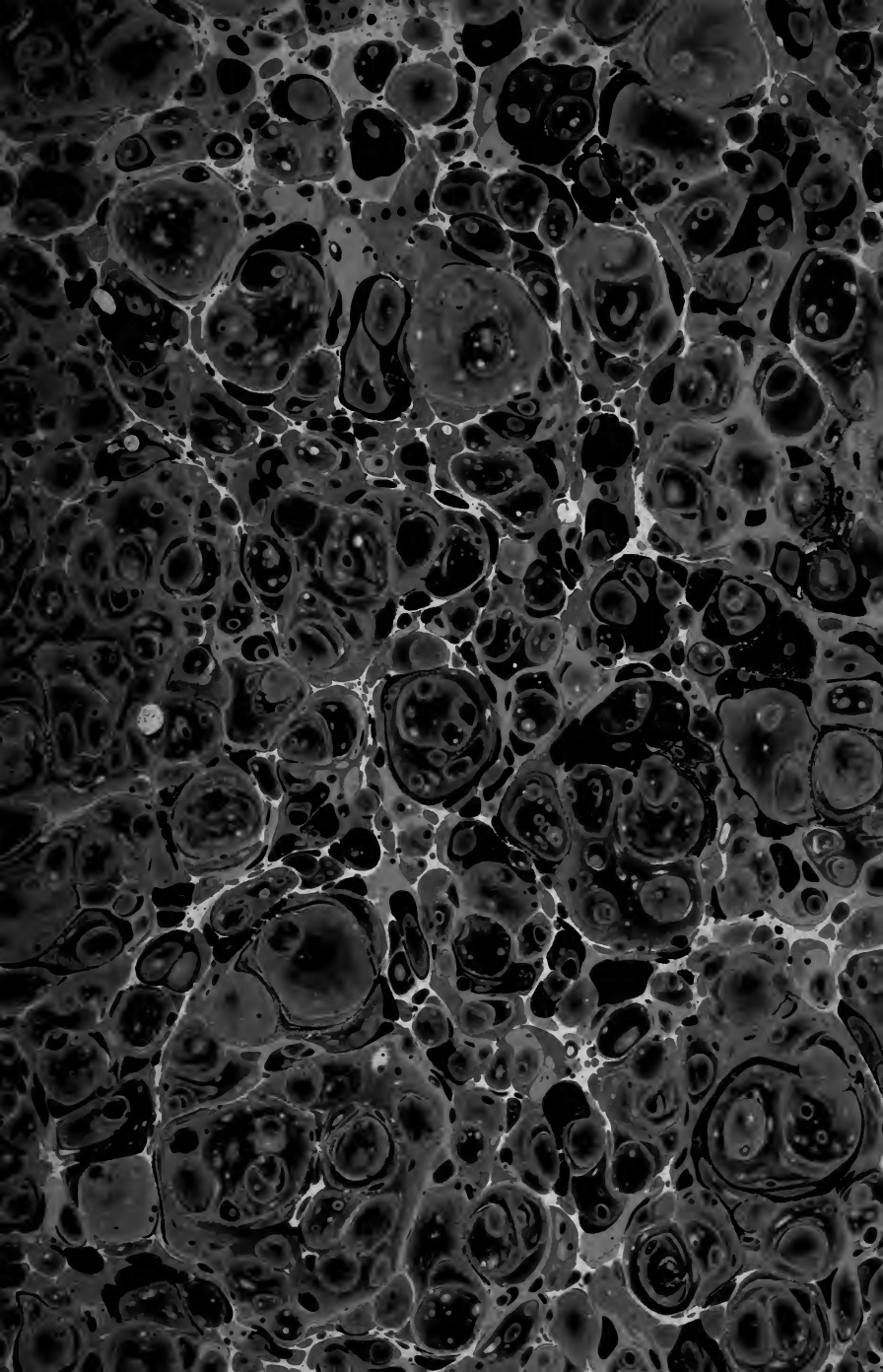


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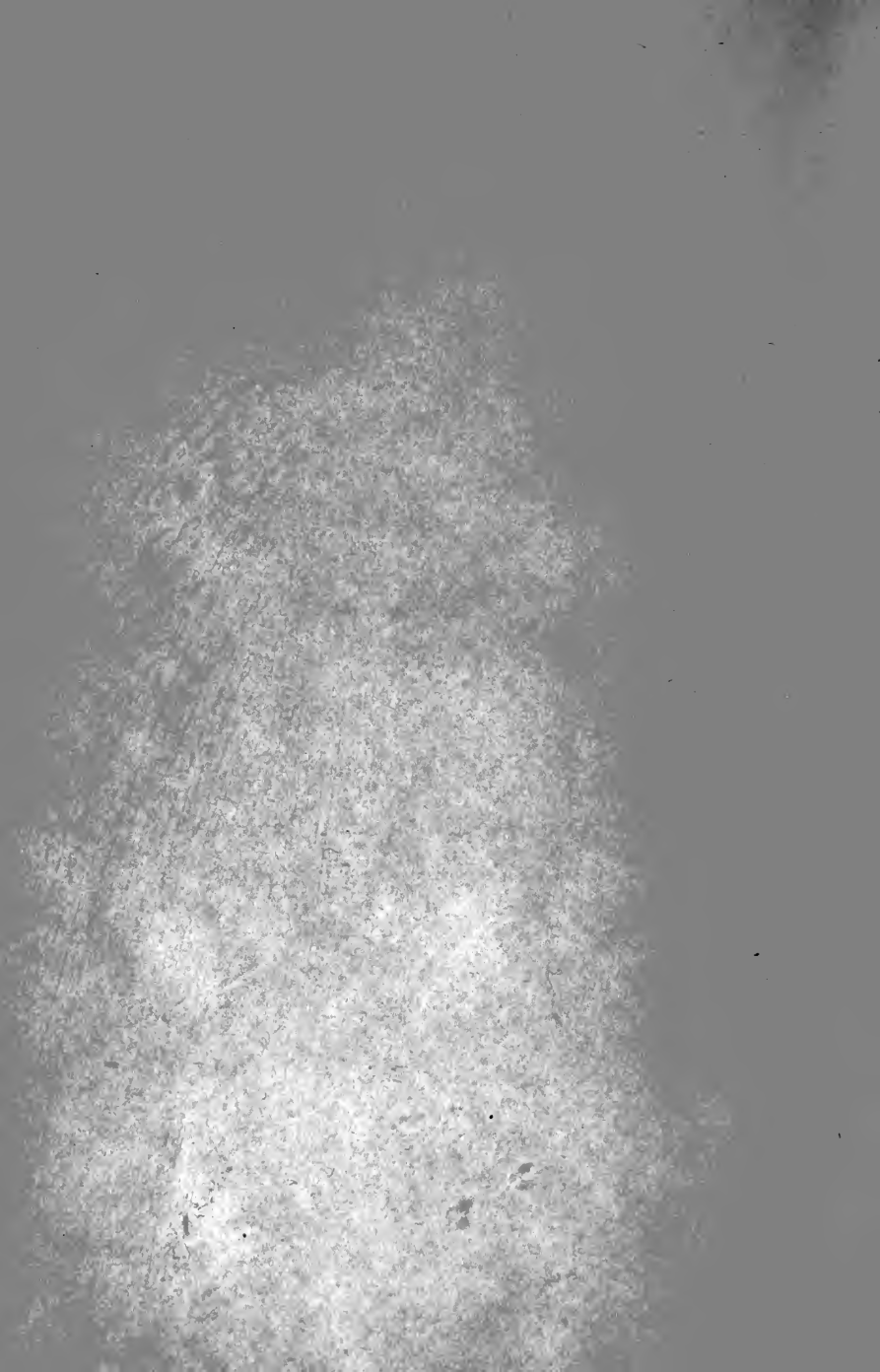
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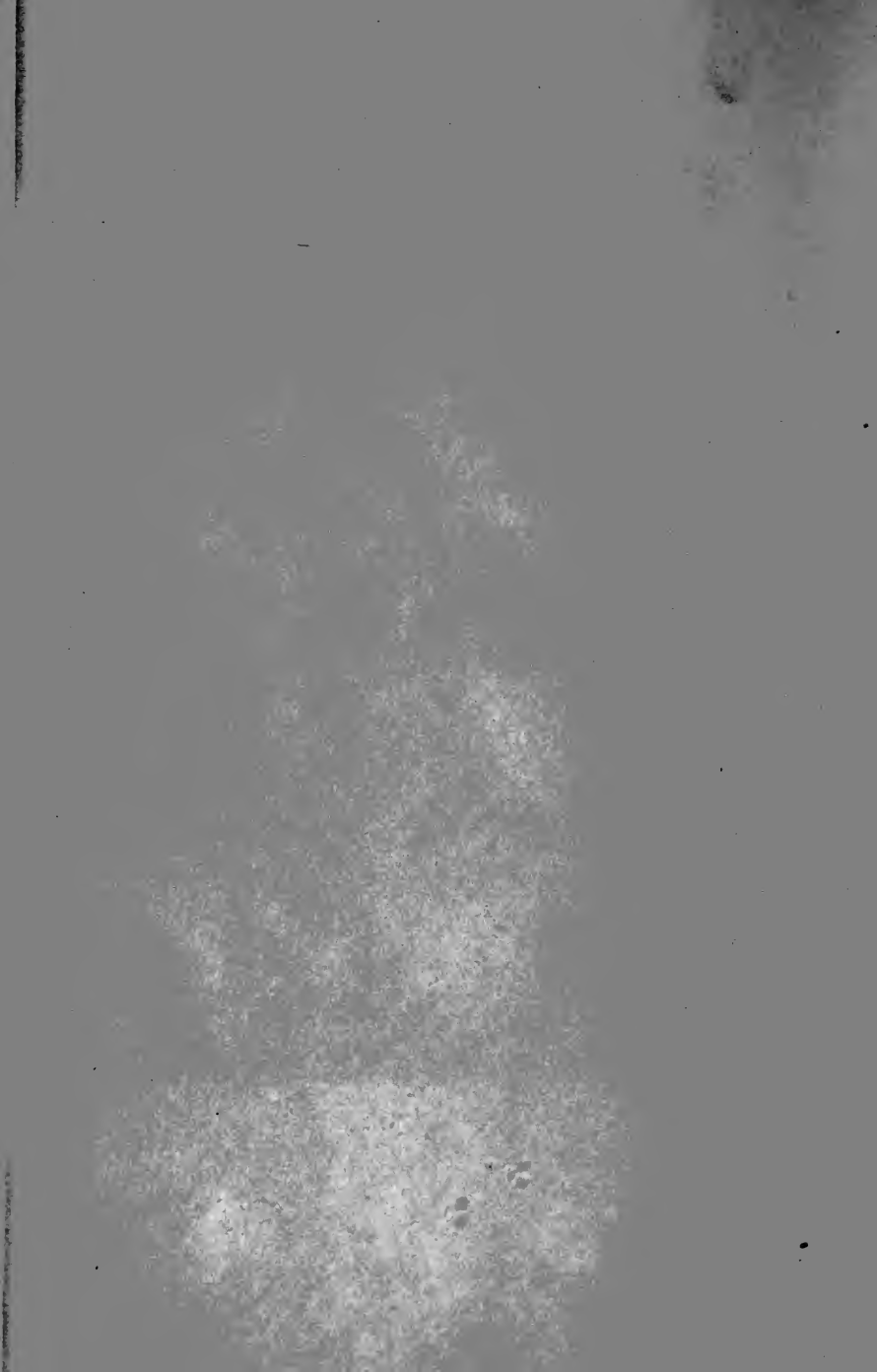




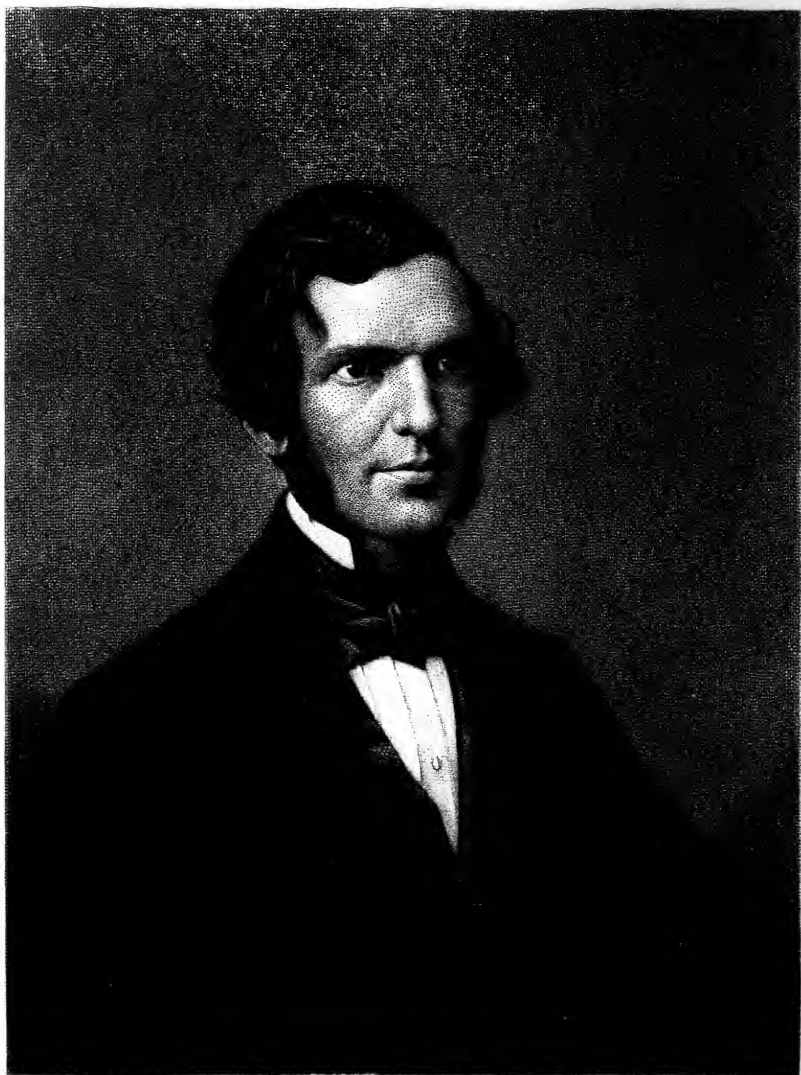












CHARLES BRONSON

Es. P. Thompson.

2

STRAY MEDITATIONS:

OR



VOICES OF THE HEART,

IN JOY AND IN SORROW.

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 BY JOS. P. THOMPSON,

PASTOR OF THE BROADWAY TABERNACLE CHURCH.

NEW YORK:

PUBLISHED BY A. S. BARNES & COMPANY,

NO. 51 JOHN-STREET.

1852.

BV 4832
J5

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1852, by
A. S. BARNES & Co.,
in the District Court for the Southern District of New York.



First Words.

THE title of this little book sufficiently indicates its character. It is not a volume of elaborate and consecutive essays, with any pretense to logical or rhetorical completeness, but a book of fragments, embodying thoughts that coursed freely through the mind in its unfettered moments—the spontaneous and unrestrained utterances of the *Heart* amid the ordinary scenes and changes of life. Though it embodies the

utterances of but a single heart, and these suggested by its own experiences, its interest is in no sense personal, its topics are in no way peculiar. The HEART thinks aloud, and records its thoughts for its own pleasure and profit, not framing their expression for others, yet not unwilling to share with others whatever of good there may chance to be in them.

Many were the years in which this HEART hardly had a care or knew the name of grief: years of childhood bright and sunny, with every want supplied, with every circle of relationship complete, and every tie of affection unbroken: years of youth passed amid the choicest friendships and untrammelled in the pursuit of knowledge: years of manhood spent in scenes of useful labor, in the service of Religion, in the home of Love, where the vine bloomed perennial and

the olive plants flourished in their green and tender beauty, and where there shone ever a serene light, fed from the fountain of heavenly Wisdom and Grace, cheering the hours of labor and of weariness, illumining the way of doubt and of perplexity, hallowing the night of trouble, and gladdening with a pure and holy radiance the lengthened day of prosperity.

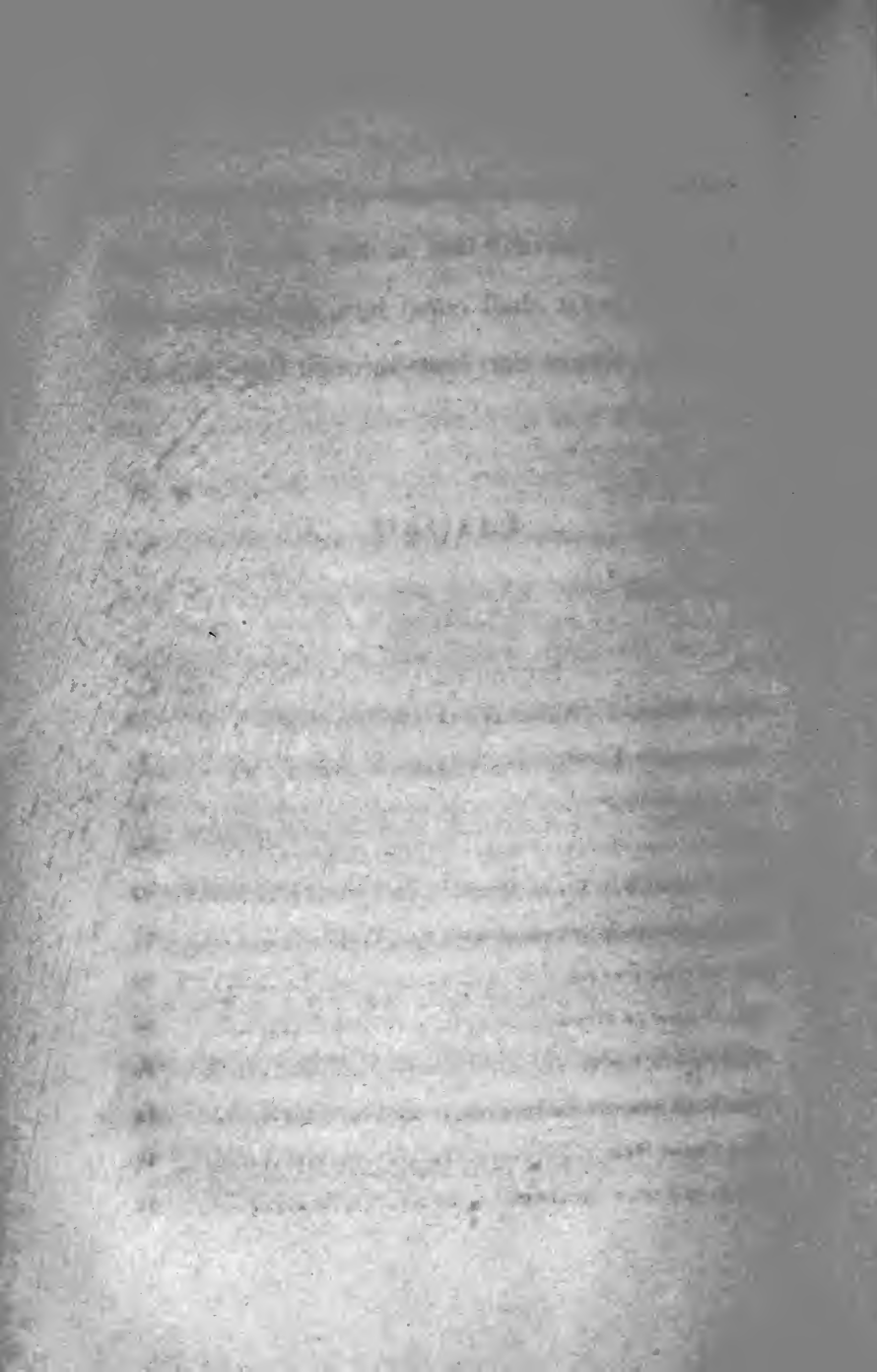
But changes came; sickness, and death, and sorrow; such changes as come to all; and the once free and joyous Heart sounded the utmost depths of grief. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness, and a stranger intermeddleth not with its joys." The reader is not invited to look into its depths. No exposure is made to his curiosity; no appeal is made to his sympathy. But in its varying experiences the HEART found a voice through the correlative truths of the Gospel, and

to these mainly it has here given utterance, that they may speak also to other hearts under like experiences.

If here and there rhymed words give expression to the passing sentiment, it is not because this Heart has ever been inspired with a poetic flame, or has essayed the "art divine," but because in some meditative hour, simple, harmonious numbers shaped themselves, unbidden, to the present course of thought; and these are retained because the heart cherishes its first and readiest impressions; and abhors the *labor limæ* and the critic's *rôle*.

Some of these meditations have already found utterance through the columns of a weekly religious journal, and from that have been reprinted in several similar journals in various parts of the country. It has been thought best, at length, to

collect them into a volume. Whether there was a call for this will not matter to the reader, if only his heart shall come into gentle sympathy with the HEART that beats through these pages.



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STRAY MEDITATIONS.

Thoughts at Thirty.

I HAVE nothing to gain or to lose by the confession—I am standing on this ridge of human life, and before this is in type shall have crossed it. “At thirty man suspects himself a fool;” and therefore he need not be troubled if others think him so. It used to seem a long, long way up to this summit, but the last few miles of the journey have been shorter and shorter, and now in looking back it is incredible that almost the average measure of a generation has been passed. There have been some sorrows on the way;—one of the heart’s dearest treasures, torn suddenly from me, was laid down not far back in that green and flowery mound by the river-side; I seem to clasp it still.

There have been some dangers, too;—not the least that lone grapple with the Pestilence at dead of night, like being dragged into a dark and chilly cavern, or to the brink of a frightful precipice. Yet has it been a pleasant way, a very pleasant way; life hitherto one prolonged blessing. At times it seems almost a waste, strewn with the fragments of broken promises and resolutions, with here and there a spot of verdure, still moist with the dew of tears, but where the sun is shining; and then, as in the “dissolving views” of the child’s chemistry, there rises over this waste a mist like the mist of morning, fringed with purple and gold, which as it rolls away reveals as through a curtain of finest gauze, the clear blue depths of ether, and banks of flowers, and waving grass, and shady groves, and streamlets dancing in the sunbeams; and across this fairy vista hath been the path hitherward. . . . There is no long level on this summit; no gentle slope; no quiet resting-place. A declivity rather as it seems, with intervals of rising ground—yet ever tending downwards, sometimes precipitous, and ending in a dark, deep chasm. Care must be had, for there are sudden breaks in the road, and dangerous

passes. But see, there is a silver thread running far, far down the hill through every winding even to the dark valley, and there too the eye can follow it on and on, like an arrowy line of light, till in the distance it expands in bright effulgence, and as the shadows roll away the dim outline of the delectable mountains and the distant shimmering of the celestial city come into view. Farewell *Youth!* Hail *Immortality!* Soul, gird thyself and on. At thirty the Master received His baptism and began His work.

My Rural Home.

(From a Published Letter.)

ONCE more at my rural home—for is not that *home* where one's dearest earthly treasures are? It is perhaps significant of the social condition of the French that their language has no word

corresponding to our good, hearty, Saxon "home;" and how can a nation ever become politically established until a sanctity is thrown around domestic life, and men's hearts are rooted in their homes? Yet after all that *chez nous* of the Frenchman, if it does not suggest a locality, a fixed abode, does it not convey the essential idea of home—a state, a feeling, rather than a place? "*With us*;" and what is home without the US? The house may be a palace; but what are spacious halls, and luxurious parlors clothed with velvet and crimson, and adorned with works of art, and chambers hung with richest tapestry and furnished with couches that invite repose, and tables spread with the delicacies of every clime,—what are all these to one who is *alone*—when the voice of love and the prattle of innocence are not heard, and no glad smile of welcome greets him after the cares and labors of the day? I submit, therefore, that I am at home, and I care not to invite friends to a home more delightful than they would find here, "with us." Will it not be the realization of the Christian's home to be *with* Christ? So prayed, so promised the Master; "that *where I am* there ye may be also;" "Father, I will that they also whom

thou hast given me be with me *where I am.*"
Blessed Home! "Forever with the Lord!"

The second journey hither differed somewhat from the first. The first time a joyous and excited company hurried on board the starting boat, as if but a plank divided them from pleasures long anticipated which might yet be lost; the second, a solitary invalid, pallid and trembling, came early to the boat and leaning on his staff, slowly wended his way to the saloon and laid down to rest, alike indifferent to the hour of starting and to the bustling crowd. Such are life's changes: now we hurry and drive, are in the whirl of business or pleasure, not a moment must be lost, not a plan must be suspended, not an enjoyment forgone; next we drag heavily onward, like an engine whose motion is reversed, and its steam let off, while its momentum is not yet spent—the wheels rolling backward, the body feebly struggling forward; and soon worn out, shattered, broken down, we shall be taken off the track and carried, motionless, we know not whither. But the Great Architect can repair the miserable wreck—can even build it up anew and give it an immortal vigor.

Well here I am in *Greenland*. Pray don't be

startled; I am not among Esquimaux, polar bears, and icebergs, (though, judging from the temperature of these August nights, I think the latter cannot be far distant,) but among open-hearted, generous, thrifty Yankees, in one of the most verdant spots of this granite region, where nature, though not luxuriant, is ever lovely, and disposes her beauties often with more effect than in sunnier climes. By the way, preaching here awhile ago, I came in my sermon to a passage designed to show the adaptation of God's word to all classes and conditions of men, and went on in the enumeration of the rich and the poor, the noble and the ignoble, the learned and the ignorant, the inhabitants of Caffraria and of—Greenland! was the word—and I had well nigh shocked my hearers by classing them even by suggestion with one extreme of humanity, when I fortunately made my escape into a vague generalization of "the frozen regions of the north." Understand then that I am at that Greenland which is located in the south-eastern corner of New Hampshire, between Exeter and Portsmouth, and about five miles inland from the Atlantic coast, a quiet farming town, which at this season well deserves its name, albeit the

drought has parched the fields which a month ago were clothed with so rich a verdure. Picture to yourself a large double-house, newly painted, of a bright buff, with pretty green blinds, standing on a gentle knoll at the junction of the main road and a wooded lane, with a neat front yard filled with rose-bushes and snow-berries, and young spruce and locust trees, a range of out-buildings in perfect repair stretching along the lane in the rear, the side entrance with its Venetian door shaded by a tall and graceful elm, opposite to which is the carriage-house, giving a picturesque grouping to the buildings as seen from the southern approach on the main road; and having made this hasty survey of the premises, come and take your stand with me in this door-way facing the west, or look from my chamber window on the broad meadow that sweeps before us, terminating in yonder slope yellow with ripening grain, beyond which stands a farm-house, surrounded with trees that shut out the horizon, save where here and there a break in the foliage reveals the clear blue sky, relieved by a distant hill: to the right is the garden, with its beds of flowers, fruits, and vegetables, so neatly arranged, its tasteful summer-

house, and ornamented bee-house; and beyond the wide fields of grain, around which the road meanders like a gentle stream, losing itself among the trees, through which we catch now and then a glimpse of an approaching vehicle: to the left the road is sooner lost among the woods that skirt the base of Stratham hill, from which may be seen of a clear day the town of Portsmouth, its spires and tall factory chimney, the navy yard, the harbor, the ocean, the Isle of Shoals, and Mount Agameticus in Maine. Near by is a quiet grove, where we may find at noontide a cooling shade. If now you would add to all this a pleasing water prospect, we will get up the horse and take a half-hour's drive down that shady lane and through the pine grove to the bay-side, where the broad arm of the Piscataqua stretches itself around a cluster of well-tilled farms; or heading due east, an hour's ride will bring us to the beach, where we may take a cooling in the surf, and then enjoy awhile the comfort and society of the well-furnished hotel. Perhaps, too, we shall be able there to learn the *news*!

When one whose life and habits and tastes are all formed for the city would seek recreation and

health by a change of scene, let him choose some quiet retreat like this, rather than the mimicry of city life at a fashionable watering place. How grateful to body and soul thus to repose amid the loveliness of nature, under the leafy grove, or beside the purling brook, with the companionship of a friend or book, or silently communing with oneself and God. I know that no less an authority than Dr. Johnson has said that "the knowledge of external nature, and the sciences which that knowledge requires, are not the great or the frequent business of the human mind;" and that therefore "we ought not to turn off attention from life to nature, as if we were placed here to watch the growth of plants or the motions of the stars." Yet the great lexicographer himself might have profited by what he here affects to despise. Had he made the study of external nature his more frequent occupation, it would have given a more healthful and spiritual tone to his philosophy—a higher character and grace to his life. To enjoy nature it is not necessary to be familiar with the nomenclature of science, any more than it is necessary to learn Johnson's dictionary by heart before one can enjoy a page of Milton. Doubtless

the botanist, the mineralogist, the geologist, the ornithologist, and naturalists of every name have pleasures peculiar to their respective sciences—there is pleasure in classification, generalization, and the study of properties and habits; but one can enjoy the color or fragrance of a flower or the singing of a bird even if he cannot *Latinize* the object, just as a Cape Cod fisherman pulls up a good fat cod thinking it is *only* a “cod” that will fetch so much in the market, with as much gusto as if he knew that a *Morrhua Americana* was swinging on his hook. And what so fitted to dispose the mind to a grateful adoration of the Creator as the studious contemplation of his works?

Ennii.

“YOU must do nothing for awhile,” said the Doctor. The prescription was hard enough where there was everything to do; it is harder

where there is nothing. Tired of reading, tired of talking, tired of sleeping, tired of walking, tired of thinking, tired of writing, what shall a poor mortal do? I have no doubt that a steamer has arrived; that there has been a great battle in Hungary, that Liberty still maintains a foothold at Rome, and that France is heaving with the ground-swell of revolution;* but I am two miles from the Post-office, four from the railroad depôt, eight from the telegraph station, and so on in a geometrical ratio of removal from all means of intelligence. Oh, to hear a newsboy crying an "*Extree!*" I could even put up with an "*Express, third edishin.*" Come, get up the horse and we'll go down to the village, though probably the Post-office will be closed, as it is nine-tenths of the time, or the papers will be a week old, and the extras from Boston will give us news of an advance in cotton from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$, or of a fall in consols, when we want to hear of the advance of freedom and the fall of tyranny.

* Written in 1849.

The Sacred Privacy of Home.

ONE of the most attractive features of a good home is its privacy. There conversation is conducted with the freedom of mutual confidence and affection; there the meal is divested of all formality and constraint, and made truly social; there dress is unstudied as to its fashion or its material; there relaxation is indulged without any consciousness of the conventionalities of society or the restraints of a cynical philosophy or of an austere faith; there love is natural and free in its every expression and its every act; there even worship is more simple and more heartfelt, because unbiassed by a regard for form or observation; and all this because there is throughout the family a community of interest such as cannot exist among a company of individuals not bound together by family ties. The presence of a stranger imposes more or less of restraint, and even the most fa-

miliar friend is at times a check upon the openness and hilarity of the family circle. It is the beauty of the family that while it gratifies the social instincts of our nature, it preserves to us that privacy which we crave in proportion to our social cultivation; for the most loving heart would share its intimacies with but few, and those if possible evermore the same. The tenants of hotels and boarding-houses may live peaceably and comfortably together, and may even contract a sort of intimacy and affection for each other; but they cannot welcome every new comer to their confidence, nor can they grasp each other with the warmth and vigor of a natural and a permanent love. They have not the free range of the house, but must retreat to their several chambers for the confidential exchanges of the heart; at the common table, and in the common parlor, dress, manners, and conversation are all under inspection; and the instinctive withdrawing of families to their own apartments for the closer communion of heart with heart, indicates that compound want of our nature, which may perhaps be expressed by the term *social privacy*. For the sake of country air or sea breezes, one can tolerate for a season the

mixed company of a boarding-house away from home; he may find advantages in the temporary commingling of families under one roof; he may form agreeable acquaintances and friendships that shall prove permanent; he may learn some valuable lessons of human nature and human life; but he will often yearn for the sacred privacy of home—a home conscious of no restraint but that of native delicacy and refined Christian feeling. Honored and cherished be the privacy of home; there let the man become a boy again, and the dignified statesman and the grave divine without scandal participate in the sports of childhood, down upon all-fours at a game of marbles, or off coat for a game of ball; there let the notes of love and glee ring out as nature prompts them, without affectation and without prudishness.

It is the calamity of the poor, in great cities, that they cannot enjoy the seclusion of a home, but must occupy a mere place in a crowded tenement, and perhaps in a crowded apartment. The same evil in kind, though from other causes, is experienced by the earlier emigrants to a new country, who have often but a single apartment for all purposes and for all belonging to the com-

pany. This promiscuous herding of men, women, and children is contrary to nature, and is unfavorable to social and moral cultivation. The family institution, with its combined advantages of seclusion and society, is the institution which God has appointed for the best development of man. The more I study this economy the more I admire the wisdom and benevolence of its Author. "He setteth the solitary"—not in *phalanxes*—but "in *families*."

A Reminiscence of Childhood.

(From a published letter.)

I HAVE heard of persons returning from Europe with their trunks filled with gew-gaws and trinkets purchased in Paris under the impression that they were rare and valuable, when the like might have been bought at any fancy-store on Broadway.

And how often do we have a glowing description of an Italian sky from writers who have never once observed our own rich sunsets; or of the Bay of Naples, from travelers who would not cross to Brooklyn Hights to view the noble harbor of New York. Men will go a thousand miles to view natural scenery, the like of which they might enjoy at their very doors if it were not *so* common and so near! But what has all this to do with Lumberland? Why I have been up among the mountains of New Hampshire in quest of the wild, the beautiful, the grand in nature, and behold here I find the same wild, romantic beauty, the same class of scenery—except that the hills do not rear their heads so high—gorges and ravines, rocks, woods, streams, rapids, and cascades, within half a day of the city; and yet I can hardly venture to write about it because it is only in New York and on the banks of the Delaware,—on the line too of a railroad and a canal, where hundreds are passing daily. The banks of the Delaware! Why I have been familiar with them from my childhood—but where the great city stretches for miles along and juts its wharves out into the river, with their dense rows of masts and puffing chim-

neys. The Jersey shore, too,—it was our swimming ground, where troops of school-boys spent the Saturday afternoon in aquatic sports; and then in winter what skating and sledding and sleighing too on the broad, glassy bosom of the river. But that was twenty years ago, when water used to freeze in winter, and before the ice-boat of the Railroad Company insisted on keeping the channel open the winter through.

But *these* banks of the Delaware are not familiar; so wild, so solitary, still tenanted by the deer, and just deserted by the Indian and the bear. Ah, I bethink me now with what childish curiosity I used to gaze on those huge rafts, covered with piles of lumber, which came floating down the river, and to wonder where they came from, and who made them; and then what sport it was to get on one of them when moored to the dock, and jump from log to log, and play at hide and seek behind the boards. I see now where they were made; two hundred miles from Philadelphia, by the windings of the river, here in this *Lumber-land*.

The banks of the Delaware at this point have a melancholy historic interest. Here it was that the

brave men of Goshen were cut down by Colonel Brant and his party, the Indian allies of the British in the Revolutionary War. On the western bank, near the aqueduct, the Indians held their midnight dance and carousal over the scalps of the slain, while a company of Jerseymen, encamped near by, feared to attack them. A friend informed me that he had picked up a bone of the fore-arm on the battle-ground, and that recently a whole skeleton had been found there, though a few years since the remains of those who perished were gathered as far as possible and deposited together under a suitable monument in Goshen. Alas! the griefs and woes of war.

But what a change! The trampling war-steed has given place to the iron horse, and the war-whoop of the murderous savage to the shrill whistle of the locomotive. Along the western bank of the Delaware, within the Pennsylvania line, from Port Jervis to Deposit, is laid the track of the Erie Railroad. Here, as on the other side, the bank was often too narrow for the purpose, and had to be widened by blasting. Riding thus on the edge of the bank, fifty feet above the river, on a narrow pathway overhung by rocks to the

height of from 200 to 500 feet, looking out upon the opposite bank where the canal traces its narrow course as if grooved out of the rock which juts over it,—at times hemmed in by hills which seem to form the boundaries of this lower world, while the clear blue vault arches high above your head and is mirrored from the depths of the stream below—the trees decked in their autumnal hues, from never-fading green, through crimson, scarlet, yellow, to the dead, dull brown of decay—you catch glimpses of the wild and picturesque, which waken every fiber of the soul to extasy. And yet a pensive air steals over you as you reflect that your image is not in the mountain or the rock, but in the passing cloud, the running stream, the fading leaf. It is well to take a lesson from Nature in the autumn; and take *John Foster* with you, if you would learn how to read it.

My Sister's Grave.*

I SAW thee laid here months ago,
In the deep, deep snow ;
I heard the cold earth heavy fall
On the velvet pall
That wrapped thee in thy bed so low,
In the deep, deep snow.

I stood beneath this pine-tree old,
Where the wind swept cold ;
I heard the voice of solemn prayer
On the wild, bleak air ;
Then gazed into thy chamber low,
'Neath the deep, deep snow.

Spring hath retouched this hallowed spot,
But it woke thee not ;
And summer sunshine hath been here,
Balmy, bright, and clear ;
But still thy slumber hath been cold,
'Neath this pine-tree old.

* Mrs. *Mary T. Okie*, next to me in age, my play-mate in childhood, in youth my associate in literary studies and in the Christian profession, my counsellor in riper years, the gentle, the noble, the pure, the lovely, the *first* taken from my early home ; she sleeps at Laurel Hill, near Philadelphia.

In vain for thee do roses bloom
O'er thy early tomb ;
In vain are choicest lilies spread
O'er thy perfumed bed—
The voice of love thou hast not heard,
Nor the song of bird.

And now the summer too is past,
Leaves are falling fast ;
The winds are sweeping roughly by,
Bleak and cheerlessly ;
And winter stern creeps on again,
Over hill and plain.

But no rude blast shall smite thy head
In this lowly bed ;
Unbroken still thy sleep shall be,
Naught here troubleth thee—
In summer's heat or winter's cold,
'Neath this pine-tree old.

Soon will I call to thee no more
At the grave's dark door ;
I'll come and lay this weary head
With the peaceful dead ;
This pine-tree old shall fade away—
All things shall decay.

Oh then! when Time's last work is done,
Death's last victory won,
Forth from the quaking, rending tomb,
With celestial bloom,
Thy form renewed shall glorious rise
Through the op'ning skies.

The Vision of Death.

TAKING up Bryant's *Thanatopsis* the other day for re-perusal, I was more than ever impressed with its sepulchral gloom, through which there gleams no ray of hope or consolation, no fire of immortality. A chill came over me as I laid the book aside and asked—Is this all that Philosophy, decked in the gorgeous attire of Poetry, can do to cheer the spirit in view of death? The last few lines of the poem will be immortal, because that little word *trust*—though the poet does

not intimate the object of that trust—awakens in the devout mind associations of faith and hope in Him who conquered death; because by that little loop-hole the Christian may pour somewhat of his own light through the dark portal which the poet has reared for the mansion of the dead, thus transforming the huge frowning figures that beset the entrance into colossal pillars that support the massive arch while Faith and Hope pass safely under.

What comfort is there in the thought that I shall lie down in the same bed with patriarchs and kings and warriors, and all the past generations of men; that the winds, the streams, the forest leaves, the ever-rolling ocean shall sigh my requiem; and that all the living in their countless generations shall follow me until the desolated globe shall swing silent and dark, a crowded sepulcher? What comfort is there in the thought that death is the common, the universal fate of men? Nay, does not this add rather to its gloom? I can have no sympathy with a poem that offers such sentiments as the sum of its consolation in view of death. I turn from it as from the embrace of an iceberg. Gigantic it may be, and flashes of

various colored light may shoot from its surface—but it is cold, deathly cold.

Death in itself is a gloomy event. It must be so. It was meant to be so. Nothing can relieve it but faith in Christ and immortality. A greater poet than Bryant has described the grave as *a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*

Such was the view which a good man had of the grave, four thousand years ago. It is the only view possible where Christianity is unknown. And after all the light and warmth which Christianity has shed around it, the grave is still a cold, dark place. It has no attractions; it can have none. We may spread the rich turf over it; we may adorn it with flowers which the hand and the tear of affection shall keep always in bloom; we may surround it with shrubbery, to screen it from storms, and to seclude it from the noisy, careless world; the sunbeams may steal softly over it; the birds may build their nests in the willow that bends at its head, and may warble their sweet notes on the balmy air; fountains may be murmuring near, and streams may go babbling by;

the evergreen may relieve even the cheerlessness of winter; but it is still the grave,—the cold, dark, silent grave. Faith may not fear it; Hope may leap over it into the land of brightness and of joy immortal; care, toil, suffering, disappointment may render death to the inconsiderate a welcome relief; or the soul that pants after the fullness of God may long for the dissolution of its earthly tabernacle;—but none of all these things can make the grave inviting.

The grave, indeed, is another place since Jesus slept there; but only because he rose again. The light comes not from the grave, but from the resurrection and from heaven beyond. The Christian does not look upon death or the grave with so much of dread and repulsion as did Job; he can look upon them not only without fear, but with feelings of triumph. But this is not because death and the grave are changed, but because the *future* is changed, because life and immortality are brought to light in the Gospel. The way by which we pass out of the world is still narrow, and dark, and cold, and clammy, though our sharpened vision may see sweet fields beyond, and our quickened ear may catch celestial strains. We

should look at death as it is, as we shall find it, that we may know how to rise above it.

The Patriarch of Uz in his afflictions besought God to grant him a brief respite from suffering before death. His prayer resembled that of the Psalmist, "Oh spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more." Looking upon death as the termination of all earthly good, and knowing but little, if anything, of the bliss that lies beyond, Job earnestly desired that his last days might be days of comfort. "Are not my days few?" Must I not at all events soon die? "Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death." No description of Hades by the ancients can be compared with this in intensity; nor can any translation convey the deepening intensity of the original. The region of the dead is a land of darkness;—covered with gloom; where Death like some frowning castle throws far and wide its somber shade; it is darkness itself as when the sun goes down and the stars do not shine out; it is the

“deep darkness of the shadow of death.” It is without any order;—like the ancient chaos, without form and void—“a vast, immeasurable abyss, dark, wasteful, wild.”

“Where even the light is as darkness,”—the few rays that break in upon it are pale and somber, and serve only to heighten the gloom. Dark, all dark; light itself transformed into darkness.

Thus did the grave appear to one who could say of God, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Thus does it still appear often to the meditative mind. That narrow pit is dark with all the light of heaven over it; the river of death is cold, though sunbeams are glancing on its surface. I want some surer support, some stronger consolation than *Thanatopsis* gives. Chilling indeed is the vision of death, without the vision of life and immortality in Christ.

The Newly Burn.

AS I sat alone in my chamber one dark and stormy night, I fell to musing about an infant's soul—whence it comes, of what it is formed, and how it is united to the body; and as I mused I dropped asleep. Suddenly I thought I was in a splendid palace; its floor was polished marble that shone like glass; its ceiling was so high that it seemed to be above the clouds, but I could trace upon it carvings and paintings of most exquisite forms and colors; the hall was so vast that I could not see the walls on either side, but all around me on the marble pavement were beautiful images and ornaments of silver and gold, and fountains were playing, and jets of light were streaming from branches of gold and crystal. Above, it was all one blaze of light, yet I could see no luminous body, nor any artificial source from which the luster came. Far down the hall—as far as

my eye could reach—and stretching up from the pavement to the dome, were bands of angels with shining faces and pure white wings, some with trumpets of silver, some with harps of gold, and some with instruments that I had never seen, and the music of which was sweeter than any I had ever heard. I fairly cried for joy as I listened to the sweet sounds that came from that beautiful choir. Presently I saw in the distance a pure, bright flame, which grew brighter and brighter, and gradually shaped itself into a throne white and dazzling. It was so bright I could not look upon it, but turned away my eyes. When I ventured again to glance that way, I saw what seemed to be a little speck of white floating toward me upon a beam from this throne, and as I looked it grew and spread itself till I beheld a dove, with soft, white wings, pure as snow, flying gently into my very arms. Overjoyed I put out my hands to clasp it, when from the angelic bands there came a burst of music louder and sweeter than before—the lights went out, the palace disappeared,—all was silent and dark, and I was sitting alone in my chamber.

It was a dreary night. The wind was blowing,

the rain was falling, and the blinds swung and rattled as if they would break from their hinges. Presently I heard a noise like a gentle tapping on the window; I listened for a moment and thought it was a gust of wind. Soon it came again, tap, tap—tap, tap, till wondering what it could mean, and half trembling with fear, I rose and went to the window. There I saw what seemed in the darkness to be a bird flapping its wings and dashing its bill against the pane. In a moment I perceived it was the same sweet dove that I had seen in the palace hall. I opened the window and took it in:

Come in, come in, my pretty dove;
How cam'st thou here
From that fair land of light and love,
To this so drear?

“God sent me from my home above
To this so drear,
And bade me with His own pure love
Thy heart to cheer.”

Come to my heart, my pretty dove
And take thy rest;
Come, nestle here with God's own love
Upon my breast.

“ I'll fold my wings upon thy breast
Although defiled ;
I'll nestle here and be at rest
As God's own child ;

“ I've left my Father's house awhile
To dwell with thee,
To cheer thee with my Father's smile,
Thy child to be ;

“ I'll stay with thee, come good, come ill,
No more to roam ;
Obedient, till my Father's will
Shall call me home.”

I awoke and found it was a dream ; and yet it was not all a dream, for the joy of my dream remained, and I folded to my breast the pure, sweet gift of Heaven.

The Bird and the Child.

“CHERRY is dead, father,” said my sweet little Mary to me one morning, with a tear in her eye and sorrow in her tone; “ain’t you sorry Cherry is dead? He will never sing for us any more.” The favorite bird that we had nurtured for many a year, that was ours before it began to sing, and whose sweet notes had enlivened the house and filled our hearts with sympathetic music, was indeed dead. Sincere mourners were the children as they hid away the little senseless creature in some by-place of their own, where no living thing might molest it, and as they expressed their regrets that they could no longer share with Cherry their daily food; and with their sorrow came the questions of a child’s philosophy, as to whither the bird had gone and whether they should ever see it again.

My thoughts flowed deeper and took a wider range. In the chamber where the little bird had died lay a sick and suffering child, and to the heart that had yearned over that little one there was unspeakable relief in the thought that the bird and not the child was dead. Never did the compassionate interest of the Saviour in little children appear to me so lovely and consoling. Indeed God careth for the little bird, and not a sparrow falleth to the ground without Him; but for children he has covenanted grace and mercy, and has said, "*Suffer them to come to me.*" How monstrous then seemed the doctrine of the annihilation of infants, to which even Dr. Watts and Dr. Emmons have given countenance—though the latter afterwards repudiated it. How cold and repulsive all such philosophizing and theologizing about the death of little children, when the heart-strings are touched by the reality present or in prospect. Is not something due to the instinctive assurance of parental affection that children dying in veriest infancy do live after death in a better world,—that somehow—we comprehend not how—they are numbered with the saved? Does not that instinctive feeling harmonize with the intima-

tions of Scripture respecting the future of such little ones? I have not yet known what it is to surrender a child to the call of my Heavenly Father, but if I could speak to a sorrowing parent, with my present feelings, I would say that that instinctive feeling is a prophecy of Christian hope.

You have a favorite bird that relieves your solitude by his merry song, that feeds from your hand, perches on your shoulder, and gambols on the carpet at your feet. You are conscious of a warm attachment to the little creature, which he seems to appreciate and to return. Some morning you miss his cheerful note; his matin warblings do not greet the rising sun; and going to his cage you find him dead. A feeling of sadness comes over you. You grieve at the extinction of life in a creature to which life was all enjoyment; you grieve at the loss of a companion upon which you had become more dependent for your own enjoyment than you were before aware. And yet you do not once think of that bird as living still in other climes; you do not imagine that you shall ever see it again, nor think it strange that its existence has come to an end. For affection's sake you may bury it in your garden instead of throw-

ing it into the street, or may have it embalmed for preservation ; more than this would be a profane burlesque upon the most solemn and tender rites. It gives you no shudder to think that the being of that bird is annihilated. Neither the exquisiteness of its structure, nor the softness and richness of its plumage, nor the melody of its song that enlivened your dwelling, suggests to you the thought that it *cannot be* utterly and forever dead.

But God has given you another favorite, dearer far than bird of richest plumage and sweetest song—a prattling child that breaks your morning slumbers with its happy voice attempting to speak your name, that tries to win your notice by a thousand pretty arts, that manifests intelligence and affection though it knows not yet the use of language, that climbs upon your knee, or totters by your side, or gambols at your feet in boisterous glee. That child has not yet lived so long as your bird, nor has it made any like progress toward its maturity ; yet hath that child a hold upon your heart that no other creature can ever gain.

Some morning you awake, but not at its call ; you listen for its voice but hear it not ; you go to

its cradle to find it dead. Perhaps you had watched over it in sickness and had seen it fall into its last sleep, and having lain down to rest have awoke from a dream, forgetting for the instant that the child was dead; or perhaps some sudden and unknown cause has terminated its life when you knew it not. But ah! what grief and anguish now come over you. No song of bird can now relieve your aching heart. A sweeter voice is hushed in death; a brighter, sunnier life has been extinguished. And yet you cannot for one moment feel that your child is utterly and forever gone. You seem to see his spirit hovering nigh. You know *he* is not dead. You call your friends and neighbors, and with solemn and decent rites commit his body to the dust—not for affection's sake alone, but for hope's sake also—for a voice within you says, 'I shall see him yet again.' And has God implanted in us these unutterable yearnings of affection only to be crushed and disappointed forever? Nay; the fond hopes that gush out with our tears, and so relieve our loss, and make us serene in sorrow, are angel voices whispering to us of immortality in the mansions of the blessed. Weep not, fond heart, for the child

departed; "he is not dead, but sleepeth;" "*I shall go to him but he shall not return to me.*" The voice of nature teacheth thee what God hath forborne to reveal in his Word. It needs no revelation to assure thee that thy child hath not met the fate of thy bird; but hath soared to the empyrean of the blessed, which wing of bird essays in vain.

The Child Dead.

"**E**DDIE *is dead,*" said I to my little Mary one morning, after a night of anxious watching over the suffering babe. "Your dear little brother is dead. You will never hold him in your lap again; you will never see him smile so sweetly as you talk to him; you will never see again his bright and beautiful eyes that you loved to look at, nor feel his soft little hand in yours. To mor-

row they will put him in a coffin and carry him away ; and you will never again see him here. Do not cry so, do not cry, for Eddie is happy now in Heaven, and if you are good and love God and the blessed Saviour, you will go to heaven too, and see your sweet little brother again." Thus with choked utterance and sobbing heart did I comfort my dear children under the first impression of death ; its first impression, for though they had sorrowed a moment for Cherry they felt a strange and solemn grief as they looked upon the face of their infant brother cold in death. To me also it was a strange experience ; yet the heart had so long foreboded the greatest of earthly griefs, that this seemed rather a relief than a burden. How sweet the thought that I already had a child in heaven ! *My* child, the same pure, gentle dove that had flown from Heaven into my arms,—still mine, and always to be mine, though with me here only for the first few days of its immortal being. I cannot release my hold upon that child in Heaven.

I once visited a family circle where to temporal prosperity and social refinement was added the grace of a cheerful piety, diffusing itself from parents to children, and sweetly blending in all the

affairs of the household. The children, of various ages, from prattling infancy to blooming girlhood and aspiring manhood, were like olive-plants around the table. But between two of that thriving row there was a wider interval, a double distance in age and stature, denoting that from that space had been removed the plant that once had bloomed there. One child had been taken from the bosom of that family to the great family above. And yet it seemed as if that child was daily present; for on the table at every meal was placed the silver cup from which she used to drink, now left untouched; and from the wall smiled ever that cherub face through auburn ringlets, as the almost creative art of the painter had won it back from the embrace of death. Yes, she was present still as an angel in that little band to which she was once so dear.

To some the placing of that cup upon the table may seem an idle superstition; to others a sentimental weakness. But it was dictated neither by a Romish idolatry, nor by a Swedenborgian vagary. Parental affection, chastened by sorrow, sought thus to retain in all the associations of the family one who was still of the family, though far

away; and to retain her as she was, in the freshness and innocence of childhood, at the table with her silver cup, marked with her own name, and which no other might use. And why should the child whom God hath taken be kept out of mind, and every memento of her put out of sight? How sweet to think of her as not lost, but still living, still present as a child!

God mercifully opens to us new sources of joy as we pass on through the successive changes of life. When we must leave our early home, he provides for us another, with new objects of affection, and instead of our parents He gives us children. And when this home shall be broken up also, He has prepared for us another which shall never change; and as the time draws near for us to remove thither, He draws out from our hearts one golden link after another, and fastens it there; He gathers for us objects of affection in our heavenly home. What is all the joy that parents find in children on earth, compared with the joy of having a child in heaven?

“Suffer Little Children.”

THOUGH there is no direct and positive teaching in the Scriptures respecting the future condition of children that die in infancy, yet the intimation of their blessedness given by Christ himself, is most cheering and satisfactory to the bereaved parent. “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*” Matt. 19: 14.

By “the kingdom of heaven” in this passage, some commentators understand the Church of Christ on earth; and they regard the entire passage as only a commendation of a pure, docile, and child-like spirit; “*of such as these—persons like these in disposition—shall my Church be composed.*” But this does not appear to me to be the true interpretation of the Saviour’s language. These words were not spoken on that occasion when Jesus, in order to teach his disciples humility,

called a little child and set him in the midst of them, and told them that they must become as little children if they would enter the kingdom of heaven. The subject of his remarks was not humility, or the character becoming his disciples, or the condition of salvation. He was talking about *children*. Children were brought to him to receive his blessing. His disciples regarding this as an idle superstition, and presuming that it would be an annoyance to their Master, rebuked those that brought them, and thrust them back. But Jesus said, "No; you do not understand the value of these children, or their relation to my kingdom; you do not know how dear they are to me and to my Father. Suffer little children to come to me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Now *such* must here be taken as a *definitive* adjective, and not as an adjective or adverb of *comparison*. There are other passages in which the same word and phrase occurs, where it is evidently so used.

For example: In directing the Corinthian church to discipline the incestuous person, Paul says, "deliver *such* an one to Satan." (1 Cor 5: 5.) By *such an one* he means that particular person—

the man who has been guilty of this crime. *Such* identifies the individual.

So in 2 Cor. 12: 2-5, where he is speaking modestly and in the third person of his own visions, he says, “I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, *such* an one caught up to the third heaven. . . . I knew *such* a man. . . . Of *such* an one will I glory.” Here the word *such* refers to the particular person of whom he is speaking—i. e. *himself*. So when Christ said, with little children in his arms, and in order to give his disciples right views about children, “Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven,” he did not mean that heaven is made up of persons having some resemblance to children, but of *these* as a class, and others like them. And when we reflect that the vast majority of the human race die in infancy, we may well give the words a literal signification—of *SUCH* is the kingdom of heaven. It is in this way, through the salvation of myriads of infants, that the number of the saved will in the end so far exceed the number of the lost. Christ was speaking of *children*, and not of men with the disposition of children; the very act of taking the children in his arms and blessing them, requires

that we should so understand him; otherwise that act has no meaning. It was after he had performed that act and made that declaration about children themselves, that he made the remark given by Mark and Luke, that whoever would enter the kingdom of God must receive it as a little child. That declaration was based, by way of inference, upon the preceding declaration, that children *as such* should be admitted to heaven. It is as if he had said, "Why thrust children away from me? why seek to debar them from my blessing? Heaven is full of little children; instead of keeping children back from me as of no account, look to it that you become like them, or you shall not enter heaven yourselves."

This seems to be the only interpretation that meets the occasion, and gives consistency and force to the language of the Saviour. This is the grammatical construction of De Wette; and if orthodox vouchers are wanted, Calvin so understands the passage, and Dr. Griffin quotes it to prove that infants shall be saved.

Christian parents have in these words abundant consolation in the death of their infant children. If those children die in early infancy, before they

have formed a moral character, there is every reason to believe that they are removed at once to a brighter sphere; if they die later, yet before their understanding is matured, there may still be ground to hope that they are saved through the grace of Christ. Besides, where there is due fidelity and prayerfulness, the seeds of grace are often early sown in the mind of a child, and there is hope of true piety though we cannot look for its maturer fruits. For many a dear child, taken from the world just as reason and conscience were unfolding and the knowledge of God was entering its mind, we may adopt the joyful lament of the poet for early piety departed:—

“It is not length of years that lends
The brightest loveliness to those
Whose memory with our being blends,
Whose love within our bosom glows.

“The age we honor standeth not
In locks of snow, or length of days;
But in a life which knows no spot,
A heart which heavenly wisdom sways.

“For wisdom taught by heavenly truth,
Unlike mere worldly wisdom, finds
Its full maturity in youth,
Its antetype in infant minds.

“ Thus was this child made early wise—
Wise as those sages, who from far
Beheld at once in Bethlehem’s skies
The new-born Saviour’s herald star.

“ No more could learning do for them
Than guide them in the path they trod;
And the same star of Bethlehem
Led this child’s spirit to his God.

“ Well may his memory be dear
Whose loss is still its sole alloy—
Whose happy lot dries every tear,
With holy hope and humble joy.

“ ‘ The brightest star in morning’s host ’
Is that which shines in twilight skies;
‘ Scarce ris’n, in brighter beams ’tis lost,’
And vanishes from mortal eyes.

“ Its loss inspires a brief regret;
Its loveliness is unforget;
We know full well ’tis shining yet,
Although we may behold it not.”

Bernard Barton.

Watching for Death.

DID you ever watch for Death to enter your dwelling? How strange the feeling! An indefinable awe steals over your soul, as in breathless expectation you listen for his footstep. For hours, perhaps for days, you have been admonished of his approach, and with aching heart, through weary nights, you have awaited his coming. Now you are told that he is near. At the call of the watcher you have risen from your troubled sleep to see a loved one die. As you sit by the fire in your dimly-lighted chamber, where every step is hushed, and scarce a breath is audible, strange shadows flit before you, and intermingled with these, holy memories revisit your soul. Presently you are startled by a sigh, a groan, a convulsive shudder. Was that he? Has Death come at last? No: life still gurgles there, and,

strange though it may seem, you catch a glimmering of hope from the fact that another struggle has been survived. As well might you suppose the tide was rising because the receding wave seems at first to creep upward along the beach. But you breathe more freely; you wait awhile for some decisive sign of death, and then sit down again to your meditations. You call to mind the promises of the Gospel; you engage in silent prayer; you find comfort and support in God; and yet an unwonted sadness diffuses itself over all your thoughts and feelings. You are looking for something, you know not what.

You have often watched at midnight for a tardy guest, listening to every footfall, starting at every sound, your mind bewildered with strange fancies, your heart palpitating with unreasoned fears. But never have you watched for such a visitor. You know not when, or where, or how to look for him; he will enter by no door; he will make no formal announcement; but come he will. Again you are called to the bedside of the dying one, and again; but death still lingers, and hope revives. And now, with conflicting emotions, you once more resume your seat by the fading embers, to

meditate and watch. Presently all grows strangely still. The silence is deep, is awful. You are again at the bedside. Is the loved one sleeping? Ah! there is no motion, no sign of life. The lips are fixed as marble, the eyes are set in their sockets. But how quiet,—how calm! Is he really dead? You were watching for Death, and he came, and you heard him not. You heard him not; but now that he is here, his footstep reverberates through your inmost soul. A gush of grief, a broken prayer, first break the dreary silence, and bring you to the consciousness that Death has come!

One day I shall watch the coming of Death to me, and while others see him not, I shall feel his cold hand upon my heart-strings, and hear his summons in my palsied ear. This year thou mayest die. Watch, then, for the coming of the last Messenger!

The First Breach.

HOW painful is the first breach in the family circle. You have known—have always *known* that sooner or later Death must enter that circle; but you have never realized it, never felt it until now. You have lived on from year to year with your family growing up around you, or you have moved on with the same happy group within which you first came to the consciousness of life, and parents and brothers and sisters are all relatively the same to you now as then; you see no change, and seldom think of change; indeed, you have settled down into a practical conviction that in these happy relations there is to be no change. But at length Death comes, and the shock he gives to your every sensibility, startles you from the dream in which you have lived, and shows you how utterly you had deceived yourself with delusive hopes. Then comes the terrible

realization of what you have always known, but have never half believed. Your honored father, your loved and venerated mother, your husband in the prime of his manhood, your wife, in the flower of her beauty and the warmth of her affections, your son, your daughter, budding into life and promise, or your gentle babe, the petted lamb of all your flock, lies silent in death.

What a strange feeling of uncertainty now steals over you. The affliction may have come in the gentlest form, and Mercy may strew with flowers the very bed of death; but the breach is made, and you no longer live in a charmed circle. Sickness, heretofore no stranger in your family, now brings unwonted anxiety and fear; it comes with the association of death; your sleep is broken, your nerves are disquieted by any symptom of disease in your household. Life takes on another aspect; it grows more somber and earnest; it loses its wonted elasticity; it no longer unwinds from an endless reel; you see its end, or at every moment you expect the thread will snap. A new experience, a new world of thought and emotion is opened to you, and henceforth you will live in that world.

Such an experience sooner or later all will have; and it will be a blessed or a mournful experience, according as the heart is [spiritual] or worldly. Happy will you be in the midst of your sorrow, if this breach in your family circle shall open more widely the channel of divine grace, that the full tide of heavenly love may flow in upon your soul. Blessed be God there is a family—a glad circle of love, and peace, and joy,—in which there will be no breach, and no change forever.

Moths - Eaten.

“THE moths have eaten the carpet, sir,” said Mrs. — to me one morning, when the annual process of house-cleaning had disclosed the ravages of these tiny destroyers. It was a bright, new carpet, costly in itself, and doubly valued as the gift of friends. I stood and looked upon the work of destruction that had gone forward secretly,

silently, in every covered spot and every dark corner of the parlors, and a momentary regret arose in my heart for the loss it had occasioned me; but this was immediately succeeded by a feeling of utter indifference. To the question what should be done to exterminate the ruinous insect and to preserve what remained of the mutilated tapestry, I made some mechanical reply and then mechanically turned away. Ah! the eye that had been so prompt to detect such intruders was now sealed, and the hand that had guarded with jealous care the household property was motionless. *My heart too was moth-eaten.*

Months ago this tiny insect deposited under the sofa and the library the eggs that had since issued into gnawing worms; months ago the moths of care and grief made their first and almost imperceptible deposits in my heart. I knew they were there, but no earthly specific could destroy them. And now how many bright and beauteous images of hope, how many sweet pictures of love, how many buds and flowers of promise have they marred and devoured. My heart is riddled and fritters away. There are some sound spots where love and hope still linger, and I may patch it up

till others shall think it whole again, but *I* shall never forget that the moth has been there and has eaten out its center. I have sold my moth-eaten carpet for a song, but I must keep my moth-eaten heart. Yet, blessed be God, my heart's brightest, dearest love, its sweetest hope, its purest joy, its chiefest treasure, are where no moth doth corrupt.

The Deserted House.

MY house is empty, and my heart—
From every treasure torn apart—
Oppressed with the unwonted gloom
Roves restless round each vacant room.

Sometimes it saith, "They *must* be near;"
I still their voice, their footsteps hear,
I haste to seek—but find them not,
And weep afresh my lonely lot.

Sometimes with eager step I come
To meet the wonted "Welcome Home,"
I bound impatient up the stair—
But start to think *she* is not there.

I *know* alas, she is not here,
But still I feel her presence near;
My heart anon forgets its pain
And leaps to clasp her heart again.

She is not here;—but they she bore,
Now tenfold dearer than before,
Will not they cheer this lonely place
And soothe me with their fond embrace?

Alas! one in his infant rest
Lies slumbering on his mother's breast;
The living now, with many a prayer,
I've yielded to another's care.

I see their pictures on the wall,
I find their playthings in the hall;
I start to think that they are gone,
And weep to know—*I am alone.*

Thinking Too Much.

MEN commonly think too little. Some purposely avoid reflection through fear of the rebukes of conscience; but most persons simply omit self-reflection as a daily exercise, or suffer the pressure of business, the attractions of society, or the allurements of pleasure to crowd it out of place. There is in general a want of the reflective habit and especially of the habit of introspection. This habit is fostered by Christianity. Indeed the world is largely indebted to the religion of the Bible for the development of a meditative mood in the mind of man, and for any approximation to a just philosophy of mind; and this not only by the outward and visible projection that the Bible makes of certain mental phenomena, but especially by the habit of scrutinizing its own processes and cognitions that the Bible forms in every mind that comes under its power.

It is true, as Isaac Taylor remarks, that "a quiescent under-action of the mind" was favored by the climate of the East, by physical habits, and by a nomadic state of society; and under such influences speculative philosophy, which, as well as poetry, is indigenous to the East, may have originated. The influence of these causes may be traced in the Hebrew Scriptures, especially in the Psalms. Yet after all it was the religion of the Bible, a religion grasping ever the inward, the unseen, the spiritual, the eternal, which more than any influence of climate or condition gave to the patriarch, to the prophet, and to the ancient Hebrew his devout and meditative turn, and has grafted that same habit upon the more active and "calculating" nations of the West. The more the mind comes under the power of that religion the more is it disposed to seasons of retirement, in which it may commune with itself and with God, with the Past and with the Future, with Death and with Immortality. The universal prevalence of Christianity would have a wonderful effect upon the intellectual development of the race. The habit of reflection would become universal; and the "quiescent under-action of the mind" would

restrain the tumult of passion, the clamor of business, and the boisterous mirth of unlicensed pleasure.

Sometimes, however, men think *too much*. This they do not of choice but by unavoidable necessity. Thought runs loose and wild; the flood-gates of reflection, of imagination, of emotion, at once are opened, and great surging waves roll in upon the soul. Reason and Will are prostrate, the ship refuses to obey the helm, and a tumult of thoughts, like an angry sea lashed by the tempest, drives it every whither. This is true when the mind is under the strong excitement of fear, of grief, of conviction, whenever in short the emotive development is intense and the excitement of the Sensibility disturbs the nice balance of the Intellect and the Will. First, feeling overmasters thought, and then all the resources of memory, of imagination, of invention, and the most concentrated intenseness of reflection, are plied by the passion that excites the soul. The mind is a vast cauldron into which oceans are poured and find no bottom and no vent. Reflections, memories, hopes, fears, imaginations, promises, threatenings, cares, griefs, boil and surge together and know no rest.

What a reach of capacity does such a soul exhibit! What vast outlooks upon the Infinite and the Eternal does it present across its ever-rolling seas of thought. It thinks of all its Past; its own past history, its every experience, its every act, the course of Providence, the varied intercourse and relations of life, the history of the world as illustrative of its own position and of Divine Providence, the whole Past from the creation down, nay more—the eternity of God himself in his being, his attributes, and his plans—these all, in one mighty stream, empty themselves in a moment through the chasm of memory into this fathomless sea of emotion, and yet it is not full. The Present is there; its cares, its burdens, its perplexities, its sorrows, its responsibilities, all duties and obligations, individual, domestic, social, public, the wants and claims of the family, the church, and the world, these all, like mountain torrents, pour in on every side, and yet the sea is not full. From another quarter rolls in the broad and ever swelling tide of the Future; its hopes and fears, its dangers, its promises, its plans, all possible knowledges and experiences in this life and in eternity, and the boundless reach of the infinity

of God, roll their waves into this all-devouring reservoir of the soul of man. What a capacity is that which can drink in all things, past, present, and to come, and yet not be filled. But this wild tumult of thought, this mingling of the floods of time and of eternity is more than human nature can endure. The soul is adequate for this, but the body sinks under it. The brain reels, the heart quails, the knees totter beneath the stupendous pressure. The waves of emotion threaten to dash down their banks of clay.

But He who created both soul and body, and who adjusted their subtle union, has made provision against such a catastrophe as the dissolution of the body under the excitement of the mind. He can calm the most tumultuous agitation of the mind, and give it perfect peace. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul.*

Troubled Thoughts.

WHEN the Psalmist speaks of "the multitude of his thoughts," he means anxious, troubled thoughts, perplexity and distress of mind. "I had much solicitude in my heart; but thy consolations delighted me." What a multitude of troubled thoughts arise from any overaction of the sensibility!

Thoughts of *personal guilt* are wont to arise in the mind of the Christian in such a state. No mental excitement can be compared in force with that of conviction of sin when the mind comes fully under its power; no anguish can equal this in nature or intensity. The deep self-abasement of David and of Job, the criminations of Brainerd, of Edwards, and of Payson against themselves, in terms that indicate to many a morbid conscience or a relentless Calvinism, are the simple reflection

of that mood of the soul in which the sense of guilt is quickened aside from the consciousness of pardon. This phase of experience arises not only under reflection upon past conduct, but often incidentally from some other exciting cause which distorts the mental vision, and presents every object with the keen and tormenting sensation of a hydro-oxygen light upon an eye diseased. The mind, excited by calamity or from whatever cause, will oftentimes revert to its own dereliction of duty as the occasion of its grief, and will write bitter things against itself. Once its thoughts are turned into that channel they pour on unceasingly; now swollen and turbid, now wild and foaming, now black and sullen. The soul attempts to fathom its own depths, but the multitude of accusing and condemning thoughts that roll tumultuously within, defy the soundings of reason or of faith. None can doubt that there is a hell who has had the flood-gates of its fiery gulf thus opened within himself.

Thoughts of *personal danger* bewilder the excited mind. Let loose from its anchorage it is driven of fierce winds and tossed. Dangers multiply on every hand. That which in calmer moods

it would not count a danger, or which it would meet unflinchingly, now terrifies it like the vision of Eliphaz. It has met with a sudden loss or bereavement; a ship has gone down at sea, a house has been consumed by fire, a parent, child, sister, brother, husband, wife has been snatched away by death, or the person has narrowly escaped some great disaster, and now every storm forbodes the destruction of property, every alarm of fire is a new agitation, every symptom of disease is the grim herald of death, every journey is a peril, danger lurks in every breath. Sometimes to these nervous apprehensions are added the fierce buffetings of Satan, who shakes the soul with terrible alarm. The "terror by night" drives sleep from weary, aching eyes.

Anxieties for the future agitate the mind. A sudden change of relations has brought upon the soul a sea of cares. The widowed father finds the training of children who were pliant under their mother's softest tone or look, a strange and perplexing task to one busied with the general cares of life and unwonted to its gentler assiduities. The widowed mother finds the providing for her household, the arranging of business

affairs, the governing and counseling of her elder children,—matters which had gone so smoothly in other hands that she had scarce given them a thought,—now crowding sharply upon her, and filling her way with perplexities—a hedge of thorns in the once rosy path of life. And when once the mind is adrift upon the sea of uncertainty, all things, temporal and spiritual, present and eternal, are shrouded in gloom.

Then cares like a wild deluge come,
And storms of sorrow fall.

Doubt, unbelief, and fear oftentimes disturb the quiet of the soul in such a state of agitation. Perplexities about Providence, about the course of events and the principles of the divine government, perhaps even atheistic thoughts like those of "The Preacher" and of Asaph touching the very fact of the divine government over the world, roll tumultuously upon the soul and give it no rest. This was the trouble of the Psalmist. The prosperity of the wicked, their triumph over the just, their boasts against God and his people, almost shook his confidence in God himself. His

thoughts were greatly disturbed. "Who will rise up for me against the evil-doers, or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me,—in all my perplexities concerning thy government and ways,—thy comforts delight my soul." How terrible were the surges of doubt that rolled over the mind of Blanco White, now dashing him against the cold, castellated rocks of formalism, now throwing him awhile upon the smooth, pebbly beach of a pure and simple faith, but ere he had gained a footing there, dragging him by their fearful undertow a hopeless wreck into the abyss of pantheism.

Thoughts of *emptiness, desertion, loneliness, desolation*, distract the mind under such an excitement of the sensibility. When property is swept away—when the loved one dies—when character is assailed—when friends prove false, it seems at first as if everything were gone. A prop is broken, and the whole frame feels the jar; and while settling down into its new position, it seems to be

falling into ruin. Any sudden disappointment, loss, or grief—any sudden rupture of tender ties—so cheapens the soul's estimate of remaining good, that in the comparison there is nothing left; it is empty and forsaken. Of all experiences this is the most trying. Of all the anxious thoughts that crowd the mind, these thoughts of emptiness, of loneliness, of desolation, do most weigh upon it like the nightmare, in which the sufferer is conscious of his own helplessness under the burden that crushes him, and cannot utter even a stifled cry for sympathy and aid.

In this experience the blessed Redeemer of mankind has shared, or rather stands pre-eminent. His loneliness in the garden, when all forsook him and fled—his appalling sense of desertion on the cross, when the Father himself forsook him, are a type of sorrow that no other mortal experience can ever realize. Yet something of this bitter agony often mingles with the multitude of anxious thoughts that harass an excited mind.

The mind in such a state is vexed also with *vague and shifting plans*. Imagination roves without restraint; multiplies its schemes of comfort and relief, then dashes them into air, and thus

harasses the mind with vacillation and with disappointment. And the disappointment of unreal plans is often more harassing than of plans that have a foundation; in the latter, the possibility of failure is an element in the calculation; but, in the former, all is ideal and beautiful; the pleasure floats on wings of gossamer within our grasp, it shines a globe of light of every hue, and reflects in gorgeous colors each hope and purpose of the soul—but we touch it and it bursts, and not so much as a fragment can be gathered to reconstruct the vision. Castle building is a pleasant pastime for youth; but sad, sad is it when the soul is already thick strewn with ruined hopes, for a wayward fancy to taunt it with fresh visions that vanish in its very grasp. Imagination—the gentle handmaid of faith and hope—is a tyrant hag when in the tumult of the thoughts she essays to rule.

And is there no relief from these multiplied distresses? Has the mind no resource against itself? Peace, troubled soul! turn from this tumultuous sea of thoughts to the divine consolations.

Divine Consolations.

THERE is a remedy for troubled and perplexing thoughts,—one remedy, and only one. This is not in mere force of will. Powerful as is the human will, it is no match for the excited sensibility. The will can resist truth, motive, argument, appeal,—it can even resist the Spirit of God and all the forces that Omnipotence arrays against it from without, but it cannot withstand the tumult of the mind itself when thought runs wild through the excitement of emotion. The helmsman is driven from his post by the surging billows, and as often as he attempts to regain it he is dashed prostrate and impotent upon the deck, or swept overboard into the sea. The will cannot govern in such a storm. And herein is an evidence of God's moral government over men, in that He can thus turn upon the soul a flood of memories and of

fears from which it cannot deliver itself except by his good pleasure.

• The diversions of the world will not allay such an excitement of the mind. When the mind is agitated with excessive grief or fear, it loses all relish for worldly pleasures. These are a mockery to it. Every passion of the soul is absorbed in the present or impending calamity. The most intoxicating pleasures of the world are but as vinegar and gall to one in the agonies of crucifixion. Even though for a while one should be diverted from his harassing cares or griefs by some transitory pleasure, yet the cause of his painful excitement remains, and his trouble returns with a violence the greater for its brief respite.

Neither can Time minister effectively to a mind thus disturbed. Time may have a soothing influence upon grief, it may lessen burdens, quiet fears, and alleviate sorrows; but time alone cannot restore the disturbed balance of the mind, or secure it against fresh outbreaks of anguish, or fresh inroads of fear.

There is but one remedy for distracting thoughts, and this the Psalmist found in divine consolations. *In the multitude of my thoughts within me, THY COMFORTS delight my soul.*

The character of God gives consolation to the troubled mind, if that mind has ever learned to look to God and to confide in Him. Is the mind disturbed with thoughts of personal guilt? Does conviction stir its depths like a troubled sea? The mercy of God, rich, boundless, free, a mercy that like a greater sea, vast, calm, and fathomless, swallows up all other seas in its stupendous tide—rolls in upon the soul a fullness of peace that “passeth all understanding.”

Is the mind agitated with doubts and apprehensions for the future? The goodness and the truth of God, unsearchable and unchangeable, bring to it an assurance of comfort and support. Is the mind perplexed with the providential dealings of God—with the prosperity of the wicked and the oppression of the just? The infinite justice of God beaming through the clouds and darkness that surround his throne, brings consolation and hope in the darkest hour. And thus through all the fluctuating emotions of the soul, and in all its varying phases, there is in the character of God when fairly developed to its view, some specific adaptation to its support and consolation.

The Government of God is a source of consola-

tion to the troubled spirit. Indeed there is no true consolation that does not involve a recognition of the divine government. The waves of care and sorrow will dash us every whither until we plant our feet upon the everlasting granite of the sovereignty of God. Here the Psalmist found relief from all his perplexities respecting wicked men. "*Thy righteousness, O God, is very high. My tongue shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long.*"

It is not enough that one should believe in the existence of God or acknowledge in a general way his attributes,—he must believe in the government of God as a reality, a present fact, and upon that he can lean with absolute assurance. The rugged, cloud-capped mountain that strikes him with awe, gives him a refuge and defense.

The promises of God shed consolation over the troubled spirit. These promises are at once specific and comprehensive. *The Lord is nigh to all them that call upon him. Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee. Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. We know that all things work [are working] together for good to them that love God.*

Well may such comforts delight the soul; rich, abundant, adapted to its every want. Such strong consolation have they who flee for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them.

But higher than all these consolations, and involving all these, is that which springs from the presence of God realized unto the soul. "*When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flames kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.*" And is this indeed so? Is God my Saviour with me as I go through the fire and the flood? What matter the perils of the sea, the violence of the winds, the madness of the waves, if Jesus is with me in the boat? Though he seem to be sleeping I am safe. He will arouse in time to save me. He will rebuke the tempest and on the instant there shall be a great calm. Ah, let it not be that he shall rebuke me also for little faith. Christ engages to be with me; and shall I doubt that he is with me? Christ engages to support me, and shall I doubt whether he will support me? Christ engages to deliver

me; and shall I doubt that he will deliver me? He bids me cast all my care on Him, for he careth for me.

“ And shall I still the load retain
Which thou hast offered to sustain?
No, at thy bidding, I will flee,
And cast my burdens all on thee.”

My soul, there is coming to thee an hour of hurried thought, of quickened memory, of eager expectation; the hour that shall part the vail and make the Present and the Future one, and pour upon the Past the light of eternity. Oh, then, in the multitude of thy thoughts, amid all thy self-upbraidings, thy remembered sins, thy conscious weaknesses, thy rising doubts and fears, may the consolations of thy Saviour's word and presence give thee joy.

Heart Searching.

THE Psalmist prayed, *Search me, O God, and know my heart.* Did he comprehend the import of that prayer? Do we comprehend its import when in our most pious frames we repeat the petition? To come to the knowledge of oneself, to go down to the foundation of one's character and hopes, to fathom the depths of the soul, and in so doing to fathom as it were the depths of eternity, this is a more serious and earnest matter when God answers the prayer than we imagine when we utter it. It is like descending the shaft of a mine; your first descent is by an easy flight of steps, and the novelty enlivens, and the coolness refreshes you; but at the bottom of these you come to a narrow archway, through which you must creep to the next descent, which is by a slender perpendicular ladder that trembles be-

neath your weight; you grow dizzy and wish yourself safely out again; the air becomes more chill and damp, and you are wet and soiled with the drippings of the vari-colored strata through which you pass; again you crawl through a yet narrower passage, tearing your flesh at every motion, and now you are on the verge of a deep well, into which you must be lowered by crank and bucket. You look down into the awful unbroken gloom. You cast in a pebble and listen nervously for the distant splash. You ask the guide, "Are there ever explosions here?" His affirmative answer does not nerve your courage. You ask again, "Do rocks ever fall here?" Again the answer is in the affirmative, accompanied by the details of a recent accident. "Does the rope ever break?" "Yes," again. Your knees smite together as you launch into the abyss; the bottom reached, you here find countless avenues with mystery on mystery. Now your breath is stifled; now your frame is chilled; now your flesh is wounded; now your sight has gone; again and again you wish yourself at the surface, yet cannot brave the perilous ascent. Who would have imagined that under the smooth grassy mound, the

fragrant clover, or the teeming orchard, such wonders and such dangers lay concealed?

It is even so with the heart of man. Yet must we at times take the candle of God's word, or better still the guidance of God's Spirit, and fathom its utmost depths. Though it chill our blood and palsy our nerves and sicken our brain, yet must we go down, down into the caverns of the heart. What find we there?

Self-examination is apt to be an occasional and a very superficial work. We look into ourselves enough to see that there is evil there, and in the gross we make confession of sin and purpose repentance. But we shrink from the details. To tell the number of our sins is an unwelcome task; we avert our eyes from them, we seek to cover them, we hope to outgrow them, and feel assured at least that death will emancipate us from them and make us pure. This is a wretched policy. "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper." We cannot get rid of sin by any such process. It cannot be concealed; it will not die out; it cannot be outlived; death will not cancel it. Where sin is harbored in the soul, suffered to live on without repentance or correction, what is there in

death to destroy it? Nay, the soul that comes to death with cherished sin must needs go to judgment without repentance and without pardon. Death works no such miraculous transformation. Let me not delude myself with such a thought. Search me, O God!

Sometimes God searches us by an array of providences that expose us to ourselves; he holds up on every side a mirror, and whichever way we turn some phase of our own heart is reflected upon us. Sometimes he deals directly with the heart, and probes it gently but to the quick; sometimes he tears it open with one gaping wound, and as it lies quivering in its black deformity we must look on while conscience guided by his hand lays bare this evil motive, this self-interest, this idolatrous affection, this impure imagination, this envious desire, till as in the chambers of imagery that Ezekiel saw, we discover within us every abomination. Such a searching is like the attempt to cleanse a well whose waters have become turbid and foul. You draw out a few buckets, and give time for the pure water to flow in and settle; you then draw again, but to your surprise it is still turbid; you empty bucket after bucket till a del-

uge of slime is heaped around you; the pure water is flowing in, but so foul is the well that it is continually discolored; and again and again must you empty it before it will send up a limpid pail, and reflect the clear azure of the overhanging sky. Blessed be God if in the heart blackened by sin there is a deep well-spring of life, that after all this wearisome and loathsome emptying of self, will bubble up pure, and from its placid depths mirror forth the light of his countenance. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

The Peace of God.

THIS "passeth all understanding" It cannot therefore be defined; it refuses to be held in the vice of our logic, or to be subjected to the iron pressure of our metaphysical systems. It

comes to the soul through the avenue of the sensibility, and not through the intellect or the will. The knowledge of it is derived from the experience of the heart rather than from any process of the understanding; it must be felt in order to be known; it must come to the consciousness as a matter of realization before it can be apprehended as a matter of intellection. The soul doth not bring itself into this state by mere force of will, nor simply by meditation upon divine truth. Peace comes to it from God.

There is an external peace that Christ has secured to the believer, a peace in his relations to God, to his law, to the judgment, and to the eternal world. He is our peace; having slain by the cross the enmity subsisting between our sinful flesh and the violated law, he has reconciled us to God, and has preached peace to them that were afar off. But "the peace of God" is an inward peace, an internal tranquility of the soul. It was this of which the Saviour spake when in his last interview with his sorrowing disciples before the crucifixion, he said, "*Peace* I leave with you, *my* peace I give to you: not as the world giveth—a brief, fitful, superficial, uncertain, and ever limited

composure—not as the world giveth, give I unto you: *let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*” The peace that Jesus gives is an entire freedom from trouble and fear; freedom not only from danger, but from the apprehension of danger; freedom not only from want, but from that solicitude which is awakened by real or imaginary need—a state of full, constant, undisturbed tranquility.

This peace Christ imparts to the soul. It is his gift. And yet it is a gift bestowed in accordance with the laws of mind and with the laws of truth. There is in it nothing miraculous, nothing mysterious, though often it comes to the soul in an unlooked-for moment, in the very tumult of its thoughts, its fears, its convictions, its griefs, and without any immediate assignable cause. It enters the soul and *keeps* it. Of a sudden there comes a calm—deep, rich, full—like a river filling up every channel, every pore, every the minutest ramification of the tranquilized and delighted sensibility. At what point this river found entrance to your soul you know not—this passeth comprehension; on every side it floweth in, and still it floweth on, and with every tumult hushed

with every apprehension gone, you sit a wonder to yourself, in the calm, full blessedness of the peace of God. In the chamber of your bitter agony, where you groaned with the burden of guilt and the anguish of despair, in the solitude and darkness that but now were filled with shapes and sounds of terror, in the chamber of your deepest grief, by the bed of death, by the cold and silent form you loved, by the yet open coffin, in the somber presence of funereal scenes, you sit serene—the very God of peace abiding in you.

This peace is not the mere subsidence of animal excitement in the interval of the paroxysms of grief. You have the same consciousness of sorrow as before; the pressure of calamity is upon you, and grows heavier with each dragging hour. You have not fallen into insensibility or into mental inaction. Your perception of your sinfulness is as vivid as ever; your sense of your loss is as keen as when first your soul was laid open by the piercing sword; your emotions are not exhausted, your tears are not dried; should you at any moment give loose to your feelings they would hurry you away as before; but you do *not* give loose to them, and this not because your will restrains

them—for here the will is impotent—not because you have reasoned yourself into a calmer frame, not because philosophy or pride has come to your aid and is bolstering you up with false props, not because you have formed resolutions and plans for the future and by force of imagination have thrown yourself out of present scenes, till Hope has distanced Memory; you have no wish to flee from sorrow, and know that henceforth it must abide with you; but while every grief is present, it is present with an altered mien or with its attendant solace, and it comes to you sadly but with calm and gentle footsteps; while every sin is present, it is present not as an accuser but as a sorrowing monitor, and Penitence and Pardon come hand in hand with each remembered transgression; your peace though not consciously derived from God or from meditation upon any specific attribute of his character or truth of his word, is ever associated with his character and his word, and these are continually recurring to your thoughts. And thus you come to recognize it as a true, divine peace. It is not the induration of the heart under prolonged conviction or excited grief, it is not the uprising of the will to reassert

its pride of dominion, it is not the stern bracing of a stoical or a necessitarian philosophy, it is not the diversion of thought and emotion into other channels, nor is it an ecstatic and visionary frame into which the mind has come through very weakness and excitement; it is a state of mind in which every cause of grief or of mental agitation is yet consciously present, but is hushed down by calm and holy thoughts, by serene and majestic shapes of truth and love, that as from an invisible source have entered the soul and there abide.

In such a state Conscience is at peace, because the will and the affections have come into harmony with its demands; the Will is at rest in the accepted will of God; and even Imagination ever fretting the soul with fictitious hopes or exaggerated fears, is now quiescent at the feet of infinite Knowledge and infinite Love. God is in the soul. The peace of God which passeth all understanding keeps the heart and mind through Christ Jesus.

But though this peace thus *comes* to the soul often without any immediate and perceived connection with divine truth, it were the height of

enthusiasm to suppose it a matter either of pure spontaneity or of miraculous creation. It is consequent upon a certain attitude of mind toward God, though the point, or the medium, or the instant of its communication may be determined by the special influence of the Holy Spirit. It is connected as a promise, with two injunctions. *Be careful for nothing.* Confide in God. By the study of his word, his providence, and his grace, learn to trust in Him, and so repress all undue solicitude about any of your concerns. “Be careful for nothing, *but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God.*” Pray to God habitually, uniformly, in each event and concernment of life. Carry every thing to God. Thus trusting and thus praying, *the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and mind through Christ Jesus.*

A Day with Christ.

IT may enable one the better to realize what it is to live with Christ, to conceive of him as being present bodily as he was with the first disciples. Suppose then that Christ is at your side, just as he was daily with Peter or John, are you quite willing to have Him observe all your conduct, to know how you are occupied, what you say and do through all the day? He is not present as an austere censor, but as a personal friend, kind, patient, forbearing; yet He is pure and holy, and is grieved and offended at any departure from the perfect law of rectitude and love. And now with Christ thus at your side, you are supposed to act naturally in all respects as you are accustomed to do, assuming nothing for the occasion. How far are you prepared to submit to the personal inspection of Christ?

He enters the *family*. He rejoices in the genial play of affection, and in the innocent mirth of the fire-side. The little prattler on your knee engages his attention and receives his caresses. He is a cheerful, affectionate, considerate visitor, entering with interest into every subject relating to your happiness. But what impression does the general, the usual course of affairs in the family produce upon the mind of such an observer? How much place is given to religion? Is God honored in your house? Is your family worship so conducted—I speak it reverently—that Christ himself could join in it, or could at least be an approving spectator? How much of the conversation of the family is upon topics agreeable to Christ? And to what extent is your conversation upon domestic affairs and secular things characterized by a tone of natural and cheerful piety—the recognition of God’s providence, of moral obligation, and of the superior importance of spiritual things?

In the whole economy of the household, in the intercourse of the several members of the family with each other, how much is there of the spirit of kindness, subduing irascibility and fretfulness,

and causing the day to glide smoothly and pleasantly onward? How far are your expenses, your style of living, the education of your children, in a word, all your domestic arrangements, regulated so as to meet the approbation of Christ? Endeavor thus to entertain Christ in your family for a day, and you may discover whether you do truly live with Him.

From the family, Christ now accompanies you to your place of *business*. He observes your deportment in your intercourse with the world. He is with you in the counting-room, He is with you in the shop, He is with you on 'Change; wherever you go Christ is at your side; whatever you say or do Christ is a witness of it. He sees with what temper you bear the disappointments and vexations of the day; He sees upon what principles you conduct your business, and for what end; whether you are in haste to be rich, or whether, while "not slothful in business," you are still "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Christ stands by you when you are making a bargain, knows whether you speak the truth, or take advantage of your neighbor. If you act just as you are accustomed to do, how much will Christ

see in you to approve, and that will cause Him to rejoice in such a representative; or how much that will cause Him to blush for the honor of His name?

From your family and your place of business, Christ next goes with you into *society*. Perhaps the company to which you introduce Him is a circle of relatives, or of Christian friends, who have met for social entertainment. Such a company ought to be congenial to his tastes and feelings. Does it prove to be so? Is your deportment and that of your fellow-Christians in a social party,—are your topics of conversation and methods of amusement such that Christ will feel quite at home there, and, as a cheerful friend, can participate therein?

But perhaps the company to which you introduce Him is of a different character,—a gay worldly party. As He enters the brilliant assembly, is not Christ struck with the incongruity of your going to such a place in quest of enjoyment? And as the entertainment of the evening proceeds, the giddy dance begins, the games are introduced, the wine circulates freely, and the flip-pant conversation grows more noisy as night

wears away, does not He wonder more and more that any disciple of his should take pleasure in such scenes, and court their deleterious excitement?

Possibly Christ is gratified at seeing how that young disciple, whose relations to society have casually brought her into such a position, maintains her consistency, and demeans herself as a Christian, in the presence of the gay and giddy world. But when you are again invited to such a party be sure that you ask Christ to go with you, and that you keep Him at your side.

Leaving these scenes, Christ next attends you to your *closet*. He observes whether you resort thither cheerfully, or by constraint of conscience and of habit; whether you enter it in a hurry, and after a hurried prayer and a listless mechanical reading of the Scriptures, rush forth again to the world of business or of pleasure, where your heart has mainly been; or whether your closet is a favorite resort, which you delight to seek, and where you love to linger, that you may hold near and intimate converse with Him. Are you willing that Christ should thus enter your closet with you?

He attends you also to the *prayer-meeting* and to the *house of God*. He knows what passes in your mind before going,—whether you go cheerfully or of constraint, after a long conflict between duty and inclination. He knows what preparation you make for these social and public religious services, and in what spirit—for He reads the heart—you engage in them. Would you be willing to perform these duties as you are accustomed to do, with Christ at your side as a close observer?

And in the same manner Christ takes notice of what you do for His *cause*. He knows whether you visit the poor, converse with the impenitent, seek out the vicious and degraded, and in what spirit you perform such labors. If you are a Sabbath-school teacher, He sits by your side and observes whether you hear your class mechanically, or whether with kindness and patience you adapt your instructions to them personally, and are intent upon their salvation. Christ is at your side, too, when an appeal is made to you for a charitable object, and He sees how you regard it, or He sees how much you put into the contribution-box when such an appeal is made in public. Are you

quite willing that Christ should see and know, as a personal observer, just what you are doing for his cause?

If you will endeavor thus to conceive of Christ as with you in the body, for a single day, you may judge how far you truly live with Him.

A Porcelain Christ and the Heart Christ.

FEW Christians have attained to that intimate and complete union with Christ of which he spoke in the last interview with his disciples before his crucifixion. "*Abide in me, and I in you.*" It is not merely trusting in Christ, or walking with Christ; it is living in him, and having his presence ever in the soul. As two friends, though separated, live in each other's thoughts and affec-

tions, and possess one spirit, seek each other's happiness, rejoice in each other, and often without consultation come, as it were instinctively, to the same opinion, and adopt the same course of life, so Christ and the true believer are one.

Paul, in one of those sententious sayings which contain an epitome of the Gospel, declares that the grand revelation of the New Testament is "*Christ in you the hope of glory.*" Oh! the preciousness of such a union with Christ! of such a *real presence* of the Saviour in the soul! And yet it is to be feared that many of his followers know but little of it. Some have merely a *historic* Christ. They receive the facts recorded of his life and death as the ground of confidence in him as the Saviour of the world. They believe in that Christ who appeared in Judea eighteen centuries ago, and rest their hopes of salvation upon his finished work. But Christ, like any character in history, is with them only an object of outward contemplation.

Others have a *dogmatic* Christ: the Christ of the catechism and the schools. They believe in the atonement, in the doctrine of justification by faith alone, in the mediation of Jesus as their

great High Priest; in a word, in all those doctrines called Orthodox. They are sound in the faith, and zealous for the honor of the Gospel; and yet Christ is too much in their creed, and too little in their hearts.

What we need in order to know the full power of Christ—the power of his life, the power of his doctrine, the power of his death, the power of his resurrection—is, to have Christ *in* us as 'the one object of thought, of affection, of desire, of hope, of joy—to be in sympathy with his feelings and his work—to be swayed by his Spirit.

I know not how better to illustrate this general idea, than by the following incident. A German woman, a Catholic, now residing in New York, on leaving her native land, had received from her priest a charm, which was to preserve her amid the perils of the voyage, and to protect her in a land of strangers. Such a charm is generally procured by German Catholic emigrants before coming to America. Sometimes it consists of a small crucifix; sometimes of a mere picture of the Saviour on the cross, enveloped in a leather case; sometimes of an image of the Virgin. In this case it was a crucifix of porcelain. Its pos-

essor having reached New York in safety, and thus proved the virtue of her crucifix, kept it suspended upon the wall of her chamber, as an aid to devotion, if not itself an object of grateful adoration. But one day, as she was adjusting the furniture of the room, a sudden jar brought down the crucifix to the floor, and broke her Saviour into a hundred fragments. Alas! what could she now do? She had lost her Christ—her friend, her protector. For a time she gave herself up to weeping and self-reproach. But presently, in her grief, she sought counsel of a neighbor in an adjoining apartment. "What shall I do?" she cried, "for my dear Christ is broken to pieces!"

It happened that this neighbor was one of the congregation of German seceders from the Roman Catholic Church: one who had embraced the doctrines of evangelical religion, and who had experienced the grace of Christ in her own soul. She said to her distressed friend, "Do not grieve, and I will tell you how you may make up your loss. I keep the Saviour always *in my heart*." She then explained to her the Scriptures, and invited her to go and hear the preacher of the new congregation on the next Sabbath. The invitation was accepted:

the eyes of the poor, disconsolate woman were opened, and she, too, found a Christ whom she can keep always in her heart, and of whom no casualty nor violence can ever deprive her.

Our faith in the historic evidences of Christianity may be shaken, at times, by those doubts and fears to which all Christians are exposed; our creeds may be assailed or undermined; our ecclesiastical systems may be exploded into fragments, but nothing shall ever deprive us of Christ, if he be *in* us the hope of glory.

Christ Indwelling.

THE great thought upon which the Saviour dwelt in his last interview with his disciples before the crucifixion, was that after his bodily presence should have been withdrawn, he would really be with them more intimately than before.

For three years he had been with them, thenceforth he would be *in* them. "Yet a little while and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." He promised them a complete identity with himself in interests and in blessedness; nay more than this—a certain life-union that should constitute them one with Christ. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and *ye in me* and *I in you*." He spake also of a peculiar manifestation of himself to his disciples, such as the world could not witness; and when one of them desired to know how this divine manifestation should be, and how they should be conscious of it, "Jesus answered and said to him, If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and *we will come to him and make our abode with him*."

Often as we have pondered these words they have seemed to veil an impenetrable mystery; and this because the mind was intent upon comprehending the manner of this indwelling, rather than upon taking cognizance of the fact itself through its palpable evidences. But in truth it is with this indwelling of Christ in the soul, as with the peace of God; it is a fact of personal experi-

ence that cannot be analyzed and reduced to a metaphysical proposition. It were easy indeed to set it forth both negatively and positively; to show that Christ does not dwell in the believer in his essential nature or by any visible manifestation; and that he does dwell in the thoughts, the affections, the desires, and the purposes of the soul, through his perceived character and relations, his adopted principles and spirit, and his ever-living truth. But this after all is a dry skeleton of the intellect, or if it be clothed with flesh and beautified, that is a work of the imagination which vanishes again into airy nothing when the heart in loneliness and sorrow would clasp a present Saviour. The living Saviour will not be thus dissected and analyzed by the speculative reason, and taken piecemeal into the heart; if he enters the heart at all he *comes* to it in his own way, and the heart knows that he is there.

Christ gave to the inquiring Judas no explanation of the mode of that divine manifestation which he had promised. He did not say, "You will meditate upon my character, my person, my teachings, my relations to you, and my Spirit will so quicken your perceptions of truth and so enli-

ven your affections that you shall see me and feel my presence as if I were with you in the body.” But what said he? “Judas (not Iscariot) saith to him, Lord, *how* is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not to the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and *we will come to him, and make our abode with him.*” But this answer does not tell *how* Christ will manifest himself; it declares what are the conditions and what the evidences of that manifestation, but as a psychological phenomenon or as a problem in mental philosophy, the answer renders it not one whit plainer than the original declaration. Indeed in this respect the answer is even more mysterious than the first announcement. Christ comes to the soul—no doubt in connection with his truth and the exercise of faith upon that truth—but nevertheless he COMES to the awakened consciousness with a realization of his presence that words cannot define, and he ABIDES in the soul, diffusing spiritual light, and life, and comfort, and joy, as from a self-luminous globe whose interior constitution cannot be analyzed, and whose brilliant effluence eludes our nicest tests.

That this indwelling of Christ in the soul is a reality is plain from the experience of John, whose first epistle is a continuous reflection of it. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ." John walked in that holy fellowship. As we read Neander, especially when he acts as the interpreter of John or of Christ's last sayings, it is evident that he has experimentally apprehended the indwelling of Christ. This he does not explain, or if he attempts to explain it he is caught in the subtleties of German metaphysics, but it beams upon us from his innermost consciousness; we know that Christ dwelleth in him because Christ shines evermore through his genial, childlike, affectionate piety.

No doubt Christ dwells in the soul by his character, his doctrines, his precepts, his example, his spirit, his promises, his relations, as these are dwelt upon in meditative faith. But is the root above all this a sympathetic union, a heart-life, a subtle acting of his mind upon ours, that comes not in the first instance through the critical reason, but through the pliant and gladdened sensibility? Our limited human experiences here furnish us with some faint analogy. You love to devotion

the chosen partner of your life. The charms of person, of mind, and of heart, the hallowed sympathy, the dear companionship of years, have made the one being with whom you dwell the all in all of earth. Where every counsel, every care, every joy, every thought has been shared, you can conceive of no higher fellowship. But you do not yet understand the capacities of your own nature. This fellowship, so intimate and so complete, is yet a fellowship connected with and manifested by external media—a dwelling with, rather than an indwelling. Let now this partner of your life be for weeks, and months, and years, an invalid, feeble, dependent, wasting before your eyes with slow disease; let every generous and tender sympathy of your being be enlisted for the relief of suffering, and every plan and arrangement of life be shaped for that end; let each day bring its alternations of hope and of fear, of comfort and of distress; let your eye with the quick glance of affection mark every change, note every symptom, catch every expression, read every thought and wish, and you have become absorbed in this dear object with a oneness of feeling to which you were before a stranger. On the busy street, in the shop, the

counting-room, the study, in the public assembly, in the silent watches of the night, this one object is ever present not to thought only, but to every susceptibility of the soul, while through all the changeful phases of that presence your emotions follow as the tides obey the moon. So too does that loved one live in you, read your thoughts, and drink in your spirit; and thus through the quick and subtle sensibility, or through some new channel of your being that emotion has forced open, do two souls, hitherto linked together by every outward and visible tie, flow gently into one, and know a union that death itself cannot dissever. Even so does Christ come and abide in the soul that, penitent and trustful, looks to him; even so does he bear its griefs and carry its sorrows; even so does he nerve it with his strength and fill it with his joy, until that soul comes to live in him as its own indissoluble life. Yes, far transcending all sympathetic union of human spirits, is that deep, sacred, all-pervading union of sympathy and affection into which Christ the Creator and the Redeemer of the soul, enters with that soul when he comes to manifest himself to it and to abide with it.

But how shall we know that Christ is really present with us—that it is Christ whom we see and not a creation of our own excited imagination? On that point there is no need of mistake. Though we cannot know how Christ enters the soul we may always know when he is really there; and the evidences of his presence should engage our thoughts more than the manner of it. The Apostle John gives us these evidences in such terms as these: “He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the spirit which he hath given us. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit. He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.” The spirit of obedience and the spirit of love secure to us the indwelling of Christ. Especially is it through the spirit of love that Christ enters the soul, and by that spirit that he manifests his presence. He that dwelleth in love, whose whole spirit and life, whose every thought and purpose is under the direction of love to God and man—is the out-going of that love—

will know assuredly that Christ and the Father have come to him and have taken up their abode with him.

A Good Foundation.

IN a fierce tempest that swept over New York in midsummer, the walls of a church then erecting were shaken and in part thrown to the ground. On inquiring into the cause of the disaster I learned that though the materials were good, and the workmanship thorough, it proved that the soil in which the foundations were laid was a quicksand which had shifted under the weight of the building, and had left it at the mercy of the winds. The wall was taken down to the foundation; piles were then driven thickly

together till they formed a solid basis; then heavy timber was laid on the top of these; next a firm and consistent soil was heaped upon the whole, and then the masonry was relaid, and the wall built up again in massive strength.

As with that foundation so is it with many of the grounds of earthly hope, and comfort, and joy. Man builds upon friendship, upon wealth, upon public opinion or reputation, and rears on these his lofty hopes and schemes; but when he is shaken by some mighty wind these foundations often prove to be only quicksands; they slide from under him, and all that he had built upon them comes toppling down. What then? Though the crash seems dreadful, all is not lost. He can build again, and if he is wise he will look well to his foundation, and he will go below all human props and aids, that he may plant himself firmly in God. He will not begin to build upward till he has sounded the treacherous depths around him, and has struck the rock, and bolted himself to that. Yes, though the discipline be severe, and to a sensitive spirit almost insupportable, it is well for one who is aiming to do right, to be forsaken by friends, and maligned and buffeted by enemies,

to be cast out as vile, and blown upon by fierce winds of human passion, that he may learn what strength and comfort are in God. There are depths of the heart and depths of religious experience which we can learn only by such a trial, and to learn which is worth years of patient suffering. A blessed result of such a trial is that it leads one to fix himself absolutely upon God. Why should we shrink from trials that come to us in the way of duty or as a heaven-sent discipline? We are in the hands of ONE who, while he shakes the mountains with his tempests, doth also temper the wind to the shorn lamb. In this ever shifting world, amid its varying and often boisterous currents, one needs a sure anchorage, and this he finds when he is driven to put his trust alone in God.

Fixed to Christ.

CHRIST is a foundation—the foundation of our hope, of our peace, of our salvation; the foundation of all true worship, of all true access to God; the foundation of that spiritual temple which Jehovah is rearing to himself amid the ruins of the fall. He is the only foundation; the foundation that the Lord himself has laid for the hopes of a perishing world. He is the corner-stone—the support and the connection of the whole building—the chief corner-stone, chosen, tried, precious, sure, adjusted by infinite wisdom and infinite power to its position of honor, of strength, and of beauty, in the stupendous work of man's redemption.

Am I built on this foundation? Men may disallow it, but God has chosen it, and it shall stand. Have I then chosen it as my foundation? Do I

rest upon it as my confidence and support? Am I cemented to this foundation, riveted to it, so that all my interests are consolidated with the interests of Christ? "Think it not enough," says the excellent Leighton, "think it not enough that you know this stone is laid, but see whether you are built on it by faith. The multitude of imaginary believers lie round about it, but they are never the better nor the surer for that, any more than stones that lie loose in heaps near unto a foundation, but are not joined to it. There is no benefit to us by Christ, without union with him; no comfort in his riches, without an interest in them, and a title to them, by virtue of that union. This union is the spring of all spiritual consolations. And faith, by which we are thus united, is a Divine work. He that laid this foundation in Sion with his own hand, works likewise, with the same hand, faith in the heart, by which it is knit to this corner-stone." Yes, faith is the cement that unites the soul to this sure foundation—the ethereal link that binds it evermore to Christ. "To whom coming as to a living stone, . . . ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house."

Have I this faith? "To you who believe, he

is precious"—an object of honor and esteem. Is Christ precious to me? Is he not only an object of fitful admiration and affection—as when his attractions are portrayed in eloquent discourse—but is he *precious*, my only honor, my ever chief delight? Then am I built on him by faith; then may I claim that blessed promise, “he that believeth on him shall not be confounded—shall not make haste.” Then all my interests are safe; then *I* am safe—forever safe.

In the far South there is a river which, ordinarily still and shallow, in the spring time is swollen by heavy rains or melted snow from the mountains, and whose sudden freshets devastate the whole country through which it flows. I have heard that one who wished to avail himself of this stream for manufacturing purposes, selected a site for his building where the foundation was of living rock; this rock was drilled at various points to the depth of several inches, huge stones selected and shaped with care were then laid upon it in cement, each stone being furnished also with iron bolts that fitted into the sockets prepared in the foundation and were there soldered by fused metal; thus was each stone bolted to its fellow,

and the whole to the foundation. The neighbors laughed at such pains-taking and expense, and in their improvident way thought it better to take the risk of a freshet. To what purpose was a pyramid of granite built beside a shallow summer rill? The next spring there came a freshet of unprecedented suddenness and force. Wide the torrent overflowed its banks, sweeping down plantations, fences, trees, huts, houses, with appalling devastation. The occupants fled in dismay; confounded at the sudden ruin, they made haste to escape for their lives. Meanwhile, the workmen of this factory pursued their customary labors within its walls; from the windows they saw the roaring flood, the crashing trees and buildings, the torrent of destruction rolling by; yet they felt no alarm, they were not confounded with surprise, they were not agitated by one anxious thought, they did not make haste to secure their safety by flight; they knew that they were safe—nowhere could they be safer than there, founded on the rock, bolted to the rock. Thus it is with the soul that is built on Christ. Secure in him it cannot know a fear. No danger can surprise it, no agitation or alarm can disturb its peace. It shall not make haste, it shall

not ask Whither shall I flee?—for only where it is, can it be safe. “They that are disappointed and ashamed in their hopes, run to and fro, and seek after some new resource. The believing soul makes haste *to* Christ, but it never finds cause to hasten *from* him Such times may come as will shake all other supports, but this holds out against all—*though the earth be removed, yet will not we fear.* Though the frame of the world were cracking about a man’s ears, he may hear it unafrighted who is built on this foundation. And in that great day wherein *all faces shall gather blackness* and be filled with confusion, that have neglected to make Christ their stay when he was offered them, then it shall appear how happy they are who have trusted in him; *They shall not be confounded, but shall lift up their faces, and be acquitted in him.*”

Come then my soul, and join thyself to Christ alone. Build upon this sure foundation, and rivet thyself and thine immortal destiny to Christ, by every tie of gratitude and affection, with every fiber of thy being. Be not content to *have* believed in Him, to have built upon Him thy hope, but daily by new bonds rivet thyself to this living

and eternal rock. In thy morning meditations, let some new aspect of Christ, some new application of Christ, some new adaptation of his words and his life to thy condition and thy wants, be as a burning bolt of love to bind thee unto Him, and let the glow of devotion at eventide, the grateful remembrance of what Christ hath been to thee this day, weld and clinch that bolt forever.

Oh let me be established on the rock! Then shall I be firm in every trial, in every conflict, in every temptation; then when the cold, dark waters of death shall rise about me, I shall not be confounded; though they gurgle in my ears and chill the life-blood in my heart, yet I shall touch bottom all the way, shall feel the rock beneath my feet, and shall emerge upon the crystal pavement on the other side.

Not Solitary.

“I WILL not leave you *orphans*,” said Jesus as he was about to depart from his disciples. An orphan has no natural protector; no proper guide; no father upon whose counsels he can lean, upon whose aid he can rely; no mother to whose ever-ready sympathy he can resort, and in whose love he can nestle secure from every childish fear. He is alone and desolate. He grows up without nurture; like a plant by the way-side exposed to be plucked or trodden down by every passer-by, or like the wild shrub of the heather, subject to every storm, without shelter by day or by night, from sun, or wind, or cold, or tempest, or the careless tramp of hunter or of ravenous beast. The orphan may have a guardian; but often does the guardian content himself with fulfilling his legal duties to his ward, while his intellectual develop-

ment, and his social and moral culture are quite overlooked. Too often the commission for his own services is with the guardian a leading consideration in all his care of his ward's person and estate. Sometimes, indeed, the orphan finds a home in the bosom of a family allied to his own by consanguinity or by the tried friendship of years, and there he may forget his lone and comfortless condition in the light and warmth and tenderness of a disinterested and a permanent affection. Yet even such a family, with all its genial influences, with its affectionate, its refining, its sanctifying culture, cannot be to him in all things as the home of earlier years, before death had thrown its shadow over the dignity and grace, the gentleness and saintly purity that presided there.

The most anxious wish of the dying parent is to provide, in the plighted faith or the known affection of another, some security for the proper nurture of the children now to be deprived of their natural guardian. The Christian is enabled in faith to commend his orphans to God; but the utmost confidence of faith does not argue an indifference to such temporal provision for their welfare as a prudent forethought may suggest. Yet with all

that both faith and forethought can do for its relief, the condition of the orphan is still most desolate. "I will not leave you orphans," said Jesus to his sorrowing disciples, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you again."

The affectionateness of Christ in his closing interview with his disciples is one of the most remarkable features of that memorable scene. The humanity of Jesus was as conspicuous in the expression of sympathy as was his divinity in the assurance of his omnipresent indwelling. Jesus was truly a *man*—a perfect man—a man in whose soul every sensibility and every affection was most exquisitely tuned, and who could reciprocate the endearments of friendship with more than the love of woman, with a strength, a purity, and a delicacy of affection known only to souls that are free from sin. The little circle of disciples constituted his family; upon these he bestowed an affection kindred to that of the nearest relations of life. On one occasion he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples and said, "Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother." These

disciples were for three years his intimate companions. They had forsaken all for him, and had shared his cares and sorrows and toils. He loved them; loved them not only with the divine compassion that had brought him into the world to save them from their sins; loved them not only as a Redeemer, ready to offer himself as a sacrifice for their salvation; but loved them as a friend with a personal attachment. Indeed, there were those among them for whom he had a peculiar regard;—thus he selected Peter and James and John to witness any special manifestations of his glory, and John was called habitually “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” The thought of parting from these cherished friends was painful. He had borne with their weaknesses, their ignorance, and their folly,—he could even bear their desertion,—for he loved them with the most deep and tender affection. And now in this closing hour, forgetful of himself, he expressed that affection in the most pathetic terms. His concern was not that *he* was about to suffer and to die, but that they were about to be left alone as lambs in the midst of wolves. He prayed for them, he counseled them, he gave them his sympathy. “Little children,”

said he,—before this he had called them his disciples or his friends—but now he says to them, “Little children, yet a little while I am with you.” Some of them perhaps had numbered more years on earth than Christ himself, but as an expression of tenderness and affection he calls them little children; and in the same tender association adds, “I will not leave you *orphans*.”

The provision made for these immediate and personal disciples is extended also to all who have believed upon his name. “I will not leave you solitary; I will come to you.” Blessed promise—a provision made by Christ himself for the protection, the guidance, and the support of his disciples. I will not leave you SOLITARY.

The Promised Coming.

“**I** WILL not leave you solitary; *I will come to you.*” Ah, this is more than earthly friends can promise at parting. These can commend us to God; they can leave us with composure in the hands of an all-wise and an almighty Father; and they can console us with the fond hope of meeting them again;—but the dying parent cannot say to his children, as if he were going on a journey, “I will come to you again; in a little while ye shall see me.” How would such an assurance, could it be realized, mitigate the anguish of separation, and make the parting at death nothing more than the parting for a journey at the railway station or on the deck of a steamer. But no such assurance can friends send back to us from the world of departed spirits. Sometimes on the confines of that world, a fervid imagination or a quick-

ened faith will seize the hope of an angelic ministry to those whom it has loved on earth. "May I not know you? May I not visit you?" it inquires earnestly, hopefully, but it cannot say—*I will come to you.*

A venerable minister of Christ, who has experienced the sorest of earthly bereavements, writes to me:—"I never enter the pulpit but a saying of my dear partner, just as life was fast ebbing, comes into my mind. 'Weep not for me—who can tell but that, when you are preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ, I may be permitted to be near you to joy over you—weep not for me.' There may be selfishness in it," he adds, "there may be too much of human weakness—but I feel as if the thought nerved me up to proclaim the fullness of that salvation which I then saw so touchingly displayed."

But what in such a case is mere conjecture—for though the heart delights to cherish such a thought, it is conjecture only—what is a mere conjecture, a wish, a hope respecting a departed friend, is reality, is knowledge respecting Christ. "Weep not for me," said Jesus to his sorrowing disciples, "weep not for me, though you shall see me snatched

from among the living and suspended on the cross—though ye shall see me dead and laid in the tomb. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Though I shall go out of the world and be removed from the sight of men, I shall not depart from you. I will not leave you solitary; I will come to you. In a little while the world shall no longer see me, but ye still shall see me. I know that I am with you.”

It is given to the believer to realize in his own heart the presence of Christ through the Spirit. How this is we may not attempt to define; it is a matter of experience to the renewed and sanctified heart,—but the heart unrenewed, the heart never gladdened by this consciousness, can no more comprehend what it is than a blind man can comprehend the beauty of color to an eye that sees.

Some would restrict the coming, or the manifestation of Christ here spoken of, to the brief interval during which he appeared to his disciples after his resurrection. But could an occasional appearance for a few days, to be followed by a life-long separation, fulfill the promise, “I will not leave you desolate”—a promise which assures

them of an eternal fellowship with himself? Moreover, there is an assurance that they shall live because he lives; but this cannot refer of course to the preservation of mere natural life, nor can it mean that the general resurrection was just at hand. It must therefore refer "not to the physical sight of the corporeal resurrection, but to the spiritual perception of Christ in the mind." The coming of Christ is "an inward presence in the mind," realized through the Holy Spirit. 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, whatsoever I have said to you." To the soul quickened by divine truth, brought by the movings of the Holy Spirit into a sympathetic union with Christ, the presence of Christ becomes a reality; his words live, his spirit lives in and through that mind; his love pervades it, and animates it with an energy and a life not its own. *Ye see me*; faith apprehends me as a present Saviour. The soul's glad consciousness reveals the presence of my *love*, the presence of my Father and of myself. "I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU SOLITARY; I WILL COME TO YOU."

Was Christ Come?

THIS promise of the Redeemer was not given to a favored few. It was not meant to be a barren declaration of his own eternal existence and almighty power. It was intended to give comfort and support; and it should give comfort and support to every disciple. Our meditations should not dwell exclusively upon a crucified Saviour, upon an absent Saviour, upon a risen Saviour, upon a reigning Saviour, but more than all these upon a present, personal Saviour, abiding in the soul, its strength and its life. We speak much of the coming of Christ, and imagine that some glorious personal manifestation of the Redeemer to the world is the one grand and important event signified by that coming. But the delicate, invisible, spiritual, habitual coming of Christ to the believing soul, through its meditations on his word and

by the suggestions of his Spirit is a higher expression of his glory and his power than will be that august appearance amid thronging angels, that shall burn the heavens and dissolve the earth. Christ's coming is even NOW—every morning like the noiseless advent of the light, every evening like the gentle dripping of the dew, to the soul renewed and sanctified. Has Christ thus come to me? Let me look not for special manifestations, but for daily evidences.

The Sympathy of Christ.

HOW precious is that experience of sorrow which brings Christ to the soul as a sympathizing friend! The heart that mourns over its sins is naturally absorbed in the contemplation of Christ as its Redeemer. His atoning sacrifice—Christ crucified—is the object of its devout affec-

tion. In its view of Christ the cross is ever present; Christ on the cross is the Christ of its love, its trust, and its hope. To the penitent and believing soul this must ever be the most precious and the most cherished view of Christ:

“My faith looks up to thee,
Thou *Lamb of Calvary.*”

Without this view of Christ, without a trustful recognition of him as the Saviour from sin, without a clinging to his cross as the alone medium of pardon for guilt, of sanctification for impurity, of life and joy for spiritual death and condemnation,—all other views of Christ are meaningless and vain. Yet this view of Christ may be indulged too exclusively, and may shut out from the soul other aspects and relations most intimate and tender. While in one sense the cross brings the Saviour ever near, as the source of pardon and of spiritual life, in another it keeps him ever remote, and invests his office and work with a purely historical interest. Christ died for me on Calvary; Christ reigns for me in heaven; but Christ on the cross and Christ on the throne do

not fill up the whole representation of Christ as given in the Scriptures. There is a living Christ present with his disciples, a guide, a counselor, a friend.

The prophet Isaiah in his exquisite delineation of the Saviour's mission and death, while he gives prominence to an objective atonement—" *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities*"—introduces also the tender relation of sympathy that Christ sustains toward his disciples. Contemplating the peculiar sufferings of Christ, which the Jewish nation at large would interpret as a retributive visitation, he exclaims, *Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*. The reference here is not to the bearing of our sins in his own body on the tree, but to his voluntary participation in the trials, infirmities, and griefs of our every-day life. The "griefs" are diseases and infirmities of the body; the "sorrows" are anxieties, cares, and distresses of the mind;—these Christ bears, lifts up and carries away as a burden from us. In recording the miracles of healing that Jesus wrought, the evangelist Matthew observes that thus was fulfilled that which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet,

Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses. What Jesus then did he does essentially now for all that come to him in faith; he is *touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, not only through a historical experience, but by a present and an active sympathy.

No doubt Christ even now oftentimes bears away human infirmities, healing diseases not by miraculous agency but by his own sovereign power in answer to prayer. Especially does he reach diseases through their prime cause, which is sin, and which his sovereign grace removes in its curse, in its power, and sometimes also in its effects.

But the more immediate and the more affecting view of Christ in this relation is, that he enters with the most tender sympathy into our personal feelings. How touching the manner of Jesus when he was about to effect a miraculous cure or to bestow some boon of priceless worth! There was no ostentation in his bearing, there was no indifference to the surrounding grief, there was no cold professional dispensation of his services, there was no stern and repulsive mien to overawe a suppliant, there was no blunt and hasty performance

of an act that must startle and agitate while it cheered and blessed, but a quiet, gentle, tender, affectionate *manner* in working a miracle, that showed the heart of a man wielding the power of God. A ruler of the synagogue comes to him and falling at his feet, passionately entreats him to lay his healing hands upon a dying child. Jesus goes with him toward the house, knowing full well that the child is already dead, but having purposed to restore her to life. On the way the servants and friends of the ruler hasten to meet him saying, "Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any farther?" The agonized heart of the father sinks within him. In a moment he is plunged into the depths of despair. He had faith in Christ's power to heal, but the thought that Jesus could raise from the dead had not entered his mind. "Oh that death had delayed one hour! Oh that I had sooner gone for the Master! Oh that Jesus had reached the house before she ceased to breathe! Oh that he could have looked upon my dying child! Alas, alas, it is too late, all is over!" Thus from an eager and confident hope the poor man sinks at once into the anguish of a hopeless sorrow. Now what

saith Jesus? He does not break suddenly upon him with a reproof for lack of faith; he does not startle him by the promise of an unheard-of miracle; he does not speak confidently of his own power and his own intentions. He pities that broken-hearted father, and says to him gently, tenderly, *Be not afraid, only believe.* Then dismissing the multitude and all spectators but the parents of the child, and his favorite disciples, he goes to the bedside and raises the lifeless damsel from her sleep.

Jesus is passing with his disciples into the gate of Nain. He meets a sad procession attending to the sepulcher the body of a widow's only son. With the tenderest compassion Jesus looks upon the sorrowing widow; he steps to her side, he whispers to her, *Weep not*; then touches the bier and restores her son alive, and with his own hands presents him to his mother.

Again, while Jesus for personal safety is sojourning beyond Jordan, tidings are brought that Lazarus, the head of that little family circle at Bethany where Jesus loved to resort, is sick; Lazarus whom he loved—the brother of that Mary “which anointed the Lord with ointment, and

wiped his feet with her hair." The message was sent doubtless in the hope that Jesus would at once hasten to the bedside and restore the sufferer to health; but instead of this Jesus remains beyond Jordan until he knows that Lazarus is dead and buried; then, spite of personal danger, he wends his way toward Bethany. Before he reaches the house of mourning Martha hastes to meet him, and her first salutation is a lament that Jesus had not been there in season to arrest the sore calamity; *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*; and yet she seems to cherish some vague idea that Jesus still may help her; *I know that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee*. But when Jesus gently intimates that her brother shall rise again, her faith receives the assurance only with reference to the Last Day. And now as he stands thus pathetically discoursing with the disconsolate Martha, the more sensitive and soulful Mary comes up and throws herself at his feet,—the same feet that she had wiped with her hair and had kissed in grateful adoration of her Lord—and there sobs out, as if she were once more laying her brother in the tomb, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*.

Thus grief gushes out afresh at sight of each friend of the departed, and if that friend is near and beloved, the ceaseless current of sorrow is tinged with the vain regret that he or she was not present at the parting scene. "Would God that *you* had been here." But now this ever-painful regret is immeasurably heightened at the sight of Him who had he been present would not only have soothed the dying pillow, but could even have averted death. "Dear Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother, my dear, my only brother had not died. Alas, dear Lazarus, my brother, my help, my stay, I might then have had thee still." The Jews, her friends and kindred, touched with this new sorrow, weep with Mary. And now, what does the Master?—who delayed to come to Lazarus living that he might raise up Lazarus dead. Does he slight their grief or abruptly check the expressions of nature? Does he at once announce his own purpose and shock their agitated minds with an idea so foreign to their thoughts and so incredible? Nay, nay—the Divine waits on the human—the Man weeps for what the God shall presently restore. Jesus groans in spirit, and is troubled with a sympathetic grief. He lifts

the sobbing Mary from the ground and mingles his tears with hers, as he tenderly asks, Where have ye laid him? They lead the way, and Jesus weeps. Going to the grave to loose the bands of death, the Son of God bedews the path with tears. He takes Martha and Mary to his breast, he bears their grief and carries their sorrow, and groaning and sobbing all the way, he supports their tottering footsteps. The Jews, moved at the scene, exclaim, *Behold how he loved him.* And now they are at the sepulcher; the grief of the bereaved sisters here breaks forth incontrollably, and Jesus again groans as he carries their sorrows; he yields himself to all the gushing sympathies of his own heart, though by a word he could, as soon he will, stay every grief. Why went the Master thus sorrowing to the grave? Why wept he then, who wept not under the cruel scourging or along his own *via dolorosa*? Why wept he when about to raise the dead, but to assure thee, my soul, of sympathy in thy tears for those whom he will not yet give back to thee from the grave? Thou blessed Lord, dost thou bear my griefs and carry my sorrows? And may I look to thee, not only upon Calvary, my Saviour from sin, but *here* in

my solitary chamber, there by the new-made sepulcher, ever in my desolate heart, my tearful friend, my sympathizing comforter? Blessed Jesus, thou dost not chide my tears; *thou dost bear my grief and carry my sorrow.*

Christ's Sympathy.

AND is it indeed true that Jesus is my personal friend, and that he is interested in all that affects my welfare? Assuredly this is so if I truly love and obey my Lord. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you.* Christ grants his disciples the utmost freedom of approach to himself, he admits

them fully to his confidence, he instructs and comforts them, he enters into all their desires, their feelings, and their wants. Especially does he manifest his friendly sympathy with his disciples in times of danger, of temptation, and of sorrow; "he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities." With what tenderness does a parent watch over a delicate child! With what constant sympathy and solicitude does one carry in his thoughts a sick and dying friend! With what spontaneity does the mind in such circumstances answer to every phase of the disease and to every wish or emotion of the sufferer! Does that delicate little one, unconscious that its frail life is wasting away, exhibit a languid cheerfulness at the approach of its father or its mother, and throw its gentle nature upon the sympathies of parental love? How promptly does that love respond to every childish feeling;—pity is merged in a momentary joy as the imparted life rolls back its sparkling current into the soul from which it sprung, and then joy is overwhelmed in turn as the deepest springs of emotion are opened by the cry of sudden pain, or by the look of languor, of disease, and of death. Has that child a want, a wish, a grief—all childish

though it be—the breaking of a toy, the pricking of a pin,—the heart of the parent does not chide it, does not make light of it, but quietly soothes the sorrow with words and looks of sympathy. That dear child lives ever in the parent's heart, and is a partaker of the parent's life.

Is a dear friend drooping under the slow, sure, fatal progress of disease in some vital organ? How does the heart ebb and flow with the advance or the seeming recession of that disease, and with the fears or hopes of the invalid? With what affectionate promptness is every wish gratified; with what tender eagerness is every want anticipated; with what exhilaration is the least improvement hailed; with what deep though smothered sadness is every symptom of decline detected; how is the pallid countenance and the wasted form of that loved one present amid all the thoughts, and cares, and employments of the day; in all the dreams and watches of the night. A whisper, a motion, a sigh, a look—any the least intimation from the sufferer—how does it draw upon every chord and fiber of the sympathizing heart that yearns over the life that is receding from its embraces. And thus it is that the blessed Redeemer is touched

with the feeling of our infirmities, and bears the griefs and carries the sorrows of those he loves. Nothing that affects their welfare is too trivial for him to notice. As the parent shuns not the petition or the grief of the child because it is childish, as the friend does not slight the humor of the invalid though it may be weak and frivolous—so neither does Jesus overlook the every-day incidents in the life of his disciples because these in themselves are insignificant. Whatever affects the welfare of one he loves, interests his heart also,—either to gratify the wish or to allay the desire by substituting a more valuable good. Christ was invested with a full and proper humanity, a human nature of the most exquisite tone, that he might sympathize with and succor those that he came to redeem.

But with this manifested sympathy there is also an imparted strength. *Fear not, I am with you. I will not leave you desolate ; I WILL COME TO YOU. My grace is sufficient for thee ; for my grace is made perfect in weakness.*

How near and how lovely a friend is Christ ! Man needs such a friend. The heart is formed for sympathy. In its joys, in its sorrows, in its

affections, it retires ever to the innermost circle, and there in the dear companionship of one tried friend unbosoms itself and gives to its emotions their utmost play. Without such a resource the heart is lonely and wretched indeed. How blessed then is that presentation of Christ which places him within that innermost circle, which enshrines him in the very heart itself, nearer than the nearest earthly friend, and which keeps him there unchanged, in all the fullness and tenderness of human sympathy, and with all the strength and consolation of divine grace, when that innermost circle is made vacant, and the heart finds no outward support for its torn and bleeding tendrils. Let me then accustom myself to the thought of Christ as a present, personal friend; let me learn to confide in him as fully and as freely as in the dearest earthly confidant;—nay more, to tell him of all my wants, my temptations, my sufferings, my cares, my griefs, my infirmities—to tell him of these without one distrustful thought of his kind sympathizing interest, or of his ability and his willingness to help in every time of need. Above all, let me ever keep his friendship by avoiding whatever is displeasing to him, and by

devoting my whole heart to his service. Oh the misery of being without such a friend; to live in a world where all other friends must fail, where life itself must fail, and have no interest in this Almighty, Everlasting Friend!

Death no Terror.

THE believer in Christ should banish all solicitude about the event of death to himself or to others who depart in the faith. Christ assumed our nature, "took part of flesh and blood, that through death"—first endured in his own person and then vanquished by his resurrection—"he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." The Christian has no occasion to be

in bondage to the fear of death; indeed, by such a bondage he dishonors the power and the grace of Christ, and puts discredit upon his finished work.

It is sometimes the case that even where the intellect, the heart, and the will are all properly disciplined for the advent of death, there is a nervous apprehension of the mere physical process that renders the thought of death unwelcome. And indeed there must be something repugnant to the sensibilities of our nature in the thought of dissolution, whenever the mind dwells upon this apart from its relations to a higher existence. The demolition of a house in which we have lived from infancy, and every stone and beam and arch and angle of which has some association of childhood and of home, awakens feelings of sadness, though the building is old and crazy, and no longer fit to be occupied. But the mind should not live thus in the past, and hug the old stones and timbers and nails, as if these were home or had in themselves any life and virtue; it should look forward to the house that is to succeed the time-worn tenement, should study its plan, arrangement, and effect, and transmute

the memories of the old into the hopes of the new. It is thus by a beautiful analogy that Chrysostom discourses of the believer's change at death. "When a man is about to rebuild an old and tottering house, he first sends out its occupants, then tears it down, and builds anew a more splendid one. This occasions no grief to the occupants, but rather joy. For they do not think of the demolition which they see, but of the house which is to come, though not yet seen. When God is about to do a similar work, he destroys the body and removes the soul that was dwelling in it, as from some house, that he may build it anew and more splendidly and again bring the soul with greater glory into it. Let us not, therefore, regard the tearing down, but the splendor which is to succeed." Thus in a higher strain does the Apostle speak of this blessed exchange: "*For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*" The Christian should familiarize his mind with the thought of dying as one familiarizes himself with the thought of exchanging an old and decaying though still serviceable house or garment, for one new, bright, glori-

ous—of better material, yes, of an imperishable fabric. It is idle to attempt to conceal from one's self the fact of his own mortality and of his exceeding frailty. And it is unwise and unnecessary to allow in the mind a secret dread of death. That event should be familiar to the Christian, not as a process of physical decay, but as a process of mysterious and sudden but of certain and glorious transition from the seen to the unseen, and from the mortal to the immortal.

“The Christian, when he leaves the body, is at once with the Lord Jesus. He rushes, as it were, instinctively to his presence, and casts himself at his feet. He has no other home than where the Saviour is; he thinks of no future joy or glory but that which is to be enjoyed with him. Why then should we fear death? Lay out of view, as we may, the momentary pang, the chilliness, and the darkness of the grave, and think of that which will be the moment *after* death—the view of the Redeemer, the sight of the splendors of the heavenly world, the angels, the spirits of the just made perfect, the river of the paradise of God, and the harps of praise, and what has the Christian to fear in the prospect of dying?”—(*Barnes.*)

The Christian should have a present assurance of his own future blessedness. Many Christians accustom themselves to speak doubtfully of their own good estate, and even seem to regard this as the part of true Christian humility. But so far from exhibiting humility, this may only exhibit unbelief and an unworthy distrust of Christ. There is no lack of humility in having a confidence of one's personal interest in Christ, and therefore a confidence of personal salvation. True humility is shown in tracing this glorious hope to Christ alone. Paul was not wanting in humility; and yet Paul said, *We know* that when this body dies there is prepared for us another abode, heavenly, divine, eternal. This he said not in the way of a general proposition of such as were true Christians, but as a fact immediately personal to himself. *We* who are hunted to death for Christ's sake—I, Paul and my fellow-servants, know that we have a house eternal in the heavens. Therefore, he says, *We are always confident*—of good cheer—*knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord*—while we live in the flesh, we have not the visible presence of Christ—but we are confident that as soon as we

drop this fleshly tabernacle we shall see Christ; and therefore *are willing rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.*

John was not lacking in the modesty of the true Christian; and yet his first epistle is a continuous series of asseverations of his personal interest in Christ and in the heavenly inheritance. *Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him. We know that we have passed from death to life because we love the brethren: hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.* Now every Christian may have the same assurance with Paul and John, if he has the same evidences; and he may have the same evidences if he is a true Christian—if he really loves God. The great thing for me to know is that I am indeed a Christian; then I know that I have a house in heaven. And may I not know whether I am a Christian—whether I hate sin, whether I love God, whether I am supremely devoted to Christ, whether I am striving to be pure and holy? And have I been these many years a professed follower of Christ, and do I not yet know whether I really

love him? But if I love him and his cause, if I forsake sin and serve God with all my heart, then surely I am a Christian, and if I am a Christian why may I not be just as confident of my future good estate as was Paul or John? Ought I not to be thus confident, not for my own comfort merely but for the honor of my Lord, and as a testimony to the power of his Gospel? Come then, my soul, grasp with a firmer hold on Christ; assure thyself that thou art in his love; then mayest thou overleap the gloomy vale, scarce feeling its damps and its shadows, and alight with ethereal freedom upon the banks of the river of life.

The Gain of Losses.

I HAVE often heard it said, and indeed I have often said to others, when Christian friends have been removed by death, "Your loss is their gain." And this is a thought of consolation. One's affection for those he loves should be so pure, so unselfish, that he would willingly be deprived of their sweet companionship if thus their welfare could be enhanced. A parent would be very selfish who from personal considerations should insist upon retaining a child at home when the happiness and the usefulness of that child required that he or she should enter into a new relation and establish another and an independent home, perhaps thousands of miles away. For what has God given me children? Is it merely that I may toy with them and dandle them upon the knee, and in their riper years be folded in their

embraces and soothed with their love? For what should I train my children? Is it mainly that they may serve me and promote my interests? Whenever it is clearly for their welfare and their usefulness that they should quit the home of their childhood, shall I not—though it be with unutterable yearnings—bid them God-speed? Shall I not surrender them even though I know that they will love another more than they love me, and another home more than mine? When, however, a child leaves the parental roof, it is by no means certain that this will be for the good of the child. He may be willful in his plans or misguided in his choice; at all events the problem of life is yet to be solved by him, and he may find it hard to cipher. True, Providence directs the change, but human agency and perhaps human folly and wickedness also are concerned in it.

But when God by his own direct act takes from me a dear friend who is also his dear child, then do I know that it is well with that friend,—better, far better than to abide with me; and knowing this, I would chide all selfish longings, I would even repress the noblest, purest love for thee as mine, and rejoice that thou art His, and wilt be

infinitely and forever blessed in His love. I sought to bless thee while God intrusted thee to my guardianship,—thy happiness was ever my delight—but since He now would bless thee more than human love could ever compass, go thou and dwell with Him, though thou shalt love Him infinitely more than thou lovedst me and His home infinitely more than mine. Thus my heart answereth, not from the depths and gloom of stoical philosophy, but from the heights of Christian faith and hope. My loss is thy gain, and as I love thee I must and will rejoice in this.

But is it not my gain also? Truly it must so appear if I value the spiritual life above the temporal and the future above the present. A childless man once said to me as we stood together by the coffin of an infant that had fallen asleep, "Much as I love children, I am content to be without them when I think of such a loss as this. If I am denied the pleasure of having children, I am also spared the pain of losing them." "Yes, yes, indeed," I said; "but neither can you know the joy of having brought into life an immortal being that has gone to heaven as your child, and that in all the endless progression of its existence,

in the highest development of its powers and the fullest realization of its bliss, shall be allied to you as to no other being in the universe except its Maker. You cannot know what it is to lose a child; but neither can you know what it is to have a child in heaven. The gain transcends the loss to the parent as well as to the child." How great was the gain to Jacob when the Ishmaelitic horde, tempted by the cruelty and rapacity of his brethren, bore away the young and tender Joseph as a slave, only that he might become a prince in a foreign land and the saviour of his people. How unspeakable the gain to the Christian parent when with tender and gracious hand the Lord of life and glory bears away his little prattling child, and clothes it with princely splendor among the angels of God.

The childless man has no living contact with the future. Ancestors he has, but no posterity. The stream of life that has flowed through many generations is lost in him. He may be a treasure to society, a blessing to mankind, a great, a good, a faithful man,—more useful even in his individual life than others are through a score of children. He may repair his childlessness, like Bacon, by

bequeathing to the world immortal thoughts, like Washington by bequeathing immortal deeds. Like Neander he may leave treasures of learning in the jeweled casket of a serene and radiant life, like Girard he may leave treasures of wealth in the marble pile that buries the orphan from the sunlit world. But in his personal sympathies and experiences he must ever want the joy that flows from an imparted, reflex life in the happy hearts and the beaming faces of one's own children. His joy may even now be full, but should this new channel be opened he would quickly find it fuller. So he who has no dear friend in the better world, who has not been called to surrender to heaven one whom he has cherished here, lacks as yet an experience that would link him to the spiritual and the eternal with the most fervent sympathies of his being. All heavenly he may be in his temper and in his life; his faith may be strong, his hope bright, his union with Christ complete, but he wants that tender and endearing sympathy with heaven that comes from having there a parent, a child, a sister, a wife, and that gives to the unseen world a home-like feeling and a present reality. He who has caught the last affectionate breathings of the departing saint; who even as from

the other side of the river of death has received the farewell greeting of faith and love and joy, has thenceforth a new experience of things spiritual and heavenly, has a vested interest in heaven, has a more assured hold upon its realities, and is a nearer partaker of its life.

The gain of such an experience, the value of such a palpable and personal interest in that world may well mitigate if it do not compensate his loss. New links bind him to that great spiritual world of which he is a member, and of which he shall soon become more cognizant, when flesh and sense and all the external media of thought shall give place to the direct intuition of God and of the future state. As each relationship of life, son, brother, husband, father, opens a new experience of sympathy and affection, so does this personal affinity with some already in the world of spirits, the marriage of souls that survives the dissolution of earthly ties, bring with it a life-like experience of the unseen, the spiritual, the eternal, that binds the soul more closely to its higher destiny, and imparts to it in hopes and aspirations an exceeding gain. Why art thou burdened, O my soul, with the pain of earthly loss? Is not thy loss

their gain whom thou didst love? and if their gain, is it not thy gain also, who art forever linked to them as a partner of their blessedness?

My Future Mansion.

HOW beautiful the thought that heaven is a home where all the children of Faith and Purity are gathered in their Father's house. I never could discover anything to kindle the aspirations of the soul or to ennoble its aims, in the thought of being hereafter absorbed in the Infinite or diffused like some subtle medium in endless space. Locality, personality, identity, and some sort of corporeity seem necessary to the highest blessedness when we shall put off this tabernacle. Hence is provided a spiritual body for those who

here have worn a material form ; hence, too, provision is made for future recognitions and for peculiar associations between those who have been here allied by the tenderest ties of earth hallowed with the spirit and the hope of heaven. The Saviour promised his disciples a home. "In my Father's house are many mansions ; I go to prepare a place for you." We shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God. We shall know Moses and Elias, and Paul and John, and all the holy of whom we have read or whom we have known upon earth. The most ecstatic vision of a pure and blissful society, of a calm and holy fellowship, of an unbroken peace, will then be realized. Yet there is even something more than this general abode provided for believers, each of whom shall have his own house, some radiant and ethereal, yet cohesive and palpable dwelling-place for his personal soul.

The "building of God" of which the Apostle speaks, is something pertaining to the person ; not an abode into which he enters, but a mansion or a covering that attaches itself to him like the body he casts off at death—a something that he wears as a garment, and with which he is clothed upon

in his own proper person. It is not a palace in the skies to which he goes,—though this also opens its portals upon his dying gaze—it is not merely an apartment in the celestial city into which he enters, but a form, a garment, a habitation, that thenceforth becomes a part of his proper self, and that pertains to his personal existence. In its characteristics this is incorporeal, incorruptible, heavenly; it is prepared and bestowed immediately by God himself; it is eternal and imperishable.

With such a house shall I be clothed upon if I am found in Christ when the soul shall quit its present habitation. With what holy courage and fortitude should this nerve me in all the conflicts of this mortal state. This mortal life has its trials; this mortal body has its pains. *We that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened:* burdened with sins, burdened with cares, burdened with labors, burdened with trials, burdened with sufferings, burdened with sorrows. How often by reason of our connection with the body do we groan, being burdened, and pant for our release. Yet little comfort would there be in the thought of dying if that were all. We should only drag our weary footsteps downward to the grave.

But what the mere thought of dying will not give, the hope of glorious transformation can and will. This uplifts the soul to a higher range of vision, whence all earthly interests seem insignificant. What matter the fatigues and perils of the way if we are journeying homeward. What matters it that as mere pilgrims here we camp out under a worn and shattered tent through which the wind pierces and the rain beats, if we are on our way to a safe and substantial habitation already full in view? Thus Paul was cheerful amid all his labors and perils. He did not faint; he did not give over in despair; his afflictions were light and but for a moment, in comparison with the exceeding weight of glory.

The Christian should live in the constant anticipation and desire of his heavenly home. *Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.* And the motive for this is that when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, *then shall we also appear with him in glory.* Heaven should engross the thoughts and the affections of the believer. Here, however, there is need of discrimination. The believer should not

indulge a repining spirit, nor cherish a sense of weariness and disgust toward this world, and make the excellence of heaven consist only in a freedom from toil, and care, and pain. There is no merit in merely pining for heaven as a rest from the weariness and the pains of the body. He should shrink from no duty, responsibility or trial, especially in Christ's service; and his anticipations of heaven should be not sensuous but spiritual. *Not that we would be unclothed*—merely set free from this body of sin and death—*but clothed upon*, covered with celestial glory, *that mortality might be swallowed up of life.*

“ Here in the body pent,
Absent from thee I roam ;
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent
A day's march nearer home.

“ So when my latest breath
Shall rend the vail in twain,
By death I shall escape from death
And life eternal gain.

“ Knowing as I am known,
How shall I love that word ;
And oft repeat before the throne—
Forever with the Lord.”

The Spirit-World.

WHERE is the spirit-world? In what region of space is it located? Has it any well-defined boundaries? What relation does it sustain to the material universe? How far are its inhabitants removed from my person, from the place where I now write? These are not idle questions. They are questions that come up from the deepest soundings of the soul. Is there no meaning in that spontaneous and universal feeling of those whose friends have passed into the spirit-world, that the departed are yet near, and are yet in some measure cognizant of what is transpiring in this world? To the cold philosopher such a thought may pass for the vagary of an imagination excited by grief. To any mind as yet inexperienced in the separation of friends and kindred by death, this may seem at best but an uncertain

and an unprofitable speculation. But to almost every mind experienced in such separations there comes a vivid conception of the reality and the nearness of the spiritual world, and it finds a meaning and a power in the fancies it had scouted. Is not this uniform experience a sort of sign-language by which the soul converses with the spiritual and the immortal? The parted veil through which the ascending spirit returns to God, affords to the watching, sympathizing soul an outlook upon the spiritual world, through which it gains new and wondrous conceptions of the boundless mysteries in the creation. Oh, what glad surprises, what sublime studies, what glorious discoveries lie just before us in the future, lie just around us in the present. There are moments when the soul, absorbed in divine contemplations, forgetful of the body and of all its associations with earth, suffused with spiritual influence, permeated with truth, lives only in its loves, in its sweetest, purest, holiest affections, and knows these to be continuous and immortal—beyond the reach of change or of death; when it feels itself linked to a holy and blessed communion of spirits everywhere surrounding it, and embracing it with a love nearer

and more exquisite than any to which eye and tongue can give expression.

Let me look at this matter calmly. I am sitting by the side of one whose soul is interwoven with my own. All of physical life, of outward beauty, of vivacity and grace that lent expression to that soul, is wasted, marred, or paralyzed by disease; and nothing now remains but the memories, the experiences, the hopes of that soul, to maintain its wonted communion with another. Yet as these find labored and imperfect utterance, my own soul kindles to an ecstasy of love, and that pallid and wasted form wears again its accustomed freshness and beauty, and grows luminous with celestial light. Nothing common or indifferent may now intrude; we talk awhile of the soul and its destiny, of heaven and its glory, of Christ and his love, and even as we speak, that form grows still, that hand lies motionless, those lips forbear to move. Came not that last, faint, broken response, "Yes, all is peace," from the emancipated spirit already upon the other side of the river of death? Even as in the still night one converses awhile with a wearied friend, and receives answers briefer and briefer, monosyllabic even,

yet always intelligent and distinct, exhibiting consciousness and comprehension, till at length silence assures him that in the shortest interval between two questions his friend has fallen asleep with faculties at rest but unimpaired, and that shall arouse to a more vigorous activity, so does one see the worn and wearied body yield to the last sleep of death, while yet the soul lives and needs no rest.

Where now is that spirit? Whither gone from me? Do memory, and sympathy, and love, remain only to the soul that is yet imprisoned in the body; or do the fibers of the heart, all rudely exposed by tearing away their kindred soil, grow now like plants that feed on air, and grasp with a palpable hold the spiritual and the eternal, that intersperse their fibers still with these? Do we not lose in the conception of the spiritual world, and in its power over the mind, by fixing it too remote from us, and by viewing it too much in contrast with the life of the soul here? What is eternal life? To know God and Jesus Christ. What then has death wrought upon the soul, upon its character, its affections, or its substance? Nothing; it has but liberated it into a higher stage of

its existence, where the life of love and purity here begun in the knowledge of God and in the faith of Christ, shall be developed and perfected forever. To accomplish this there is no need of an infinite remove in space.

The renewed soul has already an adaptation for its new sphere of action. The souls of departed saints are not in a state of unconsciousness; they have only removed from one house or apartment into another. Of the righteous dead it is said, "*They all live unto God;*" though dead to us, because they are removed from our sight, and have ceased to *act* here, they live and act without interruption in the presence of God. This plainly is the teaching of Scripture. They enter at once upon a state of conscious and joyous activity. For this they have already an adaptation; it needs no miracle to prepare them for a place and a part in higher scenes. The laying off the body—as a friend suggests—may be like taking on a new sense,—like couching a cataract in a blind man's eye, and giving him sight. And what a wonderful revelation of the universe is given by that one acquisition!

"Thus," says that profound thinker, Isaac Tay-

lor, "thus, when the infant wakes into the light of this world, every organ presently assumes its destined function; the heaving bosom confesses the fitness of the material it inhales to support the new style of existence; and the senses admit the first impressions of the external world with a sort of anticipated familiarity; and though utterly untaught in the scenes upon which it has so suddenly entered, and inexperienced in the orders of the place where it must, ere long, act its part, yet it is truly meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of life. And thus, too, a real meetness for his birth into the future life may belong to the Christian, though he be utterly ignorant of its circumstances and conditions. But the functions of that new life have been long in a hidden play of preparation for full activity. He has waited in the coil of mortality only for the moment when he should inspire the ether of the upper world, and behold the light of eternal day, and hear the voice of new companions, and taste of the immortal fruit, and drink of the river of life; and then, after, perhaps, a short season of nursing in the arms of the elder members of the family above, he will take his place in the service and orders of

the heavenly house, nor even have room to regret the ignorances of his mortal state. There is a preparation here for that higher world, and an adaptation to it immediately after death."

That the disembodied spirit—sanctified by grace—enters at once upon this blessed and glorious activity, the intimations of the Scriptures leave us no room to doubt. Whether for the purpose of such an agency it is at once endowed with some sort of corporeity, "clothed upon" with some palpable and saintly form, is not certainly revealed. The transfiguration of Jesus upon the mount, when to the wondering eyes of Peter, James, and John, "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light," shows what a wondrous change may be wrought upon the human body in an instant of time. The appearance also of Moses and Elias in palpable forms, distinct from each other, and their talking with Jesus in an audible voice, shows that departed saints are capable of resuming a connection with this material world whenever God wills it. The body of Jesus after his resurrection, which could be seen and handled by the disciples, and recognized as the very form of their crucified Lord, was yet so

subtil and attenuated that he could suddenly appear to their view without their perceiving whence or how he came, and could vanish from the sight of those with whom he had walked, and talked, and broken bread. This shows us that spirits may have a visible form altogether different in material and structure from the body worn in this world, and that this form *may* be possessed immediately after death. The chariot of fire and the horses of fire that parted Elijah from Elisha and bore up Elijah by a flaming whirlwind into heaven,—the horses and chariots of fire that filled the mountain round about Elisha in Dothan, were but single manifestations of that spiritual world that evermore surrounds us, and which the servant of Elisha saw, not because it was clothed with visibility for the occasion, but because his eyes were opened to behold it. “He maketh his ministers flames of fire.” But be that as it may, it is a revealed fact, that the believing soul at death enters upon a high, a blessed, and an immortal state of existence and of action, where it finds itself at home, to which it is at once adapted, so that in putting off the body of death it is not left naked, but puts on a new garment of celestial

fabric;—"life is lapsed in immortality"—"mortality is swallowed up of life."

The spirit-world is not indefinitely removed from us in space, nor as related to our present capacities and adaptations. But how am I related to that world? Am I altogether isolated from its interests, its activities, its sympathies, its communion and its joys, while here in the flesh? With one department of the spiritual world I have directly to do. As a Christian struggling for the mastery of principle and faith over the world and sense, "I wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." And can it be that these mighty spiritual forces of evil are let loose upon my soul, and that there are no friendly forces engaged for my protection and defense? Is the battle for my soul in the spirit-world waged altogether on one side? Not so surely: *The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him; Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?* I am surrounded with a cloud of witnesses to cheer and animate me in the race; I am aided with more

than human sympathy and succor in the strife for an immortal crown.

Whether spirits who have known me more intimately here, still watch over my defenseless way, or have any power or any mission of guardianship and of succor, I cannot know. But is there not a beautiful truth underlying the exquisite verse of Keble in which he thus consoles the gentle maiden sorrowing for the infant sister snatched from her guardian love?

“Thy first glad earthly task is o’er,
And dreary seems thy way,
But what if *nearer than before*
She watch thee even to-day?”

“What if henceforth by heaven’s decree
She leave thee not alone,
But in her turn prove guide to thee
In ways to angels known?”

“O yield thee to her whispering sweet:
Away with thoughts of gloom!
In love the loving spirits greet,
Who wait to bless her tomb.”

“ In living hope with her unseen
Walk as in hallow'd air ;
When foes are strong and trials keen
Think, ‘ What if she be there ? ’ ”

The Spirituality of Heaven.

IN the closing chapters of Revelation, the Spirituality of Heaven is brought into view in the sublime idea of the absence of all symbols of worship. Heaven is described by what it is *not* rather than by what it *is*—which indeed could not be brought within the compass of human language. In looking at a picture of the New Jerusalem, the eye naturally seeks the Temple which should crown its heights, more vast and gorgeous than that which stood upon Moriah. But in vain does it look for a correspondence in this respect

with the earthly symbol. By one stroke of the pencil, the temple with its mystic treasures, its divinely-patterned furniture and ornaments, its altars and its sacrifices, its priests and its worship, is obliterated forever. The inspired Revelator, who was carried away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain whence he could view the city of God, tells us, as if filled with surprise, "*I saw no temple therein.*"

But bewildering as was this announcement of the inspired seer, not only to the Jew, to whom the Temple was the glory of the city and the land, the center toward which his devout aspirations were ever tending, but also to the Christian who had learned to trace in that temple and ritual, as in symbolic lines, the priesthood and the sacrifice of Christ,—contrary as is this announcement of the want of a Temple in the New Jerusalem, to our natural conceptions of the antitype of the city of David, it yet gives us an insight into the Spirituality of Heaven and its worship, such as no other language could have conveyed. There is in these words an uplifting of the soul into the very atmosphere of Heaven;—as if the same Spirit who carried John to his high place of vision, had lifted

us out of the body, and away from its dependence upon material objects, and bade us view not the place of worship but the Being whom we worship—above all place, or circumstance, or rite, or form—Himself a Temple to each sanctified and ennobled mind.

I saw not what I had looked to see—a Temple corresponding in dimensions and in splendor with the city of crystal and gold on which I gazed, I saw no gorgeous pile of sapphire and rubies towering above the rest, with the nameless Name emblazoned on its front;—but I saw a vision more sublime—JEHOVAH the center of light, of glory, and of praise;—where should have been the Temple, was His Throne, and where the Holy of Holies, the HOLY ONE Himself revealed alike to all. I saw no Temple therein; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Temple of it!

What a view does this representation of Heaven suggest of the capacity and the destiny of the sanctified soul! The soul of man was made in the image of God that it might glorify him and enjoy him forever. But it has fallen from that original blessedness by yielding to the desires of the flesh; by suffering the body, made to be the instrument

of its will, to become its master; by giving to the sensual and the earthly predominance over the spiritual and the heavenly. Yet from this degradation it has been redeemed;—the work of sin effaced; the germ of a higher life implanted by the divine Spirit, and in the progress of this life it shall recover its lost character and gain its exalted destiny. That destiny is, to become a partaker of the divine nature;—to dwell in God's presence and share God's blessedness forever. In comparison with this all earthly good is vanity. To secure this consummation for the soul of man, all the dispensations of Providence and of Grace have been ordained. The sacrifices of the ancient dispensation and the ordinances of the new, the Temple with its solemn and imposing rites, and the house of prayer with its simple, spiritual worship, priests and prophets, apostles and teachers, all these, yea and the work of redemption itself, have been but the scaffolding by which the soul might mount to its own place in the heaven of God. There it shall expand forever in a life derived from Him who is all in all. No need there of temple or of priesthood, where the glorified spirit rests in the bosom of its Maker; sun, moon,

and stars, shall be thrown aside as smoldering tapers in the light of day; freed from this dull, sluggish body,—nay, I will not put dishonor upon God's workmanship, though marred by sin—but how refined and elevated shall the soul have become when it shall no more need this body with its delicate organism and its exquisite sensations, the eye to drink in the beauty of color and the ear the sweetness of sound, but rising above the highest frame of enjoyment known in connection with this physical world, it shall be the more joyous and elastic and blessed, because disencumbered of the body and left to its own expansion! Truly as saith Augustin, "There is but one object greater than the soul and that is its Creator." And the soul's greatness shall expand evermore as it shall be filled with all the fullness of God.

How important then is it that we should here cultivate and develop the spiritual part of our nature, as a preparation for the heavenly state. Each person has a soul capable of that infinite expansion in the presence of God. Is it for this that I am training mine? Do I prize the seasons of devotion and the means of grace which I now enjoy, or might enjoy, as a preparation for heaven? It

is by cultivating the spiritual in distinction from the sensuous, by exercising the heart in pure devotion, that I shall be fitted through grace for a worship and a communion where there is no temple. It is by loving and serving God, and by honoring and trusting Christ, that I may obtain a relish and a fitness for a world in which all light, all glory, and all joy proceed from the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.

They only who take supreme delight in spiritual worship, in prayer and praise and communion with God, can have a well-founded hope of heaven, or possess any congenialty for that world. The humble, devout, prayerful Christian, who walks by faith and feeds on heavenly truth, will find himself at home in the employments of the celestial city. Glorious is the prospect before such a mind.

But in contrast with this the reflection forces itself upon the reflecting mind, that those who have no true religion of heart, but who live to gratify their carnal nature, or in the pursuit of mere knowledge or fame, can have no place in heaven. They must be shut out by the law of nature as well as by the fiat of God. Heaven is a

state—a condition of pure spirituality—for which such have no fitness. The heaven of the Indian, with its hunting-grounds, its war-dances and its drinking-horns; the heaven of Mahomet, with its harems and houris, a heaven of sensual delight; the heaven of the infidel and the sensualist, where carnality reigns; even the cold speculative heaven of the philosopher,—what are these as the destination of the soul of man made in the image of God? There is but one heaven in the universe, and that is a heaven of pure spiritual delight, of lofty, unending devotion. For that heaven, they who love this world and seek its vain delights, they who live for the pleasures of earth and sense, for that heaven such have no fitness, and for such that heaven has no place. There shall enter into it nothing that defileth. They who are lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, shall not enter into that city which God irradiates and sanctifies with his presence. While all is light and blessedness there, with them shall be utter darkness and eternal woe.

The Resurrection.

I CANNOT conceive how any person who has ever lost a friend can argue against the doctrine of the resurrection, or doubt that this doctrine as revealed in the New Testament is to be understood according to the literal import of the terms in which it is expressed. The doctrine commends itself so warmly to the tenderest sympathies and affections of the heart, that one must say of it as Socrates said of the immortality of the soul, "Let me believe it; for if true, it is better that I should believe it; and if false, it can do me no harm, and I shall have derived much comfort from it." Yes, I will believe it. I know, indeed, all that physiology and chemistry have urged against it; I know all the alleged physical impossibilities in the case; I know the skeptical objection so elaborately drawn out, from the dis-

solution of the particles of matter and their re-absorption into other forms; I know the impossibility of conceiving *how* the dead shall be raised up; and yet *I believe in the resurrection of the dead*; my faith receives the revealed fact, my heart rejoices in it.

How peculiar is the comfort that this doctrine brings when death has withdrawn the visible presence of a Christian friend. The soul of that friend is with the Lord, and with the holy and the blessed in his kingdom. I must not think of that friend as in the grave, cold, unconscious, perishing beneath the sod, but as living to God in a nobler, purer life; and yet I cannot relinquish my hold upon that form in life so beautiful, that was ever to me the presence, the personality, the expression of that friend; I cannot make this to seem merely as other insensate matter; I cannot believe that this shall henceforth be to the soul that has forsaken it like any other portion of the material creation; I cannot persuade myself that the preservation of this sacred dust is a tribute of Memory only, and not also a prophecy of Hope. Thou shalt wake from this sleep; I shall meet thee again; I shall know thee again. It cannot

be that two beings so closely interlinked in thought and feeling, in sympathy and affection, in hopes, and joys, and sorrows, in all the experiences of this life, and having the like precious faith in Jesus for the life to come, shall not hereafter be to each other what they can severally be to no other created being. And now when I hear that voice, sublime and mighty, yet tender and soothing, "*I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,*" shall I not believe it, shall I not rejoice in it? I bless thee, Saviour, for that word.

He whose power is infinite might have made his children supremely blessed as pure spirits, without corporeity,—though this passes present comprehension,—or he might have endowed them with other forms, and still have given them the capacity of mutual recognition. But he has determined to reanimate and to glorify these same bodies, partly as a demonstration of his dominion over sin and death, partly as a token of perpetual brotherhood between Himself and his Redeemed, and partly also in condescension to our human sympathies, that he might here soothe our sorrowing hearts, and that he might *there* augment our

joy by social sympathy and communion. The raising of the dead is continually set forth as the crowning act of the Redeemer's power and the consummation of his work. How often does this thought recur in the memorable sixth chapter of John, where Jesus unfolds the spiritual import and the eternal grandeur of his mission in contrast with the sensuous expectations of the Jews: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth in him, may have everlasting life; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*" "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*" "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and *I will raise him up at the last day.*" How tender and beautiful those words of consolation to Martha, even in the remote reference in which she understood them, "*Thy brother shall rise again.*" How sublime the movement of that dithyrambic of faith in which the Apostle almost dramatizes the resurrection scene;—the shout of the angelic host; the pomp of the descending throne; the gorgeous panoply of clouds; the voice of the archangel louder than seven thunders; the trump

of God—whose mighty summons wakes the dead; the dead in Christ uprising and in dense serried columns ascending as the van of his triumphant army to where troops of angels open before his throne; the living in Christ, by some supernatural impulse, “caught up together with them,” their myriad ranks closing upon the hosts of the resurrection as they are upborne in mid-heaven to meet their descending Lord. Well might he say, “Sorrow not for them that are asleep. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. Wherefore exhort and comfort one another with these words”—words that stir the soul like a trumpet, and kindle it with an unearthly fire.

“I believe in the resurrection of the dead.” He that hath promised is able to perform it. No speculation, no science, shall rob me of this precious hope. Who can demonstrate that the *essential germ* of this corporeal existence is destroyed by death, and cannot be made to bloom upward from the dust and to receive again its spiritual life? “Thou heedless man! That which thou sowest is not quickened, does not germinate, un-

less it die. And that which thou sowest is not the identical form that shall shoot upward from the seed and shall be gathered at the harvest;—it is mere grain—whether wheat or other grain; but God by the ordinances of nature hath assigned to each seed its own body, to each germ its appropriate development, so that wheat produces wheat, and every seed after its kind. So also is the resurrection of the dead.”

“Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground *and die*, it abideth alone,—but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. The perishing of the *seed corn* is not only no difficulty, but is an essential condition of the germination of the new body. Cut the seed or the bulb, and there to the eye of science the fair form of the perfect plant is distinctly traced; and so, to the eye of God, in the corruptible seed of the human frame may be enveloped the germ of the immortal and spiritual body. If we had no experience of those delicate and splendid forms springing, in the freshness of their glory, from the bosom of decay, skepticism, no doubt, would be ready to interpose its rash fiat of impossibility; and because we have only experience of the planting of the mortal germ of humanity, and

have not seen the wondrous bursting into life of the celestial body, shall we disregard the analogies by which God would aid our faith, and fall under the Apostle's charge of having a mind without spiritual perception, and slow to learn? 'O man without understanding, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.' And then, as to the second objection, of how can this human frame become accommodated to a spiritual and imperishable life, the same analogy suggests an answer: 'That which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body *that shall be*, but bare *grain*;—but God giveth it a *body* as it hath pleased him,—and *to every seed its own body*.' A root, a seed, is dropped into the earth, and from it the chemistry of God educes the loveliest forms, the most delicate tints and odors, the most ethereal and spiritual beauty. Follow the analogy:—and if such are the new bodies that God gives to the seeds of unconscious matter, and to the spring-times of earth,—what may be the glory of the spiritual body from a seed that is now an organism for the souls of his children, and whose spring-time is reserved for the celestial world? Nor are we confined in our conceptions of that spiritual body by our present ex-

perience of organized existences; for there are bodies terrestrial, and bodies celestial,—and as much as the glory of the one transcends the glory of the other, may our resurrection body transcend the imperfect seed of our earthly frame. ‘The glory of the terrestrial is one, and the glory of the celestial is another. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.’ The natural body is an organism fitted for the development and action of the animal man: the spiritual body is an organism fitted for the development and action of the spiritual nature; and the spiritual body holds to the natural body a relation, which is emblemized by that which the most glorious of nature’s forms bears to the seed from which it springs.”—*J. H. Thom.*

This doctrine of the resurrection makes the realities of eternity the more palpable and tangible. We cannot comprehend pure spirit. We know almost nothing of its nature and its properties except by negatives,—by contrasting it with matter;

we know nothing of its existence—consciousness apart—except through its effects. We believe that God is a pure Spirit and an Infinite Spirit; but we can hardly conceive of a finite created spirit, without supposing it to have some outward form, some visible substance, and some definite locality. Hence some Christian philosophers,—like Origen and Cudworth, after Plato—have supposed that immediately after death, the spirit is furnished with a form adapted to its new sphere of action—a form which distinguishes it, which makes it perceptible to others, and which qualifies it to act in its new condition; and that when the new earth shall be fitted up for the saints, they will require a new adaption for it, and will lay aside their ethereal shapes for spiritual bodies, developed from the germ or seed of the old, and fashioned like to Christ's glorious body. But whatever may be true of the intermediate state, concerning which Revelation is chiefly silent, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though this body be destroyed, yet in my flesh shall I see God.* Marvelous as will be the transition at death and in the resurrection, I shall yet preserve my own identity,

shall possess my own corporeity, and shall know the loved companions of my earthly pilgrimage. Blessed be God for the doctrine of the resurrection, that so clothes the unseen world with visibility, and fills it with the beautiful presence of those to whom even in their glorified appearance I shall not be a stranger.

Thou God of peace, that broughtest again from the dead the Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, remember my gentle, sleeping lamb, when thou gatherest the flock into thy fold. Thou Lord of life and glory, who didst rise again from the dead, and who wilt raise up them also that believe, remember thou the precious dust I have garnered up for thee against thine appearing. Thou Lord of my life and my salvation, who didst die for me that I might live to thee, remember me when thou callest thine elect from the four winds of heaven.

And now what wait I for? Is not the whole future made secure? Believing in Jesus and in the Resurrection, encompassed with the supernal glory of the cross and of the opened sepulcher, what more can heart desire?

Up, then, my soul, and on—
Thou mayst not linger here;
Life's duty must be done
Though death, the somber bier,
 The op'ning tomb
That veils thy heart's young love in midnight gloom,
Demand of thee the ever-flowing tear.

Up, up, my soul, and on—
Thou mayst not linger here,
Nor toil nor conflict shun
Though hedged about with fear.
 Thine be the care
Each duty to fulfill, each burden share;
Up, for the coming of thy Lord is near!

Up, up, my soul, and on—
Thou mayst not linger here.
Life's vict'ry must be won,
Death's conflict draweth near.
 And from above
They welcome thee—they of thy heart's young love
Are hov'ring nigh thy dreary way to cheer.

Up, up, my soul, and on—
Thou mayst not linger here;
Life's race will quick be run,
Heaven's plaudit greet thine ear.
 Linger no more
Tearful and sad beside the grave's dark door;
Up, plume thy flight for the celestial sphere.

The Inalienable Possession.

[A SERIES OF MEDITATIONS UPON ROMANS VIII. 35., SEQ.]

THERE is ONE thing of which I cannot be deprived.

Earthly possessions, be they never so secure, I may not be able to retain. The elements of nature, fire, lightning, tempest, flood,—the craft or violence of men, do but conspire against these and they are gone: nay, my own rash adventure or misplaced confidence may put these forever beyond my control.

Reputation, though guarded with a virgin care, may receive the taint of calumny, or pass under the eclipse of suspicion: nay, my own weakness or my own pride may bring down with dishonor the good name of years.

Health, though grounded on a physical constitu-

tion, formed and disciplined for endurance, sparkling in the lustrous eye, blushing on the radiant cheek, beating in the calm, even, silken pulse, that, however fresh and vigorous, tells not the minutes of life with the sharp click of the tense wire, but with the soft breathing of the Æolian harp, *health*,—the freshness of youth, the vigor of manhood, may wither in an hour. I go forth in the consciousness of strength, in the flush and pride of manly vigor; the angel of the Pestilence passes by, or the fierce winds of winter sweep over me, and “I am gone like the shadow when it declineth.”

Intellectual wealth I may have gathered by the slow and careful toil of years, by the discipline of schools and the companionship of books and men, by solitary musing and by foreign travels; the garnered treasures of the past, in libraries, in monuments, in institutions, in thoughts perennial as the soul, may all be mine, and yet a fevered brain, a Reason shattered by disease or crushed beneath the very accumulation of its spoils, may leave me beggared of all this wealth—to drivel on in stolid penury.

The richer wealth of *affection* may be mine. My

heart may have its precious fruits culled from the fields of friendship, of beauty, and of love, or growing out of itself by those strange laws whereby Love is evermore expanding to embrace new objects while yet it clings more firmly to the old, and in my sacred HOME may be a little world, which, were all the world beside, yea and all other worlds annihilated, is world enough for me;—a world that has its own sun and stars, its bright and genial skies, its balmy atmosphere, its sunlit heights, its sweet and shadowy repose, its flowery meads, its luscious fruits, its purling streams, and its great unfathomed, unbroken sea of blessedness;—and yet this world, to me so ample and so lovely, the finger-touch of Death may cover with a pall of blackness. “*Lover and friend may be put far from me, and mine acquaintance into darkness;*” and I be left like the lone wounded bird of spring that sees its mates pluming their wings for a heavenward flight, while it lies crippled and bleeding in the forsaken nest.

Thus in still, meditative hours, do I ponder the uncertainty and the emptiness of earthly joys, till in the vast vacuity around the solid globe dissolves, and sun and stars vanish away.

And is there then nothing permanent, nothing sure? Can my heart nowhere lean with safety and with confidence? Blessed be God there is a resting place. *There is one thing of which I cannot be deprived.* I have an inalienable possession—I know that I have in reversion an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away;—this I hold by grant from my Father through Christ my elder brother, and in the lively hope of this I might well endure with patience the privation of earthly good; but I am not only an heir, I am a possessor, I have not only an inheritance but a *possession*, that cannot be alienated by calamity, or change, or time, or death. “Who shall separate me from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate me from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus my Lord.”

A personal interest in the love of Christ is to the believer an inalienable possession. Christ is mine and I am his. Of earthly limitation is the sentiment,

“There is no union here of hearts,
That finds not here an end.”

This vital heart-union of Christ with the soul that he has redeemed and has blessed with his love, shall never find an end; it knows no separation, no cessation, no change. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?

This mighty pyramid of faith by whose granite steps overlaid with gold we mount to celestial glory, is based upon the eternal love of Christ. The interpreter pauses before it in awe. He cannot measure its vastness; he cannot specify its details; it is the one grand comprehensive conception of all created things heaped together beneath the victorious feet of the ascending saint upborne by the unchanging love of his Redeemer. All the gathered forces of the universe, all the opposites of created good and created ill, may combine for the destruction of this one humble,

believing soul that Jesus loves—they shall be vanquished by an easy victory; nay, angels, principalities and powers, the mighty agencies of the unseen world, may heap mountain upon mountain to crush this believing soul, but, like Pelion piled on Ossa in the war of giants with the gods, these shall but pave its triumphant way to the upper glory.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? “Here is the very summit of the mount of confidence, whence the believer looks down upon his enemies as powerless, and forward and upward with full assurance of a final and abundant triumph. No one can accuse, no one can condemn, no one can separate us from the love of Christ. This last assurance gives permanency to the other two. *The love of Christ* is Christ’s love toward us and not ours toward him the great love of God toward us as manifested in the gift of his Son, and the love of Christ as exhibited in his dying, rising, and interceding for us. This love, so great, is unchangeable. It is no ground of confidence to assert or even to feel that we will never forsake Christ, but it is the strongest ground of assurance to be convinced that his love will never change . . .

The Apostle heaps words together in the effort to set forth fully the absolute inability of all created things, separately or united, to frustrate the purpose of God, or to turn away his love from those whom he has determined to save And as if to prevent despondency having the possibility of a foothold, although the preceding enumeration had been so minute, in the last clause he adds this all-comprehending specification, *no created thing* shall be able to separate us from the love of God.* “Salvation,” says Olshausen in his glowing comment on this passage, “Salvation would be the most uncertain of all uncertain things if it rested not on the objective act of God in Christ, but on the wavering subjectivity [the changeful inward frames and states] of man. Only by this its objectivity [its outward substantive existence by the act of God] is the gospel a true glad tidings, which *nothing can remove*; even unbelief can merely refuse it.

“This profound and colossal thought, which indeed the divine mind alone could generate and reveal to men, inspires the Apostle to a dythyram-

* Hodge.

bic of faith, which even in a purely formal view, must be acknowledged to equal any of the most sublime creations of human language; wherefore even Longinus—the Athenian rhetorician—ranks the Apostle with the greatest orators. The absolute power of God makes everything earthly vanish: ‘if God be for man, what can be against him?’ But the greatest possible act of God’s love is the giving up of his Son; in that all else which can be thought and wished for lies inclosed.”

Let me meditate awhile upon the characteristics of this surpassing love, a love that inspires such confidence, and that works out for *the believer such glorious results.*

I.—CHRIST'S LOVE IS SPONTANEOUS.

The love of Christ is a *self-originated* affection. There was nothing worthy of love in man that called it forth. There was nothing in the character of man that could excite complacency in the mind of the Infinite Redeemer. When this love toward man began, there were no ties of race and kindred, there was no sympathy of nature, there was no fellowship of temptations and sufferings

and death, to call it into exercise. These all were consequent upon that love—the out-goings of its infinite beneficence, the reach, the yearnings of its own proper activity. We were mere creatures—made indeed in the image of God—but of a lower nature than the angels, who though they sinned found no compassion,—for verily “He took not on him the nature of angels,” he did not link himself to them in their ruin that he might link them to him in his glory, but “he took on him the seed of Abraham.” What was there in us more than in angels fallen, to excite his pity and call forth his love? We were but creatures of a lower grade; and we were sinners—dead in trespasses and sins. As to anything on our part the love of Christ for us is altogether free and undeserved. “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.” The first act of Christ’s love for us was an act of compassion, the heaving pity of his infinite soul. Naught was there in us to admire, naught to es-

teem, naught to approve, naught even to tolerate. Since then the love of Christ for us originated in his own nature, independent of any worthiness in us, independent also of any motive or influence from created beings, how should the power or the machinations of creatures be able to separate us from that love?

II.—CHRIST'S LOVE ETERNAL.

The love of Christ is an *eternal* love. In the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, Christ who made the world, bestowed his love upon each and every individual of our race who through all time should be called of his Father into his kingdom. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." He by whom and for whom all things were created, who is before all things and by whom all things consist, he who gave us being, foresaw our fall and planned our redemption, and fixed on us his own particular love, before he launched the worlds on their or-

bits. And now shall this love, kindled in eternity, be quenched in time? What created power shall here dam up the stream of mighty love that has already flowed across the chasm of eternity, and through the unbroken ages of the past?

As the silvery beam that from hitherto impenetrable depths for the first time glances upon the glass of the astronomer, comes not from a new-created star, but has traversed the ages infinite and the spaces infinite on its tireless wing to visit mortals with new revelations of the eternal power and glory, so the love that for the first time beams athwart the consciousness of the regenerated soul and scatters its gloom, is not a love then newly born, but only a new revelation of a love that has flowed across the infinite ages toward this conjunction with its selected object. And who shall separate that soul from the love of Christ?

III.—CHRIST'S LOVE OMNIPOTENT.

The love of Christ is the love of a being who is able to fulfill all the purposes of that love. Christ is omnipotent; and his almighty power is moved and guided by his infinite love. Nay, more

than this; not only is the WORD Almighty—the Creator and the Lord of all—but Christ the Redeemer, Christ the Mediator, Christ the head of the Church, has all power in heaven and in earth for the preservation of his Church. “He is the head of the body, the Church, and in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and *ye are complete* in him, which is the head of all principality and power.” Christ is able to execute all the purposes of his love. This thought of the ability of Christ is continually recurring in the Apostolic writings, to strengthen the believer’s confidence. Sometimes it is the song of triumph;—“to him that is *able* to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,—to him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end.” Sometimes it is the ground of promise; as where the assurance of a glorious resurrection and a blissful immortality is rested on the fact that Christ by his own energy is “*able* to subdue all things to himself.” Sometimes it is the solid foundation of a personal hope. “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is *able* to keep that which I have commit-

ted to him against that day." Sometimes it imparts confidence in prayer: "He is *able* to succor them that are tempted;" he is able also "to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." And again it is the theme of exulting doxology; "To him that is *able* to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

He who loves us is able to keep us. The strongest earthly love cannot shield us from calamity, from temptation, from disease, from death. Often the heart in whose every pulse and every fiber lives the dear object of affection, yearns with unutterable desire, with tears and groans and agony, to deliver that object from present or impending ill. But here the greatest strength of human love is also its greatest weakness. But Christ is able to do all that his infinite love hath desired and purposed for our welfare. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? All that the Apostle has here enumerated, even the angels and principalities and powers of dark-

ness that he challenges from the unseen world, are but *created* things subject to the control of him who doeth all things according to the counsel of his own will. "The whole world, indeed, with all its powers, its enticements, and its threatenings, is against the believer; but what is the world against God, who does what He will with its powers in heaven and on earth!" What mere created power shall separate us from the love of an Almighty Saviour?

IV.—CHRIST'S LOVE IMMUTABLE.

The love of Christ is the love of an unchangeable being. Earthly friends change in their relative affection toward us, or in their nearness to us, or they themselves are changed and pass away. But "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" the same in his nature, his attributes, his counsels, his affections, and his relations toward us. "This man hath an unchangeable priesthood." "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all

shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail." "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world." To him who knoweth all things, no new contingency can arise to affect his plans; to him who hath all power, no unexpected obstacle can impede his will. Christ changeth not, he will not deny himself, and since he hath loved us from the beginning, who shall separate us from his love?

V.—CHRIST'S LOVE PECULIAR.

The love of Christ is a personal and particular affection. It is not the love of Christ toward the world at large that is here intended, not his general compassion toward sinners and his general benevolence as evinced by his mission and sacrifice, but it is his particular love for them that are his. "The Lord knoweth them that are his;" they are his own, their names are written in his book of life. When our Lord was about to leave his disciples, immediately before the agony of the garden and the cross, he commend-

ed them to God in prayer, and said, "Of them which thou gavest me, have I lost none. Those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, though the son of perdition is lost." He selected these his chosen as the objects of that prayer. "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou has given me." Yet blessed be his name, he added, "neither pray I for these alone; but for them also which shall believe in me through their word."

The invitations of Christ are personal, and his promises are personal and particular. They are given to individuals; and he who complies therewith is thenceforth personally an object of Christ's special regard. "My sheep hear my voice, and I *know* them, and they follow me: and I give to them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

Since, therefore, from the foundation of the world Christ has chosen each believer as an object of his personal and particular love,—since this love is bestowed immediately upon its object by Christ

himself, knowing who and what that object is, and taking it to his heart,—who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

VI.—CHRIST'S LOVE PRESCIENT.

The love of Christ was manifested toward us with a foresight of all the difficulties which its exercise must encounter. Men ordinarily form friendships with little thought of the sacrifices that those friendships may involve. Sometimes a true and noble heart will bind itself to one who is struggling with adversity, and identify itself with his person and his cause when both are sinking, because it regards both as worthy of its confidence, and will testify that confidence before the world. But more commonly adversity scatters friends. They had committed themselves without a thought of danger, and are ready to retreat when the sound of danger comes. Even in those friendships where calamities are anticipated, the danger has not sufficient definiteness to give it presence and impression. In the nearest union of life it is known that sooner or later the tie must be sundered, but it cannot be anticipated upon which side the blow will

fall, and neither party, therefore, can drink beforehand the bitter cup; and while this sacred partnership of affection is known to be a partnership of care and sorrow as well as of joy, yet hope evermore predominates, and sorrow never enters as a distinct element into the calculations of such a union. It may be adverted to as an incident, it may obtrude its shadow upon the picture, but it is not laid down palpably in the plan. Nature and the highest wisdom forbid that it should be. Love does not launch her bark, wreathed with garlands and manned with laughing Hours, for seas of trouble—though when the storm comes it will be found that underneath the gilded and flowery hull are ribs of oak and knees of iron. But here is a love that from the first foresaw the trials and the hindrances to its own expression, and yet in view of these sought that expression without wavering. This love launched itself into the midst of the storm. It traversed a sea of flood. Christ knew that his love for us must bring him from heaven to earth, from the throne to the manger, from complete divinity to weak humanity, from joy and glory to shame and suffering, from life to death, from the crown to the cross; and yet he loved—loved

us notwithstanding all. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?

VII.—CHRIST'S LOVE VICTORIOUS.

The love of Christ has already encountered without faltering the highest obstacles to the fulfillment of its purpose. What enemy has the Apostle here enumerated that Christ has not already in his own person met and overcome? *Tribulation?* "A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." *Distress?* "His visage was marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men." *Persecution?* "He is despised and rejected of men;" "all they that see me laugh me to scorn, they shut out the light, they shake the head and say, Aha! aha!" *Famine or nakedness?* "The son of man hath not where to lay his head." *Peril?* "Then the Pharisees went forth and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him how they might destroy him; and Jesus would not walk in Jewry because the Jews sought to kill him." *Sword?* "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter." *Angels, principalities and powers?* "Then was Jesus led into the wil-

derness being forty days tempted of the devil." "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me." *Death?* "Then they crucified him between two malefactors." Every force of evil has already been expended in the vain attempt to wrest from the embrace of Christ the souls he came to save. This love while here incarnate upon earth, doing its own work, consummating its eternal plan, was assailed by the combined malice of earth and hell, but vanquished all. It burned with so intense a flame that many waters—even the floods of anguish and of horror that rolled over the Son of God as he lay prostrate in the garden—could not quench it, and can anything now extinguish it? Satan tried his arts in vain; Death thought to extinguish this love in his icy grasp, and to seal it in the sepulcher—but no, it rose and triumphed over all. What then remains to separate us from the love of Christ?

VIII.—CHRIST'S LOVE COMPLETE.

The love of Christ was bestowed upon us with a view to its consummation over every obstacle in the final salvation of its object. How affecting is

the exhibition made by John of the fidelity of the Saviour's love, when he records that before the feast of the passover, "When Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them to the *end*." And as the hours of darkness were closing in about his own soul, he devoted himself to the work of consoling his disciples and of perfecting their faith. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and he would not leave his work unfinished. To what intent is all this love of Christ—eternal and unchanging—a love that brought him to the humiliation of Bethlehem, and to the bloody baptism of Gethsemane and of Calvary? Was it to make a general expression of good-will toward men, and a general offer of pardon, an experiment in moral government by grace? Was it not, above all this, to secure the personal salvation of every individual to whom by faith his atoning blood should be efficaciously applied? "He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. You hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death to present you holy, and unblame-

able, and unprovable in his sight; to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy."

This then is the very intent of all Christ's love for us;—that he may secure our personal salvation in his father's kingdom. That kingdom was prepared for us from the foundation of the world, and shall anything now deprive us of our inheritance? Will he not complete the work he has begun, and upon which he has already bestowed so much thought, and labor, and suffering? Since Christ has undertaken our personal salvation, and has proposed this to himself as the object of his everlasting love—who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Such are the characteristics of this love upon which the believer reposes his confidence. It is a self-originated love; it is an eternal love; it is an omnipotent love; it is an unchanging love; it is a personal and particular love; it is a love that has counted the cost; it is a love that has endured for us the pains of death; it is a love that never loses sight of its object, and that will be satisfied only with the complete and eternal blessedness of that object in heaven. Upon this love the be-

liever reposes with unwavering confidence. It is his present and inalienable possession; the one thing—the only thing of which he cannot be deprived, but having which he wants no more. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

IX.—CHRIST'S LOVE ALL-SUSTAINING.

What are the workings of the love of Christ toward the believer in his personal experience? Sometimes it altogether shields him from calamity. The temporal promises of the Old Testament are not wholly void under the New. Sometimes the promise of the Psalmist in its letter as well as in its spirit is now fulfilled: "Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee; neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways." This merciful deliverance was vouchsafed to the Jewish Christians of the first century, who all escaped from the destruction of Jerusalem in which thousands of their countrymen were slain. But the language of the Apostle supposes that trials, per-

secutions, and afflictions do actually come, as for the most part they do come to all believers, and often in connection with their Christian profession. A natural tendency of such trials would be to beget despondency and a suspicion of the withdrawal of Christ's love. But in the very trial the love of Christ manifests itself to the believer, working out its gracious design. It brings to him a view of the presence of Christ and of his sustaining grace that is altogether unwonted in his seasons of quiet and prosperity, and opens to his soul the joy and strength of his Redeemer.

Upon this point Dr. Chalmers has some thoughts that are eminently worthy of remembrance. "The way in which God often manifests His protecting and fatherly care of us, is, not by obtaining for us the safety of a flight; but, better and nobler than this, the triumph of a victory. In plainer words, He may neither withdraw the calamity from us, nor us from the calamity; but, leaving it to bear with full weight upon our spirits, He pours a strength into our spirits which enables them to bear up under it. It is in this way frequently, that He makes good the promise of not suffering us to be tried beyond what we are able

to bear. He does not lighten the suffering, but He adds to the strength; and, as it were, cradles us, by the education of a severe spiritual discipline into a state of spiritual maturity. After that the Apostles had been threatened by the Jewish rulers to desist from preaching, they did not pray that no more threats might be uttered, or that the power of executing their menaces should be taken away. They did not pray for a deliverance from the outward trial; but for a supply of inward resolution, that they might be upheld against it. 'And now Lord, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word.' And so with Christians of all ages. They estimate the kindness of God towards them by His spiritual rather than by His temporal blessings. They count not that God has separated or withdrawn Himself because His earthly comforts have abandoned them. The most distressing separation to them were to be abandoned by the aids of His grace. That they fell into suffering, were to them no indication of His faded or expiring regard for them; but, should they fall into sin, this were the sad and sorrowing evidence of an angry or of a with-

drawing God. When He puts some dark adversity to flight, this may prove that He has made them to be safe. But higher far when He discharges this adversity upon them, and they come out, of erect and unhurt spirit, from the onset and the uproar of its violence—this proves that He maketh them to conquer, and to be more than conquerors. . . . Now a man is never overset, never plunges into irrecoverable despair, but on the giving way of that which he holds to be his main interest; and hence, you will perceive, that the same visitation of calamity which should make one man feel that he is undone, might give to another a sense of noblest independence—in that he has met the poverty or pain with a spirit unhurt, if not bettered by the collision; and that, in the triumph of a faith which looks onward and ahead of all that is visible, he can rise superior to the disaster and trample it beneath him.”

X.—PAUL AND CHRYSOSTOM.

Examples of the sustaining power of Christ's love abound in the history of the Church. Her martyrology is full of them. The noble army of

martyrs and confessors, from Stephen down to the latest victim of superstitious fear or inquisitorial revenge, do testify that nothing can separate the believing soul from the love of its Redeemer; that trials, instead of being evidences of the soul's abandonment by Christ often bring Christ to the soul in all the fullness of his love. Thus was it with Paul: "in labors abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons frequent, in deaths oft, stoned, shipwrecked, in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by the Jews, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." And yet he could say "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair: persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." And again he says, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have

suffered the loss of all things and do count them but dung that I may win Christ." "The love of Christ constraineth us." The love of Christ was Paul's support in every conflict and his final victory over death.

Chrysostom, the pious and eloquent bishop of Constantinople, whose enemies—made such by his fidelity—succeeded in deposing him and driving him into exile at the peril of his life, found ever his support in the same love of Christ. Thus in his parting address to his flock from whom this cruel edict drove him, he exclaims, "Many are the billows and severe the storm; but we are not afraid that we shall be overwhelmed; for we stand on a rock. Let the sea rage; it cannot loose the rock. Let the waves lift up themselves; they cannot sink the ship of Jesus. What I pray you, should we fear? Death? To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. Exile? The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. Confiscation of goods? We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The frightful things of this world I can easily contemn, and laugh at its good things. I dread not poverty; I desire not wealth. I dread not

death, nor do I pray for life except for your profit.

“Do I encourage myself” he adds, “in my own strength? I have his written bond. That is my staff; that is my security; that is my tranquil haven. Should a world be in commotion, I possess his written bond. To him I read it. Those words are a wall to me and a security. What are those words? I am with you always even to the end of the world. Christ is with me. Whom shall I fear? Should billows rise against me, and seas, and the wrath of rulers, all these things are lighter to me than a spider’s web.”

On returning from exile, he said, “Driven away I blessed him, returning I bless him. Blessed be God who permitted us to depart; blessed again be God, who has called us back. Blessed be God, who permits the storm; blessed be God, who dissipates the storm and makes the calm. Are you in prosperity? Bless God and prosperity continues. Are you in adversity? Bless God and adversity ends. Times vary; but the mind should be the same. Neither should the calm unnerve the generous purpose of the pilot, nor the storm overpower him.”

XI.—VICTORY OVER DEATH.

With this shield of faith the Christian is enabled to quench all the fiery darts of the adversary. He is more than conqueror. Take the single article of death. Christ's love does not deliver the believer from the physical process of dying, but it leaves him nothing more than this to endure. "O death where is thy sting?" To some it is given to triumph over this last foe with signal demonstrations of celestial strength. So was it with Knox, with Payson, with Evarts, who shook the etherial spear and death affrighted fled and yielded up his prey. But blessed be God this victory is not reserved alone for those who go up as in chariots of fire amid the clang of angel trumpets and in the blaze of heaven's opened gate. Often to some humble and patient sufferer, wasting by slow disease, shut in from all the world, shrinking not only from the inquisitive gaze of strangers but even from the anxious, sympathizing look of friends, communing ever with the Invisible rather than with the outward,—to such a one, all unknown

to the great world, and shunning its publicity as the timid fawn shuns the open moor for the still waters and the quiet pastures of the forest shades—is given, not some rare ecstatic vision of the celestial, not last days and last words of exulting joy, but for many days and weeks and months, perhaps for years, through all the mockery of illusive hopes and all the sudden apparitions of the angel of death that ever hovers near, and through all the mysterious fluctuations of that subtle nervous fluid that neither intellect nor will controls,—is given a sweet serenity, a serenity that is never disturbed by one agitating apprehension of the closing scene, that meekly wills as God wills, and views death only as a passage into life. Here is something more than resignation; here is something more than triumph. Hardly can that be called a victory where there is no conflict, where the enemy is calmly looked down without a struggle and overborne by the majesty of a faith ever present and ever self-possessed. Such a soul is more than a conqueror; it has risen above the din of triumph to a sublime, and, paradoxical though it be—an intense tranquility—“the peace of God that passeth all understanding.” Blessed be God

that this experience is sometimes given to the humblest of his saints; blessed not for their sakes only but for survivors; for the eye that hath looked on this shall never after see aught of terror or of gloom in death. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? . NAY, in all these things WE ARE MORE THAN CONQUERORS through him that loved us."

XII.—CLOSING LESSONS.

The Christian should rather prepare to meet trials than seek to escape them. It is right indeed, to pray "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," and to use every reasonable precaution against calamity. But trials must come, and it is wiser and better to discipline the heart to meet them than to burden the imagination with devising means of escape.

The only real strength in adversity comes from above. No earthly friends, no earthly resources can give real succor; no [plans or resolutions of

my own can give deliverance or support; no philosophy nor force of will can bear me up. There is but one real strength and consolation; and that is the consciousness of a personal interest in the love of Christ as a present and an inalienable possession. Let me cherish this by a life of faith and by the daily evidences of piety.

If I am Christ's I can have no cause of fear or anxiety in the universe. Nothing can by any possibility separate me from his love. "Who will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" "Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

May no trial alienate my heart from Christ, or shake my trust in him: no trial of prosperity,—often the severest,—no trial of adversity. Nothing can change his love for me, and shall aught change my love for him? Truly has it been said that "Man only has the sad prerogative of being able to draw himself away from Christ by *unbelief*, the *mother of all sins*."

It is only through Christ and to those in Christ

that this wonderful sustaining love is given. He that is not of Christ, whose consciousness testifies that he knows nothing of Christ's personal love, has no real possession, no real good present or in prospect. All things are against him. The world may seem to be for him, but it is against him. It deludes him that it may destroy him. Satan promises to be for him and to give him a kingdom for his homage, but he is against him, and will ere long drop the garb of an angel of light and show himself the fiend he is. Death is against him; oh how full of terror! God is against him, in the dread majesty of his justice, in the penalty of his offended law. Christ himself is against him; rejected by him and compelled to reject him in turn. Alas, poor, wretched, dying sinner, what can he do without the Saviour's love?

How blessed is the believer's possession,—the love of Christ. Would that I might realize its priceless worth. As saith John Owen, "Be not contented to have right *notions* of the love of Christ in your minds, unless you can attain a gracious *taste* of it in your hearts; no more than you would be to see a feast or banquet richly prepared, and partake of nothing of it to your re-

freshment." O that I might know the fullness of this love. The Apostle prayed for the Ephesians that "Christ might dwell in their hearts by faith; that, being rooted and grounded in love, they might be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which, passeth knowledge, that they might be filled with all the fullness of God." Such shall ever be my petition at the throne of grace. And yet how little can I know on earth of the love of Christ. Oh for the perfect vision of that love in heaven. That is not the cry of a weary and desponding heart, made sick of earth by sorrow—"Come Lord Jesus, come quickly." No, as the believing heart in some favored hour yearning for a higher knowledge and a clearer vision of his love, hears him say through the heavens opened to receive an ascending saint, "Watch thou, labor, pray;—behold, for thee also I come quickly," oh then it cries in joyous hope "*Even so, come Lord Jesus,*"

Death shall not me from THEE divide,
But draw me closer to thy side.



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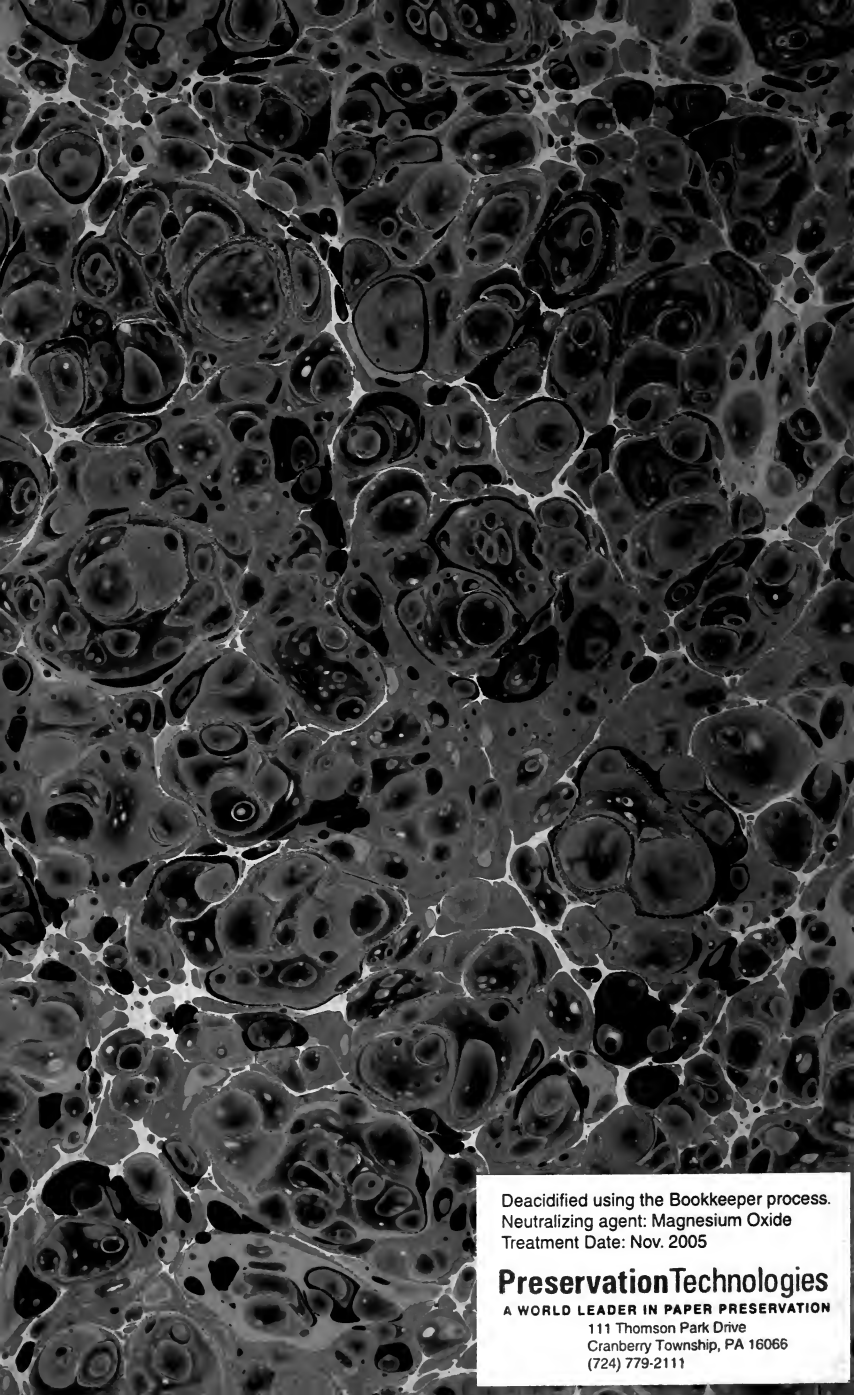
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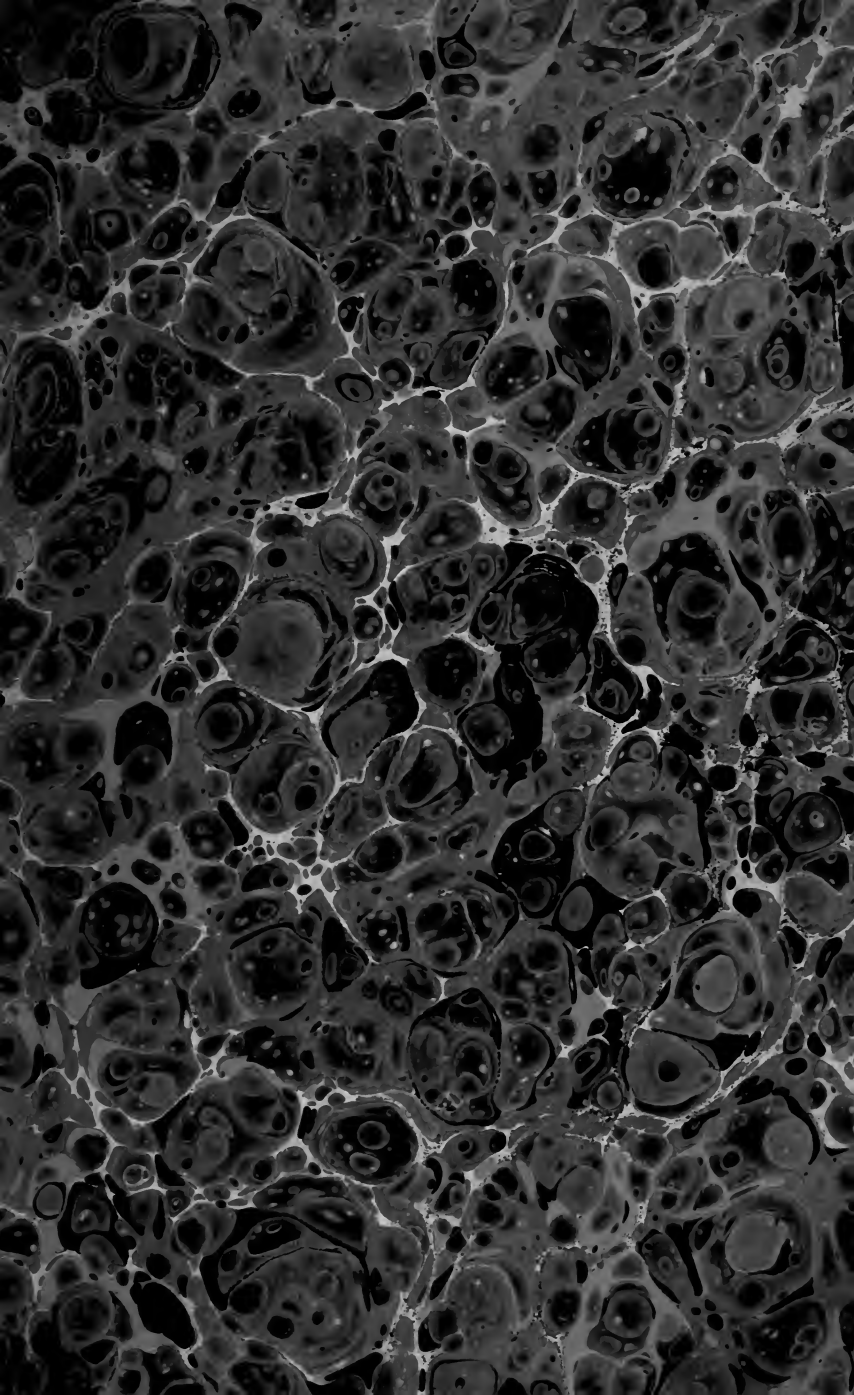


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

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