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SKETCH
OF
ANTONIO BISHALLANY,

A SYRIAN OF MOUNT LEBANON.

BY REV. CHARLES WHITEHEAD.



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ANTONIO BISHALLANY,

A SYRIAN OF MOUNT LEBANON.

CHAPTER I.

ANTONIO BISHALLANY was born August 22, 1827, in the village of Salima, on mount Lebanon. This mountain is said to be three hundred miles in circumference, and its loftiest peak not less than ten thousand feet high; some parts of it being covered with perpetual snow. Its sides and the valleys lying between its various ridges are remarkable for their fertility, and abound in fruit and trees of beautiful shape and foliage. The almond-tree, the fig, the olive, the mulberry, and the vine grow luxuriantly, and yield their delicious products in abundance. Here also is seen a peculiar tree resembling somewhat

in appearance the apple-tree, though more bushy and thickset, with darker and longer leaves. It is called the kharub, and bears a pod which is used as a food for swine, and with which, it is said, the poor prodigal would have filled his belly. Here too grows the sycamore-tree, not the one which bears that name with us, commonly called the button-wood, but a tree bearing several crops of figs during the year, usually planted by the wayside, and easily climbed; so that Zaccheus found a convenient position among the branches of the sycamore, to wait for the passing crowd and catch a sight of the great Redeemer. Travellers speak too of groves of pines, the box, the fir-tree, and the myrtle—rich evergreens, that are pleasant to the eye, and give to the mountain its deep verdant tinge and velvet richness, when gazed upon with delight by those who visit the holy land and behold the goodly Lebanon.

The mountain is especially celebrated for its large and valuable cedars. But of these noble trees comparatively few remain. To them the psalmist compares the Christian. "The righteous shall flourish like the palm-

tree; he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon." The sacred Scriptures often speak of Lebanon. Some of Isaiah's most elegant imagery is derived from its scenery; and how must Moses have conceived of its beauteous aspect, when he prayed the Lord that he might be permitted to pass over Jordan, that he might "see the good land beyond, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."

A little village on this celebrated mountain was the birthplace and early home of Antonio. Here his young mind unfolded amid the boldest of nature's works, and acquired that vigor and independence of thought for which he was afterwards distinguished. And here, among flowers and trees and fruits, he gained the first conceptions of that great and benevolent God whom he so ardently loved when, in after-years, he beheld him in the light of revelation.

Antonio's father was a dresser of the vine and olive. The vine was extensively cultivated in Lebanon, and in other parts of Palestine. We read of the grapes of Eshcol, which the men who went to spy out the land of Canaan brought back; and as one cluster

was carried by two men on a staff, we presume it was very large, and that the grapes of that country attained an uncommon degree of perfection. The Saviour, when on earth, often drew his illustrations from the vine.

The wine it produced was also well known in the holy land, and furnished the scriptural writers an expressive figure by which to represent the rich provision of the gospel. Hence the prophet cries, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

What were the character and disposition of Antonio during his boyhood, the writer has no means of learning. He was probably of sprightly disposition, active in his movements, and possessing in a high degree the playfulness and ardor usually characteristic of that period of life. Not unlikely he often accompanied his father and brothers in their customary occupation, and either watched them as they prepared the soil or trained and pruned the vines, or aided them in the pleasing employment. And we may readily sup-

pose that he wandered occasionally among the hills, climbed the trees, and gathered the fruits that hung in ripening clusters in the vicinity of his home. At one time he might probably have been seen sitting beneath one of the tall cedars of his native forest, and at another standing upon a projecting rock, and looking out upon the blue Mediterranean, while its freshening breezes fanned his face and strengthened his opening manhood.

His parents were poor, but honest and industrious, and gained a humble subsistence by their daily toil. Although originally of Arab lineage, Antonio was not a Mussulman, but a devotee of the Maronite or Romish church, which in Syria contends with the Greek for supremacy, while both are in perpetual danger from the inroads of the Mohammedan pashas, who lord it over the mixed races that now occupy the glorious land of Palestine. Antonio's earliest recollections were of hard labor, scanty fare, and constant danger. First the ruling pasha, then his horde of underlings, and lastly the Romish priest, had to be paid their dues, legal or illegal. In this way the hard earn-

ings of Antonio's father were consumed, and his family kept in poverty.

How wonderful the purposes of divine grace! In this family, thus poor and oppressed by civil and ecclesiastical power, in the obscure recesses of an eastern mountain, where ignorance and superstition held their sway, and the members of that family were all in gloomy vassalage to a false religion—even there, amid circumstances so unfavorable to piety, God had his chosen child in the person of poor Antonio the Syrian Arab, who, though then himself a bigoted Maronite, was yet to be enlightened by the gospel, and become a faithful friend and advocate of the truth of Christianity. The Lord hath his hidden ones. Like the precious gem, they may now be imbedded in the gross material of earth, and their value be unknown; but in his own time He will apply the instruments of truth and grace, and so divest them of their outer covering of depraved habits, and so polish and brighten the inward graces of their hearts as to render them brilliant stones in his holy temple. Thus God illustrates his wisdom and grace, and makes manifest

that in the conversion of souls "it is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

Syria has always been occupied by different tribes, who have their different religions. Sectarian prejudices and animosities prevail between them, and often they become involved in civil war. The Moslems or Turks are the ruling class, and number eight hundred thousand. Besides these are the Greeks, the Armenians, the Nusairîyeh, the Maronites, and the Druzes, with other smaller tribes, making in all a population of more than 1,610,000. In addition to these are the Arabs, who roam over the deserts, the descendants of Ishmael of whom it was predicted, "He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."

The Maronites, with whom the Bishallany family were connected, were a numerous sect on mount Lebanon, comprising, it is said, between two and three hundred thousand souls. They derived their name from John Maro, an ecclesiastic who lived in the character of a monk in the famous convent of

Saint Maro, upon the borders of the Orontes. For some centuries this people were excluded from the Romish church, for holding the doctrines of a sect called Monothelites. But renouncing this heresy, they were reädmited in the year 1182 to the communion of the Roman church, and became again subject to the Pope. They have a patriarch who resides in the monastery of Cannubin, on mount Lebanon, and assumes the title of Patriarch of Antioch, and the name of Peter, as if desirous of being considered the successor of the apostle. Antonio could speak from his own experience of their exclusive and persecuting spirit, of the wall of separation existing between them and Protestant Christians, and of the impossibility of any Maronite renouncing his faith without incurring the severest anathemas.

The Druzes are about 100,000 in population, and live chiefly in villages in the higher parts of Lebanon. Their religion is a mixture of idolatry with fanciful speculation, transplanted from Egypt to Syria by Derazy, from whom the sect derived its name. The most celebrated of their sacred places is on

the top of a hill just above Hasbeiya. Druze Khulwehs, as their sacred places are called, have nothing of the appearance of places of worship, and are hardly distinguished from common dwelling-houses. Cleanliness, simplicity, and quiet are their distinguishing characteristics; and the visitor is received with a hospitality so urgent, that it is generally impossible, without absolute rudeness, to make even the shortest call without tasting something. Intoxicating drinks and tobacco, however, are never offered. These articles are banished from every Khulweh, and the initiated by their vow of initiation are the strictest teetotalers.

Between the Druzes and the Maronites, to whom the Bishallany family belonged, there existed a strong aversion, leading to occasional feuds and bloody conflicts. One cause of this ill-feeling was the circumstance of the Druzes of Wady et Teim having joined their brethren of Hauren in a rebellion against Ibrahim Pasha, the Turkish governor. The pasha called to his assistance the Christians of Lebanon: namely, those connected with the Greek church, and the Maronites.

A decisive battle was fought near Shiba, in which the Druzes were defeated. As a consequence, the old and celebrated Khulwehs were plundered; the sacred and secret adytum was entered, and the contents of several chests of books were scattered through the country and over the world. The Druzes of course were deeply exasperated by this treatment, and when they subsequently obtained the ascendancy, they made the Christians pay dearly for this trespass upon the rights and property of their neighbors. The governor disarmed the Christians; and then, backed by 1,800 Druzes, he exacted indemnities for what they had lost by plunder, and imposed a heavy fine upon all who had been known to take a book. The result is, says a missionary writer from whom we have derived these facts, a deep-seated enmity between the two sects, which has descended into the heart of every man, woman, and child.

The Bishallany family were destined to share in the infuriated vengeance of the Druzes; for however humble and inoffensive they were, nothing could shelter them from

the wrath of an enemy still burning with resentment. Like angry wolves, these bold and cruel mountaineers fixed their eyes upon this quiet little flock, and were eager for their prey.

In 1837, when Antonio was about ten years of age, the family were startled by the shouts of the enemy now rushing upon the premises with overpowering numbers. To resist was useless, and the only alternative was to escape for their lives. Terrified and dismayed, they forsook their home, and avoiding the murderous weapons of their bloodthirsty foes, they hastened to some place of security. In the meantime the Druzes set fire to their dwelling-house, and laid waste and destroyed the vineyard and olive gardens, which Antonio's father and brothers had so carefully cultivated, and on which they depended for a humble support.

Poor Antonio, how sad must have been his feelings when fleeing from the home of his childhood, where every tree and rock and gushing spring were endeared to him. How his heart must have sickened when, looking back, he beheld the little cottage

where he had played and enjoyed so many happy days enveloped in flames, and becoming a heap of smouldering ruins; and with what painful regret must he have thought of the vineyard and olive grounds which had kindly yielded their fruit as the reward of his father's toil, now trodden down and destroyed by the ruthless spoilers. Both to him and to the rest of the family, the disaster that had thus suddenly overtaken them must have seemed truly calamitous, and we cannot think of this exiled, fugitive, houseless family, and especially of the afflicted parents, hastening down the pathway of the mount, seeking a place of refuge and of rest, without emotions of sympathy and sorrow.

We often learn from experience and observation that things which appeared to be adverse and trying, turn to the highest advantage of those who are affected by them. There is a wise and gracious Providence that guides all events. Circumstances that seemed to be accidental, trials incurred through our own imprudence, or inflicted by the instrumentality of others, are controlled by the unseen hand of the Lord, who can bring

good out of evil. Men may persecute and injure the Christian, but as in the case of Joseph, while they meant it for evil, God meant it for good. A person may meet with reverse of fortune, be disappointed in the accomplishment of some design, and at the time most deeply lament the occurrence that seemed so unfavorable to his interest; but presently he is impelled by this very failure of his projected plans, to take a step that leads him to prosperity and happiness. A severe affliction comes upon him, but God sanctifies it to his spiritual advantage; a new course is given to the current of his thoughts and feelings; a new purpose of life is formed, and a field of usefulness and happiness is opened, of which he had formed no conception. A young man who has no serious thoughts of God, or of his own soul, volunteers in the service of his country. He is wounded in battle, and carried to a hospital. There he comes under Christian influences. A religious tract is placed in his hand, or a minister of Jesus speaks to him of Christ and the great salvation. The truth finds entrance into his heart. He accepts of offered mercy,

devotes himself to the service of God, and goes forth to live a new and holy life. A reckless son who profanes the Sabbath, never visits the house of God, or reads the sacred word, tired of the restraints of home, forsakes his father's house and embarks upon the ocean. The vessel is wrecked, and he is cast upon a foreign shore. There he finds a mission station, and taken kindly by the hand, is induced to go and listen to the gospel message. The Lord opens his heart. He repents and believes, and goes home at length to make his parents rejoice that this their son, who was dead, is alive again; that he who was lost, is found.

Thus it will be seen in the progress of this narrative, that the hand of God directed the trying events that befell Antonio; that he made the wrath of man to praise him, and caused this sudden calamity to be among the "all things" which work together for good to them who love God, and are the called according to his purpose.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER the Bishallany family fled from their home before the infuriated Druzes, they took refuge in a village on the Lebanon range, not far distant from the city of Beirut. About this time the father died, and the support of the remaining members of the household devolved on the elder brother. Their means of living being very limited, Antonio, not wishing to be a burden to his brothers, was anxious to obtain some situation in which he might be useful, and at the same time procure an honest livelihood. In the providence of God an opening was presented to him by the Italian consul at Beirut, who proposed employing him as his attendant. Antonio was pleased to accept the offer, and engaged with cheerfulness in this service. He was willing to employ his talents in any honest calling, and felt it to be no degradation to serve in a capacity in which

he could secure some remuneration without doing violence to his conscience. He was a youth of high-toned feeling and lofty aspirations, and would gladly have acceded to some more advantageous proposal; but the present position being placed within his reach, and being in circumstances of need, he availed himself of a berth which proved to be both pleasant and useful. He was faithful and diligent in the performance of his duties, ever active and obliging, and by his general good conduct gained the confidence and kind feeling of the consul, whom he accompanied to Smyrna and to different islands of the Mediterranean.

Beirut is an ancient city, and was from an early date a place of importance. It became a Roman colony in the reign of Augustus. Agrippa adorned and beautified it with colonnades, porticos, theatres, and other public buildings, the remains of which are entombed beneath the rubbish of the ancient city, or lie at the bottom of the sea in front of the town. Christianity was early planted there, and churches flourished. It was also a seat of learning, and its law school was resorted

to by youth of the first families. In the year 551 it was visited by an awful earthquake, which overthrew its churches, temples, and palaces, and buried vast multitudes beneath their ruins. The city was rebuilt, and though it never regained its former magnificence, yet within the last thirty years it has attained a large population, and become distinguished for its wealth and commerce. Its population since 1830 has grown from five to forty thousand. At that period there was scarcely a decent house outside of the walls; now two thirds of the population reside in the gardens, which with hundreds of convenient dwellings, and not a few noble mansions, adorn the charming suburbs. European merchants have selected it for the seat of their operations; and as the foreign consuls settled in this city, the government was led to make it the capital of the country.

Beirut is the seat of Christian missionary operations. Many years since, the American Board selected this metropolis of Syria as the centre of religious light and influence. They planted there the standard of the gospel, and men of talents and piety have long

been occupied in preaching the word, translating the Scriptures, instructing the young, and thus bringing the truth to bear upon the ignorance, superstition, and vice of this benighted country. How affecting it is that Syria and Palestine, where the Redeemer lived and taught in the streets, and where the apostles proclaimed the news of salvation and planted churches, and where Christianity gained its earliest and noblest triumphs, should have sunk into darkness, have their candlestick removed from its place, and be trodden down by Turkish tyranny, and deluded by the errors and superstitions of false religions. And yet, again, how interesting that the light of the gospel, which originally emanated from the East, and in the progress of years shed its illuminating rays upon the western world, should now return from this favored land to enlighten and bless those who once enjoyed the light, but are now sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.

The providences which brought Antonio to Beirut at the age of fourteen, brought him also within the reach of missionary influ-

ence. We know not whether he frequented any of the places where the missionaries gave instruction, or held intercourse with any one of these devoted servants of Christ; but he came within reach of THE BIBLE, that holy book, whose blessed pages these Christian laborers had translated into the Syrian tongue, and which now could intelligibly convey to the minds of Jews and Turks, Arabs and Maronites, the way of salvation by Jesus Christ. And as this holy book was destined to exert a remarkable influence on the heart and life of Antonio, its discovery and subsequent perusal, as well as the circumstances that led to this result, were so many links in the chain by which the Lord guided this interesting youth in the way of truth, safety, and happiness.

On a Sabbath several years later, as Antonio was walking through the streets of Beirut, he met a person offering for sale Bibles in the Arabic language, and published by the British and Foreign Bible Society. He inquired the price, and was answered, Fifty cents. The lowness of the price measured to him the value of the book. He compared

it in his mind with a copy of the Arabian Nights, which he possessed, and for which he paid the sum of ten dollars. He went away in disgust, thinking that a book that could be bought at so small a price must be of very little value. But Antonio's interest in that blessed volume was not to terminate here. His curiosity was awakened; his thoughts were occupied by that book; he longed to know its contents. At length yielding to the impulses of his heart, he went in search of the Bible-seller, and secretly purchased a copy. He knew it was a prohibited volume; that the authorities of the church would not allow him to read it; and if it were discovered that he had been guilty of so great an offence, he would be visited with a severe penalty. But he could not understand why the Bible should be prohibited, and yet other books, that were impure and injurious in their tendency, should be allowed. He was curious to ascertain whether it contained worse words than the Arabian Nights; the priests of his church—the Maronite—permitting the reading of the one, and forbidding the perusal of the other. This work, he remarked, is

extremely immoral far beyond any conception we can form from our translations "Surely," he said to himself, "the Bible cannot be worse than the Arabian Nights."

Let it be observed that Antonio could read the Arabic language. At an early period when at home he manifested a strong desire for knowledge, and in some manner, probably from one of the priests, learned to read and write: no mean acquirement in a country where it is the policy of the rulers, lay and clerical, to keep the people in ignorance. Familiar therefore with his native tongue, he found no difficulty in reading the Scriptures in Arabic.

Entering upon their perusal, he soon came to passages he could not reconcile with the doctrines and practices of the Romish church. "Now," said he to himself, "I know why the priest does not wish me to read the Bible. It is contrary to the church; it condemns the church." But as he thought the church infallible, he concluded that whatever was inconsistent with it must be wrong. He had been brought up under the impression that the Bible is to be tested by the church, and

not the church by the Bible. Thus impressed, when he came to the twentieth chapter of Exodus, and read, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, nor any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, . . . thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them," his rage burst all bounds, and he tossed the book from him in indignation. It was at variance with the practice of the Maronite church, to which he had been trained from childhood. He regarded it as a fable, and resolved to commit it to the flames. But pausing a moment, he said to himself, It will cost me but little time to destroy this volume, but how great must have been the time and labor which it cost to make it. Arrested by this thought, he relinquished his purpose, and renewed his readings, determined to know what it did contain. Frequently he would throw down the book, and with all the impetuosity of his eastern nature, reproach and utter maledictions against the deceivers that published it as the word of God. Sometimes he would go for days without looking at it, but always found reason for returning for another

inspection. The subject pressed upon his mind, and he found himself unable to keep his thoughts from it.

Was this the true Bible? Had he been deceived? How should he find out whether it was true or not? Thus he meditated and reasoned with himself. At length the thought occurred to him, that if he could compare with this the church's authenticated version, then he could satisfy himself. Forthwith he went to the priest, and requested the loan of a Bible. "And what," said the priest, "do you want with the Bible? You have no business with the Bible." "But I only want it a short time; I will bring it back to you again." His request was granted. "And now," thought Antonio, "I will find out if this is an honest and true Bible." He sat down and diligently compared the two together. He found them substantially alike. The passages that he thought taught heresy in the one, he found just the same in the other. He turned from passage to passage, and still they agreed. He closed the book. "Now," said he, "I know why the priests do not wish us to read the Bible; it is because the Bible condemns

the church, even the Bible they admit to be authentic." The power of the priest with him was broken. He would no more go to confession; he refused to attend mass; he no longer believed in transubstantiation nor in worshipping images, or the Virgin Mary or the crucifix. One by one he took the doctrines of his church, examined them by the light of God's word, and became convinced that they were wrong. Then he became an infidel, and did not believe any thing; but all the while God's good Spirit kept him drinking at the fountain.

The Bible became the subject of constant reflection and study. During the first year he read the sacred volume twice through, and each time he opened its heavenly pages fresh light seemed to break in upon his understanding. It taught him new truths, truths which he could not fully comprehend. It shook his confidence in the rites of his church, and the teachings of his priests. He planned another perusal; he laid out a year for it; he collated passage with passage.

To ascertain Christ, who seemed to him to be so variously represented as to make it un-

certain whether he was an individual or not, he took pen and paper, and beginning with Genesis, he wrote out every passage under specific heads, which heads were the various representations of Christ as God, Man, Prophet, Priest, King, Lamb, etc. "His object," he stated, "was to get both a logical and numerical evidence of who Christ was." This study brought him to a belief in the divinity of Christ, and in the Trinity in unity of the godhead. He formed a body of theology for himself—a pure Bible theology; he embraced the whole system of evangelical truth, and became not simply a theoretical believer, but an experimental Christian.

The truths he learned in the word of God were received in faith, and applied to the heart by the Holy Spirit. That Saviour, whom he discovered to be the chief theme of the Bible, became revealed to him as his Redeemer from sin and death; and spiritually enlightened in the knowledge of his person, he was led to exclaim, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ." Jesus became the supreme object of his affections, and the source of his

greatest joy. He rested on him with all the simplicity and confidence of a little child, believed his promises, rejoiced in the hope of his forgiving mercy, and devoted all the energies of his soul to his service. He became a cheerful, happy Christian. His heart swelled with gratitude to God for the wonderful providence that had directed his steps; for his deliverance from papal darkness, and his introduction into the light and liberty of the Protestant faith; for having placed the Bible within his reach, and so blessed the reading of it to his soul as to cause him to be born again through the incorruptible seed of the word. He felt that he was brought into a new world, every object of which filled him with wonder, love, and praise. He was no longer a poor outcast, but a fellow-citizen of the saints and of the household of God. God was his Father, Christ his Saviour and Elder Brother, the Holy Spirit his Sanctifier and Comforter, and heaven his everlasting home. Privileges and hopes so precious filled him with joy.

What a striking illustration is here furnished of the power of the Bible in illumi-

nating and converting the soul. Here is a young man reared amid the deepest gloom of ignorance and superstition. He met with a copy of the sacred Scriptures. Without any one to guide him or explain the different passages, or any commentary to aid him in ascertaining its meaning, he simply applied himself to its study with that energy and perseverance which an ardent desire for the truth naturally prompted. He felt his need of divine assistance, and implored the Lord to open his eyes, that he might behold wondrous things out of his law. God, who has said, "The meek he will guide in judgment; the meek will he teach his way," revealed to this humble and anxious inquirer the mind of the Spirit. As he proceeded in his investigations, he beheld at each step the evidences of the Bible being the word of God. He discovered in it doctrines so sublime, precepts so holy, promises so consoling, and a provision of grace through Christ Jesus so adapted to his wants, that he knew it was God who spoke through the written word, and that "holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

With this conviction he approached the sacred volume with reverence, and with the assurance that in its blessed pages were to be found the truths of salvation. Those truths he sought with indefatigable diligence. He regarded the Bible as a rich mine of wealth, where valuable treasures were concealed, and he who would obtain them must dig for them as for silver and for choice gold. He thus by untiring effort searched the Scriptures, and labored to find the priceless gems lying beneath the surface. And his toil was not in vain. Observing that Christ was the prominent personage spoken of in the Bible, he first endeavored to ascertain who he was, and in doing so was gradually led to the knowledge of the true God existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. He learned the way of access to God through Jesus Christ. He found that pardon and eternal life were to be obtained by faith in that divine Saviour, and that sinful men were invited to come to Christ, to believe, and to be saved; he discovered that the Holy Spirit performed a work upon the heart, renewing and sanctifying it, and bringing it to repent

and believe in Jesus. And he ascertained that a sinner thus coming to and accepting an offered Saviour, was adopted into the family of God; was invested with all the privileges and comforts of a child; had precious promises to lean upon; was surrounded with the care and protection of the Lord; was sustained by his providence, comforted in trial, supported in death, and at last admitted into heaven to live for ever in perfect purity and blessedness with Christ and all his redeemed people.

Thus he became theoretically acquainted with the system of revealed truth, and recognized it as the truth of the living God. But he learned still more. There is a knowledge of the head; and there is a knowledge of the heart, consisting in an experimental sense of the beauty and excellence of divine things. A man may have the former and yet be in spiritual ignorance, not knowing the grace of Christ in the heart. He may be versed in all the doctrines of the Scriptures, and capable of explaining and defending them with intelligence and force, but yet may have no personal interest in Christ, and no perception of the glory of his person or the

worth of his redemption. Antonio felt the power of truth upon his soul: the Saviour was revealed to him as *his* Saviour; he put forth the exercise of a living faith, and obtained a personal interest in Christ; he discovered an adaptation in the Lord Jesus to his wants as a guilty and polluted sinner, and he accepted him as the Lord his righteousness and strength. And now he had more than a speculative acquaintance with him, he had that knowledge of which it is said, "This is life eternal, to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." His knowledge of him was of the heart. He loved him, delighted in him, and could say, "He is the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely."

Thus "the entrance of thy word giveth light, it giveth understanding to the simple." "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments of the Lord are true

and righteous altogether: more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb."

Love for the Bible was now the ruling passion of this young Syrian convert. He was fond of reading, but all other books lost their attraction after he had once entered into the spirit of these living oracles of God. In them he read of things divine and eternal, things pertaining to the adorable Jehovah, the almighty Saviour, the immortal soul, the glories of the invisible and future world. "It was his delight," says one who knew him, "to retire under the shade of some tall cedar, and pore over the poetry of the Psalms, the wisdom of Solomon, the Lamentations of Jeremiah, and the wonders of the Pentateuch. To a mind like his, inquisitive, bold, and ardent, and governed by reason of a superior order, this book was like a never-failing fountain. Previously he had read with wonder and amusement the Arabian Nights' Entertainment; but when he procured a copy of 'the way of life,' the patriarchs and the prophets of the Old Testament usurped the place in his mind formerly occupied by the caliphs and the viziers.

Strange as it may appear, he paid no attention whatever in the beginning to the gospels or the epistles. However, as he himself repeatedly remarked afterwards, when once the grand truths of the Saviour dawned upon his mind, it appeared as if he had been suddenly born into a new and spiritual life. The prophecies, which he knew by rote, seemed to him but the echo; this was the awful yet cheering voice of God proclaiming the way of salvation to a lost and guilty world."

The period was now at hand when the faith of Antonio in his precious Bible and his love to Christ were to be put to the test. It is easy to adhere to Christianity and be the faithful advocates of the Saviour and his word when religion is popular—when we are sustained by the smiles of friends, and the path of piety is strewn with flowers. But when the spirit of persecution arises, and we cannot openly avow our principles without incurring the prejudices and animosity of men, and sacrificing even the kind feelings of our dearest relations; when our fealty to Christ exposes us to the sneers and reproaches of the world, or it may be to pains and im-

prisonment, then it is that our faith is tried, and great grace is needed to enable us to endure suffering for Christ's sake, and prove that we are not ashamed of him and of his cross. The Saviour has said, "Marvel not if the world hate you; you know it hated me before it hated you." Christians in different ages have experienced the truth of their Master's words, and thousands of his humble followers have, for conscience' sake, and for the sake of Christ and his truth, endured the loss of all things, and even laid down their lives for Him who died, that they, whether living or dying, might be the Lord's.

When this interesting young man had occupied about three years in the secret perusal and study of the Scriptures, and his convictions of truth had settled down into established principles—when he had actually given his heart to Christ, and felt that subjection to human authority must yield to a higher obligation if that subjection came in conflict with his duty to the Saviour, then he became more open in the manifestation of his newly imbibed religious sentiments. He would occasionally express his opinion on some scriptu-

ral doctrine, or make an inquiry respecting the practices and ceremonies of the sect to which he had belonged, or utter a remark on the wickedness of depriving the people of the Bible. He also often absented himself from the Maronite church; and when he attended their place of worship, he omitted on entering to sprinkle upon himself the holy water and make upon his breast the sign of the cross. In these and various ways he exhibited a disposition to forsake the religion of his youth.

At length these things were either noticed by the priest or were reported to him by some emissary who was pleased with the opportunity of involving Antonio in trouble. The priest at once cited Antonio to come before him, and used every effort to convince him of his wickedness in thus neglecting his obligations to the church of his fathers. I have not been able to learn what were the questions and replies on this occasion, but the fact was clear that God used the weak things of this world to confound the wise and mighty. The Lord was with his humble and faithful servant, and enabled him to make a

good confession, and to declare with boldness his love to the word of God on which he had placed his hope. He probably stated with frankness that he had in his possession a copy of the Scriptures, and that he had been engaged in searching them; that he had learned from them many things of which he before had been ignorant, and was led by them to see many errors in the faith and practice of the church in which he had been educated. Such statements must have been highly offensive to the priest, who no doubt condemned and censured Antonio with great severity, and said every thing he could in the way of persuasion and denunciation to lead him to repent and change his course. Several other examinations took place before different grades of ecclesiastics, each one being, it is presumed, increasingly rigid and threatening. But Antonio's faith failed not. He knew whom he had believed, and was persuaded that He was able to keep that which he had committed to him. After receiving a solemn warning as to his future conduct, he was dismissed, and returned to his customary avocations.

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Instead of being daunted by this experience of priestly domination over the liberty of conscience, Antonio became more resolute in acting according to his convictions of duty. His heart glowed with benevolence towards his fellow-countrymen. He pitied their ignorant and degraded condition, and wished to communicate the things that he had learned. As Andrew, when he had found the Saviour, went and brought his brother Simon to Jesus, and as Philip said to Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses and the prophets did write, come and see;" so this Syrian convert, having by the reading of Moses and the prophets learned of Jesus Christ, desired his brethren to come and see this gracious and glorious Saviour, and receive from him the same blessings he had himself experienced. He had been reading the Bible, the revelation of God to men, and had beheld wondrous things which before had been kept from his knowledge. That book had opened the eyes of his understanding, broken the chains of superstition and sin, renovated his heart, filled him with love to Christ, and awakened the hope of forgive-

ness through his sufferings and death. It had taught him that no acts of penance or works of righteousness or religious observances could justify him before God, but that "the just shall live by faith;" that the merits of Christ are our only plea, and he that believeth is justified only through the righteousness of the Redeemer. Following the guidance of this holy volume, he had believed; and now being justified by faith, he had peace with God through his Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. A book that had brought such glad tidings to him, and wrought an entire change in him, and opened to him the highest sources of joy, was not to be confined to himself. He must go and tell his friends and neighbors of the priceless treasure.

Under the impulse of this desire, he was one evening explaining some truths which he had learned to a fellow-countryman in one of the streets of Beirut, his mind no doubt absorbed in the subject and not apprehensive of danger. It so occurred that at that moment a merchant from Aleppo was passing. Attracted by the earnest manner of Antonio, he paused and listened; and being

in all probability a papist himself, and solemnly sworn to give information of any who swerved from the faith and practice of the church, he turned away with indignation and hastened to report the case to the ecclesiastical authorities. Antonio on that very night was arrested and thrown into prison. Although his heart was sustained by the comforts of the gospel, yet he had a dread of being seized and confined in a loathsome dungeon, it being understood that an uncle, who had once displeased the ecclesiastical rulers, was long thus confined, no one daring to interfere or even supply his necessities, through fear of anathemas or punishment. Priestly power in that country bows to none other. It binds the people with a rod which they dare not even bend, and are much less able to break.

In due time Antonio was arraigned before the highest dignitary of the church, who with subordinate priests and rulers formed a court for the trial and adjudication of those accused of heresy. It was a critical position for poor Antonio. Here he stood with none to advocate his cause, without money or influ-

ence to control the decision of his judges, and at the mercy of men who in all ages have been known to pass the most cruel and bloody sentences upon those who presume to differ from them in opinion, or set up their private judgment against the church.

Unprotected and defenceless as Antonio appeared to be, yet another remarkable providence was here revealed which turned to our young friend's advantage. Strange as it may appear, a member of the court, on whose decision the liberty and life of Antonio were now suspended, was a personal friend, and felt concerned for his welfare. Embracing a suitable opportunity before the trial, he privately warned Antonio that when he appeared before the court he must not say a word, but keep perfectly silent; for if he made any reply to the questions put to him, or said any thing in his defence, however harmless it might be, it would be distorted to his disadvantage. Antonio observed this friendly and wise caution. In doing so he had the example of his divine Master, who when arraigned before Pilate and accused by the chief priests and elders, "answered noth-

ing." And when Pilate asked, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee? "he answered him to never a word." Thus this humble and faithful disciple of Jesus, when brought before the priests and elders of a church who persecuted Christ in the person of his little one, answered not a word. To all their questions and accusations he made no reply, but kept profoundly silent. What precisely was said to him we know not; but as the merchant from Aleppo had reported his having heard Antonio explaining the truths of the Bible, and as this was the cause of his arrest, it is to be presumed that his reading the Scriptures and teaching them to others were the principal points on which he was interrogated. He probably was told that the Bible was designed for the priests, and not for the people; that it was dangerous for a man to read it, especially an unlearned man, and that by doing so he was dishonoring the church, which was the only authorized interpreter of the Bible; that in teaching others the truths of this book, he was committing a double sin, and exposing both himself and others to severe penance, if not

to excommunication and final destruction. The bishop and priests probably accused him of his neglect of the rites and observances of the church, and warned him of the danger of becoming a final apostate, and being for ever cursed of God for his awful wickedness in renouncing the true faith and becoming an advocate of damnable error.

Having portrayed his sins in all their atrocity, these indignant ecclesiastics no doubt uttered their terrible denunciations, declaring the unpardonable nature of the offence he was committing, if unrepented of and not humbly confessed, and the terrible anathemas that would rest upon him for ever. And on the other hand, with kind and gentle words they endeavored to dissuade him from the ruinous course he was pursuing, and by appeals to his obligation and gratitude to the religion in which he had been reared—to his desire for peace and salvation, which were to be found in the church of his fathers, and nowhere else—to his regard for his parents, who would grieve at heart over his spiritual defection—and to his love for his own soul, whose hopes depended upon

his adherence to the true faith, they labored to subdue his feelings, and induce him to recant whatever he had said inconsistent with the teachings of the church, and return again to her bosom as a true and loving child to his faithful and holy mother. Above all, they doubtless entreated him to discard for ever that Bible which had operated so injuriously upon his mind and conduct, weakening his faith in the rites and doctrines of the church, and leading him into destructive errors. And with solemn words and authoritative manner they no doubt commanded him, as the Jewish priest and scribes and rulers commanded Peter and John, "not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus."

Antonio kept silent, according to the instruction of his friend; but we can readily surmise what were the thoughts of his heart, and that if he had deemed it wise to speak in reply, he would have said with Peter and John, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Antonio loved the precious Bible; he felt its saving power upon his heart, and he longed to tell it to his poor benighted brethren, and make known to them the name of Jesus. He could have said with the prophet, "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary of forbearing, and I could not stay." Antonio was not unmindful of the powers that be. He wished to obey all proper laws, and to pay deference to the constituted rulers of both church and state; but he also recognized his obligations and responsibility to a higher authority than any earthly court, and a higher law than any human code. And when the commands and prohibitions of the bishop and priests came in conflict with his duty to his divine Lord and Master, he did not hesitate which to obey. He obeyed God rather than men, and with holy boldness both read the Bible himself and taught it to individuals or collected groups in the streets of the city.

The court before whom Antonio had been standing a silent culprit, having exhausted all its powers in vain—having persuaded and threatened, commanded and reasoned with-

out producing any change in the mind of the prisoner at the bar, openly declared him to be a heretic. As such, he would have been doomed to the punishment usually inflicted upon those convicted of this aggravated crime, had it not been for the influence of the kind friend in some way associated with the court. This secret but faithful friend interposed in his behalf; perhaps offered some apology, or referred to some palliating circumstances. Whatever means he used, he was successful in controlling the minds of the judges, and effectually averting the blow that Antonio supposed would inevitably have crushed him. Antonio was released from the arraignment and set at liberty.

Thus the angel of the Lord was sent to deliver his faithful young servant. Like Daniel, he feared God rather than man, and did not desist from duty, though commanded to do so; and God honored him by restraining the power of the lions, and rescuing him from their jaws.

What an instance of God's wonder-working providence is here seen, in the agency of the person who so kindly and efficiently befriend-

ed Antonio. It was God who formed this curious and beautiful link in the chain of Antonio's history. It was God whose wisdom planned that one of those in whose hands Antonio's life and happiness were placed should be his friend, and that his advice should overrule the decisions of the court, and secure Antonio's liberty. Solomon says there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother. He was such a friend who, while near relatives were wanting in sympathy, was exerting his influence for the one he loved, when that one was in danger and trial.

So when the Christian shall be arraigned at the bar of judgment, He who will be his Judge and will decide his case, will be his Friend and Advocate, and by the plea He will present, will secure his acquittal and acceptance.

It is gratifying to reflect upon the Christian faith and patience of this young disciple, who, not knowing what should befall him, was resigned and submissive to the will of God—rejoicing in being found worthy to suffer for Christ's sake. With meekness he

stood before his accusers, and returned no angry or resentful word. When reviled, he reviled not again; when persecuted, he answered not, but committed himself unto Him who judgeth righteously. Like Jesus, he was led as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. Here was the faith and the patience of one of the saints of God. It was a present Jesus who cheered him by his smiles, and who whispered to him, "Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Antonio had cause of gratitude to God for preserving him from the excruciating sufferings which have been inflicted by tyrannical power upon its helpless victims. That he was not doomed, like his worthy fellow-countryman Assaad Shidiak, to perpetual confinement in some gloomy dungeon, that he was not subjected to cruel tortures, or was not sentenced to be consumed on a slow fire, or have his limbs torn from his body, was a ground of thankfulness.

But though a kind Providence rescued him from these sufferings, and he was restored to liberty with the simple charge of heresy resting upon him, Antonio's trials were not terminated. The name of heretic, attached to one who has belonged to the Romish communion, fixes an indelible stigma upon his character. It separates him from the church. It subjects him to the hostility of all who are true in their allegiance to the Catholic faith. It intercepts all intercourse between him and his nearest relatives and friends, and induces them to abandon him, as one given over to the devil and accursed of God.

Antonio having been released hastened at once to his home, not thinking but he would receive a joyous welcome, as he was wont when he occasionally visited his beloved relatives. But how changed were the countenance and manners of his beloved friends. A messenger had preceded him, and spread the news of his defection and incurable heresy. His mother, who was accustomed to clasp him in her arms and impress upon his cheek the kiss of affection, now closed the door in his face, as he sought to enter, and

would not look upon him or say one kind word. His brothers, in whose company he had found so much pleasure in other days, were not allowed to see him. Their mother sorrowfully gave him over to Satan; but was resolved that the other sheep of her fold should not be contaminated and carried away with him. His acquaintances and neighbors scoffed at him as vile and detestable, and with lifted hands and averted faces expressed their unwillingness to recognize him. He was excommunicated—an outcast. “He had no mother, nor brother, nor friend, nor home, nor shelter, nor food, nor help in all his native land. He stood beneath his native cedars a stranger among the mountains of Lebanon, homeless and friendless because he read and believed God’s word. Finding he was not to gain entrance to the house or be considered as a member of the family, he felt reluctant to go away without at least receiving a parting word from that dear mother, towards whom a child so naturally looks for the expression of love. But no; even a last kind look and the tender farewell were denied him. Dejected and sad, poor Antonio

now left the place and wandered his lonely way towards Beirut. But he was not without comfort. He carried his cherished Bible with him, and opening its pages, he read that his Master was persecuted, and that if a man were not willing to forsake father and mother, houses and lands, for the kingdom of heaven's sake, he could not be his disciple. He felt honored in being a partaker of Christ's sufferings, and being called to walk in the path consecrated by the steps of his divine Lord and Master; and having given the required evidence of discipleship, he rejoiced in the hope that he would also share in the glory of the Saviour—that having borne the cross, he would wear the crown, and dwell with those who came out of great tribulation, and who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

Antonio's offence which subjected him to the trials above narrated, consisted in reading the Bible and communicating its truths to others. And what sin was there in so doing? The church of Rome, it is true, prohibits the people from reading the Scriptures, and the council of Trent declares it to be an

unpardonable sin. But is not the Bible a revelation of God's will to men, and are men to be prohibited from reading the communication he has made to them? The truths it contains are adapted to the condition and wants of men, and have a bearing upon the welfare of the whole human race. As all men have a personal interest therefore in the Scriptures, they ought to be used and studied by the people.

How did our Saviour and his apostles speak on this subject? Christ did not forbid the people's reading the Bible, but on the contrary enforced the duty of studying it. "Search the Scriptures," said he; "for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me."

The very design of the written word is the edification and comfort of Christians, and the admonition and conversion of sinners. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God"—not the priest or minister alone, but every believer—"may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good

works." This blessed book is a precious letter addressed by the wise and gracious Governor of the world, our Creator, Redeemer, and Judge, to mankind. And shall they not be permitted to read the epistle which God hath sent to them? Must the letter that hath come from our heavenly Father to his children remain sealed, and those children be kept in ignorance of its contents? How explicit is Paul in his epistle to the Christians at Rome: "Whatsoever things were written beforetime were written for our learning"—and the most important learning in the world, namely—"that we all, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope." For *our* learning, mine and yours, ye people of Rome, tent-makers, artificers, men, women, and children, old and young—for our good were these doctrines, precepts, promises, and historical lessons written, that our faith, patience, and hope, and every virtue, might grow and abound.

When God gives truth by inspiration, and appoints it to be profitable to conviction, to conversion, and instruction in righteousness, that men may be led to the Saviour, and be-

lievers furnished unto every good word and work, what audacity, what wickedness, for any man to interpose and hinder the gracious design of the Almighty, and that by a law, and under a curse!

Persecution broke out in Egypt in the early part of the third century, under the iron sceptre of the emperor Severus. It was spreading devastation over the church, and many who loved their Bibles and loved the Saviour were sacrificed as martyrs to the faith of the gospel. A young man sixteen years of age, seeing his father seized by a band of soldiers, implored them to release him; but in vain. The aged Leonidas was thrown into a dungeon. The young man was to appear himself before the heathen tribunal. He would confess the Saviour, and offer his life to those who had murdered his brother and were now about to shed the blood of his beloved parent. His heart-broken mother clasped him in her arms, and seeing him about to escape, she carried away his toga and tunic, and hid her son's garments, that she might save his life. Then the young man, seeing he could not share the

fate of his father, exclaimed, "At least do not abandon, for our sakes, the name of our Lord Jesus." Leonidas died a martyr's death, leaving his wife a widow, his son without a protector, and six other children very young.

This young man became a minister; he rose to the chair of Clement, and if Clement, says D'Aubigné, instructed a thousand, the son of Leonidas instructed ten thousand. He was no other than the distinguished *Origen*, A. D. 220. Addressing one of his own children, he says, "My son, read above all with deep attention the holy word of God. I say, with deep attention, for this is requisite, in order to speak and judge of it without precipitation. If you persevere in the reading of the Bible with a fixed mind, and with faith knock, whatever is shut will be opened to you by the Porter of whom Jesus speaks in the gospel of John." Like the son of Leonidas, Antonio Bishallany loved the Bible and read it, and commended it to his friends and countrymen. He no doubt had read in his Bible the case of Daniel, who, when required by a decree of king Darius to refrain

from offering any petition to any god or man, except to the king himself, regarded his obligations to the King of kings superior to the royal mandate, and three times a day prayed and gave thanks before his God. And he had also read the story of the three young men who, when required by the decree of king Nebuchadnezzar to bow down to and worship the golden image, refused to obey a command so directly in conflict with the law of God. And Antonio was no doubt confirmed in his convictions of duty, and strengthened in his purposes of obeying God rather than man, by these interesting examples. As Daniel was not afraid of the lions' den, and as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not terrified by the fiery furnace, but would rather suffer agony and death than violate their consciences and sin against God, so Antonio was willing to incur the indignation of priests, and the displeasure of his family and friends, and whatever suffering might be inflicted upon him, rather than act in opposition to his convictions of duty, and offend that glorious Being whom he revered and loved.

However painful the treatment Antonio received from the rulers of the church and his relatives and neighbors—however strong the aversion and hostility awakened against him—he could not have been surprised, for he knew that the same exclusive and intolerant spirit once dwelt in him. While he was in the employment of the Italian consul, he was a bigoted Maronite Catholic, and relates that upon one occasion he violently closed the door upon a converted Romanist, and vigorously and harshly denounced his unfaithfulness. Referring to his conduct and condition, he would say that “he was as bad as the worst of them.” Had occasion been presented, he would have joined in the opposition of his sect against all who presumed to differ from him in opinion, and been ready, like Paul, to persecute the church, and carry men and women to prison. But with Paul he had now obtained mercy, and experienced a wonderful change through the grace of God. A great light had shone upon him. The love of Christ had taken possession of his heart, and he had learned to love all, of whatever name, who loved the Lord Jesus

in sincerity and truth. His sectarianism had given way to a universal benevolence. He did not limit the existence of piety to any particular church, but was ready to recognize and admire it, under whatever external form it appeared. Discovering that freedom of thought, of opinion, of conscience, and of speech were enjoyed among Protestants—that among them the Bible was an open book, accessible to all the people, and that encouragement was given by them to the dissemination of light and knowledge, he was naturally led to identify himself with them, and become, in sympathy and affection, in faith and practice, a sincere and humble, a steadfast and faithful Protestant Christian.

CHAPTER III.

AFTER Antonio's banishment from his father's house, he was thrown upon his own resources. His services with the Italian consul for a while furnished him a comfortable and pleasant means of living; but having for some cause relinquished this position, he was obliged to seek other employment. Ready to engage in any honest occupation, however humble, he became, in 1850, a dragoman or guide to travellers. The word dragoman properly means an interpreter. But one serving in this capacity in eastern countries, provides horses, or mules, or camels, for the conveyance of travellers, furnishes tents and provision for their accommodation on the journey, selects the best route, and adopts every means to secure the safety and comfort of those by whom he is employed. Antonio was active in his new profession, and skilful in the various duties required; and by his obliging disposition and affable manners,

contributed greatly to the pleasure of the company committed to his care and guidance. He once accompanied an English gentleman to Alexandria, in Egypt, and thence a party up the Nile; and often served as a guide to travellers from the United States on their journeys through Syria and the Holy Land.

During this period a great thought was awakened in his mind, a noble and benevolent desire began to swell his heart. Love to the Saviour, and love to the souls of men, became the controlling principles of his character; and reflecting upon the question, how he could most effectually honor the Saviour and save perishing men, he conceived the idea of becoming a missionary, and desired to go forth as an authorized messenger of the gospel, to proclaim the news of salvation to a benighted world. The desire to do good to others is the natural effect of piety; but it may be that certain circumstances contributed to turn the feelings of Antonio in this direction. Probably his different and extended tours as dragoman, giving him an opportunity of seeing the wide fields of moral destitution, and the multitudes who needed

the bread of life, tended to call forth his compassion; and perhaps his frequent observation of the missionaries in Syria, and the good work in which they were engaged, created a desire to be occupied in the same holy calling. Whatever suggested the thought, it was one he cherished with peculiar ardor. He beheld millions around him, living in ignorance of evangelical truth, deluded by a false religion, and going on to death without a preparation to meet their God; and he was ready to say, "Woe is me, if I preach not the gospel," and do not seek to rescue from ruin a dying race, and especially my kinsmen according to the flesh.

As a preparatory step towards carrying out his purpose, he purchased a book containing sentences in Arabic with the English translation. This work he studied attentively, in order to become capable of reading and speaking the English language; for he had discovered from travellers and other sources, that an acquaintance with our language would be of essential benefit to him, both in the acquisition of knowledge and in communicating instruction to others.

He had heard by some means of a school on the island of Malta, where pious youth were gratuitously educated and prepared for the missionary work, and he at once applied to secure the advantages thus offered. But he met with disappointment. For some reason he failed to gain admission to the institution. Deeply lamenting his want of success, but not weakened in purpose or discouraged, for he had strong faith in God and believed some way would be opened in His providence by which the desire of his heart would be attained, he resumed his occupation as dragoman, and for some time officiated as the guide and social attendant of persons who went from this and other countries to visit that land so associated with sacred memories, the land familiarized by our scriptural readings, where the gospel was first proclaimed, and where the divine Redeemer lived and died. The acquaintance which Antonio formed with these different travellers, being in general gentlemen of intelligence and reputation, must have contributed much to his improvement both in mind and manners. And it is not unlikely that his in-

tercourse with travellers from America had an influence in controlling his determination for the future; for it seems he now directed his own thoughts to this country, and expressed a desire to come to the United States, hoping that greater facilities might be enjoyed in obtaining an education. He thought also of this country as the country from which the good missionaries had come, and he wished to see the land where the Spirit of Christ so prevailed.

Among the travellers in Syria who became acquainted with the subject of this biography, was a well-known and intelligent Christian gentleman of New York. As he was in daily intercourse with Antonio, and had every opportunity of observing his character, it will be interesting to quote from a sketch he has kindly furnished.

“My first recollection of Antonio Bishallany is, that upon a pleasant morning in November, 1852, a bright-eyed, intelligent looking, cheerful native, in the attire and having the olive complexion of his race, was exhibiting in the court-yard of our hotel in Beirut a book containing words and sentences in Ara-

bic with the corresponding English opposite, which, when asked, he agreed to sell, but without the anxiety for money which is characteristic of the people generally. I well remember the sweet and guileless smile with which he replied, 'No, sir,' to an offer by one of our friends of a sum less than he asked. I soon afterwards learned that he had been engaged by the dragoman whom we had selected to conduct us to Egypt, and would accompany us in the capacity of cook. I also learned that he owned one of the tents and other portions of the equipments for our journey.

"During the first day after leaving Beirut, as indeed during the whole period we were together, Antonio was uniformly cheerful, kind, and obliging. His gentleness of demeanor, activity, and simplicity of character, joined to keenness and self-reliance, were indeed marked. When we arrived at the camping-ground, after our first day's journey, Antonio was all activity. The stove, a long kind of grate supported by four legs, was soon in place, the several saucepans and pots were in requisition for our dinners, and in a comparatively short space of time our meal was an-

nounced, and in the variety of dishes and style of cooking he did himself great credit. We speedily concluded Antonio was a good cook, and never afterwards had occasion to offer a complaint. It ought perhaps to be remarked, that it is usual for those intending to become guides or dragomen, to become attached to travelling parties in some inferior capacity, in order to learn the roads and names of towns and villages, and to secure a capital for purchasing the necessary outfit. Antonio's knowledge of English was very limited, so that it was impossible to carry on conversation with him. He spoke Italian fluently, of which unfortunately all of our party were ignorant. The book of which I have spoken was often in his hands, and on almost every day he would ride up to us asking the pronunciation or signification of some word. His merry-heartedness was a subject of remark. I do not remember to have seen him really angry. After or during the progress of apparently sharp and contentious discussions in his native tongue, his hearty ringing laugh would be heard, and if addressed immediately, his winning voice and his placid

smile, to which all his features contributed, would show that anger had not taken hold of his heart.

“He once related to me that, while taking some travellers over the desert between Damascus and Palmyra, complaint was made to him that during an encampment a man’s head and shoulders were discovered beneath the canvas of the tent, with the evident intention of appropriating something belonging to those inside—the Arabs being much given to pilfering. Antonio went directly to the sheikh, who is in that country always held responsible for the acts of those under him. He was put off with the assurance that the disturbance was caused by a camel who got too near and stuck in his head. Antonio did not press the matter further, but the next night kept watch with a stout stick; and when the intruder again appeared, gave him some blows well laid on, all the time denouncing the camel for his ill-manners. The next day he told the sheikh that the camel had repeated the experiment, but he did not believe he would try it again; and then looking at the bandaged head of the other, inquired the

reason with not a little surprise. The sheikh, who himself was the intruder, endeavored to explain the cause of his injuries by saying that a camel had suddenly risen as he was mounting, and threw him upon the ground.

“Our difference in language of course prevented religious conversation, but we knew that Antonio was a Protestant. It was necessary that he should not make an ostentatious display, for his own peace and safety, but he was no religious coward. Thus I remember that he attended religious services at Damascus on the Sabbath, at which I was not a little surprised. He has since told me that he was obliged to approach the place in a roundabout way, and through unfrequented streets, that he might not be discovered by the bigoted Mohammedans or scarcely less bigoted Catholics. His full eastern dress would have exposed him to detection and annoyance, if not danger.

“He did not seem lazy or easily fatigued. We usually ate breakfast by candlelight, and arose about five o'clock, but were never detained for breakfast; and the meal over, the cooking utensils were speedily cleansed

and packed for their place on the mule's back. So when we halted at evening, there was a prompt unpacking and speedy preparation. His was an interested activity; he derived absolute pleasure from the performance of duty, and seemed to have in view some higher purpose, to be actuated by some nobler motive than simply pecuniary gain. His good-natured exuberance found vent upon several occasions in a dance. He was urged by some who knew his skill, to entertain them. On two occasions I went to the spot, and found Antonio going through the steps and wriggling motions of body called in the East dancing, while the entertained spectators squatted after the eastern fashion in a circle around him. At Cairo we parted from him. The only favor he asked was a recommendation, which we gladly gave. There was no demand nor hint for the customary bucksheesh. His modest, gentle, and obliging demeanor confirmed the high opinion previously formed of him."

The foregoing statement is especially valuable for the light it throws upon the everyday character of our young friend. We see

him here in his familiar, unrestrained conduct, in which without disguise he acts out his natural disposition; and we cannot but admire the energy and activity, together with the innocent playfulness of his character, his firm adherence to his own convictions of duty, and his constant desire to promote the comfort and secure the approbation of those whom he was called to serve. It is not surprising that the writer of the sketch just given should form a strong and lasting attachment to one possessed of these interesting qualities.

The desire of Antonio to come to America was sensibly increased by having thus become acquainted with and secured the friendly feeling of several influential citizens of New York, from whom he might expect a kind reception if he should ever reach these distant shores. Other friends too, whom he accompanied through different parts of his own land, he remembered with interest, and would be glad to meet again. But chiefly was he influenced by the impression that in this country of churches and Bibles and schools and Christian benevolence, whence

many missionaries of the cross had been sent forth, he might obtain the advantages of education, and become fitted to go back to his native country to preach Christ Jesus and him crucified.

After months of solemn consideration, and having no doubt prayed to God for his direction, he came to the determination that he would bid farewell, at least for a season, to the land of his birth, and visit the United States. About August, 1854, he converted his little property into cash, amounting to about \$300. He owned some real estate in the neighborhood of his former residence on mount Lebanon, which, from some peculiarity in eastern law, he could not sell. He is thought to have said that it was necessary to obtain the consent of the neighbors; but either from their unwillingness to give consent, or his want of time to await their action in the matter, he was obliged to leave the property unsold.

Having made arrangements for his departure, his heart turned once more with longing affection towards his beloved relatives. He gained an interview with his brothers,

who had not spoken to him since the period he became an exile from his home. But as to his mother, her rancorous feelings had not abated. She viewed him as a vile apostate, and barred both her heart and her doors against him. Reluctant to go away, perhaps never to return, without seeing her who had given him birth, who had nursed and cherished him, and over whom his kind heart yearned with all the tenderness of filial affection, he addressed a letter to her, stating his intention to sail for a foreign land, and begging the privilege of having an interview with her, it might be for the last time on earth. Strange to say, this appeal to her heart under circumstances so affecting met no response. She refused to see him; and Antonio with sorrowful heart was compelled to leave his native land, it might be for ever, without bidding farewell, or even taking a last look at her whom he had been accustomed to address by the sacred and endearing name of mother. One cannot but think of that touching passage of Scripture, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, she

may forget; yet will I not forget thee." There are instances in which natural affection becomes extinguished, and even a mother will forget and turn away with indifference from her own son; but God is unchangeable in his love. I will never, no, never leave thee; I will never, no, never forsake thee. This promise Antonio's Bible had made familiar to him; and in the trials of this unnatural orphanage, when cast off by an only earthly parent, he looked upward to his Father in heaven, and found comfort in his everlasting love.

Antonio took ship Aug. 22, 1854, and soon the vessel was gliding away from the shore upon the bosom of the Mediterranean. As the city of Beirut gradually vanished from his sight, and the blue summits of Lebanon were seen in the dim distance, his heart swelled with emotion at the recollection of his mountain home. The scenes of his childhood, the vineyards and olive-gardens, and the humble cottage where once he enjoyed his parents' smiles, passed in review before his mind. He thought too of the trials through which he had passed, the alienation

of friends, the death of his father and the withdrawal of his mother's love, and the cold reserve of his brothers, with whom he had grown up in the indulgence of the sweetest confidence and affection. Thoughts like these could not be otherwise than productive of pensive feelings, especially when he began to realize that the wide abyss of waters would intervene between him and these objects of interest, and that possibly he might never again behold his native land. Still he was cheerful and sanguine in disposition, and it may be that his anticipations of visiting this country and returning home prepared to preach the gospel predominated over any saddening reflections, and gave buoyancy and joy to his spirit. His natural light-heartedness would serve to spread a bright tinge over the future horizon, and his strong faith in God would relieve any anxiety that might for a moment disturb him. He had consecrated himself to the Lord : to become a missionary was the object of the voyage he had undertaken ; and he was happy in the prospect of accomplishing his purpose and coming back to tell to perishing souls the glad

tidings of salvation. Still he knew not what were God's designs with regard to him, and therefore he trusted in the Lord, believing that, whether he lived to return or found a grave in a distant land, all would be well.

To a mind observing and reflective like Antonio's, a voyage upon the ocean must have furnished subjects of exciting interest. What incidents occurred on the passage, whether the vessel encountered violent storms or was favored with calm weather, we know not; or whether Antonio found agreeable companions, or met with any Christian friend who could take an interest in his case and cherish a brotherly affection; but judging from his general affability of manners and anxiety to gather instruction from those to whom he could gain access, we presume he was not obliged to feel himself alone, but found in the ship's company those who were attracted by his striking qualities, and were ready to give him expressions of kindly recognition and benevolent feeling. When it was known that he had become a convert to the Protestant faith, and had renounced his former religion in the face of persecution and

trial, and that he was on his way to America to prepare to instruct others in the truths which had been the source of light and salvation to his own soul, a chord of sympathy and affection must have been touched in hearts which would vibrate in unison with his. There is something in religion that renders its possessors easily recognized by each other as the friends of Christ. Their thoughts and feelings run so much in the same channel, that there is some outward expression of the family likeness that at once indicates from what Father they descended. Hence in a promiscuous company it is not long before they who have drank in the same spirit and love the same Saviour know and love each other. And this knowledge and affection is not confined to any sect or tribe, or complexion or country. As religion is one under all circumstances, it will bear its peculiar features whether under the dress of an Arab, the dark skin of an African, or the light complexion and more polished exterior of one of our own citizens. Antonio's olive-colored face and eastern costume did not obstruct the outgoings of those Christian

sentiments and emotions that characterized him as a disciple of Jesus, or prevent that mysterious drawing of heart to heart which belongs to the different members of Christ's body.

Whether he thus met with spirits congenial with his own, or was left a silent and unnoticed stranger, certain it is there was one Friend with whom he held delightful intercourse. He was accustomed to walk with God, to commune with him in spirit, and draw sweet enjoyment from his presence and love.

By meditation and prayer, and the habitual study of his precious Bible, he improved the days and weeks he spent upon the water, and experienced, in exercises so adapted to his taste and feelings, great enjoyment. The Christian's happiest hours are those he spends alone with God—when he feels the quickening power of the divine Spirit, receives the witness of his being born again, and with filial confidence can look up and say, Abba, Father. These are joys which a stranger knoweth not, which are unspeakable and full of glory, and compared with which the pleasures of this world are emptiness and vanity.

In October, 1854, Antonio landed at Boston, thankful to Him who ruleth the winds and the waves, for the preservation of his kind providence. The appearance of a city in this western world, so different from oriental cities and towns in the style of architecture, streets, conveyances, and costume of the people, must have deeply interested him, and we presume that few objects escaped the notice of his observing eye.

Having brought with him letters of introduction and recommendation from the missionaries at Beirut to their Christian friends, he at once sought them out, and was received by them with kindness and courtesy. Boston being the seat of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, by whom the missionaries in Syria had been sent out to their field of labor, and Antonio having been personally acquainted with those Christian laborers, and bearing dispatches from them, he would naturally be regarded as a welcome visitor, and be the object of sympathy and attention among the friends of Christ in that city. While he sojourned there, he was kindly aided and directed,

and received his first experience in America of fraternal love and hospitality.

His desire and intention being especially directed to seeing gentlemen in New York, with whom he had formed a pleasant acquaintance in Syria, he did not tarry long in Boston, but hastened to New York, where, learning on inquiry the residence of several friends, he soon had the happiness of receiving from them a cordial recognition.

“On one afternoon in October, 1854,” writes one of these gentlemen, “I was astonished by the entrance of Antonio into my office in New York. He wore a full eastern dress. On inquiry I found he had landed at Boston, and had been brought to this city by a Sound steamer, at whose dimensions, fine furniture, and elaborate fittings up, he was not a little surprised: that he had first found another and elder member of our Syrian party, and then came to myself. He has since told me, when I asked him what he knew of America, and what reason he had to expect a favorable reception from Americans, that he knew the country only as the end of the world, having no idea of its geo-

graphical position; and that he judged of his reception by what he had observed of the American character in his own country.

“After visiting his friends and meeting with the kindest treatment, he accepted the position of waiter in a family on the Fifth avenue. His object in doing so was, while earning a livelihood, to become acquainted with our habits, and learn the English language. While here he was taken sick, and was so affected by the care and attention bestowed upon him by the female head of the family, that he never seemed able, though he often tried, to express his appreciation of the kindness, and his weight of obligation to Mrs. H——g, for her unmerited favors. He did not seem able to understand how it was that with her own hands she should bring him food and administer to his wants; and usually wound up, as when upon other occasions alluding to other kind offices towards him he found himself unable to command terms expressive of his deep feeling, with the remark, ‘Well, this is not of man; ’t is all of the Lord.’

“At this time I was particularly struck

with a remarkable feature of his character. It must be remembered that he was brought up in the humblest society of a Lebanon village. At times, when comparing the mode of life among his own people with that in America, he used to say it was a life of beasts, and not of men. The feature to which I allude is, that, while faithful in the performance of the duties of his position, he was entirely at home in the most polite society, and was welcomed as a guest in the houses of our wealthiest and most influential citizens. He seemed to prove the truth of Pope,

‘Honor and fame from no condition rise.’

He was not awkwardly bashful, nor shrinkingly timid. On the other hand he was always self-possessed, poised, and graceful; and yet there was no approach to presumption. He did not force himself upon attention, nor was it necessary. His nativity, history, vivacity, gentleness, intelligence, winning amiability, and easy, one might say polished manners, everywhere opened and kept open a door for him. It indicated to my mind the highest simplicity of character and propriety of view, that he could gain and

maintain such a position. In his employer's family, he was looked upon and treated rather as an equal; and yet he could, without loss of self-respect, and without lowering himself in the eyes of his friends, act as became a servant.

“In Syria he had made the acquaintance of a member of a family living on one of our fashionable avenues. When he first arrived in the city, he was very cordially received; but after assuming our dress and finding employment, he noticed a change in manner. He related the incident to me with a great deal of earnestness, and an expression of deep sorrow that a foolish pride should thus gain ascendancy in the human heart, followed, I think, with a laugh at the folly which would erect this artificial barrier. I have forgotten the particular manifestations which led to this inference, and mention the incident to show his penetration, ready apprehension, and just discrimination between requiring from a servant, whoever he may be, a full performance of duty, and treating him outside of his position according to his merits and defects as a man.

“At this time, early in 1855, Antonio began to exhibit a strong desire for knowledge, which soon became intense. He began to study by himself, getting from time to time from his friends such aid as they could render, and if I mistake not, commenced attending a public school.

“The book which he loved best to read and study was the Bible. If he called upon a friend, and was left alone a few moments, and there was a Bible in the room, he would be found reading it when you entered; and in all probability, after the usual salutations and careful inquiry after the health of the several members of the family, as to which he was very particular, he would ask your opinion of some passage of Scripture about which he was exercised, or else would submit his own views for your examination. It might be well to say that he almost always had on hand a particular line of investigation, and seldom or never submitted for opinion a general truth, or inquired about some doctrine, but sought the signification of a portion of Scripture.

“There soon was apparent a longing desire

to do good. He was much curbed and incapacitated by his limited knowledge of our language; but if ever a man used in this respect to the uttermost his single talent, it was he. As his increasing acquaintance with the language enabled him, he extended the field of his usefulness. He seemed intuitively to feel or sagaciously to discover that his proper field of labor was with the lower classes, and especially, if not exclusively, Roman-catholics. Against popery he had a deep and bitter hatred, and was wont to term it 'the mother of harlots,' and apply other terms taken from Revelation. He came to see me very frequently, and would relate his experiences during the day, and ask my opinions upon Scripture and other points, but especially the former. I was engaged in a business enterprise which taxed and perplexed me greatly, and unfitted me to listen to him with the same interest and extend to him the aid which I could now. I think with delight of the kind charity with which, discovering my weariness, and perhaps impatience, he would seek some other member of the family, and full of sprightliness and

laughing good-nature, dropping the subject which immediately interested him, would seek to converse upon some other acceptable topic, or else, rising to leave at a comparatively early hour, would shake my hand for good-night, with a pleasant smile and heartiness of manner which indicated that he more than appreciated my feelings and position, and had not in his heart a thought of censure or complaint.

“One evening he told me that the Rev. Dr. Tyng had asked him if he would like to study theology, and become a missionary, and his reply was, that such was his object in coming to America. I was surprised at this; and finding that such was his deeply cherished design and intention, sought an arrangement by which he could be gratified. He accordingly left his position, and in connection with giving lessons in Arabic, which aided considerably in his support, went to school, and also took private lessons at his house. It was almost painful to witness his close application and intense earnestness. He grappled with the difficulties of our language with a determination to conquer, stim-

ulated to new effort by new difficulties. Irregularities in spelling and pronunciation and grammatical construction tried him sorely, but he never despaired. He had now taken board, and the late hour at which a light could be seen in his room attested his studious habits and industry. Reading, writing, spelling, and grammar were his various studies, not omitting the holy Scriptures, which he studied more than all the rest, and a large Webster dictionary which he constantly consulted. He read in many books which he had purchased, or which were given him, to aid in the elucidation of some point which perplexed him. It has been surprising to me, that with his impetuous enthusiasm, he could persevere in a detailed study that he undertook, though he could advance only step by step.

“He had undoubtedly wonderful clearness in his apprehension of Scripture. He was conscious and confident of this fact, and he chafed under his limited knowledge of the language. ‘Oh if I had only knowledge of the English language to express myself!’ he often said. He longed to communicate his

views of Bible truth, and especially to overthrow what he believed to be the errors of Romanism, which with his own experience and light he felt abundantly able to do."

"I remember that Antonio came to me one day with a Bible opened at Matthew, with the request that I would hear his exposition of the eighteenth verse of the sixteenth chapter. I listened in surprise at his skilful exposition; and then, at his request, referred to Clark's commentary, which I had before consulted when he came to me with hard questions. I found that the learned doctor and the sagacious Syrian adopted the same interpretation.

"On another occasion I was pushing him hard upon some doctrine or some passage of Scripture which he could not explain, or which perhaps was inexplicable, when with a solemn, mysterious look he said, 'There are some things which cannot be understood, and which, if we try too hard to compass, or are too anxious to comprehend, will make us infidels.' He then quickly turned to Genesis, and pointing me to the twenty-sixth verse of the first chapter, where the plural is

employed by God in speaking of himself, 'Let *us* make man in our image,' asked me to reconcile it, if I could, with the singular number employed in the following verses, or to other teachings that there is but one God."

The very interesting description thus given by one who was personally acquainted with Antonio, and observed his daily life, cannot fail to convey the impression that he was a young man of superior qualities of heart and mind. His gentleness and amiable spirit; his humble piety; his quick discernment; his thirst for knowledge, and his determined perseverance in obtaining it, are all conspicuous, and gave promise that, if his life should be spared, he would become an able and faithful minister of Jesus. On this object he had placed his heart, and the desire and expectation of going back to Syria to publish to his own people the glad tidings of great joy animated his mind, and gave him an interest in his studies. "He fairly burned with zeal for his divine Master."

From the severity of our climate acting

upon a system accustomed to the warm temperature of an oriental country, or other causes, his health became somewhat seriously affected, and with the view of affording him the advantage of a change of air and other remedial agencies, his kind friend Mr. H——r, in the summer of 1855, took him with him to Richfield Springs.

Before he left the city, he desired to be numbered among the members of Christ's visible church. He had openly avowed himself, both by word and deed, a friend of Christ and of his cause, but had never yet made a profession of his faith by identifying himself with any particular body of Christians. He wished to be one of the Lord's flock in name as well as in deed, and to participate in the privileges of his house—to enjoy more fully the communion of the saints, and especially to commemorate with them the sufferings and death of their divine Lord and Saviour. He therefore connected himself about this time with the Pilgrim church on Union-square, from whose pastor and members he received uniform and continued aid and kindness during his life. He was grateful to

them, and I doubt not their reward will be that promised by Christ to such as fed, or clothed, or cared for the least of his disciples.

The Springs being beautifully situated in a mountainous region, and a place of popular resort, Antonio had an opportunity of making many friends, several of whom he afterwards carefully cherished. It was his special pleasure to roam off with the children. He became one of them, entering heartily into their feelings, and participating in their sports. Usually one or more servants would accompany them to take charge of some of the children, and this opportunity he would embrace to expose the errors of Romanism, and to set forth Jesus Christ and him crucified.

A Christian lady of this city who met Antonio at the Springs, and became one of his real friends, thus refers to him:

“The short period that we were thrown together at Richfield convinced me that he was far from being well, though he would not allow there was any thing serious in his slight cough. You could not be with him

without observing how rapidly and wonderfully the powers of his mind were being developed.

“Day after day would he sit with his Bible before him, so completely absorbed in it that it mattered not how many were around him or how much conversation was carried on. His whole soul and thoughts were on the study of that book which was so precious to him. If any other book was offered him to read, no matter how good a one, he would smilingly say, ‘I thank you, lady, but it will take too much time, and will not teach me what this will,’ laying his hand on the Bible. Friends would tell him they feared he applied himself too closely to study, and suggested his taking more recreation and exercise; but he would say, ‘O no, dear lady; do not fear for me. I must lose no time in learning my Master’s will.’ It was double labor with him, for he had but little knowledge of our language. He was obliged to ask the meaning of many words, and often to consume the whole day over part of a chapter. But it was wonderful to see how correctly and clearly he seemed to comprehend the truth.

Dwelling on the love of God in sending the Bible to him, 'I never go to bed,' said he, 'that I do not thank my heavenly Father for sending *the English Bible* to my country; and the only way I can show God how much I love him, is to devote my whole life to his service.' The subject would light up his eye with new life, and make him the more desirous of understanding our language.

"His desire to preach the gospel increased daily. If asked which persuasion he would unite with, he would answer, 'Adam and Eve were my father and mother, the whole world are my brethren and sisters, and Christ is my head. I am an evangelist; that was my Saviour when he was upon earth, and I must labor to bring in lost sheep that have been led away from Christ's fold and truth by the false shepherds.' He would converse often in a figurative manner which was very beautiful. On speaking to him one day of my being thrown among a number of Jews, he exclaimed with great energy, 'How I wish I had been with you.' I said, I fear they would not have talked with you on the subject of religion. 'Oh,' said he, 'I would have talked

to you, and it would be as if I should dash my stick into the water very hard; perhaps some of the drops would fall on those around.' He was very fearless, and seemed to feel a particular interest in Catholics, for he said they have not the true light set before them. Of his mother it was extremely touching to see his great desire to hear from her. One kind word from her would have filled his cup of happiness. When he referred to her, his countenance would change and his eyes would fill as he spoke of her alienation from him; and until the last he hoped to hear from her: but he had given up mother and brothers for Christ."

CHAPTER IV.

IN the fall of this year, 1855, Antonio became a pupil in the Amenia Seminary in Dutchess county, N. Y. Soon after his arrival at that institution, he wrote to his friend Mr. H——:

“After my respects, you must know that I came here with my body, but my heart is remained with you. Now when I have arrived here, I been received by Mr. Hunt with all respect and kindness, and the school very convenient and respectable in all the manners, and the delightful climate of this place would be the only means to cure my cough.”

He here applied himself with great diligence to his studies, and his progress was astonishingly rapid. It was indeed painful to notice his husky voice and violent coughing while he was concentrating all his energies upon the acquisition of the English language. He returned home at the end of the term, and concluded it would be imprudent to return for the winter. He accordingly

remained in the city, giving lessons in Arabic and himself taking private lessons in English.

He occasionally walked in the beautiful grounds of Union-square both for health and recreation. While taking one of these rambles he noticed a group of Italians, and overheard them conversing on the trials they had experienced in their own country from reading the Bible. He immediately joined them, and being familiar with their language, mingled with spirit in the conversation. He soon drew out of them their history, and being a stranger himself, he sympathized with them and offered them his aid. The Rev. Dr. Holdich, Secretary of the American Bible Society, who was intimately acquainted with Antonio, says of his connection with these young men:

“He learned from them that in their own country and city they had become interested in religion. They endeavored to obtain Bibles. They went to several bookstores, but the owners said they had none. At length one acknowledged that he had Bibles, but he would not sell them unless on the condition

that they should keep the knowledge of their having one from the priests, as the bookseller feared he might otherwise be involved in trouble. They gave the pledge and took the precious volume. They read it together, and were not very long in discovering that if these things were so, Italy was no place for them. They could no longer conform to nor countenance the corruptions of the Romish church, and they had better quietly take their departure while they could. They came to New York, and strangers and friendless as they were, and ignorant of the language, providentially met with Bishallany a few days after their arrival.

“The young men were artisans of some sort. They united in a sort of club, took a room, wrought at their avocations in the day, and spent the evenings together in their retreat studying the Bible. Here Bishallany regularly met with them, assisting them in their studies, and by the aid of his better knowledge explaining to them what was difficult, and enabling them to reconcile apparently conflicting or contradictory passages. It was to help him in this that he applied for

Bibles at the Bible-house in English and Italian, being very particular to ask for Bibles with references, the better to aid them in their researches and comparisons.

“And here I might say a word in regard to his fitness for such an office. Although it was difficult to converse with satisfaction owing to the causes before mentioned, and because in my room fronting on a noisy street we were frequently interrupted both by noise and by company, yet it was not difficult to perceive that he was a young man of more than ordinary mental acumen. His mind was strong, his apprehension quick, his judgment sound, and within his range of thought he was a close thinker. He was not content with skimming the surface; he wanted to dive into the depths of truth. He said in his peculiar way, ‘If persons want to understand the Bible, they must not be contented to read it; they must study, study, study; they must go deep, deep, deep;’ accompanying it with a significant motion of the head, showing how a person must dig deep to bring up hidden treasures. It was evident that this was the course he was taking with regard to the Bi-

ble. I was often surprised at the shrewd and ingenious remarks he made upon the Scriptures, showing not only close study and familiar knowledge of the sacred contents, but independent and original views. He thought over the subject, and his remarks were the result of his own investigations.

“It was clear that he was not familiar with theological writers. I doubt whether he knew what a book of biblical criticism or systematic divinity is, or had ever heard the name of such a book. It may therefore be well supposed that many of the thoughts which would strike him with all the force of original discoveries, were familiar to the minds of biblical students; yet were they none the less evincive of his spirit of thoughtful and ingenious investigation.

“On one occasion he brought with him and introduced to me his three Italian friends. He also related at different times conversations he had with Professor —— on the subject of Romanism, a system which that professor had embraced, and on which Bishalany had many and protracted discussions with him. I cannot recall the substance of

those conversations, nor do I know the precise ground assumed by the professor. I can easily conceive, however, that he found in our young friend no mean antagonist. He had thought much upon the subject; and probably his own thoughts, derived not from human aids, but simply from the study of the Bible, would be more effectual than any other agencies that could be employed."

. We learn from another friend of Antonio that "his mind was much occupied by these discussions with this gentleman of learning and high cultivation. These conversations would often extend over several hours a day, and exercised his mind very deeply. The professor brought against him arguments from the fathers, of whose writings he was ignorant, and from history with which he was equally unacquainted, and difficult passages from the Bible which had not been with him a subject of special examination. He could not rest contented until the fathers had been consulted, and the history had been examined, and a true interpretation of Scripture, sustaining his views, had been clearly arrived at."

Among a few papers left by Antonio is the following communication, addressed to the professor with whom he held these discussions. There are numerous errors in orthography, and inaccuracy in the formation of sentences. Correcting these, we will give an extract from the document.

“PROFESSOR — —Undertaking and consulting have led me to promise myself some success. I was born when the people of God in Spain were perishing in the fire by the hand of new Babylon’s merchants—thirty-two thousand who had not confessed to the authority of the pope—and their ashes have been blown or destroyed by the wind. They were living in the liberty of religion. You have treated them in the streams of blood and burning fire. Such was the odious spectacle which first presented itself to my sight, and having the earth of Europe plunged in the blood of the saints by the sword of him who standeth on the throne of Peter. The cries of the dying, the groans of the oppressed, the tears of despair were the companions of my infant days of new birth, and you quitted that liberty, the price of which was the blood of the

only Saviour; and with it disappeared all hopes of happiness. Their submission was slavery, loaded with the triple chain of the soldier, the legislator, and the tax-gatherer.

“While perusing their writings my heart boils with indignation, and I have resolved to dissipate these delusions the offspring of ignorance. My early study of the word of God and the English language, the arguments we have had from first to last, and the memorials to which I have had access in the portfolios from you and from my friends, have led me to promise myself some success. I wish to blacken with the pencil of dishonor those who have betrayed the common poor. I wish to call all the arguments which have passed between you and me before the public opinion. Let them set forth the vexatious proceedings, and expose the secret intrigues, and if possible interest the present virtuous community in the deplorable situation we are in. Still young, my enterprise seems daring, but love to the truth and to my God and Lord Jesus Christ and my fellow-sheep impels me, and awakens the enthusiasm I feel at the prospect of ameliorating the condition

of men with regard to the truth. I know that it will arouse against me the numerous body of Babylon merchants, of whom you are one—those who spend all their life in cultivating the fine arts of superstition. You have collected some beautiful specimens, and in repeating them daily, you have subdued the people of God under your cunning power, and especially in the almost daily practising of the science of error, so as to deceive the world. Bishallany has never undertaken to be an insulter, neither will he be. But what matters it with you doers of iniquity, that bite with the teeth like the asps, and cry peace? Oh divine practice, to attack the ignorant poor with violence under threats of wrath of God! No, no, even the world thought you unable to do it. But what matters, so far as the welfare of the people of God is concerned? If the bolt falls I shall examine my heart, and shall recollect the lawfulness of my motives, and at that moment I shall defy it.

“How can I keep silent? If I had kept silent, the rocks would have spoken and contradicted your error. Do you know that

the priest of your sect said to me, Keep silent; neither keep the Bible nor speak the truth, or lose mother, brethren, kindred, relations, friends, home, property, native place, and country. Choose then what you will do. Then I said, It is not your way only, but your fathers persecuted the prophets before you. Sir, I said, I rather choose the truth, which is the Bible, and the powerful sword of liberty. For what profit to me if I gain the whole world and lose my own soul? Sir, I believe by this sword I shall gain souls to Christ; for it is rather for me to gain a soul to Christ than to gain mountains of gold and silver. What gift shall I offer to the human family I love, and to mankind, better than this mighty spiritual sword by which to deliver themselves from your terror and bondage? As I know how to do this good, why should I not do it? To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin. James 3:17.

“The priests of your sect hastened to the church, published my name in public, saying, We have paid this man for all he possessed in this country, and he is like a wild bird lighting in a tree in the wood—to-morrow he

shall fly away. And my flight was directed to America, with the same spiritual sword by which the name of Christ was proclaimed. And here I hope to have it polished and sharpened in the theological seminary, and then to draw out the spiritual sword and drive away the wolves from before their cave, that new Babylon of Rome, and cry, 'Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.' And this coming has begun, beginning as when you see the sheep coming out of your unclean hold, and entering Christ's fold. The priests, bishops, and heads begin to despair, and say, What a pity. Oh they have gone; they have perished; and so on. They stand afar, and say, Alas, alas, that great terror, that mighty pope, 'in one hour his judgment is come,' for 'strong is the Lord God who judgeth him.'

"But we know that God is merciful to them who cry to him alone, according to his promise to our fathers: I will go always before you—that is, the true church.

“Before the famine came, God caused Joseph to be sold into Egypt. After the people were oppressed by the Egyptians and they sighed unto God, he raised up Moses to deliver them, and he delivered them with mighty power; but when they worshipped Remphan and figures the work of their hands and feared them, then God said, ‘I will carry you beyond Babylon.’

“God spoke by Moses, ‘A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.’ Therefore Christ only we ought to hear. Christ promised also to his church, that it never shall fail. As God raised Joseph from his brethren, Moses from Israel, Christ from David according to the flesh, so God raised up Luther from among the monks, to turn back the worshippers of Remphan and the work of their hand from beyond Babylon. And so God is raising up us, one after another, to hasten the putting down Babylon distraction.

“I remain, with respect, Professor ——,
your most humble and most obedient servant,

“A'O. BISHALLANY, FROM MOUNT LEBANON.”

The ideas here conveyed, and the beauty and force with which many of them are uttered in a language unlike his native tongue, and as yet but imperfectly acquired, indicate a thinking mind, and excite admiration. His deep conviction of the error and wickedness of that system of religion he wished to expose, and if possible, destroy; his familiar knowledge of it from childhood, and the persecutions he experienced from its adherents, gave him deep and indelible impressions of its false principles, its destructive tendencies, and its intolerant nature; and from the fullness of his heart his mouth spoke, and his pen wrote. His hatred of falsehood and love of truth rendered him bold and emphatic in condemning the one and defending the other. Love to men rendered him anxious to rescue them from the delusive errors of a false faith, and to guide them into the path of light and safety. The greater his love to the souls of his fellow-men, the more he pitied those who were led astray by "the sleight of men and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" and speaking the truth in love, he tried to win them back unto the know-

ledge of Christ and the doctrine that is according to godliness.

The controversy Antonio held with the learned professor was entered upon and pursued as well from a sincere interest in the welfare of his distinguished friend as from an anxiety to confute his theological opinions. He cherished a high personal regard for his antagonist. He believed him to be in error, and in an error that affected his soul's immortal interest, and the interest of thousands over whom his talents and position gave him influence; and trusting in the Lord of hosts, he was ready, like David, to go forth with the simple sling of truth and meet the mighty one of Gath. But it was the hand of love that used that sling; and had he conquered his eminent opponent and made him a willing captive to the evangelical faith, he would have rejoiced in the benefit he had been the humble instrument of conferring.

The discussions he held with this gentleman were no doubt conducted with great spirit and animation. Antonio's manners were earnest and impetuous. When his feelings were aroused, his countenance lighted up,

his gestures became frequent and violent, and in the effort to speak with rapidity, while yet incompetent to command the words he needed to express his abundant thoughts and still greater emotions, he would seem perfectly impassioned.

Although these discussions were earnest, and as is usual in controversial debates may have approached at times to acerbity, yet they disturbed not the friendly sentiments existing between the parties. Antonio always cherished a high personal esteem for the professor, and in return was regarded by his learned friend with the kindest feelings. He loved his warm and ingenuous nature; admired his thirst for knowledge, and his humble and fervent piety. Their debates, instead of in any degree alienating their feelings, were in fact the means of uniting them in closer bonds of friendship.

The lady who met Antonio at Richfield refers to the love he expressed towards Professor —, “that wise man,” as he called him; how he studied and labored to lead him into the true sheepfold, and how happy he would be if he would leave the new Baby-

lon of Rome and become a true shepherd of Jesus Christ. His heart seemed full of affection towards him, and deeply concerned for his happiness.

That this kind feeling was mutual, is evident from a friendly note received from the professor by Antonio when at Amenia.

“MY DEAR ANTONIO—I received your very agreeable letter a few days ago, and was sorry to have had news of your health. But let us hope that with fine weather you will be restored to your usual health and strength.

“I have been much struck with your improvement in style, orthography, and handwriting. It is really wonderful. Your cheerfulness and patience under your long illness is very edifying and beautiful to witness. I am sure nothing but a truly earnest and Christian faith could inspire such gentleness and courage. That the constant meditation upon the blessed sacrifice which our divine Redeemer made of himself upon his cross for us, may prove the fruitful source of peace and comfort to all who seek it, shall be my

fervent prayer, as I know it ever will be yours. . . .

“May heaven bestow its choicest favors upon you, and granting you good wishes, grant also their fulfilment.

“I shall always be happy to hear from you. We are all well, and wish to be particularly remembered. My mother is less strong than usual, but is able to go about, and inquires respecting your health and prospects.

Yours, with much regard,

“—— ———.”

The following is a copy of a manuscript of Antonio, in which he draws a contrast between the teaching of *the Scriptures*, and that of the church of Rome.

“The true teacher is the holy Scriptures. By them we should compare the teaching which teachers present to us: if it agree with them, it is from God; but if it contradict them, it is from Satan. It is not lawful for any reasonable person to accept all the teaching which teachers present to him without investigating the true from the false. The devil is never quiet or resting from trying to cheat souls, that they may perish.

Paul says, 'Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that we have preached, let him be anathema.' So St. John the evangelist said, 'Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God.' From these sayings, every one may understand that it is by searching the Scriptures that we are to judge of teaching whether it be true or a lie. Oh it is a great event for every one to investigate the Scriptures; not specially for priests and those in authority, because the great apostles have not directed these words to the priests, but to Christians in general. Christians should flee to the mountain of the holy Scriptures, that from her alone they may know the true from the false, and learn all that is necessary for salvation. This is the doctrine of the old fathers. Chrysostom and others have said that no particular church is infallible, neither the church of Rome, or any other particular church.

“Let us take the teaching of the holy Scriptures, and compare with it the Roman teachers, and see if they be according to it, or contradictory to it.

“The holy Scriptures forbid from taking pictures and symbols, and from worshipping and adoring them. But the church of Rome have filled her altars and her houses and the streets of her cities with these, and commanded the offering of adoration to them.

“The holy Scriptures teach us that we are to worship only God, and him only adore; and the Roman church teaches us that we ought to adore and worship the angels and saints.

“The holy Scriptures teach that we are purified through the merits of Christ and the good work of faith; and she teaches that the doctrine of purifying standeth by doing good and example, and especially by her forgiveness and the masses of the clergy.

“The holy Scripture teaches by founding only one Head to the church, and he is Jesus Christ; and she teaches by founding many heads, springing one after one.

“The holy Scripture teaches us by founding only one Mediator between God and man, and he is Jesus Christ; and she teaches by making the angels and saints mediators and advocates.

“The holy Scripture teaches that those who sleep in God shall rise quick to eternal life; and she sends them to her fiery purgatory to suffer great punishment.

“The holy Scriptures permit the ministers and clergy to marry, and say that they who forbid from marrying follow the bad spirit and teachings of the devil.

“The holy Scripture teaches that they who distinguish in eating err; and she forbids some especial dish, and after proclaims that which she had forbidden before—sometimes forbids from eating meat, except cheese and milk, and sometimes forbids from all except fish and oil, and she will never stand fast in one case.

“The holy Scripture commands to be kept the commandments of God the same as they are, and commands not to add to them or diminish any thing from them; and she adds to and diminishes from them, changing and altering according to her own inventions.

“The holy Scripture teaches there is not to be found in the New Testament, priest nor high-priest, except Jesus Christ; and she teaches by founding millions of them, and

she thieveth the true priesthood from Christ and appropriates it to her popes, and Peter-yecas and clergy.

“The holy Scripture teaches that no one can forgive sin except God alone; and she lays down forgiveness under the authority of her popes and her clergy, that they loose men from their deeds and sins when they please.

“Jesus Christ said to Peter, Turn back your sword to its place; but the pope has drawn the sword and slain by it millions from the people of Christ and his disciples.

“The Lord Jesus paid tribute to Cæsar, and commanded his disciples to pay it; and the pope takes the tribute from Cæsar, and presses their necks under his feet.

“The Lord Jesus has announced to the poor salvation, and said, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the pope has made the way plain and easy for the rich by purchasing a passport of forgiveness through the masses of the clergy, and crowds and makes difficult the way of salvation for the poor thousands who have nothing to pay for it to the clergy.

“The Lord Jesus lived in poverty and affliction, and said he had no place to lay his head, and ordered his disciples strictly to take neither gold nor silver; but the pope standeth in the town of the Cæsars gathering the gold in his treasuries, and exercising authority in kings’ palaces.

“The Lord Jesus said, ‘Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures;’ but the pope imagines that knowing the Scripture is the greatest error, and is endeavoring by all his determination to destroy it.

“Oh, from all these expressions it may be seen how the teachings and doings of the Roman church contradict the teachings and doings of the Lord Jesus and his apostles. Hearken then to the voice crying from heaven by the mouth of St. John the evangelist: ‘Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partaker of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.’ Rev. 18:4.

“Now therefore let us hold fast the holy Scriptures, lest we doubt and perish. We have no means of knowing the true church of Christ except by the holy Scriptures. Let us hear Chrysostom’s explanation about this

subject. He often says there will never be good protection to the Christian who seeks the true faith, except in the holy Scriptures only. He said also, 'As the Lord hath known in the last days there shall be fear and trouble greatly, therefore he should commend to all Christians who desire to be satisfied that they belong to the true faith, that they trust not in any thing but the holy Scriptures; that if they go to any other teaching except the Scriptures, they shall doubt or offend and perish, because they will not know which is the true church.'

“Therefore, brethren, the Protestants are many denominations, but the doctrine is one: regarding the same gospel, obeying the voice of the Lord God, saying, ‘Come unto me, and take the water of life freely.’ And this is the sign: first Bibles stereotyped by them all freely, without fear or danger from priests or rulers; then their believing the same doctrine, and there is no one to say, ‘I do n’t like this Bible because it is Baptist, or this or that; and the greatest sign of their believing the same doctrine is their opening the door of mercy, that is, I mean to say the

public schools, and springing the water of life in them, and standing in the highway and on the tops of the houses, according to their Lord and Master's saying, 'Come and take the water of life freely.' ”

The subject of Roman-catholicism occupied many of Antonio's thoughts. His heart bled over the spiritual condition of those who in his own land and in other countries are kept in ignorance of divine truth by the papal power. To qualify himself to oppose that system of error and delusion, he carefully studied the Bible, and saw distinctly that the doctrines and practice of the Romish church were at variance with the teachings of the word of God. The contrast is partly exhibited in the foregoing article, and the reader will not fail to observe the aptness of the quotations and the force with which he applies the Scriptures as the infallible test of faith and practice. He requires a "Thus saith the Lord" for a sanction of either individual opinion and conduct, or for that of a professed church of Christ. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not accord-

ing to this word, it is because there is no light in them.”

One more of his productions on this subject will illustrate his facility in discovering a moral likeness between the Romish church and a prominent Scripture character.

“CATHOLICS THE SUCCESSORS OF JEROBOAM THE SON OF NEBAT.

“And Jeroboam said in his heart, Now shall the kingdom return to the house of David: if this people go up to do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah, and they shall kill me, and go again to Rehoboam king of Judah. Whereupon the king took counsel, and made two calves of gold, and said unto them, It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem: behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.” 1 Kings 12:26.

“Likewise the pope said in his heart, If the people shall have the Scriptures in their hand, they shall know the truth and destroy me. Whereupon he took counsel with his

ungodly hosts to take the Scriptures from the hands of the people, and make for them images and figures, and put them in a nice building like the theatre, with nice music to amuse the people, and give it the name, Christ's church, and say to the people, It is too much for you to trouble yourselves in reading the Scriptures; give them up, and we will teach you what the Scripture says, for you cannot understand it—these images and figures be your Saviour.

“And he built him convents on the highest hills and mountains, in every place where his power spread, and filled them with graven images and superstition, and made the people sin against God.

“As the Israelites forsook the Lord God who brought them from under bondage out of Egypt, and feared other gods, so the Roman-catholics forsook Christ who bought them with his blood, and feared other gods and the work of man's hand, while God said, Ye shall not do like them.

“As the king Hezekiah broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made, so the Almighty God has lifted up the Protestant

with spiritual power, like the king Hezekiah and Josiah, to break down the images from the convents which are on the high places.

“As the king Josiah rent his clothes when he heard the words of the book, and rose with mighty indignation against the leader of his fathers, so it will be when Roman-catholics shall hear the words of Scripture; they will rise mightily against the mighty pope.”

Antonio was deeply sensible of the injury inflicted upon the souls of men by those who deprived them of the Bible. He knew the benefit he derived from the perusal of its sacred pages himself, and believed that if it were universally read it would dispel the gloom of error and superstition from the human mind. He was anxious therefore to destroy the power that held millions of immortal beings in ignorance of divine truth, that the light of heaven might shine in upon their souls and bring to them salvation. It was not any hostility against those who belonged to the papal church, or against the pope or the priests, that influenced him. He loved and pitied those who were deluded them-

selves and who deluded others, but he was hostile to the system which they sustained, and which for long ages had kept mankind in spiritual thralldom. The kindness and benevolence of his Christian heart prompted him to say and do whatever he could to weaken and, if possible, to subvert a system which maintained itself by keeping the people in ignorance, which imposed upon them unscriptural doctrines and ordinances, taught them human traditions instead of the divine word, and led them to believe as the church believed, without the privilege of exercising their own reason, judgment, or conscience.

To change the views of his Catholic friends at home, and of papists throughout the world, he was of the opinion that it was only necessary to supply them with *the holy Scripture*, and give them full liberty to read it. And he was correct in his opinion. It is the truth, under the blessing of the Spirit, that illuminates the understanding, purifies the heart, and emancipates the soul from the bondage of vain forms and ceremonial observances.

It is a great mistake to suppose that men are to be detached from particular views and

religious customs by the language of denunciation. Enter into controversy with Romanists, and you put them on the defence of their principles, awaken their prejudices, and close their minds against conviction. The humble colporteur who places a Testament or some evangelical volume in the hands of Catholics, and speaks a kindly word to them on the love of Christ, adopts a more effectual method of correcting their errors and bringing them to the faith of the gospel, than the learned polemic who with strong weapons makes a direct assault upon their peculiar sentiments. The simple truth, spoken in love, is the instrument by which the strong-holds of error are to be broken down. Only place a copy of the Scriptures in the hands of a Romanist, and let him read it without being trammelled by the fear of priestly power, and with the conviction that he is there to learn what God requires both as to faith and practice, and to judge for himself of the will of God as revealed in his word; and so different are the teachings of that word from the things he has been taught to believe and do, that under the teaching of the Holy Spirit he will not be long in renounc-

ing his existing notions received from men, for the pure doctrines of truth as received from God. The Bible is not so profound, mysterious, or obscure as to be above the comprehension of ordinary minds. Nor is danger to be apprehended from the people reading it without the explanation of the clergy. The great cardinal doctrines of religion as there revealed are very simple, and all that is necessary to salvation is within the reach of the humblest intellect. The poor cottager, the illiterate peasant, the untutored Arab, and the little child may know the truth as it is in Jesus, and become wise unto eternal life.

Antonio himself is an example. This humble and uncultivated Syrian opened this blessed book, and without any commentary, without any teacher to aid him in understanding the mind of the Spirit, discovered the evidences of the Scriptures being the word of God, and so learned the great truths of Christianity as to become not only a theoretical, but an experimental believer. The Spirit of God no doubt shone upon his mind and led him into all truth. And wherever the word

is read with a desire to understand and be benefited by it, we have reason to hope the Holy Spirit will impart his enlightening influence, and that saving effects will result. It is God's own promise, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

A similar and remarkable illustration of this converting power of the word of God was the case of Luther. When shut up in the convent of Erfurth, he found a copy of the Bible fastened by a chain to a pillar. He read it, and learned that "the just shall live by faith;" and the reception of this truth opened his mind to the errors of a system which taught that human merit could purchase salvation.

The intelligent and pious Madam Guyon, by reading a Bible she met with in one of the

nunneries of France, was led to behold the grace of God as justifying the sinner through faith; and believing in Jesus, she renounced the austerities and forms of the Romish church, and obtained a peace and joy in the love of her Saviour, which all the gloom and terrors of the Bastile could not destroy.

“Here springs of consolation rise,
To cheer the fainting mind;
And thirsty souls receive supplies,
And sweet refreshment find.

Oh may these heavenly pages be
My ever dear delight;
And still new beauties may I see,
And still increasing light.”

The following letter from Richfield to Mrs. H——t, indicates his simple piety and gratitude:

“HONORED MADAM—You may think that I have used the old proverb, ‘Out of sight, out of mind;’ but I am not so. Give me leave to approach you with the most thankful acknowledgments of a grateful heart, for the favor and benefit your goodness has conferred upon me. It shall be the business of my whole

life to the utmost of my power to deserve it, and my whole heart which you have made happy by your bounty. In my prayers daily to God the Father, I beg him to bless you with the continuance of your valuable health, a long life, and all worldly honor, as you honored me among the people, and especially for the remembrance you have conveyed to me through the letter of my dear brother in Christ, Mr. H——r.

“My heart has never been silent in its acknowledgments for so much of your kindness; and how can I express my gratitude? The Mohammedan believers’ prophet is called Redwan, and they believe him to be the door-keeper of paradise; for there were two Mohammedans travelling about, and when they lodged themselves in a house, lo, the owners of the house treated them with the utmost degree of kindness. Then they addressed each other, saying, ‘These persons are not of this land, but it is probable that Redwan has forgotten to shut the door of paradise, and they have come out without his knowledge; if they were of this land we should not have been treated so well.’ And I believe

that the earthly paradise is your land, and Redwan has left the door open for me to enter. Had not your land been the earthly paradise, I should not have found her dwellers to be the kindest people upon the globe, and also the most honorable and sympathetic in heart. Had not your country been the foundation of Christ's kingdom, I should not have been overwhelmed with your utmost kindness. Permit me, madam, to ask you a question: Do I say too much on this subject? But if I express to you the sympathy of Mrs. H—— towards me, what will you say then? Madam, I may be wrong if I say the pen will not express the kindness of that family. The Arabians, when they want to express strong feeling, say, 'If the earth was ink and the heaven paper, they would not contain one quarter of that which I have to express.'

“Being unwell, I acquainted her with my case. She presently told Mr. H——, and he left his business and came to me. This is the friend I must greatly respect. You are also, dearest madam, sowing the seed in the Lord's vineyard, and the pious Mr. H——t is bringing up workmen to the harvest. It is

to you and to him, of all under heaven, I mostly wish to be remembered.”

Antonio had the warm heart of a true Christian, and no favor he received was undervalued, or failed to awaken emotions of gratitude. From the time he arrived in New York, he was the object of sympathy and benevolence. Many friends performed acts of kindness, and especially Mr. H——r.

This gentleman had become interested in Antonio when travelling in Syria, and his attachment to him was strengthened by his visit to America. He loved him as a Christian brother, and extended to him every act of courtesy and hospitality. In his father's family Antonio found a home, and enjoyed all the pleasures of intelligent and Christian intercourse. Mr. H—— ministered to him in his sickness, secured for him the facilities of education, took him as a companion to the Springs for the benefit of his health, commended him to the notice of friends, and in every way contributed to his improvement and happiness; and his favors were received with a gratitude and affection that words could not express. Antonio felt that “Red-

wan" had left open the door of the earthly paradise, and that he had been permitted to come in and experience the benefits conferred by generous and sympathizing hearts. His humility no doubt added to his sense of obligation; for he was conscious of his own humble origin and limited circumstances; and finding himself, a poor Arabian as he called himself, to be the object of so much interest, care, and kind attention, he was tenderly affected, and overwhelmed with thankfulness too great for language to utter.

It was thought, by one who observed him with anxious interest, that much talking and excitement, and the undue application brought about by the desire and conviction that he ought to be able clearly to show that his religious opinions were formed upon and strictly in accordance with Scripture, were unfavorable to his health. He was all anxiety to advance in his studies, devoted a great deal of time to his books, and laboriously exerted himself to acquire that knowledge which would fit him for usefulness. His natural buoyancy of spirit and determination of purpose battled against untoward circum-

stances; he was not discouraged by ordinary dangers, but went forward with his studies and his discussions of religious truth with unabating interest. "So impressed was he," says Mr. H——, "with the idea that with his peculiar experience he could be an instrument of great good as a missionary, that he could hardly think it possible that Providence would remove him until his mission had been fulfilled."

The winter passed along, the time being filled up with giving Arabic lessons, theological discussions, study, and visiting friends. He kept up his cheerfulness and interest in the promotion of his Master's kingdom. During this time he took private lessons in English. He was interested also in a school enterprise for educating neglected Italian children.

We here insert a copy of a pleasant letter, received by Antonio from the Rev. Mr. Hunt, the Principal of the Amenia Seminary.

"AMENIA, Feb. 12, 1856.

"MY FRIEND ANTONIO—I have been designing to write to you for weeks past, but the

various duties of my office have prevented me. You must not think, however, that we have forgotten you. Far from that. We often think and speak of Bishallany, and if you should return to the school next term, you may be certain that all of your friends will be glad to see you. We have many students this winter. All the rooms are full, but out of the whole company I have not found one who could declaim in Arabic. I hope you may return next term, for I think you would find Amenia very pleasant in the summer. I shall leave the school at the end of this term, but Mr. Foss will take my place, and he will take very good care of you. How do you stand this very cold winter? Do you have such snows on mount Lebanon? I hope your health has not suffered from the severe frosts. Perhaps you are much better than if the winter had been more open. I will trust so at least.

“By and by, Antonio, we shall reach a country better by far than either Lebanon or Amenia. No bitter cold or burning heats there. I hope you are happy every day in prospect of that heavenly country, and hap-

py too in the love of that dear Saviour, for whose sake you have left mother and native land. We do not forget to pray for you when we meet in our prayer-rooms, and hope that you do not forget us.

“I am anxious to hear from you, and wish you would write me a letter, and tell all about your health and studies and prospects.

“Remember I am used to *your English*, and can understand it pretty well. I shall hope to hear from you before many days.

“I am your friend,

“ANDREW J. HUNT.”

REPLY.

“NEW YORK, Feb. 14, 1862.

“REV. MR. HUNT:

“DEAR SIR—I received your kind letter, and I am very glad to hear that you are all well; but to me it is otherwise most grievous that you are going to leave the place, since I have been permitted to enjoy the honor and the favor of your great kindness. Next term I hoped to pass the summer with you, and all the teachers, and not lose the

company of any one of you. But the honored Mr. Foss, by your recommendation, he will take care of me; and in another way I am very certain that he is the shepherd of his Master, like unto you, and I shall be one sheep of his Master's flock, under his care; and his Master requires him to feed his flock in the good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel, in preparation for the hill of blessing, where we shall meet together once for ever with our common Creator; where showers shall fall in their season; where is no fear, no sickness, no shame, but felicity; and where we can lie down in the safe fold. Therefore I know he is not one of the antichrist shepherds, that he may thrust with side and with shoulder, and push me with horn. No; God forbid, for I was once under them. But I deeply regret that I shall lose your presence.

“As to your remembering me kindly before the brethren it is natural, for it is said by Him, ‘The good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, neither the bad tree bring forth good fruit.’ And, sir, I believe it is not in you to forget me; for if I have forgot you, let my

right hand forget me; and if I did not remember and do not remember you above my chiefest conversation before my friends, and wherever I go, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

“And to let you know the state of my health at the present time. Now since I came from Amenia I had no more night-sweats nor headaches, but I had a very violent cough for three weeks, which had put three quarters of my life in the grave; but the benevolent Dr. Lindsly having examined me well, he soon gave the cod-liver oil mixed with various substances, and that was the means of restoring the rest of the three quarters of me from the grave. Since that time I am getting on better.

“Sir, if you know that I shall not see you in Amenia when I shall go there, I trust earnestly you will not let the last time I met you in the street of New York be the last time I shall see you, but I trust you will let me see you once more in this world, for I have that warm desire. When I remember the tenderness of your action and kindness I find no words to express your bounty, for I was a

stranger, sick, and you visited me, and the reward of this is great. This He will say, Come ye to my right hand.

“As to informing you concerning my progress, it is swifter than the creeping reptiles, sir; and your hope that I may enjoy in the dear Saviour—alas to me if I do not, for I have no comforter, no companion in my room except Him. I hope, sir, you will never forgot me in your prayers to Him, that he would bind my feet upon that immovable rock Christ.

“I trust earnestly that you will present my deepest regard to Mr. Foss, and my warmest respect to Mr. Taylor, and to every friend who shall ask concerning me abundant compliment. And if you should come to New York, you may find my dwelling-place Sixth-avenue, No. 260; and if you write to me, direct it under Mr. H——’s care.

“Sir, I am your most affectionate friend,
“AO. BISHALLANY.”

CHAPTER V.

IN April, 1856, Antonio returned to Amenia, and remained until June. The testimony of his teachers and fellow-pupils was that his application and progress in his state of health were truly remarkable. As everywhere and always he was universally esteemed, and made many warm friends.

Soon after resuming his studies he addressed the following letter to Mr. H——.

“FROM AMENIA TO NEW YORK, April 19, 1856.

“TO MR. J. C. H——:

“DEAR SIR—I have neglected my duty in not writing to you sooner; but, however, you know the reasons of that. The first is the spelling, the second is the pain of bowing; therefore I am endeavoring to write you a few words to set your mind in rest concerning me. Know that I am reached to Amenia quite safe, and Mr. Foss has treated me with respect, and has given me a room down stairs with wood-stove, and in fact am here well situated; and to inform you about

my health is not yet to say any thing, for since I came here we have scarcely seen the sun out. I am undertaking the study of three grammars—English, Greek, and Latin. I find them to be very hard; my running in them no swifter than the creeping reptile.

“Dear sir, however, I charge to present my deepest regard to the benevolent mother, and my perfect compliments to the bountiful father, and my respect to Miss Sarah and Laura, and to all the brethren. I shall write to the mother after a while and acquaint her with all that shall happen, for happy is the man who has a mother like me in the strange land. Dear sir, I beg you to present my reverence to Dr. C——, if you shall see him before I shall write to him; and I beg you also to present my warmest respect to Mr., Mrs., and Miss H——t, and their children. It was my duty to have written for every one a letter; but I am not able now, I hope to do it soon.

“I am your loving brother, and most dutiful friend,

“AO. BISHALLANY.”

REPLY.

“NEW YORK, April 27, 1856.

“MY DEAR ANTONIO—Your letter reached me safely. I hope the labor it cost you to write was nothing like so great as my joy at receiving it. But I know it was difficult for you to write it, and therefore it is all the more valuable to me. You know that there are four things which make any thing costly and desirable: namely, its usefulness, rarity, beauty, and workmanship.

“Your letter was useful, as it relieved my anxiety concerning you, and informed me about your studies and situation; and further, because it taught me how perseverance and application will enable me to accomplish any thing that is right and proper, as it has enabled you to write a letter in English after a few months' residence in our land.

“And it was rare. I believe I have only one other letter from you; and be assured that, should my life be spared, I shall often turn to them, and read them with pleasure and profit.

“And to my eyes it was beautiful; not that

the grammar or spelling or writing was perfect. I view it only as a link in a long chain of events; and when I look at this link, I see the valuable events of your life, or operations of God's providence from the time that it influenced you to purchase a Bible in order to gratify your taste for reading, until under the influence of the same providence you are now prompted and enabled to address me this letter, which, bringing anew to my mind the power and wisdom and love of our Father, makes me penitent over sins that are past, and directs me to the source whence by faith we can derive whatever we need, and just as and when we need it.

“It is more than beautiful. The righteous is never forsaken, and his seed is never permitted to beg bread. When our friends forsake us, the Lord taketh us up. His ways are past finding out, and yet there is the assurance that all things work together for good to those who do his will. I do not like to indulge in disconnected pious ejaculations, for my experience is that they are very often connected with deceitful hearts, and I always am afraid of myself when I am inclined to

use them; but your experience so distinctly reflects God's presence and mercy, that every time I think of you I am led to look to Him, and in this instance to write of Him.

“One point of comparison remains. I have said the value of an article depends on its workmanship; and when I remember that there is but one Antonio to write to me, and that it costs much time and labor for every sentence of his letters, and that he has received largely of God's Spirit, I feel that there is a skilful and valuable workman whose work I can look at often—that it is such that ‘maketh not ashamed.’

“I am pained to hear that your breast hurts you when you bow down to write. It is better then not to write, or only a few lines at once. We all are anxious to hear from you, but I am sure would rather wait a month than receive letters which we know it is painful for you to write.

“I indulge a very strong hope that when warm weather comes you will grow stronger and better, and that as we say of plants, ‘April showers bring May flowers,’ so in your case the pleasant sunshine of next month will

bring out the buds and flowers of returning health.

“Are you not attempting to study too much at once? You will remember that I was very much afraid you would, and tried to convince you it was not best for you to do so. I am quite certain you ought to be able to read Latin tolerably well before you attempt Greek, otherwise your mind will get confused, and you will not get along I think as fast, and you will worry and study yourself into the grave. I of course may be mistaken, but I trust you will seriously consider what I say. Get fairly started in English first, for that is the most important of all; then begin Latin; and when you begin to read Latin, commence Greek grammar. Am I not right?

“I shall be very happy indeed to hear from you, but be careful of your health.

“Truly your friend,

“J. C. H.”

Antonio was greatly favored by having the friendship and kind feeling of Mr. H——. He was a friend indeed, who did not simply say, *Be ye warmed, and be ye clothed,* but

who actually relieved the wants and ministered to the comfort of his humble and afflicted Christian brother. The heart that loves Christ will love his disciples. The exhibition of true sympathy and affection towards the friends of Jesus, is a bright evidence of having passed from death unto life. The sacred Scriptures strongly inculcate the cultivation of this beautiful virtue, saying, "Be ye kindly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another." It is the new commandment of Christ that we should love one another; and the possession of this grace of the divine Spirit is an essential trait in Christian character. "If a man do not love his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" And it is not simply the emotion of love in the heart that God requires, or that will satisfy the true Christian. We are to do good, and communicate; to feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; aiding those who cannot recompense us, and finding our reward in the conscious pleasure of well doing, and the hope of the divine approbation. Such was the spirit that dwelt in a household where Antonio was a welcome

and frequent guest, and where each member seemed to have gained his grateful affection. Mrs. H——, whom he calls by the endearing title of mother, had manifested towards him a mother's care, and secured in return a filial regard.

His tender attachment is evinced in a letter from Amenia, dated May 3, 1856.

“DEAREST MOTHER OF THE STRANGER, MRS. H—— —My duty teaches me acquaint you with that happened since I have left New York. To the misfortunes of unfavorable seasons it has pleased God to add on me great weakness, that I hardly can walk a mile. When I consider my affliction in this land, I find no comfort except in repeating the history of your kindness; and when I charge my tongue to cease from declaration, he do answer me, May the mountains cease and depart, and hills be removed, but the kindness of this benevolent family shall never depart from my mouth. Next to seeing you is the pleasure of seeing your handwriting; and to hearing you is the pleasure of hearing from you. And if you write to me I will

thank you therefore as long as I live; and when I die my bones will thank you in their grave, for my pain has become intense, and my remedy is scarce procurable.

“I am your most obedient and most affectionate friend,

“AO. BISHALLANY.”

ANSWER.

“MONDAY MORNING.

“DEAR ANTONIO—I received your very kind and welcome letter some time ago. It gave me great pleasure to hear from you, but I regret very much to find you so weak, and not improving in health. I was in hopes the pure, bracing country air, with a little exercise and change of diet, would be of service to you; but do not be discouraged; pleasant, warm weather is coming, and the medicine which J—— ordered prepared for you may be the means of restoring you to health. If there is *any thing* I can do for you, Antonio, which will promote your comfort and happiness, let me know; any delicacy you would like which you cannot procure where you are, let me know, and I will send it to you. The children often speak of you. Antonio, I am

Bishallany.

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afraid writing fatigues you. Do not apply yourself too closely to books or study; but when the weather is warm and pleasant, exercise in the open air; avoid fatigue, and make yourself as comfortable as possible. The family all unite in much love to you; and accept the continued regard and affection of your sincere friend,

“S. A. H.”

“MAY 19, 1855.”

TO MRS. H—T.

“AMENIA, MAY 27, 1856.

“HONORED MADAM—Because you are endeavoring to bring every nation to the path of Christ, believe me, madam, that Christ is taking you to his own self as a soldier, for he is King of kings, and King of the nations. The whole of them have rebelled against him; therefore wisdom is to take the arms of Christ, by which you are subduing his enemies under his footstool. I should like very much to live until I shall be able to do something for Christ; and after I shall have done it, let his will be done; for it is duty to every Christian that he should do or write something for Christ before he die: therefore if I

should die before I have done any thing for Christ, I charge you that you may write upon my gravestone these words: 'This poor young man has died with grief because he had no opportunity to write something concerning Christ and Christianity.' I am enjoying daily the presence of my dear Saviour, and I am really happy. Our place begins to look something like summer: the trees begin to give us their delightful shade; the grass is shooting forth as if glad to see the summer again, after its long confinement beneath winter's snowy mantle. I hope you will excuse the badness of my explanation and uncorrected grammar.

"I am truly your most affectionate friend,
"AO. BISHALLANY."

The lady to whom the above letter was addressed has recently favored us with a brief communication, from which we select a few interesting incidents. "Antonio was a constant visitor at my house during the winter, bringing with him almost invariably his Arabic Bible, and while I read the English, translating from his own to observe the correspondence. His whole heart was absorbed in the one wish of doing something for the

Saviour. His conversation was always of a serious character; and he often expressed himself astonished that there should be in this enlightened country, so favored with religious privileges, any who did not serve God. He said he did not expect to find so many wicked people in America, and was grieved that so few should embrace the religion of Jesus; and felt sure that as soon as he became more familiar with the language, he should be able, God helping him, to bring many to the Saviour.

“After he was confined to his room I visited him frequently. He always expressed thankfulness that God had put it into his heart to come to this country, where he had learned so much of Christ, and found so many Christian friends. On one occasion I found him very feeble, having, as he told me, coughed all night. I said, ‘You should not have been left alone, Antonio.’ His countenance brightened, and he said, ‘Oh no, I have not been alone, the Saviour has been with me all night, and I asked him to take me with him; but no, he is not ready for me: perhaps he will let me do something for him

yet before he takes me. I *must*, oh I *must* do something for Christ. I want to lead souls to the blessed Saviour. He is so precious to me, I have enjoyed his presence so much, I want every body to come to Christ.' ”

FROM ABDALLAH EL WATWAT, BEIRUT, MAY 9, 1856, TO
ANTONIO BISHALLANY, AT NEW YORK.

(Translated from the Arabic.)

“MY DEAR ANTONIO—May your life be prolonged; and please receive the expression of my most longing desires to see the light of your countenance again in prosperity and health. Mr. Hurter has sent you a box of books, and in it are all the kinds you wrote for. I hope they will arrive safely. He will tell you whom to pay the amount to in America. As for the raisins, dry apricots, and pistachio nuts you ordered, pray do not think that I have made no effort to send them to your brother; but what delayed me was the non-arrival of the vessel coming from America to Beirût. I intended to send you the things by the gentleman that takes the books, but the will of the Lord permitted me not.

I was taken down with illness of great severity almost unto death. This was the reason of the delay in sending you the books; now, thank God, and through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ the Messiah, I have regained my health, and as the vessel is ready to receive it, I will have the box put on board immediately. I am vexed more than you are at the delay, for I fear that you have needed the things; but as I have already told you, the will of God put a stop to it. We have had various diseases, as well as the cholera, so that we had to leave for Solima, and were three months without work. When I went down to Beirût, Mary took the fever, and then the children; after that I had it, but still I thank God for all his mercies and favors. This is all that is necessary to say. Mary and the rest send their compliments to you. Your mother and your brother Abraham are continually sending letters to me inquiring after you. Good-by.

“Yours truly,

“ABDALLAH EL WATWAT.”

“BEIRUT, 27th of Nisan, (May 9,) 1856.”

FROM MR. J. C. H. TO ANTONIO.

"NEW YORK, May 25, 1856.

"DEAR FRIEND ANTONIO—I have not found an opportunity before to-day to answer your letter written eight days ago.

"The sky is again clouding over, and the chilly air and moaning wind carry my thoughts to Amenia, where perhaps you are suffering in consequence of the changing weather. But it is not in my heart to complain. I know that you stand on the Rock that is higher than you, and that you can recognize the hand of your loving Father in affliction and trial, no less than in prosperity and joy. 'Whom he loveth he chasteneth;' though I cannot believe that your sufferings are intended as a chastisement, but rather that others may see of the strength which his Spirit gives, and be led to serve their Father in heaven. I am sustained by the knowledge that what is happening to you is for your own and my own good and the good of the world; and so long as we continue to do all we can to arrest disease, scatter the pain, and restore to health, with all my friendship and love I cannot wish you to be relieved

from one moment of suffering which, notwithstanding prayer and effort, God in his wisdom subjects you to. I know that such words will not bring sadness to your heart, but will give you new strength and joy when you think of being accounted worthy to be placed in circumstances where the light of your Christian endurance and example shines so brightly on the world.

“Very truly your friend,

“J. C. H——.”

“AMENIA SEMINARY, May 25, 1856.

“MR. H—— :

“MY DEAR FRIEND—I have received your kind letter, and your bounty inquires about the medicine. I had it last Monday in the evening, and I have used it according to his direction. In three days my soul was going to quit my body, if I had not the medicine of the doctor. The doctor’s medicine it helped me better; if I had used it until this time I should have been improved considerably. Still, I am better now. Yesterday I had a ride on horseback, and I wished very much that you had been with me, for the excellent

sight of this country now cannot be imagined: for the trees begin to give us their delightful shade; the grass is shooting forth, as if glad to see summer again after its long confinement beneath winter's snowy mantle; indeed every thing begins to look gay.

“Dear sir, I received a letter from the dearest mother, encouraging me in my afflictions in such expressive manner, such as I never heard from my mother the like tenderness of heart; also telling me that Charley and Willy are getting better. I hope the next time to hear that they are cured entirely. I beg you also to give my respect to Mr. Henry, when you shall write to him. I received a letter from Rev. Dr. Cheever the same time I received yours. I also received a letter from Mr. Hurter at Beirût, and sending me a box of books to Boston according to your direction; they are coming by a ship is called Race-horse, sailed from Smyrna. I wrote a letter also to Dr. A——, begging him to inquire from Mr. Merwin, Bible-house, for he knew about her, if she arrived or not. She sailed from Smyrna, April, 1856. I beg you give my respect to

the parent, and to Miss Sarah and Miss Laura, and all the brethren.

“I am your most obedient and most affection friend,

“AO. BISHALLANY.

“Also Mr. Foss sends you his respects. Think not that I am writing much, for this is instead of my composition, and this would not hurt me.”

These several letters, fraught with expressions of sympathy and Christian counsel and comfort, must have been very consoling and pleasant to Antonio. His declining health would naturally affect his spirits. It impeded him in his studies, rendered his acquisition of knowledge laborious and painful, and cast a shadow over the prospect he had loved to contemplate of his future services in the missionary field. His kind friends knew his trials and sorrows; and though absent from him, they bore him upon their hearts, remembered him in their prayers, and addressed to him affectionate epistles adapted to cheer and encourage him under the pressure of affliction. How welcome those letters

were, and what a cordial they were to his heart, is evident in the grateful responses he so warmly uttered. They were like the coming of Joseph unto Jacob, bringing joy and gladness to his soul, and called forth gratitude not only to the dear friends who wrote them, but to his heavenly Father who thus disposed them to minister to his comfort.

Among the letters he received while at Amenia, was one from his beloved pastor, who took a lively interest in him, and from the period he became a member of his flock exercised over him the care of a faithful and tender shepherd. He regarded him as one of Christ's precious flock, and admired the humility and meekness, the love and zeal by which he was distinguished, and both he and his people gave proof of their Christian affection towards this humble and interesting disciple by many acts of beneficence.

“NEW YORK, May 17, 1856.

“MY DEAR BROTHER BISHALLANY—I am very glad to receive a letter from you. What you say of your health makes me fear that you are in danger of applying

yourself too closely to study. Now that the weather is becoming settled and fine, you ought to be as much as possible in the open air. If you have the pain in your chest, you must not sit at your studies or be confined closely. But I hope, by the blessing of God, you are better. I hope you find the climate easier for you. Let me know how you are, and whether you want any thing. Your trust is in Christ, and you enjoy his presence, I hope, continually. That is a feast for the soul that makes up for every thing. He will give you strength for whatever he has for you to do. He is a gracious, compassionate, loving Saviour. He is for you your home, your country, your physician, your portion, your all. You have only to keep near to Him, and in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God, that passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

“ Most affectionately and truly yours,

“ GEORGE B. CHEEVER.”

An unfinished letter was found in Antonio's handwriting. The name of the person

to whom it was written is not mentioned, but we can readily conjecture whose kind attentions were thus tenderly felt.

“AMFNIA SEMINARY, Tuesday, June 3, 1856.

“MY DEAR SIR—I have received that kind letter, which has cheered me by presenting the sympathy of the writer. But it has been drenched in the flowing tears of my eyes before I had read it. Dear sir, think not that to be of grief or sorrow: no; but it is from rapture, joy, and ecstasy. I consider it to be the greatest thing ever has been on earth to find such excellent birth and unsullied race cheering me always by his sweetest speech and supplying my want in all. But I say it is not you; it God’s work-hand manifest in you.”

As every comfort is sweetened by recognizing the hand of God in it, and regarding it as a gift of his love, so the friends of Antonio were rendered doubly precious by his habit of acknowledging in them the providence of the Lord. And not only did he view them as blessings of divine Providence, but

as the workmanship of divine grace. "It is not you; it is God's work-hand manifest in you." He knew that man was naturally selfish, covetous, and ready to seek his own advantage at the sacrifice of that of others. He had seen probably, in his own country, much of cruelty and oppression. The discovery of such kindness and affection as Antonio experienced here, and that from comparative strangers, therefore filled him with amazement, and awakened all the tender emotions of his heart. It created gratitude, joy, and rapture; and leading him from the gift to the giver, called forth his praise to that adorable Being who disposes the human heart to love and sympathy, and directed those loving and sympathizing hearts towards himself, a poor stranger in a strange land.

In the afflictions of Christ's humble poor He has a fellow-feeling, and has taught us by his example on earth to minister to their wants and to comfort them in their sorrows. He experienced the trials of poverty and destitution, and condescended to the deepest humiliation for our good; and ours is the ob-

ligation to cultivate the mind of Him, "who though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich." In acts of kindness to the destitute of Christ's family, we honor and please their Lord and Saviour, for they are his redeemed ones, and we give evidence of our faith in the works of charity and benevolence which are its natural fruit.

Anxious as Antonio was to obtain an education, and resolute and persevering as he was in defiance of bodily infirmities, yet he was so enfeebled that his strong will and buoyant spirit were compelled to succumb; and in the month of June he felt the necessity, and his friends saw it, of abandoning his studies, and the idea was very seriously entertained of a sea-voyage. With a mind pretty well made up to undertake it, he again bade adieu to the seminary and to the pleasant associations formed there, and for the present at least, to the hopes connected with the education he was receiving, as enabling him to accomplish the darling purpose of his life, and came to New York. He was for some time confined to his bed, and it became

so evident that he was too much prostrated to undergo a voyage, that the idea was abandoned.

Instead of sailing for Syria, his books were laid aside, his expectation of becoming a missionary relinquished, and his plans of future usefulness as a laborer in the gospel vineyard were broken up. Emaciated in body, suffering with a heavy cough, far away from his kindred and native land, our interesting friend was indeed passing through the deep waters of affliction. How true it is that man "deviseth his way, but the Lord directeth his steps;" that we plan and purpose a course of action and anticipate its results, but the divine mind may have determined altogether differently. The comfort of the Christian consists in knowing that his way is thus ordered by infinite wisdom and love, for he is conscious of his ignorance and shortsightedness and inability to govern himself. He knows that if left to the guidance of his own fallible judgment he would be likely to err, and inflict upon himself and upon others the most serious injury. With pleasure therefore he recognizes the supremacy of God,

and says, The Lord reigneth, and I will rejoice.

Antonio no doubt felt the sustaining efficacy of this truth, for he loved God and exercised in Him the highest confidence. He was too familiar with the word of God to lose sight of His all-controlling providence, and his conceptions of the glorious attributes of Jehovah assured him that what God did was always best.

In the sorrows of this dear suffering disciple the Lord Jesus took a tender interest, and opened to his soul the promises and benefits of the everlasting covenant, assuring him that afflictions are among the all things that work together for good. His faith rested upon the Saviour; and in the enjoyment of His presence, in the communications of His grace, in the fellowship of his soul with Him, he had meat which others knew not of—a holy peace, a pure and satisfying consolation, that converted his sick-room into a Bethel, and gave him a foretaste of heaven.

There is a gracious design in the afflictions which our heavenly Father sends upon his

children: they are the trials of their faith and obedience. As God tempted or tried Abraham by commanding the sacrifice of his only son, so he puts the piety of his people to the test; and blessed is that man who, having passed through the fiery ordeal, is proven to be of the pure gold, and whose "faith, being more precious than gold, though it be tried by fire, shall be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Afflictions are designed to purify the heart from the dross of corruption and to brighten its Christian virtues. He chasteneth us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness, that we may be assimilated to his moral character and fitted for a higher and nobler existence. They are intended to wean us from earth, to render us sensible that the dearest joys we have below may vanish from our sight; and that if we would secure a pure and substantial bliss, we must look away from the creature to the Creator, from the things that are seen and temporal to those that are unseen and eternal. They are designed to elevate our hearts towards heaven,

to cause us to feel that this world is not our home, and that we have here no continuing city, but seek one to come, a city which hath foundations, whose maker and builder is God. The rich personal experience of this humble servant of Christ, and his habit of drawing instruction and comfort from the living fountain of divine truth, qualified him thus to recognize the purpose of God in the disappointments and sufferings which had crossed his pathway. He knew they came from the Being who loved him and whom he loved, and they drew his soul nearer to the great attracting centre of his affections. His perfections he adored, His person he loved, in His word he reposed his trust, and to His will he bowed in humble and cheerful acquiescence.

While he was confined to his room or his bed, kind Christian friends without had not forgotten him. Many hearts turned towards him with sympathy, and many prayers went up to God in his behalf.

The following letter from a pious female friend must have been a cordial to his heart.

“RICHFIELD SPRINGS, July 6, 1856.

“MY DEAR FRIEND—It is with much sadness I learn through my sister that you are not as well as you were when I last saw you. And I fear you must be very much worse, as you have been obliged to leave your study, for that I know was the strongest desire of your heart, to fit yourself for preaching the gospel for the benefit of your fellow-creatures.

“But it may be, Antonio, that your heavenly Father sees fit to spare you further labor on earth, and is fitting you to fill a more exalted station. To know that we are under a divine Leader, and that he knoweth all things, is indeed a comfort to our fainting hearts. And of you it may be truly said, ‘When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.’ Your path has been an uncommon one, plucked as it were from the burning, from darkness and error, and brought to a knowledge of the blessed Saviour. A bed of sickness is, many times, like a refiner’s fire. May it prove so to you and to me, my dear friend. How well I know how to sympathize with you. But while we

see the dark things of this world departing and are sad, *look up*. I regret very, very much that I am not able to administer to your comfort. I am still suffering from debility, which makes me think the more of you. . . . Hoping to hear you are more comfortable,

“I remain your sincere friend,

“E. St. J.”

Wise and animating advice to “*look up*.” What relief would the tempest-tossed Christian find, did he often turn away from the billows that beat against his bark, and look up to Him who rules the winds and the waves. He can either rescue us from the calamities that have befallen us, or can give us grace to bear them. Looking to Him, we may see a Father’s face smiling through the cloud, and hear a voice saying, “It is I; be not afraid.”

What a comfort, amid this world’s sorrows, to *look up* to that bright and happy home, where the weary shall be at rest, and where sickness, pain, sorrow, or sin shall never disturb the peace of the redeemed.

“ *Look up* to yonder world ;
See myriads round the throne ;
Each bears a golden harp,
And wears a glorious crown.
With zeal they strike the sacred lyre,
And strive to raise their praises higher.”

Antonio had fixed his eye upon that celestial world. He could say, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who of his eternal purpose hath begotten us unto a lively hope in Jesus Christ, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.” He looked up and hoped to be with Jesus, and behold his face in righteousness—to be one of those blood-washed myriads who stand around the throne of God—to have a crown of glory upon his head and a golden harp in his hand, and to join the general song of praise that will be poured forth to God and the Lamb.

Antonio’s critical state and great weakness requiring constant skilful attention, a successful effort was made to secure for him the superior accommodations of the New York Hospital, on Broadway, which was founded

by a voluntary association, and is sustained by the subscription of its members and the contributions of the benevolent. Many of the patients whose circumstances are limited are received gratuitously, and others who have the means to do so, pay a certain amount per week. Many persons of respectability residing at hotels and boarding-houses, when suffering from sickness or injuries, go to the hospital to avail themselves of the superior advantages of nursing and medical attention which are there to be enjoyed. Here Antonio had a large room to himself, and received the kind attentions of Mr. Darrach, the intelligent and faithful superintendent, and his amiable and excellent wife, and the visits of his numerous friends. For several weeks he arose as usual in the morning, and remained up during the day, sometimes walking out on the grounds to enjoy the refreshing air. But his disease gained rapidly, and his sufferings were so great that he sometimes became impatient and irritable. A colored nurse noticing this, at first thought it not consistent with his being a true Christian; but she at length changed her mind, and said her com-

plaint arose more from want of grace in herself than in him. She is now, we trust, with him among the spirits of the just made perfect. Antonio had been accustomed to yield most careful service and attention to those who were entitled to it from time to time, and now when the tables were reversed, he required equal faithfulness from others. "I have been not a little amused," observes one who saw him often, "at his decided manner where service was due to him. It was not violent or unkind, but it was in the tone of one requiring something to which he was entitled."

The dispensations of Providence towards him were indeed dark and inscrutable. He had seemed directly called to missionary labor, and the way was marvellously opened before him. His whole soul was inspired with a longing desire to embark in the work. "Woe is me," he exclaimed, "if I preach not the gospel." "Do you think," said he, "that I would otherwise have abandoned my property, submitted first to the neglect and contempt of my friends, and then have been separated from them and left my home to come to

a strange land among strangers?" And now, just as by severe toil he had mastered the English language so that there was real pleasure in his studies, and he could fairly enter the wide field of usefulness for which he had so long and so ardently panted, and felt that he had the weapons with which successfully to attack the strong-holds of Satan which he saw reared around him, was he to die? Could such be the will of God? He thought not.

But when he came to view his disappointments and sickness and sufferings and frustrated designs and blasted hopes in the light of divine dispensations, and felt that God his heavenly Father was the author of them all, his mind became calm, and with the spirit of humble and holy resignation he said, "Thy will be done."

To his friends he was always kind and affable, usually receiving them with a sweet smile. The number who visited him, including several clergymen from different denominations who had become interested in him, proved he had a place in the hearts of those who knew him. Among the clergymen

whom he gladly welcomed, was the Rev. Dr. Holdich, who thus writes:

“On receiving from him a request to call and see him, I took the first opportunity of so doing, and found him sitting up indeed, but much reduced in flesh, and evidently failing very fast. I called on him repeatedly after this, and I remember very well the state of his mind and the general drift of his remarks. From my first interview he had no hope of recovery. He even thought his end very near, much nearer in fact than it proved. Yet he expressed no regrets. He seemed peaceful and resigned. He observed that God had been faithful to him, and that nothing had failed of all God’s promises. At each visit he requested me to pray with him, always desiring that I would first read a portion of the Scriptures.

“At another visit, when speaking of his anticipated death, he remarked that ‘he had nothing to complain of. God had been very good to him. Yet he did sometimes regret that he was not permitted to finish his education, and return to his own country to preach the gospel to his countrymen.’ He

expressed also a wish that he might have been permitted to live and acquire sufficient ability to publish his own views of the holy Scriptures. It was evidently his impression that, by very close and diligent study of the Bible, he had acquired a clearer and deeper insight into the meaning of the sacred record than most persons possess.

“On another occasion, finding he could not endure much longer, I inquired something about his relations in Syria, and asked if he wished any communication to be made to them. He replied that he had attended to all that; and that as soon as he found or believed his recovery hopeless, he had written a letter to inform his friends of his condition; that it would be found in his trunk; and that he desired that after his death it might be forwarded.

“During all this time he appeared to rest upon the atonement of Christ, and seemed to be filled with peace and hope through faith in him. Towards the latter part of his life, he suffered much pain; his breathing became oppressed, and it was very difficult for him to converse. On one occasion he re-

quested that at his death I would attend and perform the funeral services, which I agreed to do. He died, however, while I was out of town.

“The last call I made on him was less satisfactory than the others, on account of his exhaustion and inability to converse. I spoke to him on the mysteries of divine providence, the design and, under the divine Spirit, the purifying effect of suffering, the necessity of submission and patience, with such other topics as his situation suggested, to all which he seemed to pay great attention. I then read the Scriptures and offered prayer. As I took leave he pressed my hand, and thanked me for what I had said, and for coming to see him.”

We here insert a translation of the letter Antonio addressed to his brother, to be forwarded after his decease. It will be considered a remarkable production, glowing with pious sentiment expressive of his own peace and Christian hopes, and his concern for the spiritual welfare of his beloved kindred and friends. It was written in Arabic, with an accompanying note in English to Mr. H—,

who has forwarded it to Syria agreeably to the writer's request.

“ To Soleema, on Mount Lebanon, Syria :

[“ To be delivered into the hands of Hinna (John) Saad, Allah, or to Abraham-Joseph Bishallany.]

“ Do not ask any thing belonging to the inheritance from this country. The income was sufficient for my physician, and the expenses of instruction and the schools only are found in the library of books, amounting to a sum of two thousand piastres. They are all in the English language—would be of no use to you, and are willed to my friends here. May God prolong your life.

“ In the words of the poet,

“ The man of fear appears from under his hiding-place.

“ The heart has melted from very hardship.

“ The eye weeps for the separation from friends.

“ At this distance there is no one near me or to meet in a busy, noisy world.

“ No questions but in the day of accounting. There debtor and creditor will meet

face to face, and justice will be rendered on demanding, and give every one his right; and the false are cast out, and the wicked plunged into Satan's jail, and the righteous elevated to the highest places."

"From New York, America, to Soleema, on Mount Lebanon, Syria:

"TO MY MOST HONORED AND ESTEEMED BROTHERS, JOHN SAAD, ALLAH, AND ABRAHAM—May the Master of all things preserve them in peace.

"After presenting you from the depths of the heart my salutations, and asking after your health, my wish is that you be in the enjoyment of complete health and prosperity. Then if it should please you to ask after the condition of him who has none, (in the body,) only friendship and amity, at the date hereof he is in a very bad state under the mercy of God. The reason of that is this: he took a cold in the month of Nisan, (April,) 1855, and in this country all the doctors refused to bleed, for bleeding is not the treatment here, and not one could be found who would agree to let blood. Then my cold came on afresh

with a bad cough, and I was put under medical care, and took medicines until I spent about eight thousand piastres; and in all this illness I was not confined to bed, and was continually pursuing my studies and learning gradually without stopping at all. I took cold again in the month of Haziran, (June,) 1856, and then felt as if I was no longer for this world. Then I wrote this explanation, and will leave it with one of my friends in this country; and when I die, for him to send it to my country, that they may know the reason, and their minds be not confused at the cessation of correspondence between us in this vain world.

“Since every creature must die, and every righteous soul will be gathered unto Christ the Redeemer in the immortal world, I hope to meet you before the Judge when he shall be sitting on his throne in glory, purified from sin and become sons of his right hand, as promised from the beginning of the world, there like the angels of the Father, in unity, without separation, and live together in a new world without beginning or end. I write you that you may not think that what has

happened to me has been through carelessness or through neglect, for I was well treated and served in every respect. Neither must you think that I die unhappy, for I am truly happy in separating from this world, and my eyes are filled with all things, (abundantly satisfied with every thing.) I have no longer any desire for this world, and have had enough of it. Truly have I passed good and happy times here with my Christian brothers in this country, as I can say, Even Solomon in all his glory has not seen a better or more happy time than I have. I go happy, reaching forward to join my Saviour, the Saviour of all that come unto him. And I pray you earnestly to seek him, to abandon all earthly vanities, to hold fast unto truth, and wash yourselves in His blood, that you may be clean from your old uncleanness. Here I present you my best salutations, and here for the last time can I say, Peace be unto you. Mourn not at all, but be glad of heart and in ease of mind. I beseech you, O brother Abraham, to kiss for me the hands of mother; take care of her and of brother David. I pray to God our Creator, that he may make

easy to you the way of life and prosper your affairs, and be with you in all circumstances. Now I pray you present my salutations to all relations and friends, especially from one going to leave this vain world. May God the Master preserve you from all evil and trouble and danger, and keep you in all good.

“I have written this while able to do so, but without date, since I know not when I shall be called away.

“Your brother,

“ANTONIO,

“Son of Joseph, son of Daher the Bishallany, from So-leema, on mount Lebanon.”

COPY OF THE ACCOMPANYING NOTE.

“MR. J. C. H———This is the letter which ought to be sent after you shall bury me, or after my death, to my home, but not before; for it contains the explanation of my disease, and (it is) the last letter they will receive from me in this transitory world. Dear sir, I am the person that your goodness has conferred (favor) upon.

“I am, with much regard, yours,

“AO. BISHALLANY.

“I beg you that it be directed to Mr. George C. Hurter, Beirût, and he will direct it to my home.”

What a consolatory letter, and how full of affection! Separation and trial had not diminished his love for his endeared relatives. From the statement received from his Syrian friend Abdallah el Watwat, that Antonio's mother and brother Abraham were continually sending letters inquiring after him, we infer that the alienation of feeling and hostility they indulged at the period of his leaving home had in a measure worn off, or perhaps given place to renewed attachment and confidence. Antonio must have received this intimation with peculiar pleasure, and felt the emotions of reciprocal affection glow with fresh ardor. Love to his mother especially seemed to be a striking and beautiful feature of his character, and her image, now as he was about to leave the world, arose vividly before his mind and revived the tenderest recollections. He could not die without sending this last pledge of his undying love. With what earnest entreaty he writes :

“I beseech you, O brother, to kiss for me the hands of mother; take care of her and brother David.” It reminds us of the divine Redeemer, who, expiring upon the cross, looked with filial affection upon his mother, and said to a disciple, “Behold thy mother: and from that time the disciple took her unto his own home.”

But devoted as was Antonio's heart to his earthly friends and kindred, he had a dearer Friend in heaven—Jesus his Elder Brother, his compassionate Saviour who died for his redemption. He had committed to him all his material interests, and found him to be his all-sufficient support upon earth, and now he longed to be associated with him in glory. “I go happy, reaching forward to join my Saviour.” The presence of Christ constitutes the chief blessedness of heaven. There he will reveal his glory, and pour joy unspeakable into the souls of his saints. And the dying Christian contemplates the vision of his face as the consummation of his fondest hopes. To see the King in his beauty, to be sheltered in his arms, to enjoy his smiles and favor, to hear his voice, and walk with

him in white on the golden streets of the new Jerusalem, forms his highest idea of happiness. Paul desired to be with Jesus. John wrote of seeing him as he is; and David exclaimed, "I shall behold thy face in righteousness." And Antonio only manifested a heart in unison with these ancient servants of God, when "he reached forward to join his Saviour, the Saviour of all who come to him."

The hope which this precious child of God cherished was an anchor to his soul while tossed upon the rough waters, driven by the tempest of affliction and suffering. He looked to heaven, and in the dazzling blaze of its glory earth vanished out of his sight. He had enough of it, and had no longer any desire for it. A light came from the future to illumine the present, and the sufferings of this life were forgotten in the joy that was approaching. A beam of sunshine emanated from the throne of God, and dispelled the clouds of sorrow and changed the rain-drops into forms of light and beauty. In this bright and joyous anticipation of the future he cheerfully resigned his interest in present good,

patiently endured his sufferings, calmly waited the time of his departure, and amid the gloom of a sick and lonely chamber called up beautiful visions and bright fancies, such as would come at the bidding of a mind familiar with the images and pictures of the sacred Scriptures. The Holy Bible was the ground of his hope, and the exceeding great and precious promises were no doubt the subject of sweet reflection and the source of rich consolation during this period of his illness.

With his faith resting on this blessed word of God, he could contemplate death with composure, and speak of his expected decease as an event of agreeable anticipation. He could take his pen and write to his friends in Syria announcing his approaching end, and speak of it as one would speak of an intended journey or visit to a distant place. It was not a forbidding or repulsive thought, but one full of cheering and delightful emotions. "I am truly happy in separating from the world. I hope to meet you before the Judge purified from sin; there like the angels of the Father in unity, without separation, and live together in a new world without end."

What an instructive and consoling epistle was this to be sent from a dying Christian to his friends in Syria. What a testimony to the reality and supporting power of evangelical faith, to be transmitted to those who knew not the pure gospel of salvation. Who can estimate the effect of a letter written under such circumstances, in a spirit so kind, and uttering truths so solemn and impressive? May not God bless these affecting appeals of Antonio, penned on the confines of the eternal world, to the conversion of his mother and brothers, and gather them all into the fold of Christ?

A second kind letter was received by our sick brother from his excellent friend Mrs. St. J——, which must have been grateful to his heart.

“RICHFIELD SPRINGS, July 26, 1856.

“MY DEAR FRIEND ANTONIO—I am very happy to hear you are so surrounded with kind friends and comforts, and only regret that it is not my privilege to see you and bear a part in contributing to your comfort; but I can and do offer my feeble prayers for you, that as your day is, so may your strength

be. I am now writing you, Antonio, on the little table that you occupied so often last summer, with the Bible you loved so much to study. I never see it without thinking of you, and only wish that I could read it as profitably as you did. And now as each day is taking you nearer to your Father's mansion, it is only the selfishness of friends that would wish your stay on earth to be prolonged, for we have the blessed consolation of knowing that our sorrow is not the sorrow of those who have no hope, and that your gain would be very great.

“Has my dear pastor, the Rev. Dr. Tyng, called to see you? I know he will, so soon as he learns of your illness; it is his delight to do good, and his presence always imparts comfort in a sick-room, for he loves to speak of Jesus; and what is there besides Him that can sustain and strengthen us on our bed of sickness and pain? I know *that* will be your strong-hold, together with faith in a covenant-keeping God.

“I remain your sincere friend,

“E. ST. J.”

The connection of Antonio with the semi-

nary at Amenia was productive of much pleasure both to himself and to the teachers and pupils. His affable manners and earnest piety, together with a natural simplicity of character, won their esteem. His sickness and removal from the institution were deeply regretted; but although absent, he was not forgotten. Sincere and permanent friends were created among his fellow-students, especially among those whose opinions and feelings on religious things flowed in the same channel with his. Such could not fail to love him for his real excellence, and to seek the advantage of his Christian intercourse. Of these was the writer of the following letter, which testifies his abiding affection.

“AMENIA, August 15, 1856.

“RESPECTED FRIEND—It is several weeks since I received a letter from your friend Mr. H——, informing me of your failure in returning to Syria, and your severe illness.

“I had thought to hear a very different story from you—that your health was becoming better, and that you would be permitted to fulfil and accomplish the labor chosen by

the blessing of God: but it is otherwise; and though we cannot see how or what his plans are, yet we can feel that he knows best, and will order all for his own glory and the highest good of those who love him. I recollect, in reading the life of Obookiah, that he was almost ready to go to his native land with a good education and brilliant talents and fervent love to Christ, and by a mysterious providence he was struck down in the height of his hopes; but the sympathy which was awakened by his death led several who were preparing to preach the gospel to turn their attention to the Sandwich islands, and so his death was the means of doing more good than his life could have been. And though you may not do what you wished, yet it is God's work, and he will take care of it. It may be that in the same way or in another salvation will be spread in Syria.

“The Saviour's presence must be very dear to you in your sickness; and I know that he is near to those who trust in him.

“My father died a little more than a year ago, and his disease was the same as yours; but his trust in Christ was firm, and he long-

ed to go and be with him: when he spoke he would almost seem enraptured. And with the hope that we may all be fitted for his coming, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

“Sincerely your friend,

“S. A. S.”

Antonio's chief source of sorrow was his being disabled from returning to preach the gospel in his native land. This was the great desire of his heart, for which he had forsaken his country, faced the perils of the sea, come to a strange land, and labored to acquire the knowledge of our language. He longed to bear the message of salvation to his brethren, his kindred according to the flesh, and had looked forward with holy joy to the period when, as a herald of the cross, he should speak of Jesus and him crucified to those who were enshrouded in the gloom of ignorance and superstition. Disappointed in his cherished expectations, he thought with bitter grief of the evils he might have mitigated, and the good he might have accomplished, had he gone, and was ready to exclaim, Alas, my people, who will go for your deliverance? who will cause the light of

evangelical truth to shine upon your benighted land? The suggestion that his death might accomplish even more than his life met his case. He was ready to die for the gospel's sake; for with Paul he could say, "I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die for the name of the Lord Jesus." It was an animating thought that his removal from earth might be the precious seed from which other laborers might spring, and that thus a rich harvest of souls might be gathered, though his own lips should be closed in the silence of the tomb.

The sorrows of our friend, from whatever source they came, were alleviated by the power of a living faith beholding the realities of another world. Jesus was near him, and his smiles shed peace upon his soul. God was ripening him for heaven, staying his feet more firmly upon the Rock of ages, and drawing his soul upwards towards himself.

About this period Antonio addressed a letter to Mr. H——, in which we see the strength of his faith in the gospel, and its influence upon his heart, as well as that tender affection and gratitude which were so

beautifully manifested towards those who ministered to his comfort.

“My beloved Mr. J. C. H.:

“DEAR SIR—I believe that after our separation from this transitory world, your beneficent and sympathizing heart will feel sorrow on my account. But let us now use the language of the apostle, who said, ‘For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.’ I believe that God at first made the universe, and man after all; for it is only to show him the marvellous handwork of his Maker, and to muse himself in it for a while, being the garden and not the continuing home. So it is, my dear sir, your beneficence has not left any thing in the world that I wanted and you have not done it. You have done to me as Christ did to Lazarus; for you have showed me gladness, joy, and glory more than that which I had expected. But all these things are strength to my belief, and prove to me the sureness of the gospel. For it is said the gospel—in them that are saved, and them that perish—to the one is the savor of death unto death, and to

the believer the gospel is the savor of life unto life. For the gospel opened the gate of heaven, and by the same gospel the gate of hell is opened. Yes, I knew it by experience: in the time of my investigation of the Scriptures, and different doctrines and laws, I became infidel; then I felt that I was standing on the gate of hell, and was going to step into it. But, lo, the voice of the prophet Ezekiel, saying unto me, 'Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will you die?' Ezek. 33:11. And Christ crying, 'Come ye all unto me, and ye shall live.' And he said also, 'The dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.' Then I said in myself, I will hear these voices and follow them and try them, and see whether all these sayings are sure. But I found them to be a strong high Rock of salvation, and strong high rock of destruction; mighty to save, and mighty to destroy—mighty to destroy them only who deny the gospel, the savor of death unto death. When I was far from him, I was dead; but when I heard his voice, I lived with you in the kingdom of Christ, having been dead. For the kingdom of

Christ in this world is the happiness of Christians, that they may be able to prepare for that which is to come. Therefore I am not dying, but going to my eternal home, the everlasting kingdom, to praise him with the angels of his Father in heaven. Therefore rejoice at this, and be glad; therefore I leave unto you my peace and my love.

“Your beloved,

“AO. BISHALLANY.”

“Soon after entering the hospital,” writes Mr. H——, “he entirely threw aside his books and put his house in order for another world. For some time previous to his death, he expressed his wishes as to what should be done when he should cease to be. He had written a letter in Arabic to his friends in Syria, announcing his death, which he desired to be forwarded after his decease. He wished his Arabic clothes to be sent home, where they could be worn and be of use; and saddened me much on one occasion by insisting that I should remove his books and other effects, which he desired me to keep. He was much delighted by a ride through Green-

wood Cemetery, and I promised that when he died he should be buried there."

Mr. Darrach the superintendent was sensibly impressed with the striking qualities of Antonio. He not only was pleased to render his situation as comfortable as possible, but found special gratification in presenting to him the consolations of the gospel. In the different interviews he held with him, he was often surprised and delighted with the pious and elevated sentiments that would drop from his lips, expressions of attachment to the Bible, forcible illustrations of scriptural truth, and sudden outbursts of joy at the discovery of the glory of Christ and the prospect of heaven. One of these remarkable occasions he thus records :

"During the evening twilight of a day, about two weeks since, I sat at the bedside of our deceased friend Antonio Bishallany. I had presented various passages of Scripture, and from the lives of Christians, confirmatory of the necessity of submission to the divine will, as preparatory to fuller and more complete assimilation of the human character to that of the divine, and greater fitness

for the enjoyment of holy society. For the purpose of ascertaining his assent to the views I had presented, I closed my remarks with the words, 'You believe these views?' with an interrogative accent.

"Our friend received my query as expressive of doubt on my part of his full belief in the Scriptures. After a satisfactory explanation to remove such impression, he rose in his bed, and with a much more than usual strength of voice, addressing me by name, he uttered these words :

"'I believe the Bible to be the book of revelation, the book of knowledge, the book of wisdom, the book of salvation, the book of life; to it I devoted my life.

"'Mr. Darrach,' he repeated with strong emphasis, 'you place a copy of the Bible in my coffin, and let it be buried with me.'"

To a friend who made a morning call and asked how he was, he replied, "I am unwell; through the mercy of God, Christ is all to me, and I am all to him." When asked if he feared to die, he answered, "Oh no; he says to me, 'In my Father's house are many mansions;' why should I fear?" His faith was

simple and confiding like that of a little child. He seemed to rest entirely on the teaching of the Bible, and Christ therein revealed as the Saviour of sinners.

“For several days previous to his death,” continues the narrative of Mr. H——, “he did not eat, the difficulty of swallowing being so great, and he remarked that it was useless to prolong his sufferings. I saw him on the morning of the day he died. He seemed to be perfectly at rest. His eyes were fixed as if gazing upon something, and a pleasant smile played upon his features. He did not notice any thing, not even my entering or presence. The nurse however approached him, and asked him if he knew me; without any change of position, he uttered my name, which, so far as I know, were his last words. I added an inquiry as to his state of mind in view of the great change awaiting him, to which he paid no seeming attention, and gave no response—his gaze continuing fixed, a placid smile resting upon his features. His breathing became heavy, and soon his spirit took its flight” to the arms of that Saviour whom he so ardently loved.

Thus he expired, on the 22d of August, 1856, at the age of twenty-nine years; and it is a coincidence worthy of notice, that his birth, his departure from Syria, and his death occurred on the same day of the same month, August 22.

Agreeably to Antonio's request, Mr. Dar-rach placed a copy of the Bible with its opened leaves upon his breast, as he reposed in his coffin, and it was deposited with him in the tomb.

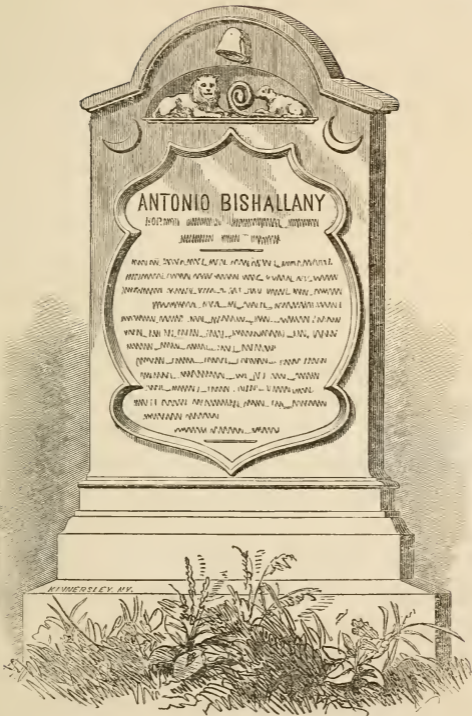
The funeral services were held on Sabbath afternoon, the Rev. Messrs. Jones, Milburn, and Dr. Crooks officiating. Although at a season of the year when very many of his friends were out of the city, and every clergyman who was acquainted with him, yet a goodly number met to pay their last respects. His remains were conveyed to Greenwood Cemetery. A lot was subsequently purchased, and beneath a simple tombstone rests all that is mortal of Antonio Bishallany.

“Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,
Though sorrow and darkness encompass thy tomb;
The Saviour hath passed through its portals before
thee,
And the lamp of his love is thy guide through its
gloom.”

Would you thus peacefully enter the eternal world, rejoicing like the weary traveller at reaching his home? Then build your hopes, as did Antonio, upon the "high Rock of salvation." Jesus has laid an immovable basis for the confidence, peace, and hopes of men in his atoning sacrifice, and he invites you to repose in him all your immortal interests. "Other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." They who build elsewhere build their house upon the sand, which will be swept away by the coming tempest. But here is a sure refuge for poor sinners, and Jesus freely invites you to come and trust in him. He who looked with pitying eye upon the poor Syrian, loves you and anxiously seeks your happiness. He came from heaven and died that you might live. He has long knocked at the door of your heart, imploring admission; and if you will open the door, he will come in and fill your soul with peace. He is able and willing to save. His righteousness is adequate to cover your guilt, and his Spirit to renew and sanctify your heart. All that you need to atone for

sin, to give peace to your conscience, to enlighten your mind, to strengthen you for duty, to support you in trial, and to fit you for heaven, is secured to you in Christ, who with himself will freely give you all things. Only believe, and he will be your Saviour; and being yours, you will have nothing to fear, for "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

Devote yourself to Christ in the spirit of entire consecration, not only to be saved by him, but to love and serve and honor him by a life of active usefulness. Catch his spirit and imitate his example who went about doing good. Like Antonio, desire to live that you may do something for Christ; and having labored for his cause, and blessed the world by your Christian influence, your dying hours will be cheered by the retrospect of a life well spent; and instead of having the inscription upon your gravestone, Here lies one who did nothing for Christ, your epitaph will be, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. Yea, saith the Spirit; that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."



The tombstone denoting the resting-place of our departed friend is white marble, with

a granite base.* Sculptured upon it are figures of a lion, a serpent, and a lamb, designed to represent his fearlessness, wisdom, and blamelessness; and upon a raised shield beneath is the inscription:

“ANTONIO BISHALLANY,

BORN NEAR BEIRÛT, SYRIA,

AUGUST 22, 1827.

DIED IN NEW YORK, AUGUST 22, 1856.

“EDUCATED A MARONITE CATHOLIC, HE FOUND, AFTER LONG AND EARNEST EXAMINATION AMID TRIALS AND DANGERS, THAT THE SCRIPTURES HAVE THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

“OBEDIENT TO THE COMMAND OFTEN UPON HIS LIPS, ‘FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE,’ HE CAME TO AMERICA TO PREPARE FOR MISSIONARY LABOR, AND STUDIED WITH UNABATED ZEAL.

“BUT GOD SENT DISEASE TO CALL HIM HOME.

* For the guidance of those who would wish to visit the grave of our Christian brother, we would say that it is located on Sassafras avenue, in Greenwood Cemetery, lot 10,197, section 181.

HIS MANY FRIENDS REGARD HIM AS A MAN WHO KNEW NO FEAR, BLAMELESS BEYOND REPROACH, AND SINGULARLY WISE TO OVERTHROW ERROR AND UPHOLD TRUTH.

“READER, WILL YOU MEET HIM IN HEAVEN?”

CHAPTER VI.

CONCLUSION.

SINCE the decease of our interesting friend, the Rev. Andrew J. Hunt, the Principal of the Amenia Seminary, has furnished the following beautiful tribute to his character.

“My first acquaintance with Antonio was in the autumn of 1855. I was at that time in charge of the Amenia Seminary, and after hearing from a friend the story of the young Syrian’s conversion, was very glad to undertake the direction of his studies, and give such aid as I might in preparing him for his chosen work. On his first coming to the school, I had some anxiety lest his oriental peculiarities might expose him to the jokes of thoughtless or mischievous boys; and knowing of no better protection for him than the charm of his own story, I briefly related to the students, before Antonio’s appearance among them, the leading incidents of his history. He was at once the hero of the school. The young men vied with one another in

showing him kind attentions, and I do not remember that he suffered any inconvenience or disrespect during all the time that he spent in the institution. Indeed there was that in the gentleness of his ways and simplicity of his spirit, brightened often by the play of true humor, which, aside from the interest of his life, would secure him friends in any society. Even the roughest nature felt the attraction and restraint of his genuine spirituality.

“As a student he labored under great disadvantages from his imperfect acquaintance with our language, but his zeal for study knew no bounds. He was eager to undertake tenfold more than he could accomplish, though yielding quietly to such direction and restraint as I found it necessary to give. Any labor or denial he counted small, if only he might become prepared to return to his native Syria and labor as a missionary among his own people. His health was very manifestly impaired, and he often seemed to realize that his time was short; but this conviction only seemed to intensify his desire and endeavor. ‘I am in the afternoon,’ he said

to me one day; 'I am late in the afternoon: I must make haste; I want to learn all I can; the sun is almost down. I pray Him to let me live; but if not,' and he pointed upward, while the eagerness on his face changed to a look of sweet submission—'but if not, I am ready, always ready.'

"His strength failed so rapidly that he was not able to make any great proficiency in his studies, but did enough to show capacities of no ordinary rank. His perceptions were clear and direct, and there was a certain alertness about his mental powers that gave peculiar vivacity to all his ideas and expressions. There were few persons in the house whose conversation was more uniformly entertaining. The English Bible he had not only read but *studied*, until he seemed perfectly familiar with all its parts; and I often sat and listened in surprise to his comments on the prophecies and the inner meaning of the profounder passages of the holy word. And this brings me to say that it was mainly as a Christian that Antonio laid such strong claim to my interest. The romance of his history, together with his pleasant simplicity of man-

ners and eager thirst for knowledge, made him distinguished among my pupils; but it was his religious character that has given him a permanent place in my memory. Perhaps I shall best characterize his piety by saying that it was preëminently *a life of faith*. It was always refreshing to us in our social meetings, hampered as we too often were by our fears and distrust, to witness Antonio's simple and entire reliance upon God's word. It did not seem to occur to him to doubt; but he really received the Bible just as it is, and believed it, *promises and all*. Nor was this an unproved faith; it had been sorely tried: he had made great sacrifices for Christ; he had given up father, mother, friends, home, possessions, well-nigh all that a man holds dear in this life; but his faith made all this loss gain. I remember that once, after alluding to these sacrifices with much tenderness, he repeated the promise of our Saviour, Matt. 19:29, and went on to thank the Lord for its rich fulfilment to him. 'I have left my great good mother,' he said, 'but God has given me a thousand mothers in this country. Every man is my father and my brother.' His fam-

ily attachments were very strong; and though he had been sternly banished from home, and rejected by his dearest relatives, he never ceased to pray for them. 'Oh Son of God, I pray you send out your Spirit and save them from their sins!' was a prayer often upon his lips, and uttered very manifestly from the depths of his heart. To go back and tell the story of the cross in his native land was a longing desire that seemed almost like a consuming fire within him. But God had other plans for his servant.

"It was but little that I had been able to do for him, and yet such was his thankfulness that he would persist in treating me with a sort of oriental deference, little knowing that in spirit I always sat at his feet. In midsummer I went abroad for a few months. My good-by to Antonio was saddened by the fear that I should not behold his face again. He had gone from Armenia when I returned, and before I could visit him in New York, I heard that he had entered into his rest.

"Poor Antonio! we used often to say as we thought of his banishment from home, and

saw from day to day his struggle with pain and disappointment. Rich, happy Antonio! my heart said as I heard of his release. He lost fields and gardens and home and friends, yea, and life itself; but he gained *Christ*, and went speedily to dwell with him in the paradise of God.

“‘Now of a lasting home possessed,
He goes to seek a deeper rest.
Good-night: the day was sultry here,
In toil and fear;
Good-night: the night is cool and clear.’”

The Rev. Cyrus D. Foss, successor of Mr. Hunt in the Amenia Seminary, writes: “Antonio’s history was certainly a remarkable one, for one so brief. His conversion was surely little short of a miracle. It seems to disprove Dr. Durbin’s favorite theory, that the gospel must come to a man by means of a human tongue in order to be effectual. It is surely a matter of most profound gratitude to God, that his Spirit should find out that poor Syrian in a distant land, and bring him to the cross. Antonio appreciated this. My heart was once deeply moved in a prayer-meeting to hear him say, from a full heart, ‘I

thank you that you sent your Saviour to me way down in Syria.' And it was often the burden of his devout praise that there was one Saviour for all men.

“He exhibited in beautiful combination an ardent zeal to do good to his countrymen, and an entire submission to the will of God. He made very rapid advancement in the acquisition of all knowledge, especially the divine. When he first came here, he told me he read the Bible in English, but prayed in Arabic—that he thought God could not understand English without an interpreter.

“I was surprised many times at Antonio's deep and extensive knowledge of Scripture. He would often ask me the meaning of different texts, and would express views of his own which would do credit to any divine.

“He has gone to a good school. It would seem as though it would be well if he might have lived to preach the gospel to his countrymen; but ‘He doeth all things well.’

“‘God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform.’

We may stand before his strange providences and wonder, but not complain.”

INSTRUCTIVE LESSONS.

THIS brief memoir furnishes an eminent instance of *the truth and controlling power of the sacred Scriptures.*

He whose character and history we have endeavored to describe was a Bible Christian. From the Bible he learned the way of life, by its influence on the conscience he was convinced of sin, and by the reception of its offered grace he obtained forgiveness, spiritual life, and happiness. He came to it as the word of God, and with implicit faith relied upon its teachings, believed its promises, and accepted the Saviour whom it revealed. He felt it as a living principle in his soul, creating him anew into the divine image, vitalizing all his moral powers, controlling his opinions, affections, and practice, and filling him with the sublimest hopes and richest consolation. It was a new volume to him, for its blessed pages had been concealed from his view; and having now access to these living oracles, and seeing that they testified of Je-

sus and made known the way of salvation to perishing men, he entered upon their investigation with all the ardor of one desiring to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he had sent. He applied to the study of the Bible all the vigor of his intellect and the earnestness of his heart. And knowing his need of divine illumination, he sought the guidance of the Holy Spirit. His researches were not in vain. He was taught of God, and though laboring under great disadvantages, he acquired a wonderful insight into the mind of the Spirit. Intelligent Christians listened with surprise and delight to his expositions of prophecies and his explanation of the more profound passages of God's word. He advanced ideas that would do credit to a divine, and exhibited a familiarity with the sacred volume that might be envied by others enjoying far greater facilities for biblical study. He was able to give a reason for the hope that was in him, to contend for the faith of the gospel, and to hold a controversy with intelligent and learned men in defence of the great principles of evangelical truth.

His knowledge of the Bible was not deriv-

ed from human aid, but from the book itself, comparing scripture with scripture, and observing the coincidence of God's truth with the operations of the Christian heart. He approached the Bible with the heart as well as the head, and learned not simply the outward letter, but the inward, spiritual import of the word. He that doeth my Father's will, "shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." The Spirit shall guide his people into all truth. There is a beauty and clearness and richness and spiritual import which some minds discern in the Scriptures beyond what is perceived by others. Humble, unlearned disciples of Jesus sometimes far excel the more intellectual though less pious follower of Christ in this spiritual insight into the word of God. They may be more sensible of the need of a direct influence from above; and looking for the Spirit to open their eyes and to reveal his mind in the printed page, they do, in answer to prayer and in fulfilment of God's promise, behold wondrous things in his law. It was so with this devoted, humble, praying servant of Christ. He seemed to gain access to the very

fountain of light; and the celestial beams resting upon the holy book brought out its spiritual meaning into visible characters, bright and beautiful, revealing the mind of God. He read them with wonder and reverence and joy, and felt their sanctifying and illuminating power.

But it was not by idle musing or dreamy contemplation that Antonio acquired his knowledge of the Bible; he studied it with untiring diligence. He remarked to a friend, that "if a person would seek for treasure concealed in a house, he must not simply sweep the floor, but tear up the boards and look beneath the surface; that the treasures of the Bible were deep down, and must be dug out by daily toil." It was thus he labored to understand the sacred volume, and found that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich."

As was natural to one recently converted, our friend thought he had a clearer perception of the meaning of the sacred record than most persons. And indeed, while he labored under many disadvantages, the fact of his being a native of the country where the Bi-

ble originated, and where most of its scenes were laid, gave him a great advantage in understanding the holy volume. Many passages in the Scriptures received light from knowing the customs and habits of eastern countries, the style of architecture, mode of cultivating the land, the dress and language of the people. We can learn these things from authors who have described them; but no description can give so vivid an impression as they have who have been residents of the East, and been familiar from childhood with the scenery of the country, the aspect of their cities and villages, their rural customs, implements of labor, and domestic habits. With all these Antonio was familiar; and in reading the Scriptures he could do so as an Oriental, and readily see the force and beauty of any allusion to or illustration drawn from the objects of nature or art, or from the customs and manners of the people. He felt this, and with his native earnestness and forcible gestures would say to those with whom he was conversing, "Oh, you do not see the force of that passage; you Americans cannot see the rich beauty of the

Bible; you must live where the Saviour lived and spoke, and where the apostles wrote, to understand and admire this book of God."

What an example is here for our imitation. Were Christians to study the Bible with the interest with which this humble Arab did, what rich attainments might they make in divine knowledge; what acquaintance might they gain with the glorious doctrines, holy precepts, and precious promises of the sacred word; what an insight into the plan of redemption, the fulness and grace of Christ, the faithfulness of God's covenant, and the glories of another world; what spiritual life and holy devotion and sacred joy would they experience; what support in sorrow and what rich provision would they gather for passing over Jordan. Antonio loved his Bible; it was his meditation by day and by night. When he came to die he rested upon it; and not willing even then to part with his cherished treasure, he begged his Christian brother to place it on his breast in his coffin and let it go with him into the silence of the grave.

Other Christians have loved the Scriptures,

and borne testimony to their power. "There is no book in the universe," said the renowned Selden, "upon which we can rest our souls in a dying moment, but the Bible." "The gospel," says Locke, "has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter." "I have led but a lonely life," said the shepherd of Salisbury plain, "and often have but little to eat, but my Bible has been meat, drink, and company to me; and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done indeed, if I had not had the promises of this book for my stay and support." A pious relative of the writer, who for many years found her chief happiness in the truths of God's word, when about to leave the world, said to a friend, "Bring me my precious Bible; it has been my comfort under all the trials and sorrows of life: place it under my head, and let it be my support in a dying hour."

Bring me my Bible, book divine,
In it the Saviour's glories shine;
Oft has it quelled my rising fears,
And wiped away my falling tears.

From early youth to ripened age,
I've loved to read its holy page ;
And still its promises impart
Rich consolation to my heart.

Now called to pass through death's dark shade,
On it I wish to lean my head ;
And free from sorrow and from care,
To breathe my soul out sweetly there.

If such be the value of the Bible, what obligations are we under to circulate it abroad, that men may experience the benefits it proffers. How adapted is it to elevate the tone of public morals, to restrain the vicious, and purify society. How wholesome the precepts it inculcates and the prohibitions it utters in counteracting those sinful practices that dishonor our country and expose it to the judgments of God, and in promoting those virtues that tend to national prosperity. What a blessing is the Bible even in a temporal point of view, by promoting industry, economy, integrity in business, harmony and friendship, personal and domestic, and public peace and tranquillity. But it brings infinitely greater blessings. It comes to men as sinners, and reveals a divine and all-sufficient Saviour,

one who is able and willing to save to the uttermost all who come unto God by him. It furnishes a remedy both to human guilt and depravity, opens to the soul sources of happiness adapted to its boundless desires and immortal nature, and applies an antidote to the ills and woes of our present imperfect condition. Patriotism and Christian benevolence demand that the Bible be disseminated throughout our land, that it be read in the public schools, so that its influence may be felt upon the thousands of youth who are to become the future citizens of the nation; and philanthropy and religion require that it be sent forth to enlighten the dark places of the earth, and hasten the day when "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea."

The conversion of Antonio also suggests *the claim of Roman-catholics upon our Christian sympathy, and the means of benefiting them.*

He was himself a bigoted Maronite Catholic, devoted to his own peculiar views and filled with prejudice against all other sects;

ready to persecute those who differed from him, and believing that salvation was confined to the Romish church, while all Protestants were heretics, and as such would be accursed. But what changed his views and transformed his whole nature from that of a blind and superstitious bigot to that of a humble, intelligent, and devoted Christian? The prayerful study of the Bible. This taught him the errors of the church in which he had been reared, led him to feel his responsibility for his belief, and to search for the truth as revealed in the word of God. The more he searched, the more he was convinced of his personal guilt in the sight of God, and the fearful delusion which had rested upon his mind. At length he came to Jesus; and renouncing all righteousness of his own, accepted him by faith, and became justified through the merits of Christ. He refused any longer to follow the guidance of priests—false teachers, as he called them—who had cruelly withheld from the people the word of God; but sought the guidance of the inspired volume. He absented himself from the places of Catholic worship, and became

an avowed Protestant. The love of Christ filled his heart, and he lived and died in the faith of the gospel. If the reading of the Bible was so beneficial to Antonio, why may it not be so to the thousands and millions of souls involved in the same superstition? The Romish church know that such would be the effect, and therefore forbid the reading of the Protestant Bible to those under her control; consequently multitudes of intelligent and immortal beings are kept in ignorance of the truth, and know not the way of life. The poorer class of that community are greatly to be pitied, shut out as they are from all opportunities of obtaining correct religious knowledge. They dare not read the Bible; they dare not enter a Protestant church, or attend worship in a Protestant family, or receive a Protestant tract. Taught to believe that their salvation or ruin is in the hands of the priest, his power over them is absolute, and they submit implicitly to his instructions and commands. Thus they walk in darkness in the midst of noonday light; and while in a gospel land, surrounded by all the means of religious knowledge and improvement,

they grope amid the gloom of moral midnight.

Let the condition of the Catholic world awaken a deep interest to spread the light of truth. Though it may be difficult to gain access in general to those whose prejudices are strongly arrayed against the Protestant faith, yet there are instances when one and another, like Antonio, have moral courage to receive and read the Bible. Multitudes in our own country have been induced by kind and conciliatory treatment to accept both books and oral instruction from those who gave evidence of their desire to do them good. In foreign lands wide fields of usefulness are open. The people are seeking the light. With the progress of civil liberty in Italy and other countries, religious freedom also advances; and men, throwing off the trammels of kingly power and priestly domination, are asking for the word of God. Let it be sent forth to diffuse its influence among the masses, and substitute an evangelical religion in the place of the lifeless forms and unmeaning ceremonies of the papal church. Then shall freedom of thought, of conscience,

and of speech prevail in the down-trodden nations of Europe; and under the influence of the Holy Spirit and a pure gospel, the kingdom of Christ will triumph and God be glorified.

The missionary spirit of our departed brother also deserves our imitation.

It was like a fire burning in his bones, and nothing but the interposing providence of God, prostrating his strength and cutting short his life, could deter him from carrying out his cherished purpose. The cause of missions, and his own anticipations of entering the field of labor, were a subject on which he loved to think; and when he thought of it, it enkindled his soul with fervid emotion and aroused all the enthusiasm of his nature. Naturally of ardent temperament and animated manner, when his feelings became enlisted in conversation upon his favorite and interesting theme, he would break forth with the fiery spirit of the Arab, and exhibit an impetuosity of utterance and gesture that was perfectly startling, and produced the conviction that the sentiments he advocated

came from the very depths of his heart. A gentleman who was engaged as his teacher when temporarily residing in New York, thus vividly describes his anxiety to become a missionary, and his earnest and impassioned interest in the subject of evangelizing his native land.

“ Hoping against hope, the young man wished to prosecute his studies, wished to return to preach Christ crucified to his own kindred and nation. Unable longer to attend school, Mr. H——, desiring to gratify his mind, or possibly hoping himself for favorable symptoms in the summer, employed the present writer to give Antonio lessons at his boarding-house. The writer has listened to his late enthusiastic young friend as he expatiated on the utter ignorance, superstition, and degradation of the inhabitants of Asia Minor; has heard him denounce with all the fervor of a fiery Arab the wrongs done to his race by the bigoted Turk and still more wicked Greek. His panacea for all the evils of his fatherland was the *gospel*, the *gospel*, the *gospel*. *That*, he said, would make them free, enlightened, and happy. He was a perfect

enthusiast for the Saviour. On all other subjects calm, cool, and collected; on this he was strong, zealous, and dogmatic.

“When speaking of the missionary efforts in Syria his eyes would gleam like fire, his nostrils would dilate like those of a war-horse when it snuffs the battle afar, his utterance would become rapid and vehement, and his whole form would expand until he appeared much larger than he really was. At such times he reminded one of Saladin and Malek, the great conquerors who defied all the attempts of the lion-hearted Richard to recover the tomb of the Saviour.”

Noble youth, how much of moral beauty and grandeur marked his character! What elevation of spirit! And how distinguished was he by those principles and virtues that constitute real excellence—an enthusiast for Christ, and burning with unquenchable zeal to preach his gospel and bring souls to his cross, that the Saviour might be glorified and sinners be saved.

What an example to Christians of devotion to the cause of missions, and how adapted to impress upon the minds of young men

their obligation to make a personal consecration of themselves to the work of carrying the gospel to the destitute and unevangelized portions of the earth.

The field is the world, and God designs the gospel to be proclaimed wherever human beings are found. Millions are living in pagan darkness amid the debasing practice of gross idolatry and beastly vice, having no knowledge of the true God and only Saviour; and millions more, though nominally Christians, are involved in the deepest error and superstition. Here and there through the vast domain of heathenism a single missionary lifts his feeble voice, or a little band of laborers endeavor to make some impression on the mighty bulwarks of Satan; but what can so few accomplish against the formidable obstacles which stand in the way of evangelizing the world? To supply an amount of labor adequate to the emergency, there ought to be six hundred missionaries where there is one. And the demand for additional help is rendered daily more imperative by the providence of God opening new doors of access to nations hitherto closed against the

introduction of the gospel. The revolutions of empires, the spread of civil liberty, the progress of intelligence, and the operations of the Spirit of God upon the hearts of men, combine to awaken a desire to receive the written and the preached word. Jehovah is shaking the nations and preparing the world for the universal dissemination of divine truth. The fields are white for the harvest, and laborers are needed to take the sickle and gather the ripened grain. Oh that the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers into his harvest.

Antonio gazed on these fields with intense interest, and his heart panted with desire to participate in the privilege of carrying home the golden sheaves. Could we have seen him, exiled from his father's house, forsaking his kindred and country, and coming to a strange land—could we have seen him, with an emaciated form and hectic fever and hoarse cough, still plying his books, and hoping against hope, striving to surmount every obstacle, that he might carry the news of salvation to his own people, we should have been rebuked for our apathy, and in-

cited, it may be, to a loftier sense of Christian obligation.

He was a missionary in spirit, if not in actual service: he had all the qualities of one—a heart glowing with love and zeal, an entire consecration to his Master's cause, and a readiness to live or to die for Him. His name may well be inscribed on the same roll with Martyn and Swartz and Abeel and Pohlman and others who went forth to preach the gospel, and who died in the service of their divine Master. His heart was in unison with theirs, and had the Master permitted his work, he would have been alike faithful.

Christian young men, though Antonio be dead, he yet speaks, and eloquently appeals to you in behalf of a cause that to him was transcendently great and inspiring. That cause needs the personal consecration and efforts of young men of piety and intelligence, who are willing to forego the gratifications and comforts of home, and to go to labor and die, if needs be, in foreign lands as ambassadors of the cross.

We admire the self-denial and valor with

which the youth of our country have left their homes and rushed to save the nation from impending ruin; but while ready thus to brave danger, suffering, and death in the cause of patriotism, will they not be willing to enlist in the service of Christ, and entering the enemy's territory with the sword of truth, endeavor to bring a rebellious world into subjection to the authority of Zion's King?

By the love of that divine Missionary who, sent by the Father, came from heaven to earth and proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy to our sinful race; by the value of millions of immortal beings now ignorant of the only way of salvation; by the woes and degradation of pagan lands, where idolatry and superstition and the grossest vice prevail; by the honor and authority of that Redeemer who has intrusted us with his gospel, with the commission to preach it to all nations; and by the present and everlasting joy of myriads who might be gathered into the fold of Christ, were they told the story of his sufferings and death, be entreated to give the subject your calm and prayerful considera-

tion, and decide whether your duty is not to occupy some point in the wide field of foreign destitution, either in the heathen world or the unevangelized nations of Europe, Asia, or South America, and become the centre of an influence that will be benign and saving upon vast regions now unblest.

Would that Christians longed as did Antonio for the spread of the gospel over the benighted nations of the earth. He believed there was a power in it to renew and sanctify the heart, to curb the passions and lusts of men, and change even a polluted, stupid, and cruel pagan into an humble child of God; and he believed that if the truths of the Bible, either preached or read, were brought to the knowledge of his own people, they would become like himself, evangelical Christians—the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. The prayers he offered for Syria are being answered. The morning star is shining upon that land, and we trust the Sun of righteousness will arise. Through the labors of Messrs. Smith, Thompson, Whiting, Calhoun, and other faithful missionaries, the gospel is disseminated, and is producing its

saving fruits. The Bible has been printed and published in the Arabic language, and is making progress among the people; churches have been organized, native converts are co-operating in efforts to promote the cause of the Redeemer, and the Lord is smiling upon the good work.

Who is there that has been convinced of the divine origin of the gospel, of its delightful nature and peaceful tendency—who is there that has ever felt its transforming power on his own soul, but will sincerely desire and earnestly pray and faithfully labor that its glad tidings may be proclaimed to all nations, and that under its benign influence this sin-stricken world may be redeemed from the curse, and become beautiful as Eden, and pleasant as the garden of the Lord.

SCRIPTURE SELECTIONS BY ANTONIO.

AMONG the papers left by Antonio, was a manuscript containing, in his own handwriting, numerous passages of Scripture. We select a few of them, from which it is evident that he regarded the word of God as the only rule of faith and practice, and considered the errors that prevail as resulting from following false teachers instead of divine revelation.

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1.

“For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed.” Jer. 29:8.

“Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither

spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart." Jer. 14:14.

"For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And many false prophets shall rise, and deceive many." Matt. 24:5, 11.

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Matt. 7:15.

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils;

"Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

"Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving." 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

"For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer." 1 Tim. 4:5.

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever

he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come." John 16:13.

"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance. John 14:26.

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." 2 Tim. 3:13.

"But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." 2 Tim. 3:14.

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." 2 Pet. 2:1.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines: for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." Hebrews 13:9.

“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.” Eph. 4:14.

“For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Rom. 16:18.

“But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” 1 Cor. 1:24.

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.” Rom. 1:16.

“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” Col. 2:3.

“Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matt. 11:28.

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matt. 11:29.

“Thus said the Lord, Stand ye in the

ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein." Jer. 6:16.

"And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Matt. 16:18.

"Wisdom is better than rubies, and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it." "Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord." Prov. 8:11, 35.

"But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul. All they that hate me love death." Prov. 11:36.



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