may his conquests still increase,
And every foe his power subdue ;
While angels celebrate his praise,
And saints his growing glory show.

ISAIAH lxii. 4.

THOU SHALT NO MORE BE TERMED FORSAKEN ; NEITHER SHALL THY LAND ANY MORE BE TERMED DESOLATE : BUT THOU SHALT BE CALLED HEPHZIBAH, AND THY LAND BEULAH : FOR THE LORD DELIGHTETH IN THEE, AND THY LAND SHALL BE MARRIED.

THIS is one of the many glowing descriptions contained in the Bible, of the glory and prosperity of the church in the latter days. In its literal and full meaning it has not yet been accomplished. The conversion and return of the Jews to their own land, with the endless train of blessings that are to flow through them to the Gentile nations, when they shall be grafted again into their own olive-tree,

is most clearly foretold, and stands very prominent in the sure word of prophecy. At that happy consummation, the verse which we have read will receive its full accomplishment. Then the Lord's ancient people, who have been so long dispersed to the four winds, and outcasts upon the earth, shall no more be termed forsaken; neither shall their land, which for so many generations has been trodden down of the Gentiles, and bringing forth thorns and briers, any more be termed desolate. Again they shall be admitted into the covenant and the favour of their God; and the children of Abraham shall be bound by a new and happy tie to the land which was given to Abraham. The Lord will delight in them, and their land shall be married. We must never overlook the real meaning of Scripture, in any application, however happy or ingenious, that may be made of it. But while we do not interfere with the true meaning, it is quite allowable to apply Scripture in a figurative sense. In such a sense as this, the glory which is promised to the church in the latter day very happily illustrates the established peace and abundant consolations which eminent Christians often enjoy as they approach the end of their pilgrimage. Our two pilgrims are now rapidly advancing to their journey's end. We have in the present Lecture to consider,

- I. Their arrival in the land of Beulah.
- II. Their experience there.

May the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, who alone can effectually do it, give each of us to know from sweet experience what these things mean.

- I. We consider first their arrival in this delight-

ful land. At length Christian and Hopeful approached the extreme border of the enchanted ground. By edifying conversation, and the sweet counsel which they took together, they had beguiled the weariness of the way, and kept off the drowsiness which otherwise would have overpowered them in that dangerous place. Beautifully fair and very pleasant was the region which now opened out upon their view. They entered the land of Beulah. The air was most delicious and refreshing; and as the way to Zion lay directly across this happy country, all their past fatigues were forgotten in the enjoyment which they here found. They were gratified continually with the singing of birds; every day the flowers sprung up in their path; and without intermission, the voice of the turtle was heard in the land. "There was no night there." They seemed to be journeying through those happy regions to which the promise belongs, "Thy sun shall no more go down." They were now far distant from the land of darkness and shadows. Into these sweet fields Giant Despair can never come, neither can an arrow from Doubting Castle be shot there. The Celestial City to which they were going was full in their view. They had entered its suburbs, and occasionally they met some of its shining inhabitants, who walked thus far to the borders of their happy home. The marriage contract between the faithful bride and the celestial Bridegroom is delightfully renewed in this place. It is the land of Beulah, or married, because pilgrims here know and are sure that they are one with Him whom their soul loveth; and here, as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so does the King of the heavenly Jeru-

salem rejoice over his people. The two pilgrims found themselves now in a good land and a large—a land that abounded with corn and wine—a land in which they could eat bread without scarceness; neither did they lack any thing in it. As they journeyed still forward, they heard the proclamation made, “Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold thy salvation cometh! behold his reward is with him!” The inhabitants of that land were all righteous; it is not the place of the uncircumcised or the unclean; it is only trode by the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.

Here let us pause for a few moments, (it is sweet to linger in such a place,) and let me put to you the question of our Divine Master to his disciples, after he had been speaking in parables: “Have ye understood all these things?” Alas! how few among us can answer with them, Yea, Lord. But have we not made a mistake? Surely it must be the saints’ everlasting rest, and not the Pilgrim’s progress, about which we have been now speaking. Is there so much of heaven to be enjoyed on earth? Can a poor pilgrim, yet an inhabitant of this sinful world, and bearing about a body of sin and death, really attain to a state at all corresponding to this glowing description? Now listen to the testimony of the eminently holy and excellent Dr. Payson, and the experience which he had, as he lingered for a few weeks on this side of Jordan. “When I used to read,” he said, “Bunyan’s description of the land of Beulah, where the sun shines, and the birds sing day and night, I used to doubt whether there were such a place. But now my own experience has convinced me of it, and it infinitely surpasses all my previous conceptions. I think the

happiness I enjoy is similar to that enjoyed by glorified spirits before the resurrection. I am going 'to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the First Born, and to God the Judge of all.' I can find no words to express my happiness. I seem to be swimming in a river of pleasure, which is carrying me on to the great fountain." When one of his congregation came to him, as he lay upon his sick-bed, he said to his dying pastor, "Watchman, what of the night?" To this he replied, with wonderful quickness and cheerfulness, "I should think it is about noonday." There was no night there. Upon another occasion he said, "It has often been remarked, that people who have been in the other world, cannot come back to tell us what they have seen; but I am so near the eternal world, that I can see almost as clearly as if I were there; and see enough to satisfy myself at least of the truth of the doctrines which I have preached. I do not know that I should feel at all surer, had I been really there." A short time before his departure, he dictated the following letter to his sister:—

"Were I to adopt the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah, of which I have been for some weeks a happy inhabitant. The Celestial City is full in my view. Its glories beam upon me; its breezes fan me; its odours are wafted to me; its sounds strike upon my ear, and its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing separates me from it but the river of death, which now appears but an insignificant rill, that may be crossed at a single step, whenever God

shall give permission. The Sun of Righteousness has gradually been drawing nearer and nearer, appearing larger and brighter as he approached; and now he fills the whole hemisphere, pouring forth a flood of glory, in which I seem to float like an insect in the beams of the sun, exulting, yet almost trembling, while I gaze on this excessive brightness, and wondering with unutterable wonder, why God should deign thus to shine upon a sinful worm.

“But why do I speak thus of myself and my feelings; why not speak only of our God and Redeemer? It is because I know not what to say. When I would speak of them, my words are all swallowed up. I can only tell you what effects their presence produces, and even of these I can tell you but very little. Oh, my sister, my sister, could you but know what awaits the Christian, could you only know so much as I know, you could not refrain from rejoicing, and even leaping for joy. Labours, trials, troubles, would be nothing: you would rejoice in afflictions, and glory in tribulations; and, like Paul and Silas, sing God’s praises in the darkest night and in the deepest dungeon. You have known a little of my trials and conflicts, and know that they have been neither few nor small; and I hope this glorious termination of them will serve to strengthen your faith and elevate your hope. And now, my dear, dear sister, farewell. Hold on your Christian course but a few days longer, and you will meet in heaven, your happy and affectionate brother, EDWARD PAYSON.”

Few of us, dear brethren, could give such an explanation as this of the land of Beulah, and its happy

inhabitants. We have just observed, some descriptions of the church are so glowing, that we can scarcely tell whether they apply to its militant or triumphant state. In the same way, the experience of real and eminent Christians is sometimes so exceedingly bright and happy, that it seems to partake of glory as much as of grace. While yet on earth, like the early Christians, and indeed, like him whose letter I have quoted, "they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls." In experience like this, we have the key to the language now under our consideration. When permitted to enjoy this state of exalted privilege, the established believer knows from sweet experience, that the Redeemer's ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. In the joy of his heart, the liveliness of his graces, and the precious communications of the Heavenly Dove, he seems to be passing through a country where birds are singing, and flowers are blooming, and the voice of the turtle is continually heard. "Joy and gladness are found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." While lingering there, the reconciled countenance of his heavenly Father makes a perpetual sunshine. The dark and distressing clouds that have so often hung over him have all dispersed. He is safe at once from the cruelty of despair, and the misery of doubt. He seems on the very threshold of heaven. He has come to an innumerable company of angels. He can now say, without any hesitation, "My beloved is mine, and I am His." Here it is said to the happy soul, after all its afflictions, great and sore: Thy Maker is thy Husband; Jehovah is thy shepherd; the Eternal

Spirit is thy Comforter. "Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shall thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah, and thy land Beulah: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married." Why, my brethren, do not all real Christians more earnestly aspire after experience like this? How inexpressibly delightful it must be thus to live the days of heaven upon earth! Oh, let us give all diligence to make our calling and election sure. Let us not be satisfied to go doubting all our days, but let us diligently use the appointed means for obtaining the full assurance of faith, that we may see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. •

II. Let us now proceed to consider more particularly the deportment of the pilgrims in this delightful country. As they walked through this land, their joy was more abundant than it had ever been before. They had now too a distinct view of the Celestial City. They could discern the pearls and precious stones of which it was built, and the pure gold with which the streets of it were paved. What with the natural glory of the city, and the reflection of the sunbeams upon it, the two pilgrims, though in a somewhat different degree, each fell sick with very fervent desire and ardent longing. Now it was the language of their heart, to all whom they met, "If you see my Beloved, tell him I am sick of love." Still advancing, they came to orchards and gardens and vineyards, with gates that opened to the highway by which they went. When they inquired of the gardener respecting these, he told them that they belonged to the King, and that they were planted there for his own delight, and also for

the solace of pilgrims. Upon this, they entered without fear into the vineyards and refreshed themselves with the various productions which there abounded. Then the gardener showed them the King's walks and arbours, where he delights to be. Here, in perfect peace and safety, they tarried and slept. They were observed to talk much in their sleep, and this was the reason: It was the nature of the grapes which they had eaten from those vineyards, "to go down sweetly, and to cause the lips of them that are asleep to speak." When they awoke in the morning, they proceeded forward in the direction of the city. But the reflection of it was so extremely glorious that they could not bear to gaze upon it with open face. They had to view it through a glass, with which they were furnished for that purpose. Here they were met by two men in shining apparel. To these our pilgrims recounted all the deliverances they had experienced, and all the travail that had befallen them by the way. Then did the shining strangers say to Christian and his comrade, "You have but two difficulties more to meet with, and then you are in the city." Our pilgrims then earnestly invited the men to go with them, and they consented to do so. But withal, they said, "You must obtain it by your own faith." Then did they all go on together, until they came in sight of the gate.

Here, again, we pause for the present. Let us try to be animated and quickened in our Christian course by a realizing view of the glorious things which are here described. "Very excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of God." Had the pilgrims more abundant and abiding joy, now that they were approaching nearer to their journey's

end? Holy joy and absorbing delight in God, is one evident mark of advancing sanctification and meetness for heaven. "It seems," said the happy saint to whom we have just referred, "as if the promise, God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, was already fulfilled to me, as it respects tears of sorrow. I have no tears to shed now but those of love and joy and thankfulness." We lay no stress, indeed, upon joy as evidence of acceptance, if it be alone. They who have no root in themselves may be carried away with even a rhapsody of joy. "There is nothing that deserves severer examination, when proposed as a test of holy sincerity, than joy; because it may be conceived to spring from so many delusive causes, as well as from a genuine work of grace." But if joy be attended with the other fruit of the Spirit, and especially if it be chastened with godly fear and self-loathing, then it is clearly the joy of the Holy Ghost and the foretaste of heaven. Did the city now in all its glory shine before our pilgrims? As the upright followers of the Lamb are finishing their course, God is sometimes pleased, by his Holy Spirit, to make a special revelation to their hearts of those good things which he has prepared for them that love him. Then they are favoured with a vivid and realizing survey of what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. "I seem," said the same witness, "to swim in a flood of glory, which God pours down upon me. I do not merely know that I shall enjoy all this—I enjoy it now." Did the happy travellers grow sick with fervent longing for the full enjoyment of the glory that awaited them? A desire to depart and to be with Christ,

to see him and be with him and like him for ever and ever, can only exist in a heart that is truly sanctified; and the strength of these longings will generally be just in proportion to the degree in which the world is crucified, and the earnest of the Spirit is possessed within. Having testified the delight and joy which he had in God his Saviour, the dying Hallyburton said, "I long for his salvation! I bless his name that I have found him, and I die rejoicing in him! Blessed be God that ever I was born! Oh that I were where he is! If there be such a glory in his conduct towards me now, what will it be to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne!" Did Christian and Hopeful regale themselves in the vineyards, and linger with delight in the walks which are frequented by the King himself? Oh happy picture of what divine ordinances would ever be to the true believer, were faith always in lively exercise, and heavenly affections vigorous and strong! Were this the case, what would the courts of the Lord's house, and every other appointed means of grace, be to us, but a continual feast of most exquisite dainties, and delightful communion with the King of heaven?—Here did our pilgrims talk in their sleep? How wonderfully quickening is the effect of communion with God! The established believer, by waiting on the Lord, is spiritually refreshed and quickened as with heavenly wine. He cannot now sleep like others. If he at all slumber, his heart waketh; and even in his most inactive moments, his lips are ready abundantly to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord. Was the glory of the city so exceeding bright, that those who approached could only behold it through the medium of a glass? However

near the true believer may have approached to the confines of heaven, however strong may be his faith, and whatever bright discoveries may be revealed to him, still faith is not sight. In his present state he could not endure the full blaze of the world to come. He must be content to view these things with the eye of faith, and through the glass of Scripture, until he is delivered from the burden of the flesh. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face."—Finally, did the pilgrims meet with celestial strangers who rejoiced to do them service, and accompanied them to the very sight of the gate? The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him. As the true Christian is finishing his testimony, and is fast advancing to his conflict with the last enemy that has to be destroyed, who can tell what dangers may be averted from him, or what friendly offices may be performed for him, by the ministration of angels! "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Still, however, it is only by his own individual faith that the believer can at last receive the prize of his high calling. Nothing but our own personal interest by faith in the Redeemer of the world can give us the victory over the last enemy, and bring us safe through the gates of the city to the joy and the glory of the New Jerusalem! Oh, be sure that you are building upon the true foundation; that you are seeking salvation and admittance into heaven by the right way. Men cannot save you; angels cannot save you; you cannot save yourself. Christ, none but Christ, can save you to the uttermost, and give you an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom. He has the keys of death and

of hell and of heaven. He opens and no man can shut; he shuts and no man can open. Stay your soul upon him now; follow him fully to the very gates of the city, and then you need fear no disappointment. If you believe in Jesus, you may say to the monster Death, Where is thy sting? And you may tell him where—"In the dead body of Christ in whom you believe." It has therefore no sting for you, neither can it by any means hurt you. He has not only disarmed death and shut the gates of hell, but he has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

THE HYMN.

There are some hours to mortals given,
Bright as the glowing face of heaven;
Sweet as the weary traveller's rest,
And peaceful as an angel's breast;

When Hope lifts up her longing eyes,
And spreads her pinions to the skies;
When earth's dark shadows backward roll
And freedom dawns upon the soul.

Why are those golden hours so few?
Why fades the vision from our view?
What envious power bids earth again
Enfold us in its iron chain?

O Saviour! with one smile of thine,
Dispel our gloom, our hearts refine;
And on the wings of faith and love,
Waft us to brighter scenes above.

With joy we hail that coming day,
When, cheered with heaven's reviving ray,
We shall be called to rest with thee,
From earth's dark clouds for ever free.

THE PRAYER.

O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire or deserve, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. We confess, with shame and sorrow, how little we know of the joy of thy salvation and the felicity of thy chosen. Our mind is dark; our heart is hard; our faith is weak; our hope is dim; our love is cold; and we are far, very far, from having attained the rich experience of those who walk in the light of thy reconciled countenance, and rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. We beseech thee, show us thy glory. Leave us not comfortless, but send thy Holy Ghost to enlighten our minds, to soften our hearts, to increase our faith, to brighten our hope, to confirm our love, and to give us the earnest and the pledge of the purchased inheritance, and to bear witness with our spirits that we are thy children. Oh that we may no more be forsaken or desolate; but that we may know that thou, Lord, delightest in us, and hast betrothed us to thyself for ever. May we live nearer to thee, and walk closer with thee than we have ever yet done. May our last days be our best days, our last comforts our sweetest comforts, and our last experience our richest experience. Bring us, we beseech thee, into that happy country which is trod by thy precious saints on this side Jordan. Save us from all our gloomy doubts and distressing fears. May we not only be thine, but may we know we are thine. Give us grace, O heavenly Father, so to walk, and to have our conversation in the world, as the children of thy covenant and the heirs of everlasting salvation ought to do. May all our rejoicing be coupled with filial and reverential fear. Reveal to our hearts more clearly the glorious inheritance which is reserved for us in heaven, as believers in Christ. May we feel thy Holy Spirit drawing our minds continually to high and heavenly things. Give us such a realizing sense of the supreme excellency of Christ, that we may have a desire to depart and be with him for ever. May we see thy face, and find thy presence, and taste thy love, in every ordinance to which we resort, for the strengthening and refreshing of our souls. And as we journey forward to the place of our everlasting rest, may we still be growing in conformity to thine image, and be made more and more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Give thine angels charge concerning us, to keep us in all our ways, until our course

is finished. And when we come to the brink of Jordan, may we pass over dryshod to the heavenly Canaan, and have an abundant entrance administered unto us into the everlasting kingdom of our God and Saviour. To him, with the Father and eternal Spirit, be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen

LECTURE XXVIII.

THE PASSAGE OVER JORDAN.

While on the verge of life I stand,
And view the scene on either hand,
My spirit struggles with my clay,
And longs to wing its flight away.

Where Jesus dwells my soul would be ;
And fains my much-loved Lord to see ;
Earth, twine no more about my heart !
For 'tis far better to depart.

Come, ye angelic envoys ! come,
And lead the willing pilgrim home !
Ye know the way to Jesus' throne,—
Source of my joys, and of your own.

JER. xii. 5.

HOW WILT THOU DO IN THE SWELLING OF JORDAN ?

By a natural and most beautiful figure, we have all been accustomed to consider the act of dying as represented to us by the crossing of a river. The prophet Jeremiah had been giving way to discouragement and despondency. He was unable to bear up amid the trials and calamities that pressed upon him. But he was shamed out of his unbecoming fear by the representation of the still greater trial which his faith and patience would have to undergo. What he had already suffered bore the same proportion to what was yet behind, as the

contest with footmen bears to the contest with hors men, or the exertion of walking through a peaceful country bears to the exertion required for crossing a rapid and impetuous stream. "If," it was said to him, "thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses? and if in the land of peace, wherein thou trustedst, they wearied thee, then how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"

In our last Lecture we were considering the delightful experience of the two pilgrims in the land of Beulah; we have now to consider,

- I. Their approach to the river's brink.
- II. The manner of their crossing over it; and,
- III. Their reception on the opposite side of the river.

I. We begin with their approach to the river's brink. Very sweet and pleasant was their journey through the land of Beulah, as they approached the end of their pilgrimage. The climate through which they were passing appeared to breathe the fragrance and waft the odours of the better country to which they were fast hastening. As the tribes who had wandered so many years in the wilderness obtained a part of the land of promise, before they had crossed over Jordan and obtained the full possession of the whole, so it was with these two pilgrims. They had tasted the celestial fruit on earthly ground. They obtained a part of the promised inheritance, before they were admitted to the full enjoyment of the whole. In the joys and comforts of that rich and fertile country which bordered on Jordan, they had a delightful earnest and foretaste

of those satisfying and never-ending delights which they expected to receive when all their toils and trials should be ended, and their weary feet should actually have arived at their happy home. As Christian and Hopeful, with their celestial guides, urged their way to the gate of the city, lo, between them and the gate was a river. There was no bridge to go over, and the stream was very deep. At the first sight of the river both the pilgrims gave a start; the joyful pace at which they were proceeding was relaxed, and the form of their visage was altered. They were assured, however, that they must go through, or else they could never come at the gate. Then did they wishfully inquire, if there were any other possible way of getting to the gate, without having to cross that dreadful stream? To this inquiry they were told, a way indeed there was, but it was so private and special, that from the foundation of the world, of all the countless hosts of pilgrims that have passed from this world of sin to the Celestial City, only two pilgrims (Enoch and Elijah) had been exempted from the common passage. The King himself had crossed the river; and by his sovereign appointment it was ordained that until the last trumpet shall proclaim the day of doom, there shall be no other mode of approach into the happy land. Our poor pilgrims, as they pondered this in their minds, and listened to the murmur and marked the appearance of the river, began to despond and to feel faint and uneasy. Christian especially was even more cast down than his fellow, and he began to look this way and that. But it was all in vain; no way could be found by which they might escape the river. Then they anxiously inquired of their shining companions, if

the waters were alike deep at all times and in every place. "Is there," they asked, "any particular time or place more favourable for crossing than another?" They were told that there was indeed a wide difference with respect to this. But withal, their informers assured them of their utter inability to help them in that matter. "You will find it," they said, "deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place."

Have we, dear friends, ever been brought to the brink of Jordan? Have we ever seriously looked death in the face? Have we made any serious preparation for death? Have we ever thoughtfully pondered how we shall do in the swelling of Jordan? Whatever be our state and character—whether we are Christians in deed and in truth, or whether we possess nothing but the Christian name—whether we have a good hope through grace of our personal interest in the only Saviour of sinners, or whether we are without Christ and without hope in the world, we are rapidly hastening to the brink of the river which separates this worldly wilderness from the boundless regions of eternity.

"There all our steps at last are brought,
That path, alone of all unsought,
Is found of all!"

Soon we shall get a sight of the river. We shall hear the solemn murmur which it makes. We shall see it in all its awful reality stretched before us. And what a sight will that be! How shall we start and shrink; and how will the coward flesh recoil at the view! What a trial will this prove to our faith! What a test of our principles! No knowledge, however clear, of the gospel-plan of salvation; no sensible comfort which we have formerly

enjoyed, nor even the actual possession of true grace in our hearts, can certainly enable us to look on without dismay, and still to advance with unhesitating step. Nature will shrink at the sight of death. Death, as the penalty of sin, is a most awful event. When we come to the brink of the river, and find that there is no escape; and when it is said to us individually, "Thou art this day to go over," how many solemn and affecting thoughts will crowd upon the mind, and how many reluctant feelings will struggle in the heart! The solemn sensation of passing out of time into eternity; the pangs of dying; the forcible removal of the soul from her ancient habitation, the only one in which she has ever dwelt; the breaking up of the earthly tabernacle! Oh, how can we realize all this without a feeling of the deepest awe taking hold upon us! The most experienced Christian sometimes may be a prey to this feeling, even more than another. The degree of comfort, or the sensation of awe, with which a person looks death in the face, is very far from being a sure indication of his spiritual state. Strong faith is sometimes strongly tried. Eminent Christians, on particular occasions, sometimes show that their usual graces are not in lively exercise. He who has the keys of death orders all the circumstances of it according to his own good pleasure. Sometimes, in compassion to a feeble-minded but true disciple, the waters are remarkably low; and at other times, when a long-tried disciple has to pass over, the body is so racked with pain, the mind so harassed with temptation, that the passage looks very formidable, and Jordan seems to have overflowed all his banks. Still, however, as a general rule, to every individual it

may be said, "You shall find it deeper or shallower, as you believe in the King of the place." Yes, dear brethren, here is the true and the only certain remedy against the fear of death. As we look in simple faith to Him who died, and was buried, and rose again for us; as we realize his presence in the gloomy vale, rest in his love, and stay ourselves upon his faithful promise, we shall fear no evil. Fear not, O believer, to go over this Jordan. Though the waves thereof may rage and swell, though heart and flesh may fail, though thou hast not gone this way heretofore, thy Saviour has crossed before, and made the passage safe for every one of his true followers. His death is thy deliverance from the bitter pains of eternal death; his rising to life again is the restoration of everlasting life unto thee. Therefore, fear not. Only believe. Be strong in faith, giving glory to God, and when thou passest through the river it shall not overflow thee.

II. The actual passage of our pilgrims over the river comes now to be considered. Seeing that there was no other way to the gate, they addressed themselves to the water. At the first, it fared far worse with poor Christian than with his fellow. He had no sooner entered into the water than he found it fearfully deep; and beginning to go down, he cried out: "I sink in deep waters; the billows go over my head; all his waves go over me." His companion endeavoured to comfort him by a declaration of his own experience, which was of a more encouraging kind. "Be of good comfort," he said, "my brother, I feel the ground, and it is good!" But this could not comfort him, who was now vexed at his heart, and yielding for a season to despond-

ency and fear. "Ah," he said, "my friend, the sorrow of death hath compassed me about; I shall not see the land that flows with milk and honey." And now a great darkness and horror fell upon Christian. A mist came over his eyes. He could see nothing, not even a yard before him. He was plunging about in the dark. The goodly land and the glorious city which he had so distinctly seen a little while before, were now as completely hid from his view as if they had never been! His memory, too, seemed to have gone with his sight. He could not recall to mind his songs of praise in time past; and all the sweet and delightful refreshments which he had at different parts of his eventful pilgrimage, had vanished like a dream. All the expressions that broke from him indicated the painful doubt and fear with which he was oppressed. He was weighed down with a fearful apprehension, that he should certainly perish in that river, and never gain admittance at the gate. He could only mournfully say, "I am cast out from thy presence." And then he would cry out again, "I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living." In addition to all this, he was now scared with terrific visions, and shapes and forms of the most frightful kind appeared to flit before him. Hard was the task of Hopeful to keep his brother's head above water. Sometimes he would sink, and then come up again like one half dead. No effort was left untried by Hopeful to reanimate the drooping courage of his companion. "Brother," he said, "I see the gate, and men standing by to receive us." But even this would not do. With the sad ingenuity of one who refuses to be comforted, and who can apply promises to any one but to himself,

Christian replied, "It is you, it is you they wait for; you have been hopeful ever since I knew you." "And so have you," rejoined Hopeful to Christian. He well knew that in the hour of sore temptation, a person is very ill qualified to judge of his state, and the way which he has taken. But Christian said, "Surely, if I were right, He would now rise to help me; but for my sins he hath brought me into the snare and left me." The reply of Hopeful is very judicious, and is quite applicable to an upright soul harassed with doubt and temptation, and deprived of sensible comfort at the prospect of death. "Is it not said of the wicked, 'There are no bands in their death, but their strength is firm; they are not troubled as other men, neither are they plagued like other men.' The troubles and distresses that you go through in these waters, are no sign that the King has forsaken you. They are sent to try you whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses." How forcible are right words! This calm application of Scripture truth evidently told upon Christian, and proved to him a word in season. He mused for a little while in thoughtful silence, and when Hopeful again addressed him in an encouraging manner, the dark and painful cloud in which poor Christian had been involved, passed away in a moment. With a beaming countenance and rapturous voice, he broke out and said, "Oh, I see Him again! and he tells me, 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee.'" Then did they both take courage, and the enemy after that was as still as a stone until they were gone over. Christian

now had found firm ground upon which to set his feet. The remaining part of the river was quite shallow, and thus they both got safely over to the opposite shore.

How deeply affecting, my brethren, is all this! Even the true Christian, when he has to launch away and to cross over this Jordan, may sometimes have very painful and distressing experience. If his faith at all stagger in that solemn hour, then, like Peter on the water, when he attempted to walk to his divine Saviour, he will begin to sink. And then he will have sorrowfully to say, "I sink in deep waters; all thy waves and billows go over me." It is an unspeakable mercy for the tempted Christian, when struggling with the last enemy, to enjoy the counsel and encouragement of a faithful and hopeful companion. Such a one will suggest that the case is not hopeless, and that there is still firm ground upon which the poor soul may rest, when most of all tossed with the tempest and not comforted. But how vain are all the efforts of mortal men, to impart comfort to the mourner, until the Great Teacher applies his own word to the heart! Nothing is more difficult than to restore peace and comfort to one who is writing bitter things against himself, and who is mourning under the hiding of God's countenance. A great many causes may unite to fill even the upright with bitterness and distress at this solemn season. Staggering faith may plunge him in despondency. Bodily suffering may impair his memory. Mental debility may cloud his experience. And above all, the enemy may use his malignant influence to harass and vex the soul of the Christian, and to fill him with doubt and darkness in his last hour. One

thing is especially obvious respecting the tempted Christian. He can believe that the promises of the gospel, which are set before him, apply to any one rather than himself. He thinks that if he were right, and his sins were pardoned, and God was reconciled to him, he would not have left him desolate and comfortless in his last extremity. "If the Lord," he says, "were indeed with me, wherefore have these evils come upon me?" But we should seriously consider that wicked and thoughtless persons have no realizing sense of the evil of sin, the holiness of God, and the tremendous consequences of death. Thus, "they have no bands in their death." They go off quietly, and have none of the tormenting fears and disquieting thoughts which real Christians sometimes undergo. God often withdraws his sensible presence from his people in the trying hour, that they may recall to mind the wonders which he has wrought for them in times past, and that they may walk, even in the dark valley, by faith and not by sight and sense. But though for a while he may hide his face, and a true disciple may have to buffet long with the swelling of Jordan, in due time the cloud shall disperse, the true believer shall be delivered, the deep shall not swallow him up, neither shall the pit shut her mouth upon him. He shall look again to the holy temple of his God. After all his narrow escapes and diversified conflicts, his painful fears and dark forebodings, the Christian shall end his pilgrimage well at the last. All is well that ends well. We have often looked upon the pleasing sight of a fine setting sun. A little before, his cheerful face was hid, and we expected that he would go down under a cloud; but he broke out again, and the blackness

of the cloud from which he issued, served only to set off to greater advantage the tints of beauty and the rays of glory that illustrated his final departure. For the most part the true Christian, when he really approaches to his journey's end, is delivered out of all his fears; he obtains the supplies needful for the distressing hour, and then—

“ Like a fine setting sun, he looks richer in grace.”

If rapture be absent, hope is present. “ The righteous hath hope in his death.” If joy and triumph cannot speak, heavenly peace shall diffuse her influence. “ Mark the upright, and behold the perfect, for the end of that man is peace.”

III. A few words we have yet to add respecting the reception of the pilgrims on the opposite side of the river. We shall reserve for our next Lecture, their happy entrance into the Celestial City. Attendants, in shining apparel, were indeed waiting to receive them on the further shore. By these they were speedily conducted up the lofty hill upon which the city of the living God is built. They had no difficulty in climbing up the mighty steep. They leaned on the arms of conductors that excel in strength. And, in addition to this, they had left their mortal garments behind them in the river. They had nothing, either from within or without, to weigh them down, or to impede their progress. Thus, with a cheerful face, and a nimble step, right onward they advanced above the clouds and the regions of air. They were comforted beyond measure to find themselves safely landed over the river; to feel themselves delivered from a burden which had sometimes ensnared their souls, and invariably

impeded their steps, through every part of their eventful progress. They rejoiced, too, in the new companions who were so kindly conducting them forward. All their conversation was about the beauty and glory of the Celestial City. How animating to the pilgrims, to hear from those who knew so well, a glowing description of the inexpressible delights upon which they were just about to enter! It was very pleasant to have described to them the glorious company in which they were to mingle; the happy regions where they were to dwell; the exemptions, which they would enjoy for ever, from all the cares and sufferings and privations to which they had been subject on the other side of the river; and to hear finally what would be their delightful employment, and the rich and glorious recompense for all their past sufferings and toils, before the throne of God and the Lamb. How could the pilgrims hear of this, and not burn with intense longing for its full and immediate possession!

And can we, my friends, hear of such things, and recollect that these are the true sayings of God, and not feel our hearts burn within us? Can we think of the glorious manner in which every true pilgrim will terminate his progress, on the other side of the river, and not be stirred up to "lay aside every weight, and the sin that so easily besets us, and run with patience the race that is set before us." Only think for a moment of the immediate consequences of death, both to the righteous and the wicked; and then consider seriously what is before you. If you are a true pilgrim to the Heavenly City; if your heart is changed; if you have come by true faith, as a perishing sinner, to the

Saviour of the lost, and are pressing forward in the narrow path of holiness and obedience to the prize of your heavenly calling, oh, what a glorious prospect is before you! However poor or despised your present condition may be, however varied may be your trials, and however painful your fears and misgivings, it shall surely be well with you at the last. Soon you will be brought to the brink of Jordan, and launch into its dark and uninviting wave. When you pass through the water, your Saviour will be with you. He will bear you safely through the swelling torrent; he will land you gently on Canaan's shore. The moment you are delivered from the burden of the flesh, your liberated soul shall be carried by angels to the paradise of God. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, you shall be free from every clog and from every sin, and scale the mount of God. You shall see the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it, and you shall serve Him, and see his face, and reign for ever and ever. "These sayings are faithful and true." But, oh, sinner, in thy present state, what an awfully opposite end will be thine! "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" You, too, must die, and after death be called to judgment! With your sin unpardoned; your Saviour neglected; all the Sabbaths you have broken, and all your other crimes weighing heavy upon you, again I ask, "How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" Oh, consider that the sorrows of death, to every unconverted person, are only a prelude to the pains of hell. While Lazarus is carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, the ungodly lifts up his eyes in

hell and in torments. Oh, that you would be effectually warned to flee from the wrath to come! Oh, that you would prepare to meet your God! Oh, that you would make provision for the hour of death and the day of judgment! Repent and pray. Seek earnestly for an interest in Christ, before you come to launch into the river of death, which can only usher the unpardoned sinner into the land and region of hopeless misery and eternal ruin. Apply to Him who tasted death for every man, and you shall yet be delivered. Believe in Him, and you shall never taste the bitter pains of eternal death.

THE HYMN.

There is a land of pure delight,
 Where saints immortal reign;
 Infinite day excludes the night,
 And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,
 And never-withering flowers:
 Death, like a narrow sea, divides
 This heavenly land from ours;

Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
 Stand dressed in living green:
 So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
 While Jordan rolled between;

But timorous mortals start and shrink
 To cross this narrow sea;
 And linger shivering on the brink,
 Afraid to launch away.

Oh! could we make our doubts remove,
 Those gloomy doubts that rise,
 And see the Canaan that we love
 With unobscured eyes!

Could we but climb where Moses stood,
 And view the landscape o'er,
 Not the cold stream of Jordan's flood
 Should fright us from the shore.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord, and with whom the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burden of the flesh, are in joy and felicity, we bless thy holy name for all thy servants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching thee to give us grace so to follow their good example, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom. We are strangers and sojourners with thee, as all our fathers were. We are dying creatures, and we live in a dying world. We are sinful creatures, and therefore dying creatures. By thy righteous sentence it was decreed, that death should be the wages of sin; and death hath passed upon all men, because that all have sinned. Lord, make us to know our end, and the measure of our days, what it is, that we may know how frail we are. We know, that, ere long, the time of our sojourning in this worldly wilderness will come to an end. It is appointed for us once to die. We must be brought to the brink of that stream, which divides the life that now is, from the life of the world to come; and it will be said to us individually, "Thou art this day to go over." Oh, may we be prepared for our great change. May we not start or shrink at the immediate prospect of death; but be able to regard him, not as the king of terrors, but as a messenger of peace. When we come actually to engage with the last enemy, let not our faith fail. May we look in simple faith to that precious Saviour, who, by his own death, destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil, to deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. Blessed Lord, may we find thy presence in the gloomy vale, and then we will fear no evil. Let not the water-flood drown us, neither let the pit shut her mouth upon us. If we may not pass over this Jordan dryshod, oh say unto our soul, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee, and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." And though the sorrows of death may come about us, bring us in safety at the last to the heavenly Canaan. If triumph and joy be denied, when we come to die, oh grant that we may depart in peace, and fall asleep in Jesus, the life of them that believe, and the resurrection of the dead. May we go down to the grave full of the blessed hope of eternal life. May we commit our departing spirits into thy hands, as into the hands of a faithful Creator, and most merciful Redeemer. Lord Jesus, receive our

spirits, as soon as they are released from their earthly prisons. May they be carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom. May we find, that when we are absent from the body, we are present with the Lord; and that we are come to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect. And if any of us are still in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity, and in no wise prepared to meet our God; oh, do thou open our eyes, show us the power of the world to come; and while we have life and memory, or any breath, may we seek earnestly for the pardon of our sins, and an interest in the salvation of Christ, before the things which belong to our peace shall be for ever hid from our eyes. Hear us, O Lord, hear us. in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

LECTURE XXIX.

THE CELESTIAL CITY.

Come, Lord, and warm each languid heart
Inspire each lifeless tongue ;
And let the joys of heaven impart
Their influence to our song.

Sorrow and pain, and every care,
And discord there shall cease ;
And perfect joy and love sincere
Adorn the realms of peace.

The soul, from sin for ever free,
Shall mourn its power no more ;
But, clothed in spotless purity,
Redeeming love adore.

ISAIAH XXXV. 10.

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 BE FOR A WAY.

MANY passages of Scripture, which speak of the extension of true religion in the latter day, seem imperceptibly to lead our thoughts from a state of abounding grace to that of everlasting glory. The whole chapter, of which this is the concluding verse, refers clearly to a period of blessedness upon earth, which the church has never yet witnessed. Though it tarry long, in due time it will surely come. The prayer which has so long been ascending from the hearts of all true believers shall eventually receive its full accomplishment. When the set time is come, the Lord will arise and have mercy upon Zion. Then Satan shall be bound, and be no more suffered to deceive the nations. The Spirit from

on high shall be poured upon all flesh, and all the ends of the world shall see the salvation of our God. All the heresies and stumbling-blocks, which defile and distract the minds of men, and prejudice them against religion, will be done away, and the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Then redeemed sinners, converted Jews and Gentiles, shall come with songs of joy and praise to worship the Lord in his holy place; and this holy joy and triumph will be the pledge and foretaste, yea, the beginning of everlasting joy in heaven. The moment they are absent from the body, they are present with the Lord. With him do live the spirits of them that depart hence in the Lord; and with him they are in joy and felicity. "They come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

We have to consider :—

- I. The manner in which Christian and Hopeful were conducted to the gates of the city.
- II. Their admittance into the city.
- III. The terrible disappointment of Ignorance, when it was too late to remedy his mistake.

I. See, first, how the happy spirits of the two saints were conducted to the gates of the city. As they were approaching towards it, a company of the heavenly host came out to meet them. Then the two shining ones, who had the charge of Christian and Hopeful, announced to their glorious fellows whom they were conducting. They spoke of them as men who had loved their Lord while yet they were in the world, and had left all for his name's sake; and they were now going actually to behold his blissful face, whom having not seen they

had loved. This intelligence diffused a thrill of holy joy through all the ranks of that happy company, and the heavenly host gave a great shout, saying: "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." There came also at this time to meet them, several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining garments. These made the very heavens to ring with the loud notes of triumph which they sounded. They welcomed the approach of the new comers to the abodes of bliss, with a shout and a merry noise, and with sound of a trumpet. In this triumphant manner they were conducted forward. They were surrounded on every side with minstrels and singers, and guarded alike, on the right hand and on the left, with celestial forms. Such melody and triumph and rejoicing were there, it seemed as if heaven itself had come down to meet them. The love and joy, the happiness and benevolence of their numerous attendants were unspeakably sweet to the enraptured pilgrims. They were scarce able themselves to contain the unbounded joy with which they were filled. The city itself, the heavenly Jerusalem, was full in their view. They were just about to enter into it; and they thought all the bells of the city were ringing to welcome their approach. When they reflected, that after all their painful toils, and all the travail that they had passed upon their weary pilgrimage, they were just about to enter Jerusalem, their happy home, how could their joy be expressed as they came up to the gate! "They came to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads."

Dear friends, how exceedingly animating is all this to the true believer! If we are indeed pilgrims to the celestial city, why do we not long more earnestly for our heavenly home? What are all our

present comforts and prospects, but refreshments by the way, and mere glimpses of the glory to be revealed! Very sweet and seasonable have these refreshments often proved to our souls. When we went into the sanctuary of God; when we bowed our knees in prayer; when we tasted the good word of the Lord; when our souls were satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and our hearts were revived and comforted as we fed with pleasure upon the word of truth, and drew water with joy from the wells of salvation,—all this was sweet, exceeding sweet, and we were enabled to say, “Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.” When we were enabled, with a penitent heart and lively faith, humbly to draw near to our Saviour’s presence; when he revealed himself in his saving office and character to our longing souls; when we heard his voice, when we saw his face, when we felt his love,—oh, this was sweet, exceeding sweet. He whom our soul loveth looked forth at the window, and showed himself through the lattice, and we could cry out, with some little degree of fervour,

“ ’Tis heaven on earth, ’tis heaven above,
To see thy face, and feel thy love !”

But how short was the duration of that sensible joy! How soon did our hearts grow hard, and cold, and insensible again! How soon has our Beloved withdrawn himself! But oh, think what must it be to be conveyed in a moment to the new Jerusalem, your happy home, where all your toils and all your weary labours shall end for ever! where you shall see the King in all his beauty, in all his glory, and he will no more hide his face from you! Can you think of this, and your soul not break out with very fervent desire for the holy place of the habitation of the Most High?

“ Oh when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend,
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end ?”

Remember, dear brethren, it is only the ransomed of the Lord who can thus return and come to Zion with singing and with joy. Are you among this happy number? Have you ever felt your need of a great ransom, to make satisfaction for all your sins, and to deliver your guilty soul from going down into the pit of eternal destruction? Have you pleaded in earnest prayer, and accepted in thankful faith, the great sacrifice of that divine and glorious Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for all? Oh, be persuaded, every one of you, that there is no way through the swellings of Jordan for any soul of man to pass safely but only the ransomed of the Lord. If you essay to go over without faith in the blood of sprinkling, like the Egyptians in the Red Sea, you will be drowned. The river of Jordan will sweep you away—that ancient river, the river Jordan. Who are the happy souls that ministering spirits rejoice to convey with singing and gladness and melody, to the gates of glory? What is that company we see, rejoicing and marching in triumph on the further side of Jordan? “ Who are these that are arrayed in white, and whence came they ?” These are they that have come out of great tribulation. They took up their cross, they denied themselves, they chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; they toiled forward on a painful pilgrimage; they declared plainly that they sought a city; they, too, had to encounter the pains of death. But mark very carefully, dear brethren, none of their pains or tribulation, however great, secured for them

that joyful welcome into the city of the living God. Oh no! "They washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." They fled by faith, every one of them, as poor perishing sinners, to that atoning blood which cleanseth from all sin; and thus their welcome, and their entrance into glory, was procured. See to it, that you are personally interested in Christ, and then all will be well. Seek the Lord while he may be found. Embrace his salvation now, while it is freely offered to you. Say, from the bottom of your heart:

"Prepare me, Lord, for thy right hand,
Then come the joyful day:
Come, death, and some celestial band,
To bear my soul away."

II. We pass on to consider, in the next place, the admittance of Christian and Hopeful into the Celestial City. They came up to the gate, and beheld the inscription that was written over it in letters of gold: **BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS, THAT THEY MAY HAVE RIGHT TO THE TREE OF LIFE, AND MAY ENTER IN THROUGH THE GATES INTO THE CITY.** When the voices of new comers were heard at the gate, some of the happy citizens from the towering wall above looked down to see who called for admittance. It was said by the strong guard, who conducted the pilgrims: "These men are come from the City of Destruction, for the love which they bear to the King of this place." Their certificates were then demanded. Christian and Hopeful severally drew forth each his own certificate, the same which he had received at the commencement of his pilgrimage, and presented it at the gate. These certificates were carried immediately to the King. All was correct and right; there was no flaw nor fault found in either of the

documents. They were neither forged nor altered, but, being sealed with the King's signet, and signed by the King's own hand, there could be no mistake or demur respecting them. In a moment the royal order was issued, and the King's commandment was heard: "Open ye the gate." Then did they enter into the glorious city: and as they entered, they were transfigured, and had raiment put on them that shone like gold. Each of them had a harp put into his hand, and a glittering crown placed upon his head. All the city rejoiced at their safe arrival, and its holy inhabitants made the very walls to ring with joy. They were told to enter into the joy of their Lord. And oh what a joy was that! Their warfare was accomplished; the days of their mourning were ended. They had arrived at Jerusalem, their happy home. They obtained joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing fled away. How could they refrain from expressing their joy? They sang with a loud voice, saying: "Alleluia! blessing and honour and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever! As the gates were opened to admit the pilgrims, a glimpse was obtained into the interior of the city. It shone like the sun; its streets were paved with gold; and all its inhabitants were seen walking about with crowns on their heads, and palms in their hands, and golden harps wherewith to make heavenly melody. There were also glorious creatures that had wings, and one cried, and another answered: "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord!" After this glimpse, the gates were closed. And who, that was left on the outer side, after what he had seen, could refrain from wishing himself safely there?

Do we, my brethren, feel this wish, warm and

fervent, springing up in our hearts? It is not a transient pang of rapturous desire that will bring us to heaven. Remember, and forget not, who it is that can live for ever, and enter into the city. There is written, as it were, over the gates of it, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city! And what, my brethren, are the commandments of Almighty God to us miserable sinners, the fallen children of fallen Adam? He commandeth all men everywhere to repent. This is his commandment, that we believe in the name of the only-begotten Son of God. What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Thus, his commandments include these three necessary things, repentance, faith, and obedience. None that are impenitent, unbelieving, or living in wilful transgression of the law of God, do his commandments. Those that are taught by the Holy Spirit to feel and bewail and forsake their sins—to put all their trust and confidence for pardon and acceptance in the precious promises of the gospel, and, as the fruit of their repentance and the effect of their faith, who daily endeavour to rule their lives by the word of God—these are the happy people that do his commandments, that keep the truth; and these, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace "have right to the tree of life, and enter in through the gates into the city." This is the generation of the upright. This will comprise in every age the genuine features of a citizen of Zion, who shall abide in the tabernacle of the Lord, and dwell in his holy hill. "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob." These are the true subjects of the King of glory; and for all these, without a

single exception, the everlasting doors shall be lifted up, and the eternal gates shall be opened wide, that they may enter into the kingdom of everlasting life and happiness and glory. These all can produce a certificate, signed by the King's hand, and sealed with the King's signet; how, then, should he deny them admittance into his presence? What is this certificate, this all-important document, without which we can in no wise either enter into the King's palace, or see the King's face? What can it be but the genuine work of sanctification, wrought in every believing heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. It is nothing else than that new and gracious principle which the trembling penitent received into his heart at the beginning, when first the good work was begun;—that principle which showed him his sin, and caused him to loathe it; which showed him his Saviour, and enabled him to rest upon him; which showed him the beauty and excellence of the Divine law, and caused him to love it, and delight in it, and strive to observe it, all the days of his life. This is the believer's certificate. It is the seal of the living God, by which all the true citizens of Mount Zion are set apart from the ungodly, and sealed unto the day of redemption. It is the writing impressed by the finger of God, to distinguish the objects of his everlasting love, the people in whose heart he has written his laws. In short, it is their Father's image, their Father's name, their Father's Spirit, and their Father's law, to distinguish all who are truly born of God from a world that lieth in wickedness. How then, can they be denied admittance into their Father's kingdom?

Will the Lord refuse the impress of his own seal, his own image? Can he deny his own hand-writing? The thing is impossible. Clothed in the white robe of their Redeemer's righteousness, they shall be presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy. And now it is done. All their toils and sorrows and privations are ended for ever. Now "they are 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.

Oh, my brethren, can we think of all this glory in the heavenly Canaan, and not wish ourselves there? See, first, that by simple faith you receive Christ Jesus the Lord to save you to the uttermost; and then cherish and retain, and never let go, the hope of glory and the prospect of the goodly inheritance which he has purchased for you and presented to you. When the Christian pilgrim is possessed of this,

"Oh, how he longs to have his passport signed,
And be dismissed."

Retain this, and you will long for the full enjoyment of that of which you have received the earnest and the pledge. It will make you act like a pilgrim to your dying day. It will support you amid all the fatigue of the wilderness. And when you see that nothing but death, like a narrow stream, separates between you and the glorious land, it will make you cry out as Moses did: "O Lord God, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand. I pray thee let me go over

and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain and Lebanon.”

III. We have now, in the last place, to consider briefly the terrible disappointment of Ignorance. He, too, at length came up to the river's brink. He contrived to get over it very easily. But by what means was this done? There happened to be just then at hand a ferryman called Vain-hope, and he readily undertook to convey Ignorance across the water in his boat. Thus, without any of the awe or distress of the other two, and without half their difficulty, Ignorance gained the opposite shore. He, too, like those who had gone before, ascended the hill, and came to the gate; only there was none waiting to receive him, neither did he obtain encouragement of any kind. He noticed the inscription upon the gate of the city; and beginning to knock, he seemed to expect that it would be opened to him immediately. Then was the inquiry made, by one who looked from the wall, who he was, and what he would have. Ignorance answered, “I have eaten and drank in the presence of the King, and he has taught in our streets.” Upon this the citizens asked for his certificate, that they might show it to the King, who would then immediately give orders for his admission. But, alas! poor Ignorance had no certificate to produce. He made, indeed, a poor attempt, as if searching in his bosom to find it. But there was no certificate there. Then said the citizens, “You have not got one!” Ignorance was now speechless, and answered never a word. His case was soon reported to the King and this was the commandment which he gave respecting him: “Bind him hand and foot, and have him away, and cast him into outer darkness.”

Very speedily and very fearfully was this righteous sentence executed. In a moment he was carried through the air to the door under the side of the hill, and shut up in the doleful place where the King's prisoners are kept. Thus was this poor deluded man, at the very moment when he thought he had happiness secure, thrust down for ever to the regions of despair. "For there is a way to hell, even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction."

Oh, my friends, what a solemn, what a very solemn lesson is here presented to every one of us! It is the last lesson we are taught in the instructive allegory which has now for so long engaged our attention, and which we are now permitted to conclude. Oh, may we every one be effectually warned by it! Let us bind it upon our hearts, and fasten it upon our memory. Let us never forget it to the latest day of our lives, and then we shall not have directed our thoughts to the Pilgrim's Progress in vain. Without a converted heart, without the sanctification of the Holy Spirit, we can never be admitted into the holy city. You may be very confident that you are in the right way. You may meet death, not only without terror, but with strong confidence. Vain-hope may ferry you over Jordan; and with all the delusion and presumption of Ignorance, you may look for admittance into the blessed abode. "But where is your certificate?" Where is your meetness for the heavenly inheritance? Where is the evidence that you have indeed passed from death unto life? Where is that penitent, believing and obedient heart, which invariably is found in all the children of God? If you are destitute of this, you are destitute of every thing. You have not the Spirit of Christ, and you are none of his

You are yet in your sins, a poor, ignorant, unconverted, unsanctified sinner. You are without holiness, and how can you see the Lord? You are not washed from the filthiness of sin, and you can in no wise enter into the New Jerusalem. Oh, what can barren notions, what can vain hope or false confidence, do for you, when the King's commandment shall go forth: "Bind him hand and foot, and have him away." Then indeed you will be speechless. It will be too late then to remedy your fatal mistake. "He that is filthy must be filthy still, and he that is unholy must be unholy still." Do not presume in your heart, and say, Having safely passed so many dangers, how should I be cast away at the last, just when I arrive at the gate of heaven? Oh, it is true, it is awfully true—"there is a way to hell even from the gates of heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction." If you are denied admission to glorified saints, through the gates of the city, think who will be your companions for ever and ever: "Without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." Oh, that you would seek now what it will be too late to find then! Though the gate of heaven is only open for saints, the door of mercy, which is Jesus Christ, is open for sinners. Apply to Him for mercy now, and He will pardon you, and save you from your sins, and give you an inheritance among them that are sanctified. Remember there is nothing, no, nothing, but your own stubborn will, which prevents your coming to Christ for pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace. Oh, come, come now, to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and to find grace! "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that heareth

say, Come ; and let him that is athirst, come ; and whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”

THE HYMN.

Jerusalem ! my happy home !
 Name ever dear to me !
 When shall my labours have an end,
 In joy, and peace, and thee ?
 Oh when, thou city of my God,
 Shall I thy courts ascend ;
 Where congregations ne'er break up,
 And Sabbaths have no end ?
 There happier bowers than Eden's bloom,
 Nor sin nor sorrow know :
 Blest seats ! through rude and stormy scenes
 I onward press to you.
 Why should I shrink at pain and wo,
 Or feel at death dismay ?
 I've Canaan's goodly land in view,
 And realms of endless day.
 Apostles, martyrs, prophets, there
 Around my Saviour stand ;
 And soon my friends in Christ below
 Will join the glorious band.
 Jerusalem ! my happy home !
 My soul still pants for thee ;
 Then shall my labours have an end,
 When I thy joys shall see.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and ever-living God, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, mercifully look upon us, and grant that in this, and all our works, begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name, and finally by thy mercy obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ, our only Mediator and Redeemer. Through thy good hand upon us, we have been permitted to end the subjects which for some time have engaged our attention. Oh, let thy Holy Spirit seal upon our hearts the instructions we have heard ; and grant that whatsoever we may have profitably learnt from thy holy word, we may indeed fulfil the same. Impress it deeply upon our minds, that we are only strangers and pilgrims in this present world ; and that soon the days of our pilgrimage will draw to a close ; and that a never-ending eternity will then burst upon us. May we then be found among the ran

somed of the Lord, who shall return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads ; then may we obtain joy and gladness, while sorrow and sighing shall flee away for ever. Oh, that we may indeed be brought to the New Jerusalem, our heavenly home, when our mortal course is finished ! We know that none but thy redeemed people can be admitted there. Lord, number us now among thy saints that are in the earth, that hereafter we may be numbered with them in glory everlasting. Now may we come as convinced sinners, by true faith, to be personally interested in that precious Saviour, who gave himself a ransom for our sins. May we come now to wash our robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, that in due time we may come fully 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. Give us, we most humbly beseech thee, now in the time of this mortal life, to experience the sanctifying power of thy Holy Spirit. Do thou not only cleanse us from all our idols, and from all our filthiness, but be pleased, according to thy covenant promise, to put thy Spirit within us, and cause us to walk in thy statutes, and to keep thy commandments, and to do them ; that we may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. May we all be found with a true certificate, when we seek to be admitted into thy glorious kingdom. Then may we be found partakers of that new nature, and possessed of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Oh, that we may truly bear thine image now, and hereafter be admitted to the blessed company before thy throne, who serve thee, day and night, in thy temple ! Deliver all of us from the awful delusion of supposing ourselves to be at the very gate of heaven, when we are about to be cast down into hell. May we all be taught of thee, and become wise unto salvation, before the accepted time and the day of salvation shall have passed away for ever. Suffer us not to pass out of time into eternity with a lie in our right hand. Deliver us from every refuge of lies, and from every vain hope ; and let none of us indulge the hope of the wicked, or the hope of the hypocrite, which can only end in blackness and darkness for ever. Make us all to know, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace, before they are for ever hid from our eyes. And now, blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

LECTURE XXX.

THE CONCLUSION.

Children of the heavenly King,
As we journey sweetly sing;
Sing our Saviour's worthy praise,
Glorious in his works and ways.

We are travelling home to God,
In the way the fathers trod;
They are happy now, and we
Soon their happiness shall see.

Fear not, brethren, joyful stand
On the borders of our land;
Jesus Christ, our Father's Son,
Bids us undismayed go on.

Lord! obediently we go,
Gladly leaving all below;
Only thou our leader be,
And we still will follow thee.

PSALM lxxxiv. 5—7.

BLESSED IS THE MAN WHOSE STRENGTH IS IN THEE; IN WHOSE HEART ARE THE WAYS OF THEM. WHO PASSING THROUGH THE VALLEY OF BACA MAKE IT A WELL; THE RAIN ALSO FILLETH THE POOLS. THEY GO FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH, EVERY ONE OF THEM IN ZION APPEARETH BEFORE GOD.

WHEN our Saviour had been teaching many solemn and affecting truths, as we read in the 13th chapter of St. Matthew, "All these things spake he unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them." But he was ever ready to expound the meaning of his parables, when humbly asked to do so in secret. He wished all his disciples thoroughly to apprehend his dis-

courses ; and to see, through the outward covering in which they were arrayed, the striking features of truth which were hid under them. Thus, at the conclusion of all the parables which He had spoken, He said to his disciples, "Have ye understood all these things?" A great variety of solemn and important truths have been set before us in parables, while we have been lecturing on the Pilgrim's Progress. Before we leave the subject, I wish, in a concluding Lecture, to press home upon every one of you the question asked by our Saviour at the conclusion of his parables—"Have ye understood all these things?" With this object in view, I have selected the text which has just been read as the groundwork of this concluding discourse. It takes in, at a single glance, the whole of the Pilgrim's progress, from his first setting out, to the happy termination of his journey. All true pilgrims to the Celestial City are men whose strength is in the Lord God. They have got the heart of them who are travellers and wayfaring men. They have to pass, indeed, through the valley of Baca—that is, the vale of misery ; but they are not left without streams of refreshment by the way. They renew their strength, and wax stronger and stronger, by partaking of the provision that is made for them. They arrive safely at their journey's end. "Unto the God of gods appeareth every one of them in Zion."

We have here the beginning, the progress and the end of the Christian's course from earth to heaven. We shall review the whole pilgrimage, by taking a glance at these three particulars ; pausing to inquire, at each head, if we have understood all these things.

I. As to the beginning of the Christian's course. A certain man dwelling in a vast city received intelligence, that, before long, the place in which he dwelt would be burnt up, and all its inhabitants destroyed. He was deeply affected at the news. Being convinced of the truth of the report, he went about weeping, with a heavy burden weighing upon him. At length he was directed to make his escape, and told in what direction to go. He was urged to strive for a little gate at a great distance; and so he did. He tried to persuade his family to go with him; but they only laughed at him, and would not go. He was obliged, therefore, to set out alone. But scarcely had he put a step on the road, before numbers came about him, and earnestly begged him to return. He would not be persuaded, but on he went. Soon he fell into a bog, and there had well-nigh been choked; but assistance came, and he got through it. Delivered from that trouble, he was soon involved in another. A false deceiver turned him out of the way in which he had been directed, and induced him to go by Mount Sinai. There he was almost killed by the thunder and lightning; but again he was helped, and put into the right way. He arrived at the narrow gate which had been pointed out to him; and when he knocked, it was opened to him and he entered through it. There it was shown him what he must do. From thence he pressed forward to the Interpreter's House. Wonderful and excellent were the lessons which he there received. He would never have got to his journey's end without the information he obtained at that house. He had scarcely left this mansion before he arrived at a place where were a cross and a sepulchre. Here

his burden fell from him, and tumbled into the sepulchre; and he received a change of raiment, and a sealed roll, which he was to present at the celestial gate. Then did the poor Pilgrim indeed look like an altered man, and he went on his way rejoicing. He had now fully set out on his all-important journey.

Here, my brethren, let me pause to press upon you the inquiry to which I have already referred—Have you understood all these things? I do not mean, can you see what is signified by this figurative language, and discern clearly the great scriptural truths which it conveys; but, have you any experimental acquaintance with these things? Do not mistake the pleasure you derive from reading any ingenious work upon religion, for religion itself. Do not confound your ability to explain spiritual emblems with spirituality itself. Think not that you truly accompany the Pilgrim in the life of faith and the walk with God, because you understand the emblem, and approve the meaning and interpretation of the parable. Have you ever really set out on pilgrimage yourself? Have you in any measure realized, in your own experience, the momentous truths which are set before you in a figure? We are far from asserting that all real Christians are brought to the knowledge of the truth exactly in the same manner. There may be almost an endless variety in the Lord's dealings with his people, and the peculiar way in which he brings them to himself. True conversion in every instance is the work of the Holy Spirit; and we must not prescribe to the free Spirit of our God. He breathes, and works, and divides where, and when, and how he will. It would be therefore very unscriptural

to say, that no one can be really a child of God, unless his experience at the first agreed in all things with that of any individual Christian. With regard to time and manner, order and degree, convictions and comforts, abounding hope or prevailing fear, instantaneous light or gradual illumination, there may be the greatest possible variety in several individuals, and yet all alike may be truly born of God. But amid all this variety, there are certain prominent features which will ever distinguish the family of the first-born, and there is some experience of which they all partake during the time of their sojourning here. They are all awakened; they are all exposed to temptation; they are all apt to try first what they can do themselves, before they apply to Christ. They are all inclined to go wrong, and they all require faithful counsel to direct them aright. They have every one to exercise self-denial, in order to press in at the strait gate. They can do nothing without the gracious teaching of the Holy Spirit, to open their understanding to understand the Scriptures. They are all taught of God. They all derive whatever hope, or peace, or grace they possess, from a believing view of Jesus dying on the cross for them. And now they have truly entered upon the Christian's course: they are on the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward; they share the blessing of the man whose trust is in the Lord, and they possess the heart of them who are passing through the valley of Baca.

Do you, my brethren, know any thing of experience like this? Have you ever been thoroughly awakened to a sense of your guilt and danger? Feeling your sins really to be a burden, and perceiving that you are exposed to the wrath of God, have you

begun in earnest to flee from the wrath to come? Have you opposed the temptations and inducements which have been offered to quench your convictions and to make you sleep even as others? Unmoved either by the ridicule of others or your own desponding fears, have you resolutely determined to escape for your life? Have you found the impossibility of working out a righteousness of your own, and the awful delusion of seeking salvation by the works of the law? Have you gone, as a poor burdened sinner, to knock by earnest and persevering prayer at that gate of mercy where Jesus answers prayer? Under a deep persuasion of your own blindness and ignorance as to spiritual things, have you ever experienced, have you ever earnestly sought to experience, the gracious teaching of the only infallible interpreter of Scripture? Have you said to Him who alone can make you light in the Lord, "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things out of thy law?" And has this prayer been answered by the Spirit of truth taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto you? so that you have had, in some measure, a revelation of Christ crucified made to you, and he has become supremely glorious in your sight, and unspeakably precious to your heart? While your burdened conscience has found rest in Jesus Christ and him crucified, are all your supplies of present strength, and all your hopes of future glory, drawn from Him, as their proper and never-failing fountain? Oh, that we may every one possess these marks, clear and distinct, of our having set out indeed for the better country! Oh, that none of us may be deceived by thinking that our state is good, while we are destitute of the things which accom-

pany salvation ! Oh, that none of us may mistake knowing and approving of the Pilgrim's path for an experimental acquaintance of it in our hearts, and a practical exhibition of it in our lives .

II. We pass on from the Christian's entrance upon the right path to the progress which he makes in the way everlasting. The traveller to Zion not only sets out, but he presses on his way. "He goes from strength unto strength." When Christian had found relief from his burden, and had received his roll of evidence, as he went on his way, how diversified was his experience, and how various were the characters with whom he came in contact ! He found Simple, Sloth, and Presumption asleep in chains, and tried to rouse them, and offered to help them ; but they refused his aid. He saw Formality and Hypocrisy come tumbling over the wall, and advised them to go back, and seek admission through the gate at the head of the way ; but they scorned his service. By sleeping himself, when he ought only to have rested for a little, he lost his roll ; and only recovered it again after much bitter experience. Though almost frightened back by the lions, he obtained admission into the House Beautiful ; and unspeakably sweet, and very profitable, was the intercourse which he had with the inmates there. He tasted there the sweetness of communion and fellowship with other pilgrims ; and was strengthened and refreshed, by what he there received and learned, to pursue his journey. He slipped as he went down into the valley of Humiliation, and thus was exposed to the furious assaults of Apollyon ; but he prevailed at length, by means of his celestial armour. Very distressing was

his experience through the region of darkness, but at length he got safely through that gloomy vale. He overtook Faithful, and rejoiced greatly in the acquirement of such a companion. He could not be deceived by the hollow pretences of Talkative, but exposed his character in its true light. In Vanity Fair the two pilgrims were men wondered at; and there, after both of them had been derided and shamefully treated, Faithful was martyred. But Christian was not suffered to pursue his journey alone. Hopeful was induced to join his company, by witnessing the behaviour of him who had resisted unto blood in the fair. By-ends and his companions were silenced and confounded by the faithful exposure which they heard of their detestable principles from the genuine pilgrims. Demas would fain have allured them to turn aside to the glittering hill, but they withstood the temptation, and warned him solemnly of his base idolatry. They were, however, seduced from the right way, by entering upon a by-path to avoid the roughness of the highway. This led to their being taken prisoners by Giant Despair, and being thrust into Doubting Castle, where their sufferings were very grievous, until at length, after earnest prayer, they found the key of promise, and by means of this they clean escaped from the gloomy prison.

Here again I would pause to renew the inquiry, "Have ye understood all these things?" It is not necessary, or even likely, if you are real Christians, that your experience should accord in all things with that which is here signified. But if you humbly trust that you have come to Christ for pardon and salvation, remember that you are required to make progress in the way everlasting. You

must neither turn back nor stand still. You must go from strength unto strength. You must forget the things which are behind, and reach forth unto those which are before; and press toward the mark for the prize of your high calling. Prove that you are growing in grace, and in the knowledge of your Saviour, by increasing endeavours to be useful in your day and your generation. Try to awake those whom you see sleeping around you in the chain of their sins. Warn the formalist, unmask the hypocrite. Take good heed to yourself, that you grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Sleep not when you ought to watch. Be not deterred, by any formidable appearance, from deliberately joining the congregation of the faithful, and casting in your lot among the people of God. Seek to know more and more, from happy experience, of the sweetness and benefit of communion with saints. If you would be preserved from the fierce attacks of your adversary the devil, cultivate an humble spirit and a lowly mind. But if ever you are exposed to the fiery darts of the wicked one, be sure that you resist him, steadfast in the faith, and clad with the whole armour of God. Should you be led into darkness and not into light, and many painful and distressing thoughts and fears come about you, remember, if you walk by faith, and trust in the name of the Lord, after all your distresses, in due time you shall be brought into a wealthy place. Whatever threatenings may be breathed out against you, fear not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings. Love the company of faithful people, and let your soul be knit to them in the bonds of the gospel. Never think that a mar-

full of talk shall be justified ; and strive habitually to let your walk and conversation agree together, and let them both be as becometh the gospel of Christ. Behave yourself wisely amid the pomps and vanities of this sinful world. Show that, though in the world, you are not of the world, and that your conversation is in heaven. Be willing to suffer for the truth's sake ; suffer as a Christian, and who can tell the benefit of such a testimony ? Consistent living and patient suffering form the most effectual preaching. Those that obey not the word are sometimes won without the word by upright conversation. Have nothing to do with By-ends or any of his wretched fraternity, but cultivate simplicity and godly sincerity ; and do every thing in singleness of your heart, as unto the Lord. Be not attracted by any dazzling prospect that may be held out to you of becoming rich. Think of the numbers that have lost their innocence, their peace, yea, and their very souls, by coveting after this world's gain. If you would be kept from the misery of doubt and the cruelty of despair, never turn aside into any by-path, in order to avoid your appointed cross. But if at any time you are surprised into any false way, and your soul is imprisoned by darkness and doubt and despair, never cease your prayers until, by a proper application of the precious promises of the gospel, you are brought out of prison, and have returned into the right way. Oh, remember, that from first to last, nothing but the application of the free promises of the gospel to the soul, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can save a burdened sinner from despair. If despair be a deep bog of mire and clay, where there is no standing, the promises are so many steps to carry

us over. If despair be a dark dungeon in which we are locked up, the promise is a key to open the prison-doors, and to set us at liberty.

III. We pass on now to consider the end of the Christian's course.

Christian and his companion, after their liberation from Doubting Castle, were approaching to the last part of their journey. They soon arrived at the Delectable Mountains, where shepherds were feeding their flocks; and great was the benefit which they derived from their intercourse with them. But advancing forward, they could not leave poor Ignorance without repeated endeavours to convince him of his danger, and to teach him the good and the right way. But Ignorance hated instruction; he was positive that he was right, and could by no means be convinced of his fatal errors. They saw Turn-away carried in a fearful manner to the hole at the side of the hill, and there let down into his gloomy prison. They heard, too, the history of Little-faith, who had fallen among thieves, and only escaped with his life after he had been robbed. Though so near their journey's end, they were seduced by the Flatterer, out of the way, and only escaped from the net in which he entangled them, by the interference of a celestial friend, who not only released them, but chastised them for their error. After this, they met with one Atheist, who laughed at them for their pains in seeking a city, and assured them that there was no such a place. But they were not to be imposed upon by his wicked lie. How could they, when they had a glimpse of the Celestial City? When they came to the Enchanted Ground, where the air inclines to drowsiness, they

kept each other wakeful by their enlivening discourse. In addition to their own experience, they spoke of one Temporary, who for a while had been a pilgrim, but afterwards had returned back to the place whence he set out. Thus conversing, they passed over, without injury, that trying part of their road. And now they had come to the land of Beulah, where the sun shines day and night, and pilgrims are cheered with flowers and music at every step, and nothing but joy and gladness was to be seen on every side. At length they came within sight of the river which divides the land of their pilgrimage from the city and the country where they wished to be. They started when they first got a sight of the river, and would gladly have passed, if they could, by some other way, to the regions beyond. But this was impossible. Cross it they must, and cross it they did. Christian at the first was sorely distressed as he sank in the water, and thought that he should be drowned. But Hopeful encouraged him; and in due time his comfort was restored, and they both got safe to the opposite shore. There they were welcomed by bands of angels; and having left all their encumbrances in the river, they ascended swiftly through the regions of air, and bounded up the everlasting hill on which the Celestial City is built. Arrived at the Beautiful Gate, they sought admittance; and when their certificates were demanded, they each produced the document which they had received in the day when they had seen the cross. This was enough. The everlasting doors flew open, and these two men, with music and singing, were conducted into the King's palace. Not so poor Ignorance. He, too, came up to the gate, and began to knock for

admittance. He had got over the river without much difficulty, and seemed to expect that he would get as easily into the city. But how dreadful was his mistake! When his certificate was asked for, he had not one to produce. Then did the King command him to be bound, and to be carried back into the same prison which, a little while before, had been opened for Turn-away.

Once more, my brethren, I pause to ask, with increasing earnestness, "Have you understood all these things?" Oh, be admonished in time, by the awful mistake and the terrible doom of Ignorance. The Spirit of God must teach us, and the Spirit of God must sanctify us, or else into the holy city we can never come. It is not a strong persuasion that we are right, which proves us to be so. Poor Ignorance was right in his own eyes. It is not an easy or peaceful death that surely proves a man has gone to glory. Ignorance was ferried over the river by Vain-hope, but what a repulse did he meet at the celestial gate! He had no certificate. He was an unsanctified person: how, then, could he be admitted into the holy city, or be numbered among the saints of the Most High? How could he see the King's face? Though pure in his own eyes, he was not washed from his filthiness; and is it not written, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord?" Oh, my brethren, sanctification of the Spirit is the indispensable certificate. Get this, if you would not be a cast-away. And how are you to get it? Seek for the light of the Holy Spirit to show you your guilt and danger, and to bring you as a broken-hearted penitent to Christ, and he will give you the needful certificate. You can only obtain inheritance among them that

are sanctified through faith that is in Jesus Christ. Apply to him to wash you in his blood, and to cover you with his righteousness, and he will sanctify you also with his Holy Spirit. Believe in him, and he will put his Spirit within you, and write his holy laws in your heart, that you may be transformed into his own image, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Then you will have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his appearing, because, as he was, so are you in this world. If you humbly trust that you are a partaker of Christ, hold fast the beginning of your confidence steadfast unto the end. Seek, in the society of eminent and experienced Christians, to be established in the good and right ways of the Lord. Be fired with a holy ambition to walk upon the Delectable Mountains, and to read clearly your title to a heavenly mansion. Prove, by your faithfulness unto death, that you are not of them that draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul. Be not satisfied with a little faith, although it be real, but pray earnestly that it may be increased, and grow abundantly. Never think yourself secure, whatever advancement you may have made, from the arts of the Flatterer. Beware of trusting to his smooth words, lest you find yourself entangled in his deceitful net. Seek to have always the witness within you, and the evidence of things not seen as yet; that you may know how to answer the cavils of the wicked, and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. If your position is such as to produce indolence and ease, oh, beware of sleeping upon the enchanted ground. Try to keep yourselves wakeful by speaking often one to another. Tell of the Lord's dealings both with

yourselves and with others. Talk ye of all his wondrous works. Press forward to the land of Beulah. Desire, even upon earth, to live the days of heaven; to partake of the rich experience of those who seem, even here,

“ To climb those higher skies,
Where storms and tempests never rise.”

All real Christians desire to be eminent Christians. For the credit of your profession, the good of others, and your own comfort, long to be assured of your personal interest in the everlasting covenant, and be able to testify that the service of the Lord is a pleasant and delightful service. Remember, in a little while, you must draw to the close of your mortal course. You must pass the barrier that divides a world of sight and sense from the invisible region of spirits. Heart and flesh may fail, and nature may shrink from the immediate prospect of death; but if you are a true believer in the Son of God, there is no just ground of alarm. Whatever may be the dying experience of a true believer, it shall surely be well with him at the last. He who died for his people will comfort and support them in their dying hour. He will give his angels charge concerning them, to bear their spirits to a place of rest and joy and felicity, as soon as they are delivered from the burden of the flesh. And because they have really been washed from the stain of sin, and saved from the dominion of sin, the heavenly gate will be open to receive them, and they will be admitted to those unspeakable joys which are prepared for the redeemed of the Lord. Oh that none of us may be wanting in the great day of account, when “the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come to Zion!” Lord, grant that

we may now be numbered among thy saints that are in the earth ; and when the days of our pilgrimage are ended, may we every one appear before thee, the God of gods, in the heavenly Zion !

THE HYMN.

Guide us, O thou great Jehovah !
 Pilgrims through this barren land ;
 We are weak, but thou art mighty,
 Hold us with thy powerful hand :
 Bread of heaven, feed us till we want no more.

Open now the crystal fountain,
 Whence the living waters flow ;
 Let the fiery cloudy pillar
 Lead us all our journey through :
 Strong Deliverer, be thou still our strength and shield.

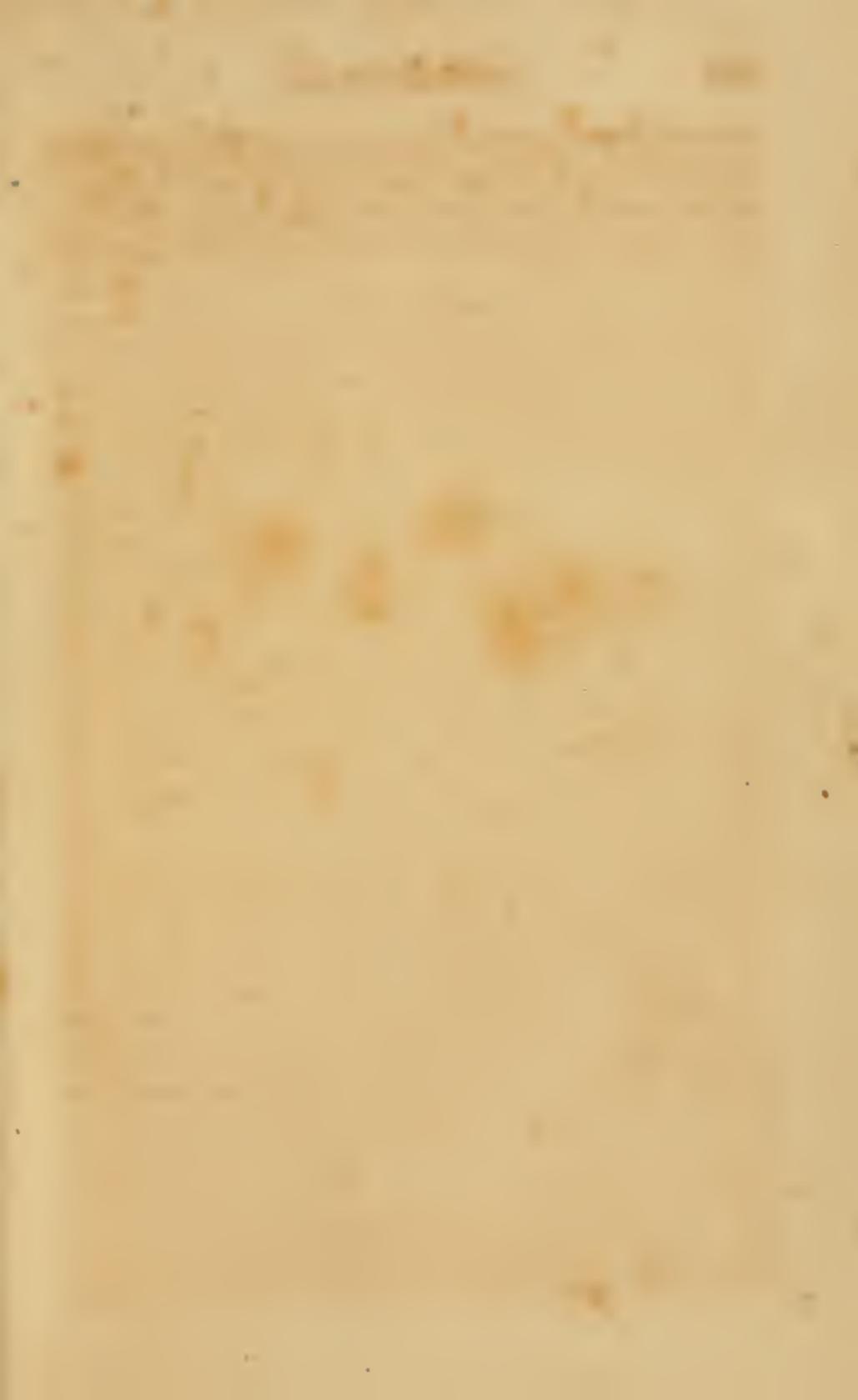
When we tread the brink of Jordan,
 Bid our anxious fears subside ;
 Bear us through the swelling torrent,
 Land us safe on Canaan's side :
 Songs of praises we will ever give to Thee.

THE PRAYER.

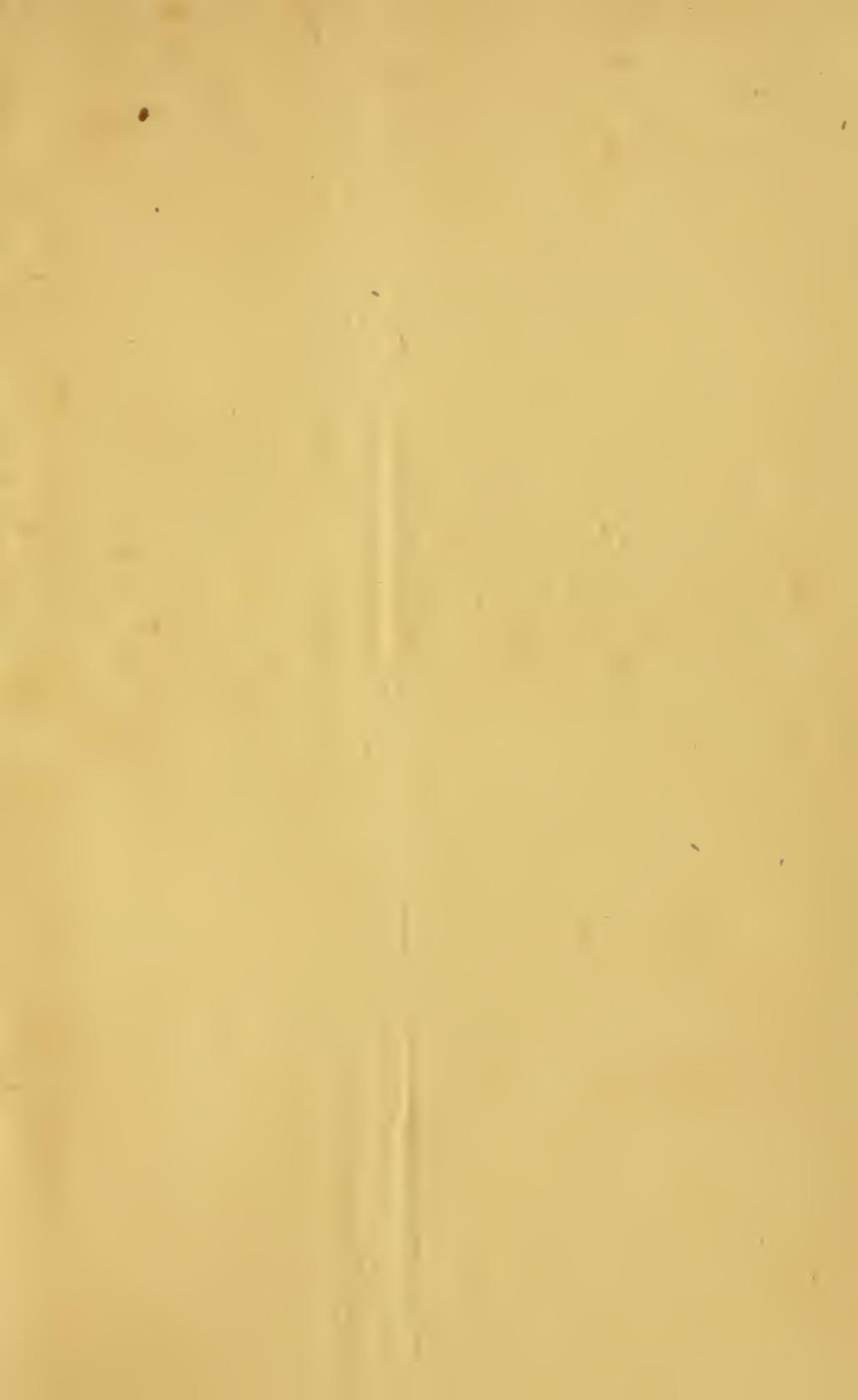
O God, who art the strength of them that put their trust in thee, mercifully look down upon us for the Redeemer's sake : and grant that in this, and all our works, begun, continued, and ended in thee, we may glorify thy holy name. We humbly pray that we may every one be enabled to understand the important truths which have been set before us. May we all have a spiritual and experimental acquaintance of these things. Lord, grant that we may indeed set out in earnest for the heavenly city. May we have such a view and such a sense of our guilt and danger as sinners, that we may flee from the wrath to come, and be unmoved either by the ridicule of others or our own desponding fears. Save us from the delusion of seeking to be justified by the works of the law. May we give ourselves unto prayer, and knock and wait at the door of mercy until it is opened unto us. May we all be under the special teaching of thy Holy Spirit. Oh, may He take of the things of Christ, and show them unto us, and reveal to us the Saviour of sinners as the only ground

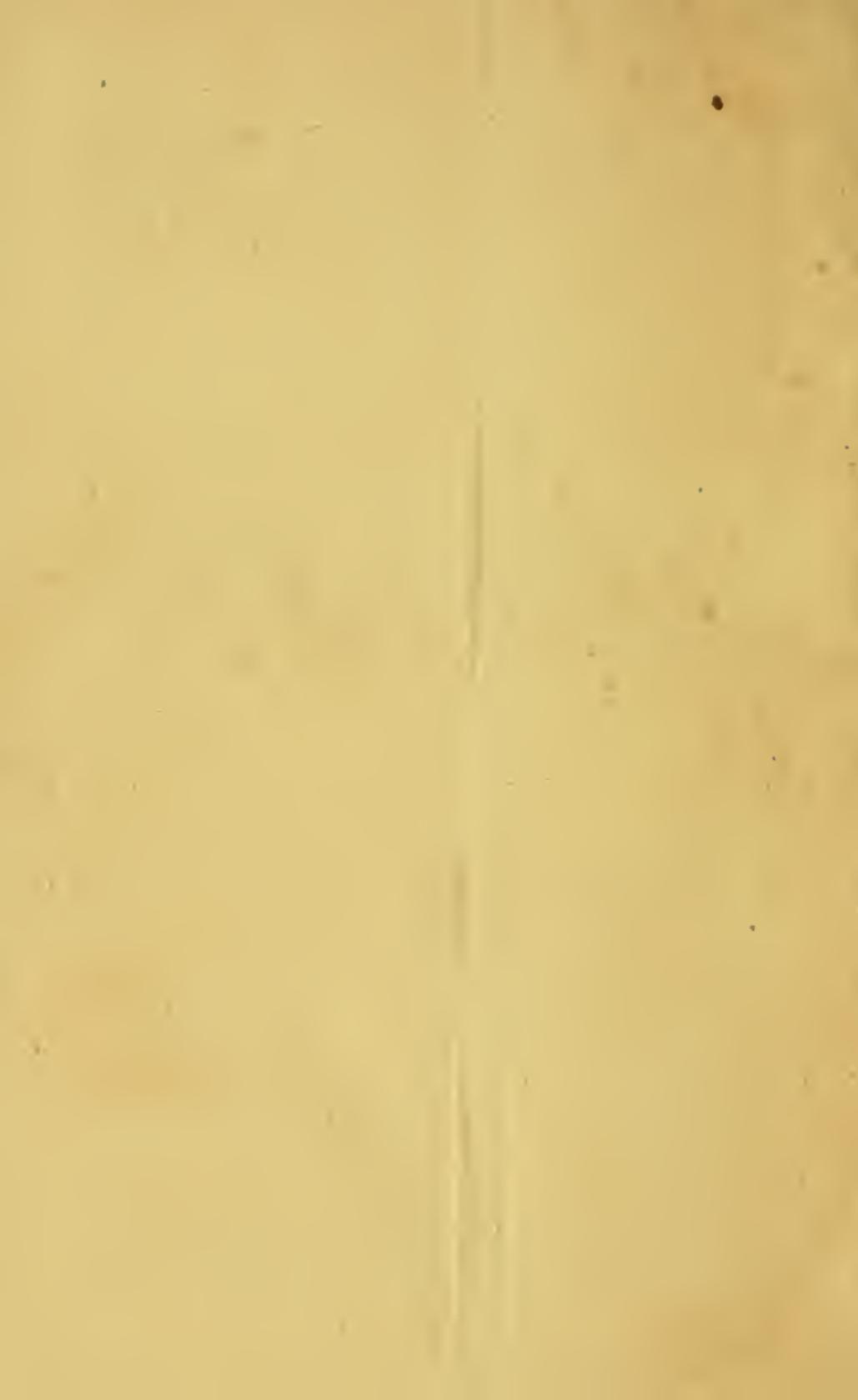
of our pardon and acceptance, and the never-failing source of grace and strength. And we humbly beseech thee, O merciful Father, enable us to make progress in the way everlasting, and to go from strength unto strength. Make us useful in our day and generation; and may we know how we ought to answer every man. Deliver us from grieving thy Holy Spirit; and grant that at all times we may watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. May we be companions of them that fear thee, and know more and more of the benefit of communion with thy saints. May we walk humbly with our God, and be prepared to withstand all the fiery darts of the Wicked One. In thy light may we walk through darkness. May we behave ourselves wisely amid all the vanities that are spread before us, and constantly strive by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. Let integrity and uprightness always preserve us, that we may be kept from every snare, and delivered from every false path. And if at any time we are brought into bondage, oh, send thy word to deliver us, and bring us out of prison, that we may praise thy name. Do thou never leave us nor forsake us, until we have finished our course, and the days of our mourning are ended, and we appear every one before thee, the God of gods, in Zion. May our last days be our best days, and our end be brighter and better than our beginning. May we know more of the felicity of thy chosen, and shine as lights in the world; endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, to warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, and to support the weak. Oh, save us from all flattering lips, and from every deceitful tongue. Keep us wakeful amid all the ensnaring scenes that would seduce from thee, even to the end of our journey. And when we come to the brink of Jordan, make us, we beseech thee, more than conquerors over the last enemy; that the gate of death be to every one of us the door of admission into thy blissful and glorious presence, where we shall sing for ever the praises of Him who led us through the wilderness, and brought us to his eternal and glorious kingdom. And now, blessed be God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wonderful things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever and ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and amen.

THE END.

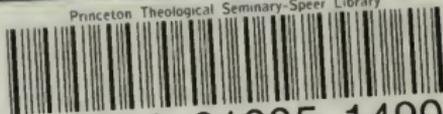








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