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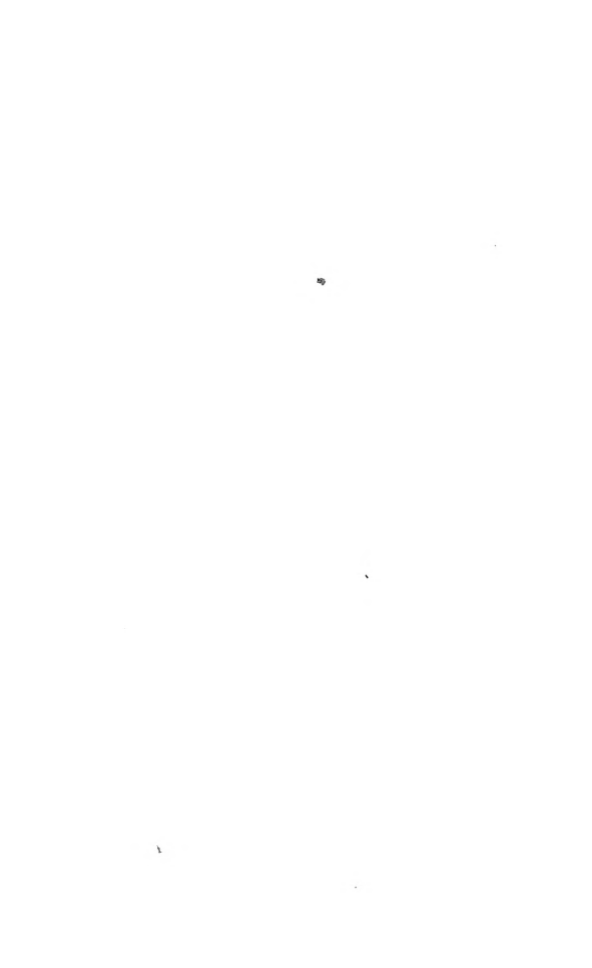
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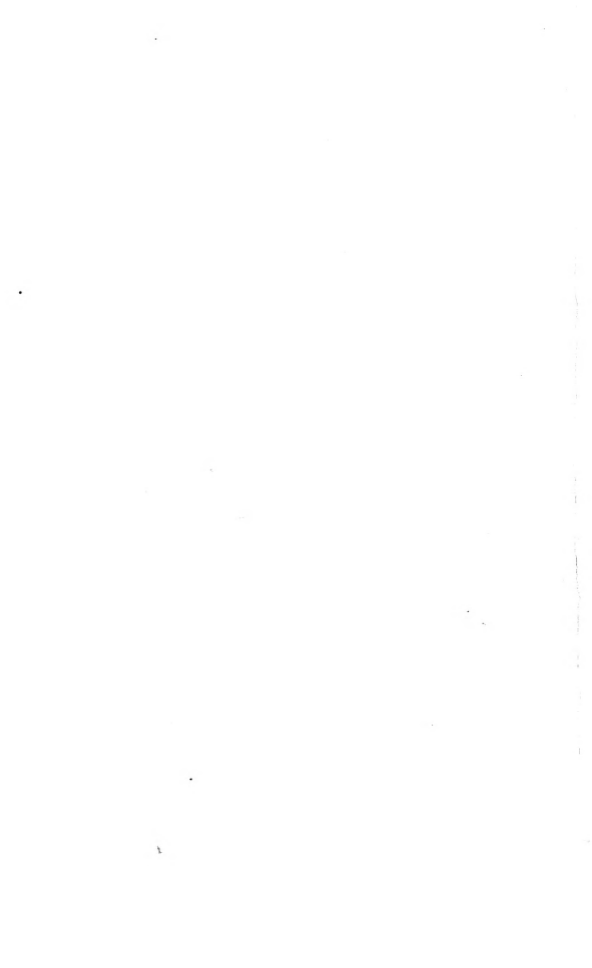
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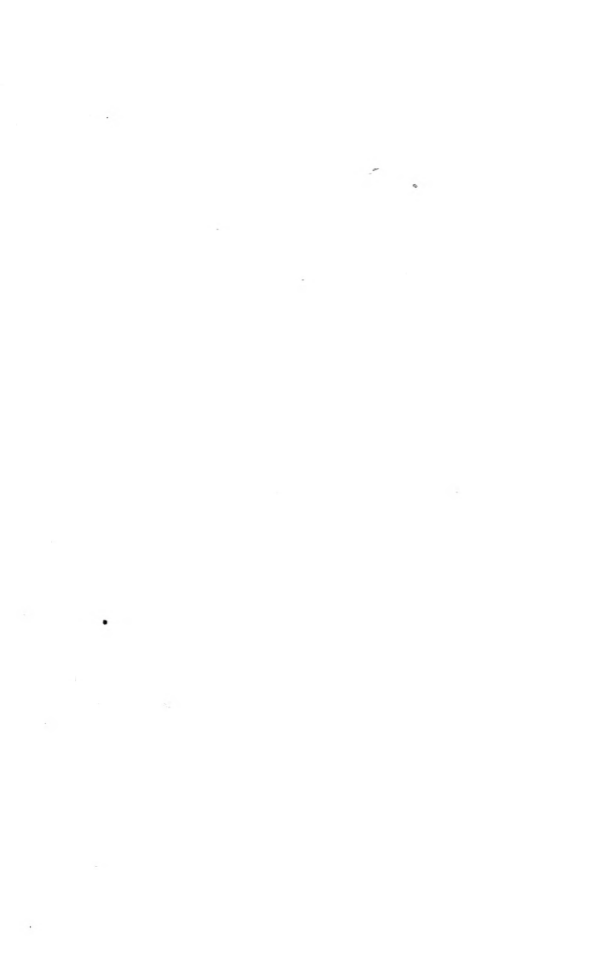
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Balme, Joshua Rhodes.
The magnet of the Gospel

Edward H. Smith











THE
MAGNET OF THE GOSPEL,

BY

J. R. BALME,

The Author of the "Lever of the Gospel," the "Mirror of the Gospel," the "Telescope of the Gospel," and the "Telegraph of the Gospel," &c.

AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, WILL DRAW ALL MEN UNTO ME.—JOHN xii, 32.

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1849.



P R E F A C E .

The Author has no apology to make for his appearance again before the religious public. His subject does not require any. It is always new and interesting. And so long as Christ remains the alabaster box of ointment to shed a rich and fragrant perfume—the great loadstone to magnetize—the centre of attraction—the focus of light and love—will it continue to absorb the minds of angels and men. It now remains for his readers to say whether he has done justice to this subject. He has the satisfaction to know that he has tried to bear a faithful witness for Christ in the following pages ; and he is encouraged by the remembrance that “one great and kindling thought from a retired and obscure person, may live when thrones are fallen, and, like an undying fire, may illumine and quicken all future generations.”

Mount Villa, Wilsden,
October 18th, 1847.

C O N T E N T S .

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THE
MAGNET OF THE GOSPEL.

A Magnet is a substance which attracts inferior metals. The Gospel may be justly compared to a Magnet. It is a source of attraction. The object of its attraction is the world. The centre of that attraction is the cross of Jesus Christ. But who shall set forth the power, magic, and splendours of the cross? On it the swarthy African, the wild Arab, the ferocious cannibal, the superstitious Hindoo, and the polished Briton, have gazed, and been overpowered with its charms! By it myriads of hearts have been transformed and melted into one! And through its invisible and all-powerful influence, men every where are rising from the depths of their degradation into the dawning radiance of the bliss of heaven, to be irradiated with the splendours and beauties of the Saviour's image; whilst angels, with rapturous emotion, swell their mighty anthems of praise to celebrate the event, ascribing the victory to God and the Lamb.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE NATURE OF THE CROSS.

By the cross we are not to understand a piece of wood or stone, but the sufferings which Christ endured, and the doctrines he made known. The cross is the standard of religion. The religion of Jesus Christ embraces knowledge—the knowledge of man as a sinner—Christ as an all-sufficient Saviour—and the Holy Spirit as the Sanctifier. It is a painful and humiliating fact that man is depraved and guilty in the sight of God. Once he was all innocence and loveliness, dignity and glory! *Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, saith David, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.*—Psalm viii, 5. No sweat dropped from his brow; no furrows of age wrinkled his countenance; no tears dimmed his eyes; no fears distressed his mind; no anguish rent his bosom. All above, around, and beneath him, was truly calm and placid, like the summer's evening, when not a breath of wind shakes the trees or stirs an aspen leaf! And could we enter the regions of the heavenly glory, what a scene would burst on our vision! But whose pen shall describe, or fancy depict it? On such a

subject the boldest imagery, and the loftiest conceptions fail! The radiance of its glory infinitely transcends the brightest visions of earth! No hand can sketch, or mind conceive it! *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*—I Cor., ii, 9. But if we turn our attention to this world, and look at man in the various aspects in which he is to be found, we are constrained to exclaim, *How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!*—Lam. iv, 1.

Man has fallen, and become the receptacle of every thing that is unholy, sinful, and vile. *Out of the heart of man, said our Saviour, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.* Mark vii, 21, 22.

Satan with his legions has taken possession of this world—reduced it to a state of vassalage the most cruel and degrading—and arrayed it in hostility against God. And had he effected its overthrow, *Who could have stayed his hand? or said to him what doest thou?*—Dan. iv, 35. Since all have revolted from God,—thrown off their allegiance to him—swelled the amount of

their guilt in their rebellion against the Almighty—and madly pressed forwards, against the poignant remonstrances of their own consciences, and the warnings and threatenings which God had given them in his holy Word. This he could have effected with one wave of his hand—one word of his voice—or frown of his countenance: but when the justice of the Almighty had upheaved its dart to strike the guilty world to the heart, the mercy of God arrested its arm with words of pity, crying, “Spare, spare!” Justice said, “How can I?” Jesus stepped forth and said, “I will be the sufferer, that sinful men may not suffer—bleed, that they may not die!”—whilst the Holy Spirit undertakes to convey to men the blessings of Christ’s mediation and death!

In the glorious scheme of salvation, God the Father is the first moving cause—God the Son the executor—and God the Holy Ghost the appropriator of its saving benefits. God was under no obligation to pity or save man. He had no claim on him for the exercise of his love; and there was nothing in man to recommend him to the divine favour, or regard. He had destroyed himself, and in him there was no help found. Hosea xiv, 9. And when we think of the depths of wickedness into which

man hath thrown himself, and of the daring impiety which he cherished towards God, it becomes the greatest wonder in the universe, that God in the exercise of his free, sovereign, and unmerited love, should ever make known to him the truce of mercy, which proclaims to every intelligent creature that *God so loved the world as to give his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*—John iii, 16. *Herein is love, precious love, distinguished love, boundless love, amazing love, unuttered and unutterable love,—Not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.*—1 John iv, 10.

In this manifestation of the Divine love, we have exhibited to our view a depth of pity, an intensity of love, and an energy of benevolence, which otherwise would have been concealed in the Divine mind. It sheds a new and inconceivable lustre on all the perfections of God, Psalm lxxxv, 10; and it constitutes Jehovah the object of the highest attraction, the most supreme attachment and regard, both in heaven and on earth—amongst angels and men.—Rev. v. 11, 13. How our hearts ought to burn with love to God for the gift of his Son! And what an overflowing stream of consolation ought to

possess our minds with the thought, that as we are great sinners, Jesus Christ is a great Saviour—great in that salvation which he brings to sinful men, as great as the divine wisdom can render it—great in its worth, as great as the wealth of eternity can stamp it—and great in its freeness, as great as divine love can make it. But whence does his power to save arise? In what does his ability consist?

Christ's all-sufficiency to save, arises from the dignity of his person. When placed at the bar of Pilate, he said, *Behold the man*. He was man. He had the bones and muscles of a man. He ate, drank, and slept, like other men. He was subject to the privations and hardships common to men; and when he was crucified on the cross, blood flowed from his wounded side as man. But then he was more than man. He was God-man; and could Pilate have looked into the interior of his temple, he would have seen Deity dwelling in the humanity of Christ. In his mysterious person, there were two natures combining the divine and human—the infinite and the finite. He was the Creator and yet a creature—the Ancient of Days, and yet the infant of days—God, and yet man. *Who is this that cometh from Edom—with dyed garments from Bozrah—glorious in his apparel—*

travelling in the greatness of his strength—speaking righteousness—and mighty to save?—Isaiah lxiii, 1. It is Jesus Christ—the everlasting God—the Creator of the ends of the earth—the Lord of glory—the Lord of all—the Lord over all! *Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion, for great is the Holy One of Israel that is in the midst of thee.*—Isaiah xii, 6. Behold the man! and as you think of the glories of his person, be constrained to seek an interest in him, that the being who laid the foundations of the earth—gathered the waters into an heap—spread out the firmament with its glory—gives brilliancy to the stars—rolls the seasons along—guides the crumbs from the table to the sparrow—feeds the ravens—defeats the plots of hell—throws open the prison doors of sin—opens the gates of everlasting life—and bestows life and immortality,—may be your Saviour.

His all-sufficiency to save is shewn in the perfection of his obedience. It meets every claim put forth by the justice of the Almighty—fulfils God's insulted law in every part—upholds the rights of the Divine government—embodies the character of God—and reflects it in living lustre amongst men. With it justice is pleased, and mercy gratified. It finished

transgression—made an end of sin—reconciliation for iniquity—and brought in everlasting righteousness, to justify the believer in Christ Jesus, and to give him a title to the boundless, blissful, and everlasting inheritance of heaven.—Dan. ix, 24. The victim has been slain—a way of access laid open to God—the pearly gates of bliss are thrown back on their golden hinges to welcome the humble believer—whilst bright squadrons of the heavenly hosts introduce him with triumph and joy into everlasting habitations. And this is accomplished without any interposition of the absolute sovereignty of God in remitting the penalty of the Divine law—without any alteration being made in the fundamental principles of his moral government—without any change being introduced amongst his perfections, and without any modification taking place in regard to the evil of sin. God is still the same. His law is still the same. His government is still the same. His perfections are still the same. And all his claims upon the reverence and obedience of the creature are still the same. Jesus has paid the penalty of the divine law—honoured the government of God by his propitiation on the cross—harmonised all the perfections of the Almighty, and made sin appear to be that abominable

thing which God hates, and which he can never suffer to go unpunished. *Without controversy, great is the mystery of Godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*—1 Tim. iii, 16. Reader, do you believe in Jesus? Has his work been made available by you? Or are you clinging to the tattered robes of your own performances—to the cobwebs of pharisaical pride? Fling them from you, abandon them as refuges of lies, make Jesus your hope and trust—and let your voice be heard above the raging storms and rolling billows on the ocean of life, exclaiming, *God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.*—Gal. vi, 14.

His all-sufficiency to save is also made manifest in the efficacy of his death. Jesus is *the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness—the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.* Millions have washed their robes, and made them white in his blood, and millions more may come and be cleansed by its virtues, since it is available to all the circumstances of being, all the scenes of time, and all the ages of human existence.—Rom. iii, 25. Reader, has it been applied to your heart? Have you

experienced its cleansing power? Do you say that your case is peculiar? Did your sins extend from east to west, and were your guilt of the darkest and blackest hue, Jesus is able to save! He can save even you! and he can save to the uttermost all them that come unto God through him.—Heb. vii, 25. But who can comprehend God's uttermost? What an encouragement to come to Jesus Christ, the physician of value!

Seeing how God meets man, and man God, in the Incarnate Word, we proceed to ask, with whom does the purpose originate that brings man back to God, and secures to him the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ? Is it with God or man? This is the work of the Holy Spirit. The state in which he finds man is one of distance from God. He alone can bring him nigh to him through the blood which Christ shed upon Calvary's cross, and take of the things of Christ, and shew them unto him. It is one of rebellion against the Almighty. He alone can lay the proud rebel low at his feet, and restore him to his favour. It is one of alienation. He alone can recover his affections, and fix them on his Maker, as his supreme good. It is one of deep debasement. He alone can raise his fallen nature out

of the depths of misery by sin—adorn it with the beauties of the Saviour's image—fit it for distinguishing usefulness in his service—possess it with sweet and elevated communion with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ—breathe into it thoughts of unimaginable felicity and bliss—entrance it with the joys that spring from God's presence and grace, and crown it with glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. Various is the instrumentality by which this change is wrought in the souls of men. And happy they who by the means used become the subjects of God's regenerating grace, and heirs of his everlasting kingdom; whether by the drawings of Christ's love, or the terrors of his law. Yea, whatever were the peculiar circumstances connected with it. Did they even prove to be the loss of an esteemed and valued relative or friend; a change in the fortunes of life that blasted every earthly hope; a season of protracted suffering from affliction; or, some severe disappointment in life which lay like a burning mountain on the spirit to crush and scathe it. In effecting this change, the first work of the Spirit is to throw open the door of the sinner's heart, bring down his pride, and subdue his love of self, that the Lord may be exalted to the throne in the affections, and exercise his benign

sway over every faculty, volition, and desire of the heart. Having gained an entrance, he purges it of its superstitions and vices—beautifies and adorns it with his virtues and graces—and sets it apart for himself, that he may be the source of the believer's life, holiness, and joy. Under his benign influence the Christian becomes more wise, holy, virtuous, and happy, until he is made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light; and through his almighty operations he attains to the full and final glorification of both body and soul with Christ, when his redeemed ones shall gather around him—hail him with unbounded transport and joy—be exalted to reign with him in glory—and to share in his blessedness for ever.

The Holy Spirit is a convincing Spirit. *He shall convince the world of sin, righteousness, and a judgment to come; of sin, because they believe not on Christ; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.*—John xvi, 8, 11. All the scenes of guilt, however dark they may be, he causes to pass in review before the eyes of men—and so long as they continue in their sinful and miserable state, he assures them that they are exposed

to the storms of God's vengeance, and the thunders of his wrath. He brings before them the righteousness of Jesus Christ, which God has constituted the gracious provision which he has made for the recovery of sinful man—a provision which sets before us all that Jesus has done and suffered in his meritorious life and atoning death—and “grasps all the blessings which have ever been vouchsafed to God's people before our Saviour appeared on earth, with all the blessings which will be vouchsafed until the consummation of all things—all the good which is comprised in the word deliverance from hell, and all the bliss which is contained in the pleasures and glories of the heavenly state.” And he shews them in that gracious change which he produces in the sinner's conversion to God, that there is a sweet and delightful participation in those blessings which spring from the Saviour's perfect, invaluable, and everlasting righteousness, and a bright hope of their full enjoyment in that world where all is love, melody, and praise.

The Holy Spirit is a converting spirit. He possesses an omnipotence of power to open the heart of the sinner, like the flower beneath the genial ray of the sun; or to bring it into the kingdom of grace, like the vessel that enters the

port on a mighty spring tide, with its sails filled with the breezes of heaven. His arm is infinite. He has boundless resources of strength at his command. This power is felt in the conversion of every sinner. By some it may be imperceptible, whilst others start and cry, *Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?*—Acts xvi, 30. The evidence which the sinner gives of his conversion to God, consists in his delight in the divine ordinances. God's word, house, people, and service, he loves. They are his chief and exceeding joy. His language is, *I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*—Psalm xxvi, 8. 'Tis there that the burning arrow of conviction from the quiver of the Almighty has been lodged in his heart—drunk up his spirits, and constrained him to exclaim—*Thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer!*—Psalm xxxii, 4. 'Tis there that the balm of Gilead has been applied to heal his wounded spirit, bind up his broken heart, and wipe his sorrows dry! 'Tis there that he has let down his vessel into the wells of salvation, and drawn streams of living water with acclamations of joy! 'Tis there that he has been animated with fresh courage to renew his conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil—

sin, death, and hell, and to press forward to the mark for the prize of his high calling! 'Tis there that he has soared aloft above the conflicting passions and interests of this world, in the contemplation and enjoyment of things unseen and eternal, until he has called the joys of heaven his own! And 'tis there that he has raised his triumphant songs to an immortal tune—and joined with angels round the throne in the celebration of his Saviour's divine love, and in the perpetuation of his glorious Redeemer's praise. Well, therefore, may he delight himself in the ordinances of religion, and feel a growing attachment to God's house. Nor need we feel surprised that he should look forward to the Sabbath as the "queen of days—the pearl of the week—the very type of heaven." . . .

“Sweet day of rest, for thee I'd wait,
 Emblem and earnest of a state
 Where saints are fully blest.
 For thee I'd look, for thee I'd sigh,
 I'd count the days till thou art nigh,
 Sweet day of sacred rest!”

The evidence of the sinner's conversion to God embraces communion with him. And how delightful is communion with God! “'Tis this that brings every blessing from above—that opens the upper and nether springs of the divine favour—enriches the mind with the treasures of

spiritual wisdom—imparts a sweetness to the disposition which no cares can sour, and an amiability to the temper which discord cannot impair—enkindles a glow of devout feeling in the human bosom, which burns more steadily and ardently by the intermingling of its fires—raises the soul above the conflicting elements of sorrow into the regions of tranquillity and peace—binds up the wounds which adversity inflicts on the heart—opens concealed fountains of consolation to the disconsolate—and wraps the soul in transport with the visions of that land, where beauty cannot fade nor sorrow dim the eye—true love shall not droop, nor be dismayed—and none shall ever die !” Who would not avail himself of it—aspire after its honour—and seek to be enriched with its blessings ?

Aversion to sin is another evidence of the sinner's conversion to God. This aversion puts the knife to the neck of lust, and cuts off, and plucks out all darling sins, though they may be dear as right arms and eyes. And it is not merely directed against some glaring enormity ; it goes further than this. It aims its shaft at the root of the evil. It extends to the very principles of depravity, which are deep sunk in the human heart, and suppresses the risings of

corruption as they spring from the fountain of man's depraved nature.

But the most delightful evidence which the sinner gives of his conversion to God is shewn in his ardent breathings after holiness. For this he prays and strives, longs and pants. All his powers of body and mind are in full stretch after it, and it is so sweet and ravishing that he would drink it in at every pore of his body and avenue of his soul.

The Holy Spirit is a purifying Spirit. He purifies the motives which actuate the soul—the principles which regulate the affections and govern the life—and life itself. Concerning him, Malachi predicted that—*He should sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, to purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* Happy they who lose the dross of sin, and shine resplendent in the beauties of the Saviour's image. Were holiness to the Lord enstamped on every member of the body and faculty of the mind amongst believers, what a deep and broad line of demarcation would be drawn between the church and the world. How high would the church of Jesus Christ be lifted towards heaven! What a close resemblance it would bear to the church

triumphant ! And how the dew of God's blessing, and the riches of his grace, would come down upon her !

The Holy Spirit is a comforting Spirit. He takes the promises of Christ, and opens them to the view of the believer in Christ Jesus in all their richness and fulness, as breasts of consolation, hoards of treasure, hives of sweetness, wells of salvation, springs of enjoyment, rivers of delight, and oceans of bliss—appropriates them to the believer, and causes a thrill of ecstasy to run through his heart, leading him to rejoice *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. 1 Pet. i, 8.

He is a supporting Spirit. He strengthens the graces of believers, by causing a fresh gale from heaven to blow on them ; the Sun of Righteousness to arise and shed his mild beams around them, and the dew of his grace to distil into them. And in every emergency in which the believer may be placed, He comes to his aid, makes his grace sufficient, and perfects his strength in his weakness. 'Tis this that makes the Christian like the burning bush, unconsumed in the midst of this desert world ; that explains the enigma of his existence ; invests him with an importance ; throws around him a degree of interest ; and awakens within him

feelings of delight, which no mortal tongue can express, or mind conceive !

He is also a soul glorifying Spirit. As he hath raised up Jesus from the dead, even so will he raise up all that believe in him, and make them partakers with him in immortal blessedness and glory.

How amazing the love of the Father, which drew the wondrous plan ! How amazing the love of the Son, which provides the sacrifice in the gift of himself ! How amazing the love of the Spirit, which regenerates the fallen nature of man ; cleanses that worse than Augean stable of corruption, the human heart ; re-stamps the image of God upon the soul, and makes it a partaker of unbounded felicity and bliss.

In the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, therefore, we see how God can forgive sin, in accordance with the purity of his character, and the equity of his government ; and by the agency of the Holy Spirit it is manifest how we can serve God on earth, and enjoy Him for ever.

In the one, God has consulted his majesty as the righteous Governor of the universe, and reconciled the seemingly incompatible claims of justice and mercy ; and in the other, he has made a provision by which pollution may be purged, the image of God restored, and man be made happy.

How cordially, therefore, ought we to embrace the gospel of Jesus Christ, seek to participate in its blessings, make it known to others, open facilities for its spread, and pray that the Holy Spirit may cause it to take deep root, spring up, and bear an abundance of fruit to the praise and glory of God.

The religion of Jesus Christ includes liberty. This is the first element of moral power, the germ of prosperity, the life blood of spiritual vitality; the bright angel that drops thoughts of fatness and words of sweetness in its pathway through this sin-stricken and sin-disordered world.

Liberty in its nature consists in freedom from the power and principles of sin. The unconverted man is under the dominion of sin. He is its vassal—bond slave. Sin reigns in him, and over him. He loves, obeys, and follows its impulses. But when he becomes a convert to Divine grace, the “enslaving fetters of sin are burst asunder by the power of God, which is imparted to the soul, and his liberated mind ascends from its moral dungeon to expatiate on the world of wonders Divine grace presents to his enraptured contemplation; whilst as a citizen of heaven he is made free to enjoy, for time and eternity, the clear escape from tyrannising lust,

and full immunity from penal woe." *There is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for the law of the spirit of life, which is in Christ Jesus, hath freed them from the law of sin and death.* Rom. viii, 1.

Observe the character—they that are in Christ Jesus. How wonderful! Mark the privilege. How exalted! There is no condemnation to them. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Fiends and wicked men may. *But it is God that justifieth.* *Who is he that condemneth?* Sin, Satan, and the world, may hurl their thunderbolts of burning indignation—*But it is Christ that died, yea rather is risen again, and ever liveth to make intercession for us.* "With God on his side," therefore we may triumphantly ask, in the language of an able commentator, "What being or circumstance, above, below, or around him, can sever him from his love! And with Christ for his portion, what good thing will ever be withheld from him!" How the believer ought to exult, and to shout aloud for joy!

Liberty in its dignity is associated with the most invaluable privileges and illustrious honours. The man who is freed from the power and curse of sin, is the servant of Christ. How

blessed is his service! His yoke is easy, and his burden is light. Mat. xi, 30. What a divine and heavenly Master! There is no voice so musical; no countenance so captivating; no hand so soft, and no feet so swift, to convey blessings to men! And how immense is his bounty and love! All blessings are at his command; the blessings of heaven above, the earth beneath, the sea that lieth under and unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills! There is no limit to his resources, and there are no bounds to his munificence! He gives with a liberal hand and heart, exceeds our most enlarged requests, anticipates our wants, and supplies us with the blessings which we most need. How devoted we ought to be in our attachment to him! How grateful for his numerous favours in providence and grace! And how implicitly we ought to confide in his wisdom, power, grace, faithfulness, and love!

A believer is the friend of Christ. If it be a privilege to have an earthly friend, one who is worthy of the name, whose prevailing habits are congenial with our own, and in whom are the elements that will sweetly blend to enhance our comfort, and to promote our happiness in life, what must it be to have Christ for our friend? who can hush the rising waves of trouble into a

calm, make the wilderness of desolation a fruitful field, silence the tongue of the gainsayer, allay prejudice, influence opinions, raise up friends where we expect to meet with foes, throw around us the immensity of his life-giving favour and love, make death feel soft and easy, and conduct us to those blissful regions which he is ever filling with the trophies of his grace. This Friend is sincere; he knows nothing of treachery or dissimulation. He is faithful; he abandons no decree which he has made in his eternal purpose; neither does he violate any promise which he has recorded for our instruction and consolation in the volume of inspiration. He is an unchangeable friend. Amid the wrecks of human friendship, he stands erect in all his beauty and majesty, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever*. Heb. xiii, 8. And he is an everlasting friend. His love can never die. Many floods cannot drown it. It springs brighter from the wave. It is stronger than death. And whilst every thing earthly moulders in the tomb, in the midst of its awful silence, he exclaims, *Because I live, ye shall live also*. John xiv, 10.

A believer is a child of God, made a partaker of his nature, adopted into his family, acknowledged as his first-born, and distinguished with

all the rights and privileges, which can never be cut off, destroyed, or lost. How enrapturing and transporting to the mind. Well might the Apostle John exclaim, *Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii, 1.

He is an heir of glory. *If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ.* Rom. viii, 17. How dignifying and ennobling to the mind! What new hopes it inspires! What happiness it secures! Are such your privileges! How ardently ought you to admire the grace which has called you into the enjoyment of the liberty of the sons of God! And is such your dignity? What an elevation of feeling ought you to cherish, and with what unremitting attention and persevering energy ought you to seek to demean yourselves in the cause of Jesus Christ.

Liberty in its excellence is surpassing, transcendant, and ennobling. It is rational. It brings us near to God, sets us apart for him, and enables us, with glowing enthusiasm and zeal, to devote ourselves to the cause of Jesus Christ. Is there any thing degrading in this—any thing derogatory to the character of God, or opposed to our happiness? No. *I beseech*

you, therefore, says Paul, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom. xii, 1.

It is a holy liberty. It is connected with purity of heart and life. It has its fruit unto holiness, Rom vi, 22. What a blessed fruit is this! How sweet! How rich! How delicious! It is infinitely more excellent and delightful than the fruit which those reap who are slaves to lust, and yield themselves to the service of sin.

It is a glorious liberty. It is glorious in life.

“ Sweet is the field, and sweet the road,
To him whose conscience bears no load.”

It is glorious in death. It divests death of its sting, strips it of its terrors, and enables the Christian to raise the triumphant shout, *O death, where is thy sting! O grave, where is thy victory! Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. xv, 56, 57.

It is glorious in immortality, beyond the confines of the grave. *Its end is everlasting life.* Rom. vi, 22. What a liberty—that rescues from the thralldom of moral corruption, breaks the fetters of mortal imperfection, and of a frail, corruptible, dying body, and introduces the

children of God into those regions, where with powers that are never weary, passions that are never sinful, and being that never terminates, they will behold the glories of their immortal Redeemer, and enjoy a felicity infinite as the duration of his existence, and passing all knowledge, like the heights and depths of his love. Thus we see that moral death is a sinful state, moral life a holy state, moral death the beginning of death, moral life the beginning of life, the bud of life, the flower of Paradise opening out. In heaven it expands in fullest bloom, and sheds its richest and sweetest fragrance. There saints departed are perfectly pure and holy. On earth the remains of indwelling sin cleave to believers; but as they have been delivered from the condemning and ruling power of sin, so will they be freed from its remains at death, and made perfectly meet for the enjoyment of heaven.

The religion of Jesus Christ includes union to him. This is not physical or natural, but spiritual. The apostle Paul calls it a great mystery, Eph. v, 32. The fact is indisputable that Christ dwells in believers, and believers in him, through the impartation of the Holy Spirit: but the nature of this union or indwelling is mysterious, incomprehensible.

It is Divine in its origin. It takes its rise in the heart of the Deity. It is the offspring of his grace, the product of indescribable love. *No man can call Jesus, Lord, save by the Holy Ghost, 1 Cor. xii, 3.*

This union is intimate. Such is its intimacy that believers are said to be members of his body, flesh, and bones, 1 Cor. xii, 27, and even to be one with him as he is with the Father. *That they all may be one, as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us: and I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, John xvii, 21, 23.*

It is also endearing. It is connected with the illumination of the Holy Spirit, whose office it is to open the eyes of the understanding, that men may perceive the beauty, excellency, and harmony, of divine truth. It is associated with the enjoyment of spiritual life, since Christ who is the possessor of life, is also the dispenser of it.—John, xi, 25, 26. It is the precursor of human happiness. Being in Christ, we are partakers with him of all the happiness which he himself enjoys, or is able to communicate.—Ephes. iv, 16. And it is the badge of honour, since all who are united to him are taken into a blessed relationship with him and

his family:—*we are no more foreigners and strangers, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith.* Eph. ii, 19.

This union to Christ is indispensably necessary. *Without the Spirit of Christ*, says Paul, *we are none of his*, Rom. viii, 9. We may be his nominally without this, but not savingly with faith and love.

The means by which we are made one with Christ are faith and love. Faith puts on Christ; love, with her magic, wand-like spell, binds us to him. It is the bond of our union with Christ. “This union is begun in our spiritual quickening, and completed in our actual receiving of Christ. The first is the bond of union on the Spirit’s part. The second a bond of union on our part. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith. It is the instrument of our justification. *By him all that believe are justified from all things.* It apprehends the pure and perfect righteousness of the Lord Jesus, wherein the soul, however guilty and sinful soever it be in itself, stands faultless and spotless before the presence of God.” It is the spring of spiritual peace and joy. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and access into that grace wherein his people stand, and rejoice in*

hope of the glory of God. Rom. v, 1, 2. Faith in Christ secures to us the inestimable blessing of peace through his meritorious righteousness and death—causes it to flow in upon the soul like a mighty river, until on its majestic bosom, he is borne into the interminable ocean of bliss. It is the means of spiritual life and subsistence. By faith we live, stand, walk, run, and are saved. Faith, therefore, is the great scope and drift of the gospel, which aims at nothing more nor less than to bring men to believe. Reader, are you united to Christ by faith; do you turn away from every thing that would grieve him, and cherish every thing that is well pleasing in his sight; do you diligently attend the appointed means of grace, and abound in works of mercy, piety, and charity, like our Saviour, who when on earth, went about continually doing good? Aspire then after a complete conformity to his image, and cherish unbounded attachment to him and his cause.

He is altogether lovely. He is lovely in his name. But who shall set forth its sweetness, richness, or beauty? It is more soothing than the fanning of an angel's wing! It is more musical than the melody of an angel's harp! It is more refreshing than the dew on the purple bell! It is more joyous than the sparkling

sunshine on the bosom of the river ! He is graceful in his person. Draw him in all his proportions, and set him forth to our view in all his beauty and majesty, dignity and glory. But who is adequate to the mighty undertaking ? Where is the hand that can draw the sketch, or the pencil, brush, or colours, that shall complete it ? There are no colours bright enough, no pencil or brush fine or pliant enough to pourtray it to our view. Even Gabriel would fail to accomplish the task. May his lovely countenance

Ever sweep o'er our midnight dreams,
Like glimpses from an Eastern sky ;
The sunshine seen in fitful gleams,—
Or some sweet melody ;
Glowing with radiance pearly bright,
Adorned with true devotion's light.

He is attractive in his offices. As our Prophet, he chases away our ignorance, fills our intellects with light, and inundates our hearts with love. As our Priest, he offers himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and advocates our cause with the Father, in the world of peace and joy. And as our King, he raises us up from our ruin and woes, defends us from the assaults of hell and sin, conducts us in triumph to his everlasting kingdom, possesses us with a life of immortal blessedness and glory, and reigns in us, and over us for ever. And as to his cause ; it is a

just cause, founded on the principles of equity and truth. It is a holy cause, and puts a restraint on the fierce passions of our nature, and independently of the fear of punishment, or the hope of glory, it leads us to obey the Divine injunction, *Be ye holy*, from the ennobling and elevating motive, *because the Lord our God is holy*. It is also a blessed cause, making life pleasant, death desirable, and filling eternity to us with ecstatic joys. Let us embrace therefore, every opportunity of seeking to promote it, scatter abroad with an unsparing hand the good seed of the kingdom, fervently implore the dew of his blessing, and never relax in our exertions, until Jesus shall call us to himself, and surround us with the splendours of his beatific vision in glory.

The religion of Jesus Christ comprehends love to God. This is the sum and substance of all the exercises of piety. It is the axis on which our submission to God, resignation to his will, confidence in his grace, and all our hopes, joys, and fears, revolve. It is the all-inclusive germ which involves all the other graces of the Spirit. It is the mainspring of the life of God in the soul of man, the very life of God itself, 1 John, iv, 16; the life which angels live, as they love God; the life which every child of

God lives on earth ; that which enhances all his enjoyments, and turns this world into a blooming paradise of bliss.

It matters not where the locality, whether here or beyond the blazing sun, and the dim twinkling stars, where there is love to God, there is heaven. On earth we have the stream, in heaven there is the fountain-head, and whilst immortal spirits drink from it there, we drink from the stream.

The religion of Jesus Christ is the quintessence of happiness. It fills the mind with peace, the peace that passeth all understanding, the peace of God, the peace of eternity ; that peace which is the earnest of salvation, the fruit of pardoned sin, the peace that speaks the heavenly giver, the peace divine that lives for ever, the peace that comes from God alone, the peace to worldly minds unknown. "This peace," says a powerful writer, is "not the stupid security of a mind that refuses to reflect. It is a tranquillity that rests on an unshaken basis, which no anticipations however remote, no powers of reflection however piercing or profound, no evolutions which time may disclose or eternity conceal, are capable of impairing. It is founded on the oath and promise of Him who cannot lie. It springs from the consciousness of an invisible alliance with the Father of our

spirits, and enables us to share in his fulness, and to become partners with him in his eternity. It is pure and serene like the unruffled wave which reflects the heavens from its bosom while it is accompanied with a feeling of exultation and triumph, natural to such as are conscious that having overcome, ere long they shall possess all things."

Religion inspires the mind with hope. This is the star that breaks in on our night of darkness as the harbinger of that day, when the Lamb will be our light, and God our glory. It is the chain, one end of which is bound to the throne of the Eternal, and the other entwined around the soul to draw it to happiness, heaven, God. The apostle Paul in speaking of the hope of the Christian, calls it a good hope, a lively hope, a blessed hope, and a sure hope. May its rays descend into the depths of our souls, and on its wings may we be borne aloft to that bright, sunny land, where blissful fields extend their verdure and immortal groves, which echo to the songs of angels; where living fountains gently play, and oceans of bliss for ever roll, without a break and without a bound.

It secures to men sweet foretastes of heaven. When the spies returned from searching the land of promise, they brought with them some

of the grapes of Eshcol, and its pomegranates, and figs. Even so believers in Christ Jesus have an earnest of that bright and fair inheritance which is prepared in heaven for them that love God. They feed on spiritual fruit, which is the pledge of future happiness, and is infinitely more satisfying than the fruits of Eshcol.

It conducts us to the enjoyments of heaven, with all the fulness of its happiness and bliss. This is promised to the believer in Christ Jesus. The Lord has secured it to him, and for him. But who shall describe it? In order to set it forth, we must pass the boundaries of mortality, enter the atmosphere of the celestial world, rove through balmy fields of bliss, and pluck of the fruit of the tree of life that stands on the banks of immortality.

What a blessed thing is religion. It is not that mopish and melancholy thing which many suppose it to be, that tears up our pleasures by the roots, and confines us to a round of rigid austerities. "It is the perennial spring of contentment, the day-star of hope, the rising and setting sun of mortal bliss."

"The best relief that mourners have,
It makes our sorrows blest ;
Our fairest hope beyond the grave,
And our eternal rest."

CHAPTER II.

ON THE DESIGN OF THE CROSS.

THIS is vast and magnificent, beneficent and transporting, gracious and glorious. That it may rise before us like the lofty mountain which towers above the little hills on every side, let us look at it in its actual purpose, contemplate it in the amplitude of its range, view it in the nobility of its undertaking. This is the salvation of men. Nothing more nor less than this will satisfy its largeness of purpose. What an object to arrest the attention of men! On the one hand it is so simple that no one can misunderstand it; on the other it is grand, momentous, sublime. But the height of its sublimity who can reach? It is higher than heaven, what can we know! Deeper than the grave, what can we do! Longer than the earth, and infinitely broader than the sea!

Divine grace is exhibited in the condescension of the cross. Jesus Christ came! 'Twas wonderful that He should think of man! 'Twas wonderful that He should think of angels—seeing that the utmost height of the throne on which he sits, Gabriel's eye cannot reach, and that the inmost recesses of the glory in which he dwells are inaccessible to the pure spirits

that surround his everlasting throne! How much more wonderful that he should glance his eye toward us in this distant province of his dominions!

‘Twas more wonderful still that He should move to man, seeing that he had violated his laws, set himself in battle-array against him, and lifted up his arms to tear the crown from his head, and to pluck the sceptre out of his hands. But it was the most wonderful of all that Jesus Christ should become man, that he who created the world should descend in person to it—that he who poured forth the abyss of the ocean should drink of its streams—that he whose goings forth have been of old, even from everlasting, should become a babe in Bethlehem; and that he should be born in a stable, when he might have been born in a palace; be subject to deep poverty, when all nature might have supplied him with her stores; to the insults of the proud, and contempt of the rude, when angels might have been vying with each other, to hymn to him their songs and hallelujahs of praise! This was descending from a height to which an angel’s wing can never reach, to a depth which human line can never fathom! Phil. ii, 6-8.

It brings before us Divine grace in its bene-

volent designs. This is to save sinners! This is strange, seeing that we are such sinners! Who shall describe the magnitude or extent of our guilt? To form some humble conception of it, we must bring before us a mountain obtruding to the throne of God in the heavens, a continent extending beyond the limits of the creation, or an ocean wider than the poles, and sinking deeper than the abyss of woe!

It is also most noble! This will appear if we consider that it not only delivers from the consequences of sin, but from the power and love of it! It not only frees us from the principles and evils of sin, but secures to us the enjoyment of pardon, peace, purity, and happiness—all the blessings of grace here, and of glory hereafter! Christ is *the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world*, John i, 9; and he is *made of God unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption*, 1 Cor. i, 30. This is accomplished by an act unparalleled, infinite,—the sacrifice of himself upon the cross. At once the climax of mystery, and the wonder of heaven and earth! The means by which it is to be done, are most worthy of himself: these consist in the word of faith revealed to us in Holy Writ, which is the instrumental agent—man, who is the sub-

ject of God's mighty grace, and an heir of his everlasting kingdom, as the human agent,—and the Holy Spirit, who is the Divine Agent! 'Tis the truth that knocks off the fetters by which we are enthralled under the god of this world, surrounds us by the life-giving beams of the Sun of Righteousness, in all its noon-tide splendour, enables us to stand forth to the view of angels and men clad in all the beauties of holiness, to breathe feelings of love on all around, reflect with brilliant lustre the image of Jesus Christ, and to cheer our souls in their everlasting progress beyond the confines of the grave!

The beings to whom this work is committed are not angelic, but human! They may not be distinguished by the treasures of wealth, the blazonry of rank, or the glittering diadems of monarchs, their fine flowing eloquence, the originality of genius, or the vigour of their intellects; but having felt the renewing influence of divine truth on their own hearts, they are anxious to make it known to others; willing to make sacrifices, that they may promote its diffusion; to bear reproach, and even to die, if necessary, should its interests require it! And to be honoured of God in assisting and guiding to heaven one benighted wanderer, in reclaim-

ing one wretched outcast, in winning to the Lord one besotted dupe, is to them a higher mark of favour, a nobler and more glorious distinction, and a source of greater happiness, than if they had been able to trace their descent from the most illustrious families, gaze on the brightest escutcheons of antique family honours and titles, look on the noblest mansions and finest estates, and say, These are mine ; or to have worn the brightest earthly crowns, and swayed the most magnificent sceptres amongst the kingdoms of this world !

But after all, the glory of the work belongs to God, who will not give it to another, nor his praise to graven images.—Isaiah xlii, 8. 'Tis the honour and privilege of man to strike the rock of the sinner's heart with the rod of divine truth. God only can cause the streams of penitence, faith, and loving obedience, to flow forth.—Ex. xvii, 6. Man is to draw the bow. God reserves to himself the high prerogative to guide the arrow, and make it sharp in the hearts of his enemies, whereby the people fall under him.—Psalm xlv, 5. It belongs to man to cast the seed into the furrows of the mind ; but no tender blade will spring up, no waving harvest tremble to the breeze, or yield to the sickle of the reaper, unless God gives the

gentle dew, the refreshing shower, and the enlivening ray.—1 Cor. iii, 6.

The command is given to man to roll away the stone. God alone can cause the dead in trespasses and in sins to come forth in all the energy of health and life.—John xi, 39-43. What a grandeur there is in that salvation which Christ brings to sinful men! What a thrill of ecstasy ought to run through our hearts when we think of its nature and extent, including as it does the redemption of both soul and body, the interests of time and eternity, the joys which spring from God's presence on earth, and the beatific vision of his glory in heaven! What unbounded gratitude we ought to cherish to Almighty God, for the manifestation of his love and good will to us in the gospel of his Son! And with what self-denial, heroic zeal, and dependence on God for his blessing, ought we incessantly to labour to make it known, that men every where may perceive its beauties and excellencies,—weep forth their heart's homage to its power and tenderness,—rise from transitory things, their better portion to trace,—bathe their uplifted natures in the light and life of God, until they are lost amid their bright refulgence in the sunny firmament of God's love—dwell in the

bosom of our redeeming Lord—cast their amaranthine crowns on the golden pavement before the throne of God and the Lamb—and cause their golden harps to vibrate in sweetest harmony, to swell the anthem of redeeming love to the Triune Jehovah for ever.

It brings before us the illustrious triumphs of divine grace in the salvation of the chief of sinners. There is then no merit. If salvation were of merit, it would not be of grace. There would be no occasion for the atonement of Jesus Christ. It would be a work of supererogation. The language of self-complacency would be—My arm hath gotten me the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil—sin, death, and hell—closed the gates of perdition, and opened the gates of everlasting life. But whose mind does not instinctively recoil at the thought?

There is no obstacle. If the arms of Divine mercy which have been extended on the cross can reach Lot, David, Manasseh, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus, and others, what can prevent them from surrounding me, and you, and all mankind? If the banquet of the gospel was spread for them, what can shut us out? Nothing but our own impenitence and unbelief: and shall we close the door of mercy against ourselves, when our Saviour has invited us to

come to him and live, and given us the assurance that *whosoever cometh to him, he will in no wise cast out?* John vi, 37. This would be the height of madness and folly. And yet how many must plead guilty to the charge? Reader, how is it with you?

Divine grace does not save men in their sins, but from them. It makes men holy, so that God, in perfect consistency with his own character, the rectitude of his nature, and the equity of his government, can be just in punishing the sinner, while at the same time he justifies all that believe in Jesus.

This object Jesus had in view from the ages of eternity. It revolved in his mind as he lay in the bosom of the Father, before the earth with its teeming riches, and the heavens with their glittering orbs, were created.

He kept it distinctly before him whilst on earth. Hear him. *The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.* Mark x, 45. When kings and queens pass through their dominions, they expect to be ministered unto; and it is the greatest disappointment that can be experienced by a loyal and devoted people, if they have not an opportunity of paying their tribute. But Christ came not to be thus mi-

nistered unto, but to minister : and during his progress through this world, what favours he bestowed, and what multitudes of hearts leaped for joy !

I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Mat. ix, 13. We do not therefore find him encircled, rank upon rank, by the nobles and grandees of this world ; or taking up his abode amongst the refined, the select, the amiable, and the lovely. Beyond the outermost verge of refinement he goes forth amongst publicans and harlots, crying, *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Mat. iv, 7.

God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved. John iii, 17. From Bethlehem to Calvary he had the cross before him ; and panting to consummate the object of his mission, he gave vent to the feelings of his heart in the most affecting terms, exclaiming, *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished.* Luke xii, 50.

This he accomplished when the sword of Divine justice was drawn from its scabbard, flashing in all its brightness, waved broad and high, trembled for a moment in the balance,

and then fleshed to his heart's core on the cross.

What a glorious truth is conveyed to us by the cross! It is this,—that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners! How cordially we ought to embrace it: it is the greatest truth that is to be found in the history of the world. In the world's history there are many great truths which have been propounded by philosophers, moralists, political economists, and others; “truths which have quickened into activity the general mind, called forth the mental resources of nations, and gone on vibrating through the universe. But this surpasses all. It is a truth which animates all other truths, sheds a flood of light and a stimulating influence on original, but neglected, obligations; and receives the great power of God, which alone can renovate, elevate, and save a lost world!”

It is adapted to meet the exigencies of all men. To save from sin is to meet your case, and the cases of all, since all are sinners. And has Jesus saved you? Where is the being that he cannot save? Or where is the being that need despair? He who has brought salvation to the believer, can bring salvation to you, the world, or ten thousand worlds! There is no limit to his power, there are no bounds to his mercy, but those which are created by indifference

and wilful disobedience to the Divine commands.

It is a truth by which we must stand or fall in the day of final judgment. Amid the disclosures of that day, all will be accepted or rejected in accordance with this rule,—their acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ whilst on earth. What a blessed day it will be for the believers of Jesus Christ! With one triumphant shout they will hail the great Judge as their deliverer and friend, whilst all their toils will be recompensed, their characters vindicated, and their highest wishes crowned! But what an awful day it will be to the wicked. What elements of despair will gather on their countenances! What storms of indignation will come over their prospects! What loads of anguish will press on their spirits! Mark their position; the left hand of the Judge. Mark their Judge; it is Jesus, the King of saints, whom they have despised. Mark their appearance; their guilt and doom can be read in their countenances, as if written in characters of fire. Mark their sentence; it is the most fearful,—*Depart ye cursed*. Mark their departure into Tophet; it is under the withering frown of Jehovah's countenance. Mark their associates; the devil and his angels. Mark their sufferings; they are the most painful and excruciating. And mark their destiny;

all this is eternal. How we ought to rejoice that the day of judgment has not yet terminated the day of grace; that the voice of mercy, which now says, *Look unto me, and be ye saved*, has not yet become the voice of inexorable justice to pronounce the sinner's doom! Without the delay of another moment let us seek mercy now, that we may experience its bestowment in the last great decisive day.

Let us never forget the object of Christ's deliverance. This is not merely from hell, but sin: many there are who desire to escape the misery of hell, and to attain unto the joys of heaven, who will not part with sin; but if they would be freed from the miseries of the one, or possessed with the joys of the other, they must be made holy, as it is recorded in the statute book of Christ's kingdom, *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Hebrews xii, 14.

Let us remember that this truth can only benefit when it is practically received. There are those who are fond of the doctrines of the cross, that are not partial to their influence. *But be not deceived, God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life*

everlasting. Gal. vi, 7, 8. *By their fruits,* said our Saviour, *ye shall know them,* Mat. vii, 20. Reader, are you bearing the sweet fruits of the Spirit; or the sour grapes of sin? It is an awful thing to know Christ, and not to have an interest in him; but it is the most awful to profess attachment to him, and in works to deny him. Heb. x, 26, 29.

Let us be stimulated to the extension of this truth wheresoever we can make it known, since Jesus Christ is the one Mediator between God and man. There is no other medium of access to the Father, no other plea than the sacrifice which Jesus has made for the atonement of sin, no other intercessor to present our prayers and praises to the Father, and secure our acceptance with him, no other refuge provided to shield men from the storms of God's wrath. How important, therefore, that Jesus Christ, in the mystery of his incarnation, the glory of his character, the fulness of his love in dying for us, and in the prevalency of his advocacy, should every where be made known; that men may be made happy, Jesus see of the travail of his soul, and God receive the glory. Reader, embrace the salvation which Christ brings, diffuse it, and praise God for it for ever.

Let us enquire if we have our own personal

convictions that this record is faithful and true ; that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. The question is, Must I be saved or lost, go to heaven or descend into hell ; dwell with angels or be the associate of fiends ; be thrilled with ecstasy or the prey of infinite torture and despair ? Reader, take the question home to your heart, and if you are not a partaker of God's grace, enter the valley of decision, and in the presence of God, angels, and men, let the oath of allegiance ascend, that, as for you, you will be the Lord's ; that the cross may find in you another trophy, and the Saviour another advocate and friend.

CHAPTER III.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CROSS.

The cross is the place where all the dispensations meet, whether patriarchal, Mosaical, or Christian. The dispensations of God are those gracious discoveries which he has made of his mind and will to men at various periods of time, in the successive ages of the world, that they might know the relation in which they stood to him ; the obedience due ; the blessings it would ensure to them ; and the punishments that would

be inflicted on those who were disobedient to his will. The first of these dispensations of God to men is the patriarchal; this dispensation embraces the disclosures which God vouchsafed to Adam, Noah, Abraham, and all the twelve patriarchs. The revelation which God made of his mind and will to Adam, refers to his innocence, fall, and recovery. When God made man, it was for his own glory, to share in that felicity which he himself enjoys. He was the noblest work of God's hands,—his masterpiece in this lower creation. His superiority was manifested physically in the beauty and dignity of his frame; intellectually in the endowment of those noble faculties which enabled him to think, feel, speak, judge, and act; things which draw a broad line of demarcation between the rational and the brute creation; a distinction which can never be broken. And morally he was like God in knowledge, power, and holiness, which was the best of all, since to a very limited extent he could imitate God. How great was the honour which was put upon him! He was lord of land and ocean; air, earth, and seas were under his control!—Psalm viii, 6, 8. And what happiness he would enjoy! Not a beast would move before him, not a bird fly above him, nor an insect crawl beneath him, without raising

his thoughts to the glorious and omnipotent Creator, and causing him to admire the wisdom and goodness of God, the great first cause of all things, the fountain of all his mercies !

Whilst in this innocent, holy, and happy state, a special revelation was made to Adam, containing a certain precept and threatening, which he was bound to regard by that general law of nature that requires the creature to obey the Creator in all things. And besides, every precept of God is benevolent in its nature, hallowing in its influence, and heavenly in its results. *In keeping of them there is great reward.*—Psalm xix, 11. The precept which God gave to Adam was enjoined as the test of his obedience. Was this unreasonable, or inconsistent, on the part of the Almighty ? Did he not give Adam power sufficient for the performance of his duty ? And since God warned him of the danger and misery connected with disobedience, he justly forfeited his claim to the divine favour, exposed himself to the justice of the Almighty, and subjected himself to his withering frowns, when he partook of the forbidden fruit, Gen. ii, 17. And as he was the representative of the human race, misery, ruin, and death, have been extended to his posterity.—Romans v, 12. This we all know by un-

happy experience ; but we have not been left to perish in our sins and guilt. A second Adam has been raised up, in whom are to be found more blessings than those which were lost in the ruins of the first. To him was committed the work of redemption. In our room and stead he was to die as a substitute for the guilty. An early intimation of this was given to our first parents, to remind them that through Jesus Christ they could again have access to God ; recognise him as their loving Father, and be possessed with holiness and happiness. This is evident in the appointment of sacrifices, which were typical of Christ ; the seed of the woman, the great Mediator between God and man, the true sacrifice of atonement, by whom God is reconciled to man ; and through whom Abel's sacrifice was as the odour of a sweet smell.—Gen. iv, 4. If therefore, prior to the fall, man's acceptance with God was dependent on his performances to justify him in his sight, now that he has entailed on himself an inheritance of guilt, degradation, and woe, his return to God, and acceptance with him, can only be through the interposition of a Mediator, the efficacy of his atonement, and the prevalency of his intercessions.

There is no such thing as justification by

the deeds of the law ; all that the law can do is to convince and condemn. It is by faith in Christ that we are justified without the deeds of the law. "This," said Martin Luther, "is the doctrine of a standing or falling church." The way is plain, so that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need nor err therein ; the means are simple. *The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart : that is, the word of faith which we preach ; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thy heart that God hath raised him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*—Rom. x, 8, 9. The instrumentality is abundant to make it known.—Psalm lxxviii, 11. And mighty is the agency of the Holy Spirit, whose prerogative it is to make it effectual in the salvation of all who believe.—Zech. iv, 6. When the race of man increased, the iniquity of men became more prevalent, until they were swept from the face of the earth by the waters of the deluge, with the exception of Noah and his family, Gen. vii, 1. Noah was a just and upright man. He had this pleasing testimony, that he walked with God, and found favour with him. To him Jehovah made a further disclosure of his love and good will to man. This referred to his curse on intellectual, animal,

vegetable, and mineral life,—Gen viii, 21 : to his purpose in regard to the preservation of men,—Gen. ix, 11 : and to the pledge of his covenant with Noah and his sons,—Gen. ix, 12. How our hearts ought to be affected with the goodness of God ! *His tender mercies are over all his works.*—Psalm cxlv, 9. And how we ought to magnify and laud his name, for the token of his love, which with its brilliant arch spans the clouds, to remind us of his power, faithfulness, and grace,—and that as our covenant God and Saviour he still lives and reigns bright and glorious in the eyes of his people ; strong and mighty to subdue his enemies, and put all things under his feet,—Rev. iv, 3-11.

But the most enlarged discovery of God's will to man, under the patriarchal dispensation, was made to Abraham, who is denominated the father of the faithful. To him it was intimated that he should sojourn in the land of promise, Gen. xii, 1, 2 ; be the father of many nations, Gen. xvii, 1 ; and that from his loins should spring the promised Messiah, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed. Gal. iii, 8. What a gracious discovery was this ! What emotions it ought to call forth from the deep fountains of our hearts ! And how our praises ought to ascend to the Almighty, free,

full, and unconstrained, for this disclosure of his love ! This will be abundantly made manifest in the following considerations.

Canaan was a type of heaven—a land of brooks and fountains, vines and fig trees, milk and honey, corn and wine.—Deut. viii, 8. But what was Canaan when compared with heaven ? Much has been said of it in the Word of God, but language is slow, and thought dull, for man to give any adequate description, or to form any just conception of its infinitely glorious realities ! No mortal words can express, or mortal mind conceive, its out-bursting glories !

Canaan was a free gift to Abraham, and his posterity the Jews—not on the ground of self-righteousness—but through the rich, free, and sovereign grace of God.—Deut. ix, 6. And if ever we are privileged to enter upon the heavenly inheritance, it will be entirely from God's unmerited love, in the mediation, redemption, and salvation of his son Jesus Christ.—Titus iii, 5.

Canaan was the subject of promise. And was not the promise fulfilled in the experience of Abraham, and his posterity the Jews ? God brought forth Abraham out of the land of Chaldea in a way that he knew not, and put him in possession of the land. And when the Jews were in bondage in the land of Egypt, God

brought them out of their captivity—opened a path for them in the Red Sea—led them in the wilderness—rolled back the waters of Jordan at their approach—and placed them secure in the enjoyment of the promised land. Even so heaven is promised to the people of God, and e'er long will be theirs; for God has broken the fetters of their captivity to sin and Satan—opened a way for them through the Red Sea of Christ's blood, and is leading them in a right, though it may be a round-about way, to a city of habitation.

Canaan was the object of expectation and desire. All the descriptions which were given of it to Abraham and his posterity, were to give them earnest longings for it, and to lead them to press forward towards its enjoyment. With what intensity of desire ought we look towards the heavenly Canaan! And how all our powers of body and mind ought to be on full stretch after it, as there is no comparison between the two, by reason of the glory that excelleth.

“ Sweet landscapes robed in living green,
Beyond the grave and death are seen,
Where Jesus stands in great renown,
Clothed in a body like our own.
What Christian would not pant and sigh,
To part with earth, and thus to fly
Far from the world, with all its care,
To be with Christ? 'tis better far.”

But for this we must be prepared. The Jews had to be circumcised, humbled, and proved, before they could enter the land of promise. Even so heaven is a prepared place, for a prepared people. There must be godly sorrow for sin, unfeigned faith in Jesus Christ, and the circumcision of the heart and life.

We come now to the Mosaic dispensation, when the Jews were formed into a nation. Jehovah condescended to be their lawgiver and king; sacrifices and ceremonies were instituted as types and figures of the characters and offices of Christ, who is our Saviour and Prince, and special privileges were to be enjoyed. And will God, in very deed, dwell with man? Yes, he took up his abode in the temple, and dwelt on the mercy seat, in the holy of holies, to receive the prayers of his people the Jews, accept the sacrifices which they brought to him, redress their grievances, and convey to them the blessings they required. Even so now God, in his condescending love, takes up his residence in the hearts of believers, sets them apart as a temple for himself, listens to their fervent and believing prayers, accepts the spiritual sacrifices which they bring, makes all things subservient to their present happiness, and future comfort and peace, and from the mighty treasury of

his mercy and love, fulfils their most enlarged desires, and exceeds their most enlarged requests!

As to the sacrifices and ceremonies of the Jews, do you ask why the rite? why the ceremony? These things were types, or emblems, that uttered all their dark meaning on Calvary. For the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin, only by virtue of the shed blood of Christ on the cross; the great anti-type of every type. Whilst, therefore, the Jews presented animal sacrifices to God, they looked forwards with the eye of faith to the crucifixion of Christ, and sung, *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed*, Isa. liii, 5.

And their divers washings and purifications were emblematical of regeneration and sanctification by the Holy Spirit. What an evil is sin, which requires blood to expiate its guilt! How dreadful the requirement, when the infinitely precious blood of Christ must be shed for the remission of sin! How condescending the love and grace of Jesus Christ in becoming the atoning sacrifice, to effect the salvation of sinful men! How awful the character of that justice which demanded the sacrifice! How happy

they who are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, and renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit! How wretched and miserable is the state of the sinner, when neither the goodness of God can soften him, nor the thunderbolts of God's judgment terrify him! And how helpless and hopeless is the condition of all who die without an interest in Christ! How bitter must be their lamentations, and heart-rending their cries, as they take up the wail of the lost, *The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*, Jer. viii, 20. Sinner, take warning betimes. Let the sweet accents of mercy and love thrill through the soul whilst now is the accepted time, and the day of salvation. Hasten to Christ, like the mariner to the plank when the vessel is sinking, or the man-slayer of old to the city of refuge. Jesus invites you, throws open his arms to embrace you, and assures you of his gracious welcome. Believe and be saved. Come to him, and live.

In regard to the special privileges of the Jews, the apostle Paul says, *To them pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is God over all, blessed for ever,*

Rom. ix, 3-5. How exalted and distinguished were the Jews ! But what were their privileges when compared with ours ? Hear what the apostle Paul says,—*We are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire ; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words ; which voice, they that heard, entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more :—no, not to such a terrific display of justice, but to the sweet disclosures of God's love ; and to the distinguished favours and illustrious honours which are peculiar to those who believe in Jesus Christ. We are come unto Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel, Heb. xii, 18-24. What a contrast ! How our hearts ought to ascend to God in the fervour of gratitude, and sublimity of praise !*

The dispensation of the Jews continued until the incarnation of Jesus Christ, which has in-

roduced to us the last, but by far the best, dispensation of grace that has ever been vouchsafed to man. In what does its nature and excellence consist? In the abolition of the types and sacrifices, forms and ceremonies of the Jews, which were no longer necessary when the great Anti-type, the true Sacrifice, had come: in the free, full, and unfettered publication of the gospel, that all men might believe in Jesus, obey him and live; in the formation of the Jewish and Gentile converts into one church, that they might dwell together as fellow-heirs of the grace of life; and in the establishment of a new and better covenant of which our Lord is the Mediator; a covenant founded on better promises than the Sinai covenant, and in which Jehovah engages to be a Father to his people, to secure their love and obedience, to be merciful to their unrighteousnesses, and their sins and iniquities to remember no more; to teach them his own holy will, and to bring them into subjection to himself; to keep, preserve and bless them for ever. "This dispensation of grace," says Robert Hall, "has risen on our world like the sun in its strength, and all those gloomy shades of ignorance, superstition, and error, which have encompassed mankind so long, are now melting away, and losing themselves in the

midst of its brightness. It no longer leaves us to the conjectures of reason, which has always erred; nor to the fluctuating opinions of men. But all it declares it confirms by the authority of God. The truths which it discovers, were proclaimed by the Son of God himself, who lay in the bosom of the Father from eternity, who was acquainted with all his counsels, and created all his works. It raises no hopes but what are built on the promise and oath of him who cannot lie. In the mystery of Christ's incarnation, who is God as well as man, in the humiliation of his life, and in his death upon the cross, we ever behold the most stupendous instances of compassion, whilst at the same moment the law of God received more honour than it could have done by the obedience or death of all his creatures. Access to God is now open at all times, and from all places; and to such as sincerely ask it, he has promised his Spirit to teach them to pray, and to help their infirmities. The sacrifice of Christ has rendered it just for him to forgive sin, and whenever we are led to repent of, and forsake it, even the righteousness of God is declared in our forgiveness. Whilst we contemplate, the gospel pours in upon us consolation from every side, and refreshes our inmost souls.

It gives us the prospect of our sins being pardoned, our prayers accepted, our very afflictions turned into blessings, and our existence prolonged to an endless duration." These dispensations of God to men were involved in much obscurity in ages that are past, to Jews, Gentiles, and angels in heaven ; but as time moved onwards in its course, each succeeding dispensation threw a signal and sensible light on those which preceded, until all were developed in the economy and administration of the gospel, which pours forth its ocean-fulness of spiritual blessings, that the thirsty souls of men may drink of its streams and live.

The cross is the medium through which the perfections of Jehovah are exhibited and glorified separately and jointly in the salvation and destruction of men. The cross of Jesus Christ is like love full of tenderness, like mercy full of compassion, like goodness full of bounty, like truth full of certainty, like justice full of equity, like holiness full of beauty, like omnipotence full of power, like omniscience wide in its survey, like immutability unchangeable, and like eternity everlasting. And it is the focus where all the perfections of Jehovah are collected, and presented in all their harmony and glory. It is the orb from which streams of light and life

pour forth on every side, and diffuse themselves amongst the nations of the earth. It is the azure firmament canopizing the world, which gives space for all the attributes of God to move in cloudless majesty, and mingle their splendours into one expanse of pure light.

In the light of the cross, therefore, we see the love of God in providing a Saviour for the guilty, and the wisdom of God in constituting it the basis of everlasting bliss, and the subject of everlasting praise; the mercy of God which surmounted every obstacle that she might have free course, run, and be glorified; and the justice of God that continued unabated in its rigour until satisfaction was made; the goodness of God in pardoning transgression, iniquity, and sin; the holiness of God which required the awful sacrifice of his dearly beloved Son, that he might maintain the honour of his name, and the equity of his throne; and his faithfulness which makes all things bear on the fulfilment of the divine promise.

And the cross is the point of vision from which we may glance from attribute to attribute in the character of God, as from star to star, or system to system, in the worlds above us; and as they beam forth in all the refulgence of their glory, we may sing, These shine for us, they

are on our side, our friends, our security, our refuge. What an interesting spot is the cross ! “ On the one hand it proclaims the inflexible determination of God to maintain his law ; and on the other, the greatness of his compassion for a lost world. It declares that God punishes only because it is necessary to punish ; that the penalty of the divine law emanates from infinite benevolence ; that the nature of sin is indescribably odious ; and that for the pardon of sin, a movement has been commenced in heaven more august and astonishing than that which created the world ; a movement which has done more to exalt the demands of angels and men than any other manifestation of God, and compared with which all the miracles ever wrought are but as drops to the ocean.” And what a halo of glory surrounds the cross, arising from the bright constellations of the Divine perfections which there cluster together, and shed their sweet, refulgent radiance all around, constituting it the glory of its attractions, the magnet centre of its influence, the strongest consolation to the people of God, the highest source of encouragement to sinners, the very pillar of the Divine throne. Who does not cry out and shout, *God forbid that I should*

glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, Gal. v, 14.

The cross is the foundation of hope.

The scriptures every where bring before us an eternal state of felicity and glory; an invisible state, and therefore the object of faith, and not of sight; a future state, consequently the object of hope, and not of present enjoyment. The foundation of this hope is not the goodness of God, or good works, but the relation in which Jesus stands to us as our sacrifice and surety,—mediator, saviour, and redeemer—prophet, priest, and king—judge, advocate, and friend. This foundation is obnoxious to human reason. The Jews, whose minds were filled with earthly grandeur, despised the Saviour on account of the lowliness of his origin. *Whence, said they, hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's Son! Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him, Matt. xiii, 54-57. And to the Greeks, who could boast of their warriors, philosophers, senators, orators, and poets, he was foolishness. But to them who are called, both Jews and*

Greeks, he is the power of God, and the wisdom of God, Cor. i, 23, 24. God has approved of this foundation. Christ is the object of the Father's choice and love. Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth. I have put my spirit upon him: he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street: a bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth; he shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law, Isa. xlii, 1-4. And it is precious to the people of God. Jesus is precious in every name that he bears, every office that he fills, and in every blessing that he conveys; precious on account of what he is in himself, is doing, has done, and from what he has promised to do for them. He is precious at the period of conversion, in the hour of mental conflict, and on the bed of affliction; in life, death, heaven, and for ever. Nothing will satisfy the believer but Christ; Christ in the beauty of his person, in the glory of his character, in the perfection of his obedience, in the efficacy of his atonement, in the fulness of his grace, and in the prevalency of his

intercessions. Jesus is all in all to the Christian ; the first, last, midst, and without end.

God himself has laid this foundation in the depths of his love, in the aboundings of his mercy, in Christ's obedience unto death, in his atonement on the cross, the power of his resurrection, and the success of his advocacy. And with what infinite complacency and delight does the Almighty contemplate the stupendous undertaking, and direct the attention of the universe to the astounding fact ! *Behold*, saith God, *I lay in Zion for a foundation stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation !* Isa. xxviii, 16.

On this foundation is centered the church of Jesus Christ. On Him believers, *as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house*, 1 Peter ii, 5. And is he not able to sustain their hopes, and to promote their happiness ? Myriads in glory have tried him, whose voices are now swelling the eternal chorus of praise, in the melody that ascribes—*Blessing, and honour, and glory, and thanksgiving, and praise, unto God and the Lamb !* Myriads on earth are now trying him, who will ere long swell the triumph and the song with the blissful throng of the redeemed. And myriads more may come, and centre on Him their hopes and hap-

piness, without the possibility of being deceived. For whilst all other foundations give way amid the changes of empires, the conflicts of nations, the shock of arms, the sneers of infidels, the vauntings of anti-Christ, the convulsions of death, and the over-running flood of God's wrath in the day of his awful visitation, when he shall come to judge the world, the foundation, Jesus Christ, will never give way, in time, or for ever. Whatever mistakes there may be in trusting to the goodness of God, or to human performances, which are like the shifting sand, yielding water, wood, hay, or stubble; there can be no mistake, no disappointment in reposing confidence in Christ, *since Christ is able to save to the uttermost all them that come unto God by Him*, Heb. vii, 25. *He that believeth in him shall not be confounded*, 1 Peter ii, 6. Reader, do you believe in Him? Is Christ the foundation of your hopes, and the source of your happiness? However delightful it may be to think of the goodness of God which called us into being, sustains us in existence, and supplies all our wants, it must ever be remembered that God is just as well as merciful, Isa. xlv, 21. And with whatever tenacity men may cling to their performances, there is no one that ever did, or

could, apart from the man, Christ Jesus, fulfil the law of God in all its requirements. How necessary, therefore, that we should make Jesus our hope and trust, for *other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*, Cor. iii, 11. The means by which we are to build on Christ is faith. This is a coming to Christ, looking to him, receiving him, and sitting at his feet clothed and in our right minds. And O ! the blessedness of faith in Christ. Amid the storms and tempests of life the believer finds shelter in the clefts of this rock ! When the waters of death rise higher and higher, and the streams of Jordan grow broader and broader, he plants the feet of faith on this rock and is safe. And amidst the sifting process of the last judgment, when the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements melt with fervent heat, Jesus is his song and salvation. *Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him. They shall never be confounded, or put to shame, world without end.*

“ Sinners, believe the Saviour’s word,
Trust in his mighty name and live ;
His lips a thousand joys afford,
His hands a thousand blessings give.”

The cross is the motive, or spring, of all holy

obedience. There are many things which induce believers to mortify sin, cherish ardent breathings after holiness, abound in the fruits of righteousness, and to seek the enlargement of the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom—such as death, judgment, heaven, and hell. But the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ are the choicest and strongest motives that can be brought to bear on the human mind. There is nothing can touch the springs of action, call forth dormant energy, or stimulate to high, holy, and devoted enterprise, like it.

Concentrate your energies, therefore, on the love of Jesus Christ. Trace it in its rise. He loved you when you were running away from him on the dark mountains of sin and folly, hewing out to yourselves broken cisterns that could hold no water, in the gall of bitterness and in the bonds of iniquity. He loved you before you had a being, and even when the earth, with its romantic beauties, and the heavens, with their shining train, slept in the womb of night, enshrouded with the darkness of chaos. His love to you is everlasting. It was conceived as he lay in the bosom of the Father from the ages of eternity.

View it in its progress; it has never ceased to flow towards you since you had a being.

When you were enemies to him, he visited you with providence after providence, minister after minister, sermon after sermon, conviction after conviction, and warning after warning, until you surrendered yourselves to him. His love still follows you, forgiving your sins, healing your diseases, redeeming your lives from destruction, and crowning you with loving kindnesses and tender mercies. Psalm ciii, 3, 4. And it will follow the believer for ever, Psalm xxiii, 6. How different to the love of the creature, which is so very changeable. What encouragement it gives us to confide in him, and to repose on the bosom of his love!

Think of its inestimable value. Some persons' love is not very costly. It does not extend farther than a few thoughts, words, or smiles. But Christ's love cost him tears, groans, and blood. And consider its mighty influence; it impels men to live not unto themselves, but to the glory of him who is the fountain of their happiness and bliss, 2 Cor. v, 14, 15. And in proportion as men come under its influence, will they be found weighing the magnitude of his claims, and consecrating their time, talents, and substance to God, in the promotion of his cause; nobler than which never awoke the sympathies, or called forth the energies of men.

The cross is the centre of all union. The person who is united to Christ is taken into an intimate and blessed relationship with all that believe in him, whatever their rank, station, cast, or colour, and is welcomed to the enjoyment of the same privileges and blessings. He feasts on the same provisions, is cheered by the same promises, guided by the same providence, travels in the same pathway, and looks forwards to the same home; as saith Paul, *There is one body and one spirit, even as ye are called by one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all*, Eph. iv, 4-6. How condescending the love and mercy of God, which exalt believers to the rank of fellow-heirs with all the saints, and fill them with the blessed hope, that heaven, with all its bursting glories, will soon be theirs! What dignity of moral character ought they to cherish, as servants of Jesus Christ, children of God, and heirs of immortal blessedness and glory! And with what unbounded gratitude ought they to praise God, for their distinguished privileges, and illustrious honours, and all his innumerable favours in providence and grace!

“Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise.”

The cross is the ensign of victory. This will appear if we consider the aspect under which it recognizes the world of men. And what is its position? It is under the power of the Prince of the air. This is shewn in the depraved nature of man, which has diffused itself, from the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise, to the present moment; sent its poisonous streams down the whole course of time, and is now every where apparent in the footsteps of creation, from the palace to the cottage.

It is manifested in the extreme wickedness of the human heart, in selecting objects of worship in opposition to the claims of Jehovah; objects innumerable, both in heaven and earth, which it has deified, and to which it has awarded divine honours.

It is evidenced in the eagerness with which men cling to the things of this world, in preference to the concerns of the soul, and rather than make them subservient to the world to come.

It is demonstrated in those vile passions by which men are governed in their sinful state, such as envy, malice, wrath, deceit, inordinate desire, worldly-mindedness, etc. To these they yield themselves; by these they are borne along as by some mysterious impulse, until they

capitulate to mercy, or are plunged headlong into the abyss of woe.

And it is attested in the commotion which is excited by the attempt to promote the spiritual welfare of men. *These that have turned the world upside down, have come hither also.*—Acts xvii, 16.

It will be apparent that the cross is the ensign of victory, if we consider its claims to judge the world. It brings accusation against it. It charges it with original depravity, and wilful disobedience. And is not the charge true? Arraigned at the bar of conscience and revelation, we must all cry guilty, for—*We have every every one turned to his own way. We are all as an unclean thing, and our iniquities have taken us away as with the wind.*

It exposes the guilt of the world. Under the searching light which it has thrown upon the conscience, multitudes have cried out in the language of Cain, *My burden is heavier than I can bear.* And from the diffusive rays which it has thrown around the tempers, characters, and actions of men, it causes them to shrink at the thought of entering into the presence of a sin-avenging God at death. Whilst in the day of final judgment it sets their sins in battle array against them, and covers them with confu-

sion and shame. How remarkable is its phraseology,—*There is nothing covered which shall not be revealed ; neither hid, that shall not be known. Whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light ; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed on the housetops, Luke xii, 2, 3.*

It subjects the world to condemnation. This is its sentence—that men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil ; that they are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God ; and that they have not believed in the only begotten Son of God.

It sounds the alarm of danger to the world from the curse of a broken law ; the warnings and threatenings which God has given in his holy word, and the experience of good men, whose unanimous testimony is, that as the effect must succeed the cause, even so sorrow and suffering are attendant upon sin.

It virtually divides the world into two classes, saints and sinners, righteous and wicked, godly and ungodly, and ranges them under one of two leaders, Christ or Belial, God or Mammon ; on the side of light or darkness, holiness or sin, heaven or hell. And surrounding them with the light of eternity, it shews them, whether they

be two or three hundred, thousand, or so many millions, what is their destiny. Fellow-sinners, every moment is bearing some of us away. We have no abiding city here. To another world we are fast hastening; and the solemn denunciations of Scripture remind us that we must soon be in heaven or hell. Choose whom you will serve. Let your choice be personal, pre-eminent, exclusive, and immediate; and with earnestness of spirit, determination of purpose, and unwearied devotedness of heart and life, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

The cross is the ensign of victory; it shews the triumphant anticipations of Christianity, and declares that the prince of this world shall be cast out, John xii, 31. This will appear in the following considerations.

The claims of another King have been tested, whose right it is to reign. They have been proved in creation, providence, and grace. The works of creation are his;—

“ He heaved the mount, he clothed the tree,
He bound the waters in the sea,
He spread the verdant carpet o’er
The soft and undulating shore,
He clothed in light the splendid view,
And veiled the distant hills with blue.”

There is not an object in creation which he

has not made, from the little hillock to the lifting up of the mountain which hides itself in the clouds of heaven;—from the rill that trickles down the mountain side, to the majestic ocean which rolls its billows on every shore;—from the sparkling dew-drop, to the glittering stars, those stupendous luminaries, vastly peopled worlds, that range the immensity of space;—and from the gilded butterfly which flits in the sun-beams, to the burning seraph before the throne of the Eternal. *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made,* John i, 3.

In providence we see him in every thing.
He it is who

“ Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees.”

It is his finger that wields the elements, and rolls the seasons along. 'Tis his voice that we hear in the roar of the tempest that shakes the forest; and his footsteps we feel in the earthquake which convulses the globe. There is no place beyond his influence, or event excluded from his control.

“ 'Tis his providence that governs
O'er all nature's wide domain;
Wings the angel, guides the sparrow,—
Blessed be his gentle reign.”

And in grace he multiplies pardons to his people,

throws around them the rampart of his protection and care, possesses them with an overflowing stream of consolation in the hour of need, and on the wings of faith and love bears them triumphantly to the land of rest and joy. But who shall record his acts of grace? Whose tongue shall rehearse them? Whose harp shall celebrate them? Not all the descriptive powers of angels or men can set them forth, or the harps of heaven do justice to them!

In the cross Jesus has laid a mediatorial foundation, and retains a pledge of future success. Jesus has entered the battle-field, trodden the wine press alone; by his almighty arm vanquished principalities and powers—crushed the head of the serpent, and made a show of it openly in the ascent of the dying thief with him in his triumphal car from the cross to heaven; and in the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and elevation to the throne of unbounded dominion, Jesus retains a pledge of future success. Invested with life and immortality, he comes forth from the regions of the grave, and surrounded by multitudes of his attendant angels, he enters the celestial world, and takes possession of the throne of universal dominion, as Lord of heaven and earth; where he ever lives to execute his purposes, and to

fulfil the designs of his infinite mercy and love. He is distinguished by regal honours, splendors, and dignities; and as the mighty conqueror and avenger of his foes, he will trample on them in his fury and indignation.—Isaiah lix, 18. *Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing. The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.*—Psalm ii, 1-5.

In the cross, Jesus has an appropriate instrumentality, and efficient agency at command. This is shewn in the weapons which it uses, and in the elevated piety of those whose high privilege it is to wield them. And what are its weapons? Not steel or faggots, penalties or prison houses:—No, they are truth, faith, and charity. And how mighty for weal or woe is the truth of the cross!—2 Corinthians ii, 15, 16. The truth, however, must be diffused before it can be felt, in subduing the temper and assimilating it to the image of Jesus Christ. How shall men hear without a preacher? Romans

x, 14. And with whatever fluency it may be pressed on the attention of men, there is no probability that we can gain access to their understandings, feelings, or hearts, unless it is set forth in the spirit of that love which it inculcates. 1 Cor. xiii, 1-13. And there must be the exercise of a strong faith in the divine promise, or we shall only be as those that beat the air. Unbelief dishonours God; but faith ensures his blessing. It says to the greatest difficulty, what art thou *that* before Zerubbabel thou shouldest not become a plain? Look at the weapons of the cross! How ethereal in their temper! and how mighty in their influence! Look at its ministers! Their characters are one blaze of light, love, and zeal! Their piety how elevated! Their courage how undaunted! Their perseverance how noble! Their benevolence how disinterested! And their success how great! To what is this to be traced? The wisdom of their counsels, the number and influence of their friends, or the amount of their property? No: it is solely owing to the dominion of Christ, who has opened the way that his messengers might go forth in obedience to his command; and to the Holy Spirit, whose agency alone can qualify them for their arduous undertakings, and render their instructions effectual in the conversion and salvation of men.

The cross is the only means by which the world is to be subdued to Christ. There is no new plan, or order of divine procedure revealed to us in the sacred scriptures. *Though we, or an angel from heaven*, says the apostle Paul, *preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* Gal. i, 8. Some may look for a glorious personal manifestation of the Saviour, and the introduction of new and powerful elements of success. But Paul says, *Necessity is laid on me, yea, woe is me if I preach not the gospel!* 1 Cor. ix, 16. The gospel is the sum and substance of the cross. Does it point to an altar? It is the altar of the cross. To a sacrifice? It is the sacrifice of the cross. Or to a Priest? It is the great High Priest who bled as a victim on the cross.

This gospel was given to the twelve apostles with a solemn charge to convey it to the world. From generation to generation it has been handed down to us in all its adaptation to elevate, purify, and bless. And it has not lost one iota of its efficacy, by the channel in which it has reached us. "Its doctrines," says a powerful writer, "are neither changed by the progress of events, nor touched by the hand of decay. As the waters of the mighty rivers fail not, al-

though they have rolled onwards towards the ocean for revolving centuries; as the tints of the rainbow are not less fresh and lovely than when they first shone in the eye of the patriarch; as the luxuriant earth continues from generation to generation to renew her beauty, and to sustain on her surface the living and multiplying inhabitants;—even so the lustre of gospel truth remains untarnished, and the fulness and power of the Saviour's grace continue unimpaired.' The gospel possesses the same power that it ever did to quicken, excite supreme love to God, mortify sinful lust and passion, secure submission to the will of God, and deep humiliation before him. And all things are subsidiary to it, in opening facilities for its spread, that its power may be more extensively felt. In streaks of living hue the gospel is every where diffusing itself, whilst amid the triumphant shout of the armies of the living God, the crucified One is lifting up his cross, drawing men of every tribe and clime, caste and colour, sex and age, to him; healing their wounds, driving pain from guilt, lighting life in death, turning earth to heaven, and to heavenly thrones transforming the ghastly ruins of the mouldering tomb! What the gospel is now doing, it can repeat and exceed, and will do it;—"since," to use the language of the

late eloquent John Ely, of Leeds, “the world stands as the arena of the great sacrifice of the cross, the field of its influence and triumph, and the monument of its glory.” In looking forwards to this great and glorious consummation, we also enter into the feelings, and re-echo the sentiments thrown out by that mighty, accomplished, fascinating, and brilliant orator, the late Richard Winter Hamilton, when disclosing to our view the enrapturing scenes of the millennium, with dignified composure exclaims, “Happy era, when the world shall be purified from evil, and hushed to repose near to the foot and under the shadow of the cross.” That we may hasten its approach, let us gird ourselves for the moral conflict before us, and in obedience to the mandate of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, seek to push his bloodless conquest far and wide, and never slacken our energies until

“The dwellers in the vales, and on the rocks,
Shout to each other,—and the mountain tops,
From distant mountains, catch the flying joy ;
Till nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round.”

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE SUPERIORITY OF THE CROSS.

THE cross is a system of truth to be believed, embraced, and practised. It refers to the fall and redemption of man—the character, offices, love, and sufferings of the Redeemer—his humiliation and exaltation, cross and crown—the nature and necessity of repentance, faith and holiness—justification through the merits of the Redeemer, and sanctification by the Spirit—a state of grace here, and of glory hereafter. What glory it secures to God, and good to men ! Look at it. “ It reveals the exceeding sinfulness of sin ; impresses the necessity of controlling the passions of the desperately wicked heart ; unfolds motives to the practice of holiness, enforced by every subject which can affect the human mind with awe, love, or terror ; secures the exertion of a purifying energy upon the soul ; tears up by the roots those tendencies to the practice of wickedness, which are found in the most amiable and virtuous of beings ; allures to the throne of grace and to the kingdom of God, by an attraction more powerful than ever before affected the emotions of intelligent beings—the attraction of Christ’s love ; builds the edifice of hope on the ever-enduring

foundation of the Rock of Ages; conveys the blessings of acceptance with God, pardon, peace, love, and joy; makes the most mysterious and afflictive dispensations of Providence subservient to the accomplishment of the designs of infinite tenderness and compassion; unites heaven and earth; gilds the shadows of the grave with the morning light of an everlasting day; and enables its subjects to antedate the blessedness of that world where all the clouds of error and ignorance will be removed; where the body, regenerated at the moment of its triumphant resurrection, shall be capacitated to accompany the spirit in its progress, and to participate in the infinite happiness of its being; and where, in a sense too sublime for the mind of man at present to comprehend, *God shall be all in all.*"

"The balm of life, the cure of woe,
The measure and the pledge of love."

What is there that can be compared to this system of truth? Unitarianism? No. It embraces many things connected with Christianity; but its essential truths, such as the depravity of man, the doctrine of the Trinity, the divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Spirit, it rejects. To understand Unitarianism you must have what the world calls wisdom; but not so Christianity. The

common people heard Christ gladly. They could comprehend the doctrines which he taught. This is a convincing proof that Unitarianism is not of God.

Roman Catholicism ? No. This is another name for superstition, cunning, and artifice. Its masses, penances, and performances are the essence of delusion. "And from the figment of apostolical succession to the last act of praying the soul out of a little hell, it keeps salvation in the pocket of the priest." "It is a turnpike-gate system," says Richard Knill, "and the keeper must be paid. No trust, is written over the baptismal font—on the confessional—the purgatory, and the gate of heaven." How opposed to the spirit and genius of Christianity, which announces a full and free salvation to all who believe in Christ ; and extends its invitation to all, without distinction, in regard to the persons of men. In its offers of mercy, it embraces all ranks and classes, from the prince to the peasant ; in favours shewn to those who believe in Christ, there is no difference. Amongst men, the benevolent may grasp all in their kindness ; but they may not have the means of gratifying their desires. There are none, however, who trust in Christ, shall go empty away : his resources can never fail.

On the standards of the one are written such blasphemies as these, " Let thy right hand protect us all, mother of God ; come unto her all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and she will give you rest ; sinners shall find grace with God through thee, the inventress of grace and salvation ;—blessed are they whose hearts love thee, Virgin Mary, their sins shall be mercifully washed away by thee."

On the lofty battlements of the other are inscribed, in legible characters, these words. *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father but by me, John xiv, 6. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water, John vii, 37, 38. In him is life, and the life is the light of men ; and the light shineth in darkness ; and the darkness comprehendeth it not, John i, 4, 5.*

There is Puseyism, which rears the edifice of salvation on baptismal regeneration, sacramental efficacy, and numberless forms and ceremonies, such as standing, kneeling, bowing, and turning to the altar, etc. But this is so

much like Popery, that it would be difficult to distinguish the one from the other.

And there is Owenism, mis-named Socialism, which makes man the creature of circumstances, and leaves him to the mercy of every wind and wave, without a friend to comfort him, a hope to cheer him, or a refuge to protect him. It puts no restraint on the evil passions of our nature. It provides no safeguard to virtue and happiness. It presents no opening vista into the future. How unlike the religion of Jesus Christ, which forbids every unholy wish ; every evil propensity ; every sinful thought ; opens an asylum for virtue ; spreads its wings as the angel of consolation over the abodes of affliction ; wipes away the tears of distress ; hushes the cries of helpless misery ; illumines the darkness of the dungeon ; smooths the pillow of the dying ; fills the soul with triumph in the hour of death ; and conducts to glory, honour, immortality, and eternal life. With the most intense application of mind, let us seek to become acquainted with its mysteries. With unbounded joy, welcome it to our hearts ; and with the most devoted attachment, seek to make it known, that all may embrace it, participate in its blessings, and swell the anthems of the blest, in songs of everlasting joy.

CHAPTER V.

ON THE ATTRACTIONS OF THE CROSS.

THE cross is a system of truth to be embraced. In the whole range of truth, there are no truths which can be compared to those which it sets forth, and enforces on our consciences and hearts, under the solemn sanction of the Almighty. There is one great truth which it announces, that is worth more than all the truths which have ever been propounded by all the philosophers and moralists that have lived since the creation of the world. It reads, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii, 16. What emotions it ought to excite in our minds. How it ought to touch every spring of hope, and to cause the main chord of our hearts to vibrate with the thrilling music of praise.

It is attractive in its power. It is emphatically called the power of God. It brings before us the love of God. We open the book of God and read, that *God commendeth his love toward us*. He loves us because we are his creatures, the workmanship of his hands. He loves us, though we have dreadfully departed from him, and awfully rejected him. There was nothing

in us to induce him to love us. He was moved to it by his own free sovereign will. This love he has manifested in the gift of his Son. And who can resist its power? What heart can withstand it? How it captivates and subjugates!

Whilst its life-giving glow, o'er cold hearts it does throw,
Like the sunbeams of earth on a mantle of snow.

A glow of love to God, and good will to men
warm as the life blood that flows through our
veins, and deep with pure and genuine feelings
as the inmost recesses of our souls.

It brings before us the compassion of God. He might be a God of love, and not of compassion. But he cannot be a God of compassion, without being a God of love. There must be love, where there is compassion. God loving the world compassionated it. Full of pity to lost man, he sent his Son, out of pure affection, to die for him. Whose heart is not melted with the thought. In multitudes of instances it has led the sinner to bow to the sceptre of God's grace, and to yield himself to the transforming and embalming influence of the cross.

It brings before us the forbearance of God, when we were far from him, rebels in arms against him, adding iniquity to sin, and provoking his direst displeasure. Had his forbearance then come to an end, and his long-

suffering, mercy, and love terminated,—the voice of God would have been heard saying, *Lay the axe to the root of the tree.* What a mercy that it did not. If it had, we should now have been surrounded with unquenchable flames. Our minds have been directed to this. It has affected us. With weeping and supplication we have cried, *What must we do to be saved?* O! the power of the cross!

And it brings before us the forgiveness of God. God passes by sin, casts it behind his back, blots it out, cancels it, even the sin of many years, so as not to think of it, nor remember it any more. Had any one transgressed against us as many days as we have against him years, we should have cast him off long ago. How different are the ways of God to those of men. *O! the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God,* Rom. xi, 33. Who can think of it, and not have his spirit influenced with the thought? Beware of resisting its influence. Trifle not with its discoveries. Slight not its calls of invitation. Prepare your ears and hearts to receive them. God mocks no one. And he will not be mocked. They come from his heart. Let them enter into yours, and wrap your souls with feelings of exalted rapture, peace, and joy.

And then there is the visible and glorious manifestation of this power, in the sublime effects which it produces. In the case of individuals, it metamorphoses men. Through its mighty power, Saul of Tarsus, the proud Pharisee, becomes Paul, the meek and humble Christian! From Saul the ridiculer and blasphemer, he is changed into Paul the warm admirer, and ardent lover of Jesus! From Saul the persecutor, he is converted into Paul the preacher! From Saul an injurious man, he is turned into Paul the upright, consistent, and devoted man! Look at him! View him in life. Though all may be commotion around him, all is calm, tranquil, serene, and heavenly, within him. He is the subject of peace. But how shall we describe the holy calm within? If we look on the sea when there is not a ripple to be seen, or a breath of wind to disturb its repose, we say, What a peaceful sea! Or if we gaze upon the sky on a fine clear day, or night, when not a cloud rises to our view, we exclaim, What a peaceful sky! But the brightness, grandeur, beauty, and rapture, connected with such scenes are nothing compared to the mind of the sinner, when the conflicting elements within him have been hushed to repose; or when the clouds and storms of fear and unbelief have been swept from his mind!

Go with him into the closing scenes of life. By the glances of his memory, all the scenes of life pass in review rapidly and vividly before him! The various incidents and circumstances connected with its smiles and tears, joys and griefs, storms and calms, seasons of high enjoyment and deep dejection, dance and glitter in his eye, unstringing every nerve, fibre, and muscle—veiling the spirit in deepest sadness, which makes it refuse to be comforted—hangs a cold, chilling damp on every scene around—throws the mind on the rack with torture and pain, and preys on the vitals, making death infinitely more to be desired than life,—until he feels the peace-speaking blood of Jesus Christ spreading over the confused, agitated, troubled, and disordered thoughts of his mind, and hushing the raging elements into a calm; or on the other hand, by the recollection of his many glimpses of the Divine favour, the many victories he has won over his spiritual foes, the many scars and wounds he has received in the cause of Christ, and the many trophies he has brought to the feet of Jesus Christ, he is laid more feelingly and adoringly low before his divine Lord and Master. Under his last and severe conflict with the great adversary of souls, how nobly he acquits himself, dealing his tre-

mendous blows, until the battle is fought, and the victory won, and his voice in one triumphant shout exclaims, *Thanks be unto God, who giveth the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*, 1 Cor. xv, 57. 'Twas the animating hope of this that fired his soul, winged his footsteps, brightened his eye, expanded his noble breast to catch the inspiring gale, and bounded over every barrier that impeded his progress, and bore him on resistless to the last in his Christian career. And now that the last step is taken, the last blow dealt at the enemy of souls, and triumph achieved, what peace, rapture, and joy, flow in upon the soul, as he sings the victor's song, and grasps the victor's crown!

Trace him in his departure from earth to heaven. No sooner is his spirit freed from his frail, corruptible, dying body, than methinks I hear him saying, Has the last drop in the cup of suffering been exhausted! has the last storm in the ocean of life ceased to beat! has the last conflict terminated between the flesh and the spirit? All that was trying and painful is now over. Joy and gladness is his happy portion! Everlasting joy is upon his head, and sorrow and sighing for ever flee away! Isa. xxxv, 10. Amidst, therefore, the melody of angels' voices, who chant thy death song, and hail thee to the

realms of immortality, wing thy flight, thou spirit of the just, to its blissful regions ; upwards mount, and onwards soar to the source and centre of thy blessedness and joys ! Enter with him the atmosphere of the celestial world. See him lighting on one of the luminous hills of Paradise, roving through balmy fields of bliss, passing through the portals of the heavenly city, standing on the golden pavement before the great white throne, whilst loud as the loudest, and sweet as the sweetest, he hymns his songs and hallelujahs of praise to God and the Lamb !

In families it hushes the voice of discord, throws a peculiar charm around the domestic circle, and makes husbands and wives, parents and children, more loving and kind ! Reader, have you not seen it ? Can you not look in upon the scene, and with bursting emotions of joy give utterance to your feelings, exclaiming, How endearing are its ties—how interesting its associations—and how enrapturing its recollections and scenes ! Domestic love reigns enthroned around the family hearth. Hearts' devotion throws its charms around the domestic circle ! And the burning flame of affection kindles into greater fervour through the live-long day, dewy night, and ever rolling year, causing

its fragrant, balmy incense to be wafted to the skies! Whose mind does not kindle into rapture at such a scene! Under such circumstances what a magnet centre of attraction is home! There is no spot on earth so hallowed, sacred, endeared, or attractive!

From the monarch on his throne to the peasant in his cot, it is the brightest blessing that can fall to human lot. Under life's eventful and changing scenes, it becomes

A beacon in life's tempest, a haven in its gale,
A refuge from the outer world, when bitter foes assail.

Whilst beneath its charms, days, weeks, months,
and years, are beguiled away!

Life's turbid tide does then appear to us a gilded stream,
Its every day realities a sweet celestial dream!

In Christian churches, it leads men to take a deeper interest in each other's welfare, bear each other's burdens, and to labour, strive, and pray together, for the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom. And does the man who is under the influence of love's invisible leading strings seek a temporal home? Even so, the believer in Christ Jesus seeks a spiritual home. Such a home is to be found in the church of Jesus Christ; and though it may meet in a house, barn, or conventicle, his lips, looks, and life, exclaim—

“ I love her gates, I love the road,
 The church adorn'd with grace,
 Stands like a palace built for God,
 To shew his milder face.”

And what links of affection and friendship are thrown around his spirit ! How his heart flows out in sweetest, tenderest love and sympathy towards all his sisters and brethren in Christ Jesus ! And how joyous has the scene become, until his spirit, bounding with rapture, involuntarily sung

“ I have been there, and still would go ;
 'Twas like a little heaven below.”

“ And in regard to nations,” to use the language of the late Richard Winter Hamilton, “ it is girdling our country and world as with a sun-track ; a belt of ever spreading splendour !” Reader have you felt its power—been subdued by its influence—attracted and enamoured with its beauties—possessed with its privileges and blessings, and adorned with its virtues and graces ? If not we would warn you of your danger ; point you to the hope set before you in the gospel ; and with all the powers of entreaty that we possess, and the tender love and pity that we can cherish, we would cry, *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.* John i, 29. That Jesus may throw around you the arms of his mercy and love—

enrich you with the treasures of his grace—and cause your pulse more wildly to beat—the heart to well more warmly up with feelings of transport and joy.

“—— Like the lone rill,
Which gushes from its fountain deep ;
When sunbeams darting o'er the hill
First wake it from its icy sleep.”

We invite you to come to Jesus—repose on his bosom, and be happy.

And the cross is attractive in its object. This is the prostration of the world at the feet of Christ. What an object ! How magnificent, glorious, and sublime. Do you ask how it is to be attained ? By our saving knowledge of Christ, and the attractive power of his cross. This is everywhere predicted in the word of God. It is the subject of a divine decree, Isaiah xlv, 23. God has promised it. And in covenant with his Son he has bound himself to accomplish it. Whilst the cross in its onward glance sees every promise redeemed ; every prediction fulfilled ; every covenant honoured ; every idol overturned ; every house a Bethel ; and every heart a temple for God. And how delightful is the thought, that this will be realized at no far distant period as the signs of the times seem to indicate, in that deadly struggle which is approaching with the powers of darkness, when the armies of the

alien will be for ever put to flight,—and heaven and earth ring with the acclamations of joy, as the shout ascends, the *kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.* Roman xi, 15.

That we may hasten it, let us consider the nature and extent of the undertaking which the cross of Christ brings before us. It is the noblest, and loftiest, that ever engaged the attention of men or angels. This is to bring men back to their allegiance to God ; restore them to his likeness and favour ; sweep away every remnant of pollution and misery from the face of the earth, and make it a type of heaven. That we may facilitate its progress, let us think of the imperative obligation under which we are laid to prosecute this undertaking, arising from the dying command of our Saviour, where he says, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature,* Mark xv, 16.

And let us think of the illustrious honours which await all those who attain to eminent usefulness in the cause of Christ, Dan. xii, 3. High up let us lift and broadly wave the banner of the cross. And with indomitable courage, and enthusiastic ardour, let us persevere to the last moment of our existence, that the world may have the benefit, and God the glory.

CHAPTER VI.

ON THE NECESSITY OF THE CROSS.

THE cross as a restorative dispensation finds us amidst the ruins of human nature. And in its narratives it records the fact, and details the circumstances which involve the loss of innocence, produced a dread of the Almighty, stamped existence with a curse, and caused the *whole creation to travail in pain together until now*. Roman viii, 22. If we take our stand, therefore, by the cross, we see man, who is the noblest work of God, presenting the aspect of melancholy grandeur, and exciting our deepest sympathies. When the traveller gazes upon the ancient castle that has been laid in ruins by the devastating hand of time, or on the fragments of noble edifices, which mark the spot where the city once existed, but is now swept away with all its inhabitants, commerce, and magnificence, what thoughts arise within him; and how his bosom swells with emotion, until his eyes overflow with tears. Such are the circumstances in which we are placed, when we look at the state and character of man. A scene of desolation rises before us, compared with which the fragments of ten thousand cities can give us no adequate conception. And this is not merely

the condition of one man, but of all men. Men every where are debased, degenerate, apostate.

This is written in the characters of a universal death. It is recorded in the book of inspiration as the first great historical fact, that *death has passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Roman v, 12. Sin has converted the world into one great charnel house, or burying place for the dead : and all must re-mingle in their original element, whether savage or civilized—bond or free—young or old. *There the prisoners rest together ; they hear not the voice of the oppressor. The small and the great are there,* Job iii, 18.

And it is also shewn in the ignorance, crimes, and sufferings of men. Men know nothing compared with what they ought to know ; do nothing compared with what they ought to do ; and enjoy nothing compared with what they ought to enjoy. This is our case. This is the case of all. The state of mankind in general “ bespeaks not a flaw in the building, not a partial or insignificant delapidation of a portion of the splendid construction ; but a prostration, an absolute downfall of the whole.”

It is entire, as it respects the whole man. It has subjected the body to pain, decay, and death. “ And as to the immortal part of man,”

says an elegant writer, "its purity is gone—its peace is lost—the image of God is obliterated—corruption has crushed it—the angel tenants of the once beautiful edifice, love, joy, and sanctity, have fled,—and the demons of darkness have taken possession of it."

And it is entire, as it respects the whole race of men. "There is no country under the sun," says the same writer, "where man has not dethroned his Maker from his heart, and attempted as far as possible, by his hateful inventions, to turn him out of his own world. In the place of the one living and true God, he has framed a religion of a thousand idols; a mythology of unheard-of demons." This is man's crime and folly; and in this deep debasement myriads of our race are at this moment sunk: they are the slaves of degraded superstition, abominable idolatries, horrid cruelties, and shameful vices—destitute of the means of grace, which abound in Christian countries, without a sabbath, without a Bible, without a minister, and without hope.

And what is the state of our own country? Is our own land Christianized? Are our neighbours all of them converted to God? And does vital religion flourish? Ah! does not the cold-hearted formalism and stupid indifference which every where characterise men, in regard to spiritual things, proclaim that *the world lieth in*

wickedness! Amongst those that are to be found in their natural state, *there are none that do good; no, not one.* But is there no hope for the guilty? We look upon the cross of Christ, and a voice proclaims that there is recovery for the fallen, a Saviour for the lost, life for the dead. *It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,* 1 Tim. i, 15. The source of this salvation is the efficacious blood which was shed for the remission of sins; and the means of its appropriation for our individual benefit, is faith in Christ. How important that this news should be every where made known—published in the ear of the world, that the souls of men may be emancipated from the thralldom of corruption—made partakers of the enjoyment of spiritual life—enviored with the presence and blessing of God, and brought to dwell in the bosom of redeeming love for ever. Reader, have you been melted down by the power of the cross? Make known its wonderful story to those around you; repeat it with deeper and deeper emphasis, until its radiant light o'erspreads the earth, and its talismanic power is every where felt, in subduing the hearts of men to God, and awakening their slumbering energies to celebrate the Redeemer's praise.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE EXHIBITION OF THE CROSS.

IT is exhibited to our view in the promise made to our first parents. *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*, Gen. iii, 15. This promise brings before us the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the seed of the woman; his awful sufferings and death, in the heel of his humanity being bruised; and his glorious victory over Satan, in the crushing of the serpent's head. It was the first ray of hope that ever darted into the soul of man after his fall; the first stream of mercy that refreshed his spirit; the first intimation that Satan's kingdom, which had been set up in the world, should be demolished.

It is exhibited in the types and shadows of the Mosaic dispensation. A type is the representation of one thing by means of another. It applies to particular persons and observances. Amongst the persons who were the types of Christ in his offices and titles under the Old Testament dispensation, Isaac, Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, and Solomon were the most distinguished. And amongst the observances of the Jews, the ordinance of sacrifice was the

greatest. But what are all the characters that have ever appeared on the stage of time, when compared with Jesus Christ, who is Emmanuel, God with us? They are like stars which disappear amid the brightness of the rising sun. And as to the sacrifices of the Jews, the one great sacrifice which Jesus presented to God, when he bled as a victim on the cross, possessed more efficacy than all the blood of bulls and goats which had been slain from the offering of Abel to the last sacrifice which was presented on the Jewish altar before the coming of Christ.

It is exhibited in the whole roll of Prophecy. Jacob prophesied, saying, *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be*, Gen. xlix, 10. Moses truly said unto the Fathers, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people*, Acts iii, 22, 23. Job testified, saying, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth*, Job xix, 25. Isaiah, in describing the sufferings of

Christ, says, *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand, Isaiah liii, 7-10. And all the prophets gave witness that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should shew light unto the people, and unto the Gentiles, Acts xxvi, 23.*

It is exhibited in the fulness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, who assumed our nature, endured all the privations of this life, and poured forth the life-stream of his blood, to make an atonement for the sins of men. In the history which is given us of his life by the four Evan-

gelist, we learn that “ he was an infant, a child, a man, a carpenter, the Son of Joseph and Mary, and the brother, or cousin german of James and Joses ; that he was born in the reign of Herod the Great, and of the Roman emperor, Augustus Cæsar, at Bethlehem, the city of David, in Judea, in the stable of an inn, and cradled in a manger ; that he was refused a place in the inn,—forgotten in the stable, and unfurnished even with the ordinary comforts provided for the children of peasants.” They tell us that he “ grew while a child, really and perceptibly, in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man ; that he had not where to lay his head, and was sustained without any property of his own, by the bounty of his disciples, and others ; that he was subject to the Jewish and Roman governments, paid tribute, performed all the usual duties of a child to his parents, and of a subject to his ruler, and was exposed to the direct assaults and temptations of the devil.” And they remind us that “ for our sakes he became poor, afflicted, despised, and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief ; lightly esteemed, hated and persecuted ; that he was betrayed by Judas, seized by the Roman soldiers, brought before the Sanhedrim, and Pontius Pilate ; judged, condemned, buffet-

ted, crowned with thorns, mocked, spit upon, scourged, nailed to the cross, and carried to the tomb." Go to Bethlehem, and see the Royal Infant, wrapt in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, surrounded by the Eastern Magi, who present to him *gold, frankincense, and myrrh*; and by multitudes of the heavenly host, whose sweet voices arrested the attention of the wondering shepherds, who kept their flocks by night, in the plains of Bethlehem. And as their notes float on the gale, listen to their song of praise, whilst in unearthly strains they praise God, singing *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will toward men*, Luke ii, 14. Enter the region of Galilee, where our Saviour turned water into wine, subdued the burning fever, cast out demons, and performed many great and wonderful miracles; and as you see the God shining gracious through the man, and shedding his sweet glories on all around, listen to the solemn and affecting announcement which he made respecting his sufferings and death, *That the Son of man should be betrayed into the hands of men, and slain: and that on the third day he should rise again*, Mat. xvii, 22, 23.

Scale the lofty heights of Tabor, where our Saviour appeared in all his transcendent glory;

and whilst you are captivated by his beauties, listen to the musical accents that proceeded from his lips whilst he conversed with his illustrious servants Moses and Elias, on *the decease he should accomplish at Jerusalem*.—Luke x, 31.

Visit the retired and lovely garden of Gethsemane, and as he bears our griefs, carries our sorrows, and undergoes the chastisement of our peace, until his soul is sorrowful, even unto death,—observe his mortified look, his troubled gestures, and his bloody sweat, that strange symptom of the smothered pangs which rent his righteous heart; whilst in earnest supplication he exclaimed, *Shall this cup pass from me?* and with cheerful resignation added, *Nevertheless not my will, but thine be done*.

And then plant your feet on the brow of Calvary, and gaze upon the awful scene of our Saviour's crucifixion. There he hangs, bleeding, suffering, agonizing, dying. O! look at his venerable remains. "How many are the strokes with which he has been beaten! and the gashes with which he has been wounded. Those shoulders were torn with the scourge. Those temples were punctured with the thorny crown. That swollen and discoloured brow was bruised with the rude blow of the rod! Those lacerated hands and feet were transfixed with the nails.

That deep gash, laying open the very heart, was wantonly inflicted by the soldier's spear." What a spectacle! In a common murder there is the "assailant springing from his ambush—the victim calling aloud for help—the deadly blow—the man staggering and falling to the ground—the blood gushing from the veins—and his convulsive agonies and death." But what is this scene, when compared with the awful tragedy of our Saviour's death? Was there ever sorrow like his?

What effects does it produce? When Eve in an evil hour plucked and ate the forbidden fruit, Milton in his *Paradise Lost* says,

"Earth felt the wound; and nature from her seat
Sighed through all her works, gave signs of woe,
That all was lost." * * * *

When Jehovah descended on Sinai, Moses tells us that there were—*Thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the Mount, and the voices of the trumpet exceeding loud, so that all the people that were in the camp trembled*, Ex. xix, 16. But when God incarnate hung upon the cross, the feeling was deeper, and its effects more extensive!

Amongst the angelic hosts it produces the deepest silence, and excites the deepest emotions, as they spread their wings over the cross.

And could they have dropt a tear, how they must have wept when the beauty of heaven was slain upon the high places of Calvary !

“ Around the bloody tree,
They pressed with strong desire,
That wondrous sight to see,
The Lord of life expire ;
And could their eyes have known a tear,
In showers must tears have fallen there.”

Devils might exult and shout when they saw him suspended on the cross. But when they heard him exclaim, *It is finished*, what confusion would spread through their ranks ! And what consternation and terror would seize on them !

Even the murderers of Christ who reviled him, wagging their heads, and all the people that came together to that sight, smote upon their breasts. Whilst with the awful sight, the “ heavens shrink and blacken, and snatch the sun from the spectacle of guilt and shame ; the earth, aghast at the deed, groans and shudders, rending her bosom, and quivering to her very centre ; religion, sitting in her holy place, arises in consternation, and rends in twain the vail of the temple ; the regions of the dead are moved—the grave throws open its adamantine doors—and the spirits of saints departed hasten back from their paradise, and return to reanimate

their sleeping dust, that they may give attestation to the victim of Calvary."

Such is the wonderful story of the cross, and the interest which it excites! Reader, what is the influence that it exerts on your mind? Have you come under its power? Make it the centre of your hopes and joys. Labour with unwearied assiduity to extend its triumphs. And with feelings of unbounded rapture and joy, raise your song of praise to God.

"On such a theme, 'tis impious to be calm,
Passion is reason, transport temper here."

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE CONQUESTS OF THE CROSS.

THESE are great and glorious! If we trace its career from the death of its founder, we find that in the primitive ages of Christianity, it triumphantly dragged at its wheels embittered foes, whether Jews or Gentiles, proud to grace its triumphs, and extended its conquests far and wide. It established its Churches throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria; while its opponents were "smitten by the wrath of heaven, their proud city destroyed, and themselves

scattered over the earth, a hissing and byword among the nations." And in its onward progress it spread "its influence through the Roman empire, entered the palace of the Cæsars, put to silence the wisdom of ages, emptied the schools of philosophy, closed the temples of Paganism, put out the fire on their altars, and enkindled in its place the flame of its own spiritual sacrifices." Within thirty years of the crucifixion, Tacitus, the celebrated historian, says that there was an immense number of Christians in the Capital. And the infidel Gibbon, in adverting to its triumphs, says, while the Roman empire was invaded by open violence, or undermined by slow decay, a power in humble religion gently insinuated itself into the minds of men, grew up in silence and obscurity, derived new vigour from opposition, and finally erected the triumphant banner of the Cross on the ruins of the Capitol.

At the period of the Reformation it again awoke from slumber, amid the wealth and luxury of princes, and the ceremonies and observances that had well nigh extinguished its spiritual existence; and girding itself for the contest, as in the days of its youth, beneath its indestructible elements, associated with the power of its glorified Author, "whatever in-

fluence had been attributed to the outward pomp of religious services, to the sanctity of self-inflicted tortures, to the interference of other mediators, henceforth disappeared; the mutterings of private masses were no more heard; worshippers were no longer found before the image of saints; the cloisters were every where deserted by their former occupants; and the gross idolatries and superstitions by which Christianity herself had almost become paganized, were not only seen to be frivolous, but felt to be sinful."

In the days of Whitfield and Wesley, the triumphs of the cross were very great. Its doctrines were attended with unusual power from on high. Vast multitudes were brought as trophies to Christ; and a mighty impetus given to his cause. Mr. Whitfield in describing his labours, says, "My constitution is weak, yet I have preached ten times a week—at others twenty. The power of God is wonderful. Hundreds sometimes cry out under a discovery of their lost, miserable, and Christless state. Whole assemblies are sometimes turned into Bochims. Floods of tears appear over congregations. Hundreds again are melted with the love of Christ, and are in the pangs of divine love."

But the most illustrious triumphs of the cross are manifested in the age in which we are privileged to live. If we look to heathen countries, we at once perceive the stupendous changes which it has produced, from ignorance to knowledge—from the worship of wood and stone, to that of the living and true God—from vice to virtue—from beastly indolence to active industry—from the habits of a barbarous and savage state, to those of civilized life—and from the horrors of internal war, to the blessings of social peace ;” and in the victories which it has won, since the most complicated systems of idolatry and delusion which have existed for ages, are now every where giving way—idol temples tumbling into ruins—new sanctuaries for God rising and filling with worshippers ; whilst warrior meets with warrior, bearing in his hands the olive branch of peace—savage with savage, to talk of the humanising influence of the cross, which sweeps away the sanguinary rites of Pagan superstition—and idolater with idolater, to cast their idols to the moles and bats, and bow to the sceptre of God’s mighty grace. And in our own land, never “were there so many bibles diffused as there are now—never were there so many places of worship open as at present—never were there so many ministers proclaiming

the riches of God's grace—never were there such vast multitudes assembled to listen to its wondrous message—never was there more living, active piety among men, than there is now. What a scene it presents to the imagination of a benevolent man! It is no less astonishing than it is captivating and delightful; and it sheds a greater degree of lustre on the cross, than it ever acquired in Greece or Rome, as it has been brought about by instruments who were endowed with no “miraculous powers to demonstrate the divinity of the truth which they proclaimed, or to inspire the people with any superstitious veneration for their persons; but by men who have felt the power of divine truth on their own minds, and held forth the doctrines of the cross in their simplicity and purity, until ignorance and prejudice, superstition and vice, have given way before its all-subduing power—until the light of life has illumined the souls of those who were enveloped in Pagan darkness—and until the sacred stillness of unruffled peace has reigned where the tumult of internal war once made the hills and valleys resound with harsh and dissonant sounds.”

“And in regard to the future,” says the late Rev. R. W. Hamilton, “we know little of dejection, and nothing of despair. We are the fol-

lowers of Him who shall not fail nor be discouraged till he has set judgment in the earth, and brought forth the victory. The past is a pledge of the future. And the pledge is made sure by the prediction, promises, and oath of God. In the Word of God it is decreed by the veracity of One that cannot lie, that Christ must reign until all enemies are put under his feet—that the stone hewn without hands, out of the mountain, shall fill the whole earth—that the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom, under the whole heaven, shall be given to the saints of the Most High—and that as God lives, the whole earth shall be filled with the glory of God. Taking our stand, therefore, on the mount of past success, Jehovah's promise, and the hill of Calvary, we are confident that the whole species shall “emerge from ignorance, thralldom, and superstition, and stand in the erectness of knowledge, and the majesty of religion. And how rapidly does the future disclose itself! What intimations crowd upon us! Presages multiply, not to be mistaken! Already we have begun to walk in an earth whose resuscitation is begun! The scene is changing around us! The landscape is painted in a richer beauty, and suffused with a more heavenly light! Jarring discords die away!

Sweetest harmonies succeed ! The skies pour down righteousness ! Truth springs up out of the earth ! We are fanned by incense-laden gales ! Flowers bloom along our path ! Still waters glide through green pastures ! Aceldama grows into a Paradise ! The trail of the serpent disappears ! The unclean spirit passes out of the land ! Angels renew their visits ! The Lord God walks in the garden once more ! Man hides himself no longer, and is not afraid ! The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them !”

Such have been—such are—and such will be the triumphs of the cross. Reader, what are you doing to advance them ? Are there two contending powers in the world ? To which of them do you belong ? To Christ or Beelzebub ? Let the subject be applied to your heart, for your own happiness and for God’s glory, if you have not yet become a soldier of the cross. But if with the heart you have enlisted under the banners of the Prince of Peace, resist unto blood, striving against sin, and with glowing enthusiasm and zeal devote yourself to the cause of Christ, that you may wear a bright crown of rejoicing in the great day of the Lord Jesus—that crown which will leave “ambition nothing to crave, and benevolence nothing to surpass.”

CONCLUSION.

WITH what intense interest we ought to turn to the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the brilliant point of light, whose radiance streams far forth on the deep, dark sea of life, to guide the voyager to eternity in safety, from amid the rocks and shoals of ignorance, superstition, prejudice, and vice, to the shores of eternal bliss. It is the rock on which the sinking sinner rears the edifice of his salvation in the hope that shall never die! It is the sword which is the emblem of honour, justice, and victory!

What deeply interesting facts it conveys to us! Is the cross a beacon to warn men of danger, and to light up to them the path of life? How constantly and steadily we ought to keep our eyes fixed upon it, that we may not be wrecked on the shoals and breakers that abound in the sea of life. Is it a rock on which the sinner may securely trust without the possibility of being disappointed? With what earnestness and solicitude ought we to press the enquiry, is the cross the foundation of our hopes? Are we confiding in the merits of Jesus Christ for pardon, acceptance, life, and salvation? And is Christ not only precious, but preciousness itself?

Is it a sword of honour, justice, and victory? How helpless and hopeless is the state of those who set themselves in battle array against Christ, or that die without an interest in him. Hear what Christ himself says, *Who would set the briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them, I would burn them together*, Isa. xxvii, 4. *If God spared not the natural branches*, the Jews, ought not the Gentile sinner, who is compared to a wild olive, *to take heed, lest he spare not thee*, Rom. xi, 21.

How condescending and kind are the love and mercy of God, which are manifested in the cross of Jesus Christ!

Are you exposed to peril on the sea of life? What gratitude you ought to cherish to Almighty God for the streaming light of the cross, which alone brings before you the surrounding region of shore and sea, along the dark coasts of this world, reflects the glory of a better, and conducts to the realms of everlasting purity and bliss!

Do you require a foundation on which to rear an imperishable hope for eternity? And will you not abound in thanksgiving to Jehovah for the foundation stone which he has provided in the person of his Son, and laid in Zion for the comfort, happiness, and safety of all that believe in Jesus?

And do you need protection, encouragement, and support? In the sword of the cross you have a shield of defence, so that you may lift your head above your enemies round about you—a stimulus to renew your devotedness to Christ and to his cause, since all our inward and outward foes will be slain, for the cross is ever victorious over the world, the flesh, and the devil, sin, death, and hell; and it is a pledge of support, or token of victory, that as Christ has overcome, and taken possession of his glorious inheritance above, so all who trust in him will overcome, and inherit all things. How inspiring is the sound! What scenes it presents! What grateful and enrapturing feelings it calls forth! And how the shouts of praise ascend! But what a painful and melancholy thing it is to trace the unbeliever and all the enemies of Christ into eternity, and to think of the awful doom which awaits them, when Christ will meet them in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them, as those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Reader, what is your hope and trust? To whom do you belong? With whom are you classed? There is no neutral ground. *He that is not for me, says Christ, is against me. And he that gathereth not with me, scattereth*

abroad, Luke xi, 33. Do you believe in Jesus? If so, how happy and secure are you! Your happiness is heartfelt. You know in whom you have believed. You have a burning consciousness of this on your spirit, and it fills you with peace and joy. It is substantial. Not like the happiness of the wicked which resembles the foam that covers the ocean in a storm, whilst a sea of bitterness rolls beneath. No; it is not empty and deceitful, but satisfying; it springs from God's pardoning mercy, sanctifying grace, and adopting love—a well-grounded hope of everlasting life through the alone merits of Jesus Christ, and an assurance of Jehovah's favour and blessing. These are the streams which make glad his spirit, and cause it to leap for joy.

And it is permanent. Uncertainty and mutability are inscribed on all earthly hopes, pleasures, and scenes; but not on those which are spiritual and heavenly in their nature. They are permanent and abiding like God himself. This is every where affirmed in God's holy word. They are spoken of as *a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth*, Luke xii, 33. They are set forth as *a kingdom which cannot be moved*, Heb. xii, 28. *An inherit-*

unce incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Peter i, 4. And a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, 2 Cor. v, 1. And it is confirmed by oaths, promises, and blood, Heb. vi, 17-19.

And the believer is not only happy but secure. Is he a partaker of the blessedness that is in Christ? His life is also bound up with His. He has, therefore, an arm around him which can never fail to uphold and protect him—an eye to watch over him which can never grow weary—and a goodness to enrich him which can never be exhausted. O Lord, who is like unto thee? *There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky, Deut. xxxiii, 26.* And who is like unto the believer? Concerning him it may be truly said, *The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them. Israel then shall dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heavens shall drop down dew, Deut. xxxiii, 27, 28.* Who would not seek the favour and friendship of Jehovah?

If, therefore, you do not believe in Jesus, we

invite you in the most affectionate and earnest manner to make him your hope and trust, that the tear of penitence on account of sin may gush from your eye, and stream down your cheek—the smile of love play around your countenance—hope spring up in your spirit, supporting all your expectations—meekness clothe your spirit—the fruits of the Spirit adorn your character and actions—energy, decision, patience, and perseverance mark and ennoble your course—and heaven's raptures and glories enwrap and entrance your soul, whilst life, thought, and being last, or immortality endures.

To Jesus, therefore, we commend you, and the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance amongst them that are sanctified through faith. Come to Jesus. Make him your hope and trust. And let the cross be your rallying point, boast, inspiration, and song.

“ There may you glory, there alone,
Thence will your comfort spring ;
The cross of Christ, the righteous One,
Does full salvation bring.

Friend ! glory in its power to save,
Its power to sanctify,
Its power to give beyond the grave
The palm of victory !

The cross ! the cross will bear you up
In all the ills of life :
The cross ! the cross will be your hope,
In nature's latest strife.

The cross will be upon your tongue,
As up to heaven you pass,
And then your everlasting song
Shall be, the cross ! the cross !¹³

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