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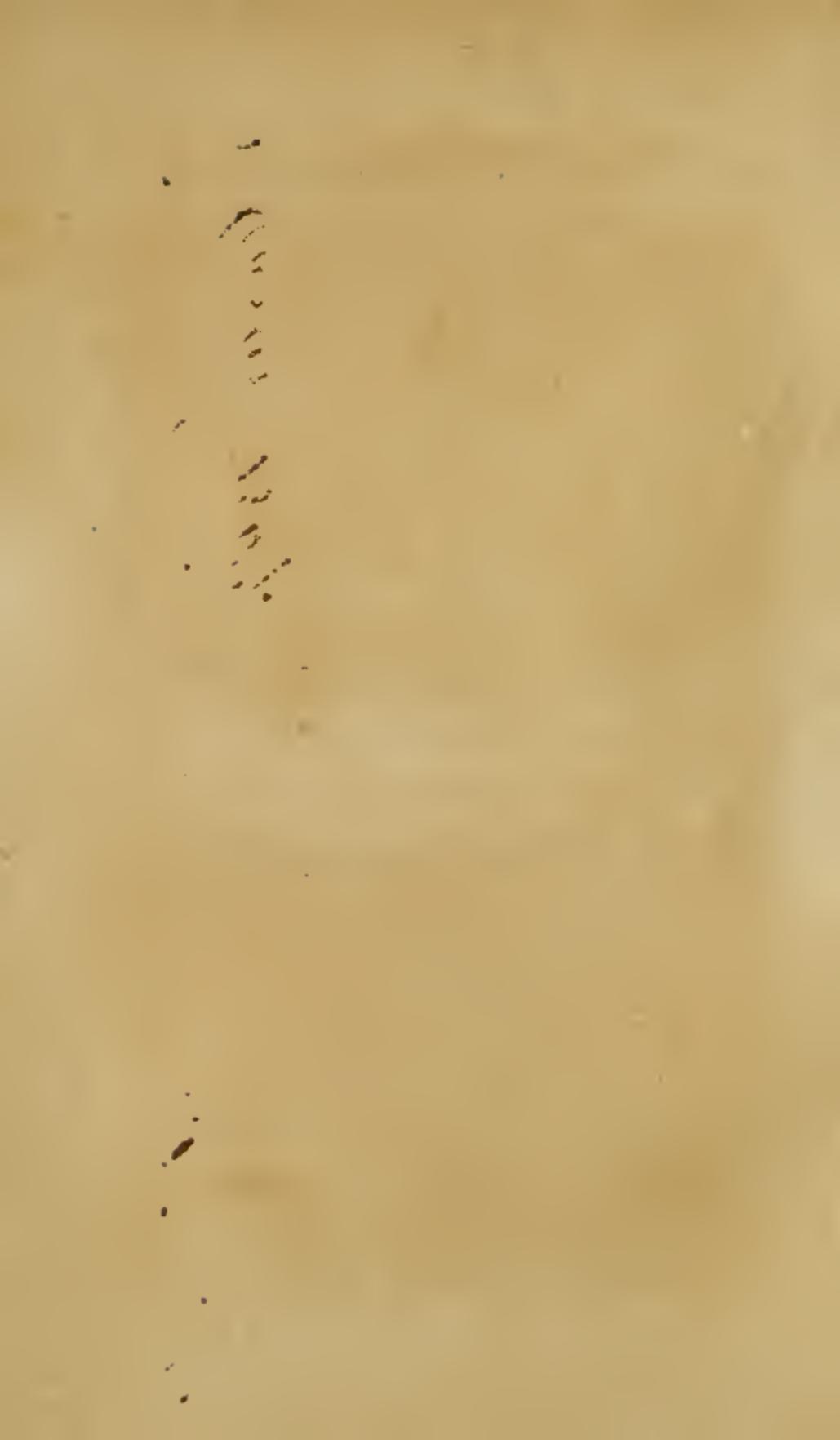
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Thankfulness

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THANKFULNESS;

AND

OTHER ESSAYS.

BY

REV. JAMES HAMILTON,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE IN EARNEST," "HARP ON THE WILLOWS,"
"MOUNT OF OLIVES," ETC.

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THANKFULNESS.

“ Ten thousand thousand precious gifts
My daily thanks employ ;
Nor is the least a cheerful heart,
That tastes those gifts with joy.”

A **THANKFUL** Christian is a happy man, and brings peculiar glory to God. Thankfulness is something better than mere cheerfulness. It is a pleasant sight to see a merry, gleesome child, or a placid, contented man ; but pleasant as it is to see, it scarcely needs a soul to make a creature cheerful. You may see cheerful sights by cottage-fires and on village-greens, on the harvest-field and amid the vintage-heaps ; but you may see the exact equivalent as often as you look on a bright summer's day at a flock of sheep, or a dancing minnow-pool, or a cloud of insects swinging mazily to and fro in a field of balmy air. If you

reckon the mere gladness, the sensation of delight, beasts are as capable of it as ourselves ; and, for anything I know, the swift shrieking out his ecstasy as he glances round the steeple, or the bee murmuring all his noontide musings into the ear of an opening flower may be as full of gladness as you ever were when your pulse was bounding bravely, and the joy of felt existence was swelling every vein. I believe that God can fill the tiniest and most transient thing as full of its proper happiness as he can fill the heart of man ; for he can fill it brimful, and human bosom can hold no more. What advantage, then, has man in his enjoyments over the beasts that perish ? Why this : his best joys should be spiritual and intellectual—a domain peculiar to himself. They should be more lasting, also ; a tinge of immortality should run through them ; and as they are sublimer and more enduring, so they should awaken gratitude. Our gladness should take the form of thankfulness. Gratitude is the

grace which hallows gladness, and by giving it an upward Godward direction, makes it both noble and safe. A joy in which gratitude does not mingle is a dangerous thing, for it is atheistic and God-provoking.* And it is a degraded thing; for nature's high-priest, that spokesman and interpreter who should embody in articulate praise the homage of a voiceless universe, and whose adoring capacity is only lower than the angels, ingratitude makes him lower than the oxen; for the ox knoweth his owner, and feels his own kind of thankfulness;—and duller than the stones; for rocks and mountains have their silent anthems, and rather than that none should utter "glory in the highest," the stones would cry aloud.†

That man leads the most angelic life whose life is fullest of adoration, and thankfulness, and praise; but none except the Lord's redeemed can lead that life. None will cry, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good," who have not first tasted

* Isa. v. 12.

† Ps. cxlviii. 9; Luke xix. 37-40.

that "mercy which endureth for ever."* And just as there is no real gratitude which does not come down from above, so there is no acceptable thank-offering which does not go up through a mediator. "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."† "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up a spiritual sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."‡ Christ is the altar which sanctifies the sinner's gift; and in order that a thank-offering be accepted, it must be laid on this altar. Cain thought that he was thankful. He presented to the Lord the produce of his fields; and perhaps it was more than a complimentary acknowledgment. Perhaps he felt a gush of emotion as he eyed God's goodness in his ripening acres. But he thought his own hands pure enough to convey the tribute, and on a bloodless altar he laid his elegant oblation. Abel was thank-

* Ps. cxxxvi. 1. † Eph. v. 20. ‡ 1 Peter ii. 5.

ful also ; but besides the fruit of the ground, he brought the firstling of his flock, and with hands washed in its innocency, presented his more excellent, his more abundant and acceptable offering. And while the sacrifice of faith received the fiery sign and vanished, fragrant in flames of Heaven's own kindling, the mellow heap of corn and glossy fruit, the deist's offering, remained unnoticed and untouched. "The Lord had respect unto Abel and his offering ; but unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect." That offering alone arrests the eye of God which is laid on Abel's altar.

The grand ultimatum of the Christian economy is just to evoke abundant thanksgivings. And with this end in view, it has provided at once the mightiest topic and the fittest ministers—the unspeakable gift, and the royal priesthood. And a believer is never so truly what his Lord would have him to be, nor so like what he shall hereafter be ; he never brings more glory to God, nor does more to commend the gospel, than

when others see in his spirit and demeanor, in what he gives, and what he says, and what he does, a living sacrifice, a holocaust of praise. "In everything give thanks ; for this is the will of God in Jesus Christ concerning you."

In the hope of promoting this most desirable grace, I would mention —

I. Some hinderances to a thankful spirit.

II. Some topics or materials for thanksgiving.

III. Some appropriate expressions of Christian gratitude.

I. Some Christians are not eminent for thankfulness. They are on the right side ; but they have scarcely got the right spirit. Their complainings and murmuring are a deep spot on their Christian character, or rather a thick veil over it. Their heavenly citizenship could never be gathered from their benign and joyful mien, or from their cordial, thankful words ; for, even with the cup of salvation in their hand, you never

hear them asking, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his gifts?"

Three things mainly hinder Christians from being thankful: selfishness, peevishness, and heedlessness.

Some are very selfish. Unless the blessing alight on their actual self, it matters not where it comes down. It can occasion no gladness to them. They can not joy in beholding the faith of other men. They can not exult in beholding the order of other churches. They do not glorify God for the graces of their believing brethren. The husbandman who sees a cloud melting over the adjacent fields, while not a drop comes down on his own thirsty furrows, is more likely to envy his favored neighbor than to indulge in patriotic congratulations; and so when a blessing comes down on neighbor Christians or neighbor churches, there are some who, instead of indulging in that wise congratulation which of all things would be the likeliest to bring the blessing to themselves, instead of rejoicing with the patriot-

ism and public spirit of a citizen of Zion, exulting in the general good, they grudge as if they lost what other members of the body get; and by a most unlovely selfishness, defraud themselves of that joy which no man could keep from them—the joy of rejoicing with them that do rejoice—the joy of admiring the wonderful work of God. There are some so grievously selfish, that they take as matters of right, or as things of course, every good and perfect gift; and being little accustomed to view all things in the surety, viewing themselves more frequently from the little hill of their own self-love than from the great mountain of God's free grace, no gift is so great as to surprise them, no mercy is so amazing as to make them thankful. Like the Caspian sea, which has some unseen way of disposing of its waters, so that whatever rains come down, and whatever rivers flow in, its great gulf never fills, and never a rill runs out from it again; so there is a greedy, all-devouring selfishness, which, whatever rivers

of pleasure flow into it, and whatever mighty bursts of heaven-descended bounty exhaust their fulness over it, always contrives to dispose of the whole in the caverns and subterraneous passages of its capacious egotism—the vast *mare internum* of self, without one drop overflowing in kindness to man or gratitude to God. And if the sudden advent of some un hoped-for or overwhelming mercy stagger them into a moment's tenderness, they recover their presence of mind before they are betrayed into the liberality of imprudent gratitude, or the vehement expressions of an over-ardent thankfulness.

Others, who are not so remarkable for sordid selfishness, are of a peevish, complaining temper. Unless a man be changed in the spirit of his mind, he can not belong to Christ. It is the work of the transforming Spirit to change the temper in making all things new ; and in the majority of instances the change is very perceptible : the churl becomes bountiful, and the murmurer

grows thankful. But the change is sometimes very slow, and seldom, in all its details, complete. And it is sad enough that when the box is alabaster and the ointment precious, this dead fly should spoil it all ; when the man is a Christian, and his qualities those of substantial worth, that this bad temper should diffuse an odor of repulsiveness around him. We have, however, only to do with the fact and its evil influence — the fact that some good men are of a fretful temper, and its evil effect in making them unthankful. Just as there are some instances of ingenious gratitude, making the most of scanty mercies, and extracting materials of thanksgiving from subjects the most unpromising ; so there is an ingenious fretfulness, surprising you by its dexterity in detecting flaws, its industry in imbittering its own comforts, and wearying you by its pertinacious fault-finding. If the house be commodious and well furnished, the situation is bad. If your friend be judicious, and affable, and kind, it availeth you noth-

ing, for he is so busy that you do not see him half so often as you would. If the book be scriptural and original, and ever so impressive, you throw it aside with a shudder, because it contains some expression at war with your rules of criticism. In the first book of Kings, we read (ix. 10-13): "And it came to pass at the end of twenty years, when Solomon had built the two houses, the house of the Lord and the king's house, that then King Solomon gave Hiram twenty cities in the land of Galilee. And Hiram came out from Tyre to see the cities which Solomon had given him; and they pleased him not. And he said, What cities are these which thou hast given me, my brother? And he called them the land of Cabul [margin, *dirty*, or *displeasing*] unto this day." Now, without waiting to inquire whether the conduct of Solomon on this occasion was right or wrong, handsome or unhandsome, we have no hesitation in saying that Hiram was neither gracious nor wise. Even had the cities not come up to

his expectation—and perhaps the misfortune lay in his expectation being too high—there was no need to vilify them, and hand down to posterity a memorial of his own spleen. But some men's lot is always cast in the land of Cabul. There is something dirty or displeasing in all their mercies. They find a crook in every field, a drawback on every comfort, a bitter in every sweet. They can get nothing to their mind, nothing that comes up to their idea, neither a church, nor a minister, nor a Christian friend. And just as they are sullen and dissatisfied in the midst of ordinances, they are fretful at their own firesides. And just as God never gave them a mercy yet where their perversity did not discover more cause for grumbling than for gratitude, so, were they entering heaven itself with this hankering, discontented spirit, they would write Cabul on the very gates of paradise.

Many are unthankful from sheer inadvertency. They are surrounded with blessings, but, from pure heedlessness, they do

not perceive the open hand whence all have issued. They shut themselves out of the rich enjoyments included in the very exercise of gratitude, by not observing the countless objects on which that gratitude might be exercised. They are neither proud nor perverse it may be, but of a light inconsiderate turn, enjoying the good things which God has given, happy and cheerful in the use of them, but not connecting them with the bounteous Giver, and so not thankful. Gratitude does not depend on the amount of mercies received, but on the amount of mercies known and prized. And some are incomparably more quicksighted in discerning, and ingenious in detecting, mercies than others are. A man may possess an estate and be little alive to its intrinsic worth. From ignorance or incuriosity he may look on it as good for nothing, till a stranger comes and reveals to him its value. "This barren shaly rock overlays a bed of fuel. That poisonous spring, of which the cattle may not drink, is itself

a promise of plenty, for it shows that out of these hills thou mayest dig brass. These coarse unsightly shells are the casket which contains the pearl. And even those heaps of rotting seaweed may be rendered a source of occupation to your people, and of riches to yourself." And many a man has the sources of boundless happiness and gratitude all at his feet, but owing to mere heedlessness the well is hid. Many a man whose average enjoyment amounts to little more than a duller sort of misery; many a Christian whose thankfulness is a conscientious effort rather than a spontaneous emotion, his peace might flow like a river, and his praises rush in a mighty stream, if he only had a prompt and observant eye, if he were only eager to discover and alert to notice his multitude of mercies. And this brings us to our second head:—

II. Materials for thankfulness.

There is no better plan for suggesting these than to fix our regards on some one who was eminent for the grace of thankful-

ness, and then to ascertain what those mercies were which made his thanks abound. And having ascertained them, it will be for each to consider how far the counterpart mercies have been bestowed on himself. In looking over the Bible, the most eminent example of a thankful spirit which occurs to us is the sweet singer of Israel. His was a heart so full, that the least mercy made it overflow ; and when it overflowed, it was gratitude of a peculiarly intense and generous kind, such as fills the golden vials of the four-and-twenty elders.* There was a holy skill, a Divine exuberance, in King David's gratitude. Nothing came amiss to it, but, like the fire which transmutes rotten wood and dingy coal to light and flame, the fire of David's devotion turned his hardships into blessings and his sorrows into songs of thanksgiving. For instance, when he had taken refuge with the king of Gath, hungry and weary, and hunted for his life, he had not been long in

* Rev. v. 8, 9.

his house till he found that the king intended to kill him. Saul lay waiting for him, and Achish drove him out to Saul. So David arose, and marched along, singing cheerfully, "I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."* And long afterward, when death laid his hand upon him, and the once-ruddy countenance was deep-lined and mortal pale, he cast a wistful glance round his dwelling, and though it reminded him of many an awful sin and many stunning events in his family's history; amid its dreariness, a sense of obligation still survived, and he gathered up his languid strength to say, "Although my house be not so with God, yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow." It was the faint Amen which closed the hallelujah of his

* Psalm xxxiv.

thankful life, and told that he was of the same mind still as when in sprightlier days he sang, "The Lord is my shepherd. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life." So far there is foundation for Isaac Walton's quaint conclusion, that, "though the prophet David was guilty of many of the most deadly sins, yet he was said to be a man after God's own heart, because he abounded more with thankfulness than any other that is mentioned in Holy Scripture, as may appear in his Book of Psalms; where there is such a commixture of his confessing of his sins and unworthiness, and such thankfulness, for God's pardon and mercies, as did make him to be accounted, even by God himself, to be a man after his own heart."*

* "The Angler," b. i., ch. xxi. Perhaps it owes somewhat of its charm to the friend with whom I always associate it, as having first called my attention to it; but that chapter of the "Complete Angler," seems to me a well-spring of as healthy and thankful emotion as any passage in our English authorship. It begins to this effect:—

"Well, scholar, having now taught you to paint your rod and we having still a mile to Tottenham High Cross, I

What, then, were the things which chiefly awakened David's gratitude? To enumerate all would be to recapitulate the psalms

will, as we walk toward it, in the cool shade of this sweet honeysuckle hedge, mention to you some of the thoughts and joys that have possessed my soul since we two met together. And these thoughts shall be told you, that you may join me in thankfulness to the Giver of every good and perfect gift for our happiness.

"And that our present happiness may appear to be the greater, and we the more thankful for it, I will beg you to consider with me how many do, even at this very time, lie under the torment of the gout, and the toothache, &c.; and this we are free from. And every misery that I miss is a new mercy; and therefore let us be thankful. There have been, since we met, others that have met disasters of broken limbs, some have been blasted, others thunder-stricken; and we have been freed from these, and all those many other miseries that threaten human nature; let us, therefore, rejoice and be thankful. Nay, which is a far greater mercy, we are free from the insupportable burden of an accusing, tormenting conscience—a misery that none can bear; and therefore let us praise Him for his preventing grace, and say, 'Every misery that I miss is a new mercy.' Nay, let me tell you, there be many that have forty times our estates, that would give the greatest part of it to be healthful and cheerful like us, who, with the expense of a little money, have eaten and drunk, and laughed, and angled, and sung, and slept securely, and rose next day, and cast away care, and sung, and laughed, and angled again; which are blessings rich men can not purchase with all their money."

of praise. We shall only specify three or four.

1. Personal salvation.—There is a joy which many here have felt—the joy of returning health. The Lord had brought you very low, so low that nobody expected you would rise again, and you did not greatly care. You were so sick at heart, that life had no attractions for you. Your soul abhorred the very things it loved before. They had to stop the music in the streets, the din so distressed you. Your little sister brought you a few flowers from the garden, but you asked her to put them away, for their fragrance sickened you. Some one offered to read you a chapter, and you gave a listless consent, but you could not attend to a single verse, and soon said, “That will do.” But the Lord raised you up again.

Do you remember the first time you breathed the open air, when you were strong enough to cross the threshold again? It was quite an ordinary day to other peo-

ple. The shopman stood behind his counter, the student was poring on his book, the smith was hammering at his forge, and noticed nothing remarkable about the day. And when neighbors met, they said to one another, as words of course, "A pleasant day." They saw nothing extraordinary about it—but it was a wonderful day to you. You just felt as if it were a day that God had newly made—as if he had on purpose breathed a new freshness into the air, and scattered on the earth a handful of heaven's own sunshine. The commonest things had an uncommon look. They had a friendly look—a happy thankful look. They all seemed to be singing the 148th psalm: "Fruitful trees and all cedars; beasts and all cattle; creeping things and flying fowl;" were all praising God, for you yourself were praising. And as you hearkened to the merry tune of the evening bird, and the piping tones of the bee hurrying home with his last burden, and the chorus-gush of winds and waters, your

swelling heart kept time to their hosannah, and your tumult of ecstasy almost threw your feeble frame into a fever again.

But there is a joy more Elysian still, and it, too, is the joy of returning health—the joy of a forgiven sinner when the Holy Spirit first seals the pardon on his soul. To some, this joy comes so gradually, and with such wise abatements, that they can not date its dawn nor say when that joy was full. But others can. You were a sin-sick wretched man. The Spirit of God, unperceived by you, was working in your heart and had convinced you of your guilt. You had no desire for anything; you had not courage to pray; you took the Bible in your hand, but had scarcely heart to open it; you expected nothing there; and you wondered why other people were so happy, for, in your desolate bosom, all was dark despair. You were almost afraid to shut your eyes and take your needful rest, for you did not know but you might awake in hell; and though you put up an earnest

cry for mercy, you felt as if God had not heard that cry. These were dismal days. But they are over now. The true light shone. You saw a sin-bearing Saviour. You saw God's reconciled countenance in the face of the incarnate Son. You had peace with God.

You were no longer averse to pray, for God was your Father. You were no longer reluctant to open the Bible, for that Bible was good news to you. You were no longer terrified to sleep, for you could sleep in Jesus. Your heart was so full of joy because you felt that God was at peace with you, that you felt at peace with everything, and called on the dumb creatures to help you to praise the Lord. Your gladness found outlet, and scarcely found it, in crying, "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who

crowneſt thee with loving-kindneſs and tender mercies. . . . As far as the eaſt is from the weſt, ſo far hath he removed our tranſgreſſions from us. . . . Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominions; bleſs the Lord, O my ſoul.” Theſe were David’s feelings when he felt himſelf a forgiven ſinner—feelings which burſt in on him again in all their freſhneſs and force each time that he realized the ſame affecting mercy anew.* Ah, brother! are you a forgiven ſinner? Are you accepted in the Beloved? And has your heart not danced as David’s did? Has not your glory waked, and your ſoul and all that is within you been ſtirred up to bleſs his holy name?

2. The Bible.—In the days of King David, the Bible was a ſcanty book; yet he loved it well, and found daily wonders in it. Genesis, with its ſublime narration of how God made the worlds, with its glimpses of patriarchal piety, and dark diſ-

* Psalm xxxii. ; li. 15, &c.

closures of gigantic sin ; Exodus, with its glorious marchings through that great wilderness, its thrilling memorials of Jehovah's outstretched arm, and the volumes of the written law ; Leviticus, through whose flickering vistas David's eye discerned the shadows of better things to come ; Numbers, with its natural history of the heart of man ; and Deuteronomy, with its vindication of the ways of God ; Joshua and Judges, with their chapters of providence, their stirring incidents and peaceful episodes ; the memoirs of Job, so fraught with spiritual experience ; and the domestic annals of Ruth, which told to her grandson such a tale of Divine foreknowledge, and love, and care, all converging on himself, or rather on David's Son, and David's Lord ;—these were David's Bible. And, brethren, whatever wealth you have, remember that David desired his Bible beyond all his riches. So thankful was he for such a priceless possession, that he praised God for its righteous judgments

seven times a day. But you have got an ampler Bible—a Bible with Psalms and Prophets in it—a Bible with Gospels and Epistles. How do you love that law? How often have you found yourself clasping it to your bosom as the man of your counsel? How often have your eyes glistened over a brightening page as one who had found great spoil? How often have you dwelt on its precious promises till they evolved a sweetness which made you marvel? How many times have you praised the Lord for the clearness of its light, the sanctity of its truth, and the sureness of its immortality?

3. Another blessedness of David's life, was devout and congenial society. Among his friends were the saints in the earth, the excellent in whom was all his delight. In this respect he felt that the "lines were fallen to him in pleasant places;"* and for these gifts from the Lord—those friends in the Lord—the king was grateful. He

Psalm xvi. 3, 6.

had, for instance, Nathan, so faithful and honest, and affectionate withal, taking the Lord's side, and speaking the Lord's mind in every matter; for his soul's sake still lingering near his master, when it seemed as if that soul were lost, and when it had been as natural for Nathan to take his leave; leal to his fallen friend, but no less loyal to his heavenly Lord. He had Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, men whom David loved because they loved the ark of God. He had Barzillai, the Gileadite, a brother born for adversity, or rather a friend whom affliction brought to view, like those brave ocean-birds that walk forth upon the swell when seas are waxing fierce, and timorous wings are wending home. And he once had Jonathan — Jonathan, who had a word in season for every sorrow, and a welcome ready for every joy; — Jonathan, who understood the full meaning of David's words, and could still perceive the meaning of his friend when laboring words could do no more; — Jonathan, whose tastes and affec-

tions so coincided with David's own, that, like two cloven tallies brought together, their souls, their minds suited one another — fitted and filled up mutually, and coalescing in all the freshness of early life, clave to one another. Have you got such a friend? A Nathan, faithful in his kindness, and wise withal? A Barzillai, a friend in need, a benefactor in the day of poverty or persecution, or a comforter in the hour of sorrow? A praying friend, like Abiathar, or one mighty in the Scriptures, like Zadok the scribe? Above all, a friend, like Jonathan, with whom it is sweet to take counsel; one who makes the sabbath more lightsome, and the road to the sanctuary shorter in his company; who makes the Bible itself more memorable by his quoting it — the throne of grace more dear by his fellowship in prayer — and the Saviour himself better known by what he has told you of him? If you have got such a friend, a gift from God, your lot is pleasant; be thankful and bless the Lord. And

bless him none the less if the gift has gone back to God. Few mercies call for more thankfulness than a friend safe in heaven; a friend who bore the image of the Firstborn so plainly, that you doubt not he has joined the church of the Firstborn in heaven; a friend who fought so good a fight, and kept the faith so well, that you now can see him wear the crown of glory. It is not every one that overcometh. Some ran well, but have been hindered; and when you think how uphill is the road, and how many are the adversaries; how heavy, too, the encumbering weights; they are well off who have reached the goal. Some worldly men are thankful—and rightly thankful—if their friends have gone down with stainless names to honored graves. But this is poor cause for gratitude compared with yours, who have had friends that went up with white robes to immortal crowns. You yourselves have sometimes been thankful when, after days of eager waiting, and nights when the rioting tempest kept you

anxiously wakeful, the telegraph announced the vessel home which conveyed your brother or your son. And afloat on this world's waters — embarked in that profession of which so many now make shipwreck — often beyond your eye, perhaps beyond your influence — with all the cross currents of interest and passion to contend with — with the great gulf-stream of worldly-mindedness bearing in on them, and winds of fierce temptation — the power of the air assailing them : the best moment — for it is the moment which should supersede many vexing thoughts, as it answers many prayers — is the moment that brings them home. However pleasant in his life a Jonathan may be, it is so far better for himself that you have much to be thankful for who have a friend dear as your own soul — a Jonathan in heaven.

4. But it was not only for obvious mercies, but for mercies in the disguise of sorrow, that this man of God was grateful.*

* Psalm xxxiv. ; cxix. 65, 67, 71.

These are the topics which give scope to the holy ingenuity of loyal saints ; and as they are the severest trials of faith, so they are the noblest triumphs of gratitude. "In everything give thanks ;" for "everything is working for good to them that love God." You were strong and vigorous, and rejoiced in active exertions, and had just planned an enterprise which you were sure would be useful, and which you were hopeful you might execute — when sickness came. A notable break in your health occurred, and you can never hope to be the same active man again. Well, but this is the will of God, even your sanctification ; and without the sickness you would not be sanctified wholly. There are lessons of patience and submission, yea and of gratitude, which are best learned when the head is low. There is a mellowing of the man, which is best effected in the cloudy autumn weather of weakness or decline ; a softening of the spirit, an enlargement of experience, a meeker on-waiting on God, a weaning from the

world, and a ripening of faith; in short, the whole of that maturing process which in believing men constitutes the meetness for glory. If you can not be thankful for the pain, the sickness, the restraint, be thankful for the peaceful fruits.—You were rich or independent, and were purposing to do some good with your money, when, lo! your wealth took wing, and, like a scared eagle, you saw it spread its pinions and fly away till it dwindled in distance out of sight, and you have little hope that it will alight on your field again. Perhaps not; and, like everything we lose, there is a pang in seeing it go. But there are lessons to be learned from its sudden flight. You meant to do good with it. And so David meant to build the temple. But while David was projecting a temple on Zion, the Spirit of God was rearing a more beautiful temple in David's soul. And a capestone was wanting—absolute resignation. And so the Lord denied to David the thing nearest David's heart, and David acquiesced; and

in that submission God got more glory than he could have got from David's projected house. And has the reverse of fortune no alleviations? Are you not surprised to find how independent of mere money peace of conscience is? and how much happiness can be condensed into the humblest home? A cottage will not hold the bulky furniture and sumptuous accommodations of a mansion; but if God be there, a cottage will hold as much happiness as might stock a palace. It is with wealth as with a water-reservoir. When the drought has dried it up, you find in the deserted bed things that were lost years ago, and curious interesting things, which but for this circumstance would never have been known. So, where it is a believing contented mind, it will discover, when the flood of fortune has drained away, in the deserted channel, unsuspected sources of enjoyment and lost things, feelings which long since vanished, simple pleasures and primitive emotions which abundance had overflowed. You had a

friend, a parent, or other beloved relative, on whose arm you hoped to lean far through the wilderness. That parent died at the moment he was most needed ; that arm was broken when the road grew roughest and the wilderness most weary. Well, perhaps it made you think more of an arm which never grows feeble — of a friend that never fails. You were of a passive, leaning tendency — doing nothing except as you were prompted, and deciding nothing except it was decided for you. This made you up and doing : this drove you out upon the world ; sent you back on your own resources ; nay, shut you up to an all-sufficient God. And you are conscious now, that but for that bitter, yet timely loss, you had passed through life in the idolatry of creature admiration and in the listlessness of creature trust ; without energy, without activity, almost without separate personality, and assuredly not been where you this day are. Afflictions, wisely considered and skillfully improved, are blessings in disguise ;

and though they be not in themselves joyous, but grievous, and though it is not as in themselves, but for their blessed consequences, that the gratitude is due ; be it the removal of the guide you least could want, because he walked closest with God ; be it the disappearance from your dwelling of one who shed over it its most sacred light ; be it the vanishing from your view of some brief loan, the recall of the smiling babe before he has had time to sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression ; nay, be it sorrow sadder still, a sorrow in which there is little hope or none ; — there still is something from which a thankful heart may elicit gratitude, for there is still something from which the Holy Spirit can elicit sanctification.*

* Another friend — and there are few kinder things that friends can do than to bring one another acquainted with the memorable passages in the books they have read — once awakened some good thoughts in the mind of the writer by reading a few sentences from “ Watson on the Art of Divine Contentment.” It is a quaint, kindly book, full of homely sense and scriptural wisdom. Its author belonged to the class of Caleb and Joshua. He neither

My dear friends, I can not enumerate all the sweet mercies for which you should be thankful ;—the *personal mercies*, a sound mind and a healthy body ; restoration from sickness ; preservations in imminent peril ; a good education, abundance of books, and, perhaps, some leisure to read them ; a competent share of the good things of this life, a house, food, raiment, occasional rest and recreation, the enlivening of a journey, and the enlightenment of travel ;—*family mer-*

despised the goodly land, nor murmured because of the way. And those who are apt to look at the dark side of things can not do better than to read his pithy little treatise :—

“ Compare your condition with Christ’s upon earth. What a poor, mean condition was he pleased to be in for us! He was contented with anything. ‘ For ye know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ ; that although he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor.’ He could have brought down a house from heaven with him, or challenged the high places of the earth ; but he was contented to live poor that we might die rich. The manger was his cradle, the cobwebs his canopy. He who is now preparing mansions for us in heaven, had none for himself on earth. He came *in forma pauperis* ; ‘ who, being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant.’ Jesus Christ was in a low condition ; he was never high, but when he was lifted up upon the cross, and that was his humility.”

cies, parents that were kind when you were helpless, and wise when you were foolish; the endearing associations of early days; the gentleness of kindred, who, if a little more remote, were scarcely less tender than father and mother were; the amenities and joys of your present home; the household lamp and the household hearth, with all the fond familiar faces on which they shine; the voices which make blithe music in your dwelling; the lives which you have got back from the gates of the grave, and those glorified ones whom you would not wish to bring back; with all those numberless indoor delights, those visits of kindness, and advents of gladness, and solacements of sympathy, which He whose home was heaven loved to witness or create in the homes of earth;—*spiritual mercies*, the Bible, the sabbath, the house of prayer, the closet, the family altar, the great congregation, prayer-meetings, communion seasons, psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, Christian friends; perhaps a con-

science void of offence toward man, and at peace with God through Jesus Christ ; perhaps a victory over some temptation ; perhaps progress in some grace ; perhaps answers to prayer ; along with what may either already be your own, or may as assuredly be made your own, as the Bible is already yours — the Comforter, peace in believing, hope in dying, a sanctified grave and a joyful resurrection, a mansion in heaven, a bloodbought harp, a golden crown, the inheritance of all things. These are a few of his mercies ; but oh ! how great is the sum of them !

III. Appropriate expressions of Christian gratitude.

1. Thanksgiving should occupy a prominent place in devotion, whether secret or social. For this purpose it were well to note God's mercies, to mark the return of prayers, to treasure up all the pleasant incidents in your outward history and all God's gracious dealings with your souls ; and he who does this will find fresh materials for gratitude every day.

2. Recount God's mercies to others. In this way you will confer a double benefit. You will quicken your own soul to increasing fervor; and, by speaking good of his name, you may kindle the love and gratitude of your friends and neighbors. A thankful Christian is a general benefactor; his cheerful countenance diffuses a true report of that religion, a great part of which is peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.* The law of kindness which dwells on his lips, goes far to neutralize the acerbity and peevishness of the murmuring professors around him: and the atmosphere of serenity and joy in which he moves reminds you of that world where all the labors are labors of love, where all the movements are a harmony, and

* "On the top of a coach, in a heavy rain, a young woman who sat next him was much annoyed. Samuel was happy in his soul, audibly blessing the Lord for all his mercies. When his neighbor fretted, he exclaimed, 'Bless the Lord it is not a shower of fire and brimstone from heaven!' This sentence took effect; and he had the happiness to learn, that, in consequence of his behavior and conversation, she became a steady convert to Christianity."—*Life of Samuel Hick, the Village Blacksmith*, p. 233.

where every radiant aspect and every uplifted eye is plainly saying, "Thou art worthy."

3. Sing praise. "O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him; sing psalms unto him." Few things are better fitted to dispel the evil spirit of censoriousness, selfishness, and sullenness, than heart-sung hymns of thanksgiving. Besides, adoration and thanksgiving are the proper and the highest order of psalmody. It may be well to sing our own sorrows and our own desires, but it is better still to sing God's praise.

4. Embody your gratitude in offerings of thankfulness. These are the only oblations for which room is left in our new economy. Sin-offerings and trespass-offerings have passed away. There is no place for them now. But freewill-offerings and thank-offerings remain.* The gospel has left am-

* The substance of this tract was originally delivered in the form of a sermon at Manchester, and then in London, on behalf of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, in 1844.

ple scope for these. Its joyful dispensation is essentially eucharistical; its glad tidings should awaken glad feelings and these glad feelings spontaneously express themselves in sacrifices of thankfulness. It is in this way that the Great Author of the gospel has stamped it with a self-diffusive tendency — inspiring with a joy unspeakable those

On such an occasion, it will be allowed that the subject was at least natural and appropriate. Methodism has done more than any other ecclesiastical community to infuse a joyous and eucharistical spirit into modern Christianity; — a spirit which finds other outlets besides the evangelic gladness of its psalmody. In the contributions to its Mission Fund we find frequent entries like the following:—

An Anonymous Thank-Offering to God for the Mercies of 1841	£20	0	0
Anonymous Token of Gratitude for twenty-three Anniversaries of a Wedding-Day	23	0	0
Commemoration of a Friend's Birth-Day	50	0	0
Family Thank-Offering	40	0	0
Family at Grimsby, in memory of a deceased and affectionate Parent	15	0	0
Thank-Offering from Persons embarking in Business	10	0	0
Thank-Offering on New-Year's Day, 1840	10	0	0

When the sermon above referred to was published, by far the most gratifying criticism which met the author's eye, was an acknowledgment of fifty pounds, which some one, after perusing it, had presented to the London Missionary Society.

who receive it in simplicity and love ; and then, through their overflowing hearts and open hands, transmitting it over widening circuits till a regenerate world has felt the leaven of its heavenly life.* The genius of the gospel is liberality. Itself the most amazing instance of the Divine munificence, its advent into a human soul is marked by an instantaneous expansion of its feelings and affections. When it comes in its fullness and tells in its power, the churl becomes bountiful, the miser turns out a philanthropist, and the sluggard issues forth a sleepless evangelist. And so invariably does this activity indicate the energy within — so sure a dynamometer of spiritual vitality is the amount of what a man can do or give for Jesus's sake — that in order to ascertain how freely any one has received, or how much any one has been loved, you have only to ascertain how freely he can give, or how long he can labor without fainting. The love which does not lead to

* Matt. xiii. 33.

labor will soon die out; and the thankfulness which does not embody itself in sacrifices is already changing to ingratitude.

It is distressing to see reluctant or stinted offerings laid on the altar of the God of love; and perhaps it is better not to give at all than to give grudgingly. The Lord loveth a cheerful giver; and none of his people need ever lack that grateful motive which makes a cheerful gift. Were you sick, and has the Lord restored your health, and like Hezekiah, are you living on a second lease of life? Were you far away in a foreign land, and across the dangerous deep — has the arm of providential mercy brought you home? Have new wells burst on you in the valley of Baca, and new songs cheered you in your house of pilgrimage? Have you found new friends, or new sweetness in the old? Has a brighter blaze burst from the domestic hearth, or a richer zest been infused into the household cup? Have you cause for rejoicing in those that remain, or a hope full of immortality

regarding those that are gone? Then commemorate the mercy in a gift of gratitude. Or should all other topics fail—should you look back on weary months and find no spot of your earthly journey bright enough to deserve an *Ebenezer*, then think of the Bible, and the gospel ministry, and the Great Comforter, and heaven; and if everything else should fail, cast your gift into the treasury, with this motto round it, “Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift.”

TO THOSE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD WHO LOVE
THE LORD JESUS IN SINCERITY :

AN ADDRESS

ON BEHALF OF THE PROPOSED

EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

THE church of Christ has all along been one. It is made up of all those, and only those, who in every place, and of every party, believe on the Lord Jesus as their Saviour, and obey him as their sovereign. One life pervades the whole band of discipleship — that life of which the regenerating spirit is the source; so that they are vitally one. And in the eye of Omniscience, one prevailing character marks them all — a character predominating over all singularities of creed, and peculiarities of temper

and practice—the all-absorbing feature of oneness with Christ. Vitally one—viewed from the highest of all standing-points, they are visibly one.

And there was once a time when nothing was more notorious than the church's unity. From no peculiar garb, from no studious uniformity, but from the warmth of their affections and the depth of their sympathies, so obvious was their oneness that mere on-lookers said, "Behold these Christians, how they love one another!" Filled with the Holy Ghost, "the multitude of believers were of one heart and of one soul."

But these days have passed away, and for ages a divided church has been the lamentation of the holiest men; and the healing of its divisions has been the anxious problem of many of the church's wisest members. Various schemes have been suggested. Some have sought the remedy in vigorous legislation. They have recommended as the cure of discord a general council, followed up by the edicts of kings

and emperors. They have said, "Let the most learned divines assemble and determine the true theology, and then let the rulers of the land enforce it; let royal proclamation or act of parliament enjoin one creed, one worship, and one polity throughout the country, and then we shall have unity." And it is with this view that the decrees of councils have so often been enforced by civil law, and that dissent from the legalized religion has so often been made a crime forbidden by the statute, and punished by the judge. But another and milder class, aware that compulsion is not concord, and that a forced concession is not faith, have tried another plan. They have taken up the points of difference, and have defined, and explained, and distinguished, and have attempted to show that after all there is no real diversity, but that Lutherans, and Calvinists, and Arminians, mean the same thing, though they have an unfortunate way of expressing their mutual harmony; or if there really be some dis-

crepancy, it is so slight that they might well consent to split the difference. On this system Richard Baxter tried to reconcile the advocates of a limited and a universal atonement, and Archbishop Usher sought to unite the opposing forms of episcopacy and presbytery. But the usual upshot of these eclectic efforts is a new division, and the *via media* proves a *via tertia*. The difference is split, but the division is not healed. Another, and an increasing class, have, therefore, felt that Christian concord can never be effected by civil compulsion on the one hand, nor by a scheme of giving and taking on the other. They feel that Christian union is an affair of neither legislation nor logic, but, as in the beginning, must be the result of love. Intelligent enough to distinguish the outward differences of his brethren, but perspicacious enough, through all peculiarities, to discover their vital identity—magnanimous enough to overlook much that he may reckon odd or erroneous for the sake of

more that he deems noble and right—full of that regenerate instinct which hails the Saviour's image rather than his own facsimile, and shining in those holy beauties which win each Christian heart—so amiable as to make his fellowship an object of desire, so cordial and catholic that he rejoices to give it, but, withal, so zealous for the truth, and so explicit in his conduct, that he can give it without suspicion of his personal soundness ; his is the right attitude for Christian union, whose personal piety is constantly attracting brotherly love, and whose prompt affection instantly reciprocates each overture of brotherly kindness. In healing the dissensions of a divided church, legislation will fail and logic will fail, but LOVE will never fail.

For years there has existed, in almost all quarters of Christendom, a strong desire to draw more closely together, and to show, in some overt and signal way, the actual oneness of the body of Christ. Both on the continent, and in America and England,

much has been written to clear away difficulties and expedite the issue. Repeated meetings have been held, not only to explain the truth, but to exhibit it; and whatever other effect the great assemblage of June 1, 1843, may have produced, it at least helped all present to understand the blessed oneness and joyful worship of the upper sanctuary. Not only was the name of Jesus so predominant that every other name was forgotten, but he himself was so sensibly near, that no disciple could then and there have felt it difficult to die. That London meeting was followed up in Dublin, and elsewhere; and in the various forms of a dull discomfort and at the present state of true religion, or a vehement yearning after better acquaintance and closer alliance with other Christians, or an intelligent perception of the mighty results likely to follow a large embodiment and striking manifestation of Christian oneness, the union-spirit has been widely spreading. Last autumn, after many prayers and communings among

themselves, ministers and members of seven denominations in Scotland issued a circular, inviting their friends in England and Ireland to a conference at Liverpool, on the first day of the bygone October. Though many most appropriate individuals, and even denominations, were unintentionally omitted in sending round the invitation, and many whose hearts were in it forbore to attend till they should see what form the movement took, upward of two hundred attended—representing the talent, zeal, and piety, of seventeen of the largest Christian societies in the empire. To enumerate the names—illustrious in the history of modern evangelism there assembled, or to describe the heart-melting, the brotherly kindness and mutual confidence, the devotional enlargement and sacred joy of those ever-to-be-remembered days, is not the object of this address. It must suffice to say that the Lord was with us of a truth, and that, after ample consultation and prayer, it was resolved to convene a more extensive meet-

ing in London next June,* to which Christians from all parts of the world shall be invited. It was agreed that the persons invited to this great conference should be persons holding what are usually understood to be evangelical views regarding such important doctrines as—

“1. The divine inspiration, authority, and sufficiency of Holy Scripture.

“2. The unity of the Godhead, and the trinity of persons therein.

“3. The utter depravity of human nature, in consequence of the fall.

“4. The incarnation of the Son of God, and his work of atonement for sinners of mankind.

“5. The justification of the sinner by faith alone.

“6. The work of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and sanctification of the sinner.

“7. The right and the duty of private

* The time was subsequently altered to the month of August.

judgment in the interpretation of Holy Scripture.

“8. The divine institution of the Christian ministry, and the authority and perpetuity of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s supper.”

It was, among other suggestions, agreed to recommend to this conference of ecumenical evangelism the formation of an institution, to be called **THE EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE**, for carrying out the objects included in **CHRISTIAN UNION**.

In fulfilment of a duty devolved on them at the Liverpool conference, the London branch of the provisional committee have issued this brief address, in order to convey to their brethren a general idea of the principles on which it is proposed to establish the intended alliance, and to mention some of the objects which it might hopefully seek. And to prevent misconceptions, it may be well to state in the outset some of the things which it is not, and at which it does not aim.

1. The proposed alliance asks no *sur-*

render of conscientious conviction. There is nothing which a good man values more than his religious belief. There are some things which it may cost him an effort to abandon, and some things which may cost him little. He may be called on to part with his money, and may be able to tell it down, and hand it over to its new possessor without a moment's pang or the most secret murmur. He may be constrained to part with some object of endeared affection, and may feel that in its vanishing his better and happier self has gone away ; but when he feels that the Lord hath taken it, he feels a mournful blessedness, a sublime self-abdication, in letting it go. And he may be forced to surrender some memorial of distant affection or departed friendship ; and however brawny the arm which wrings it from his grasp, he almost feels that there is a sacrilege in not letting life go with it. But in all these cases, at the worst they are the natural feelings which are wounded ; the conscience remains unhurt. It is far other-

wise, however, when a man is called to abandon a truth which his Saviour has taught him to believe, or a duty which his Saviour has taught him to practise. The matter may be minute, but if he believes it to be his Saviour's will, he can not sacrifice it without a dismal sense of delinquency. He feels that he is a traitor. His conscience is lacerated at the moment; and even should the deadly wound be healed—should he contrive to argue or cajole himself into subsequent self-complacency, the scar of such a wound, by making conscience more callous, leaves his religious vitality less. Hence many went to the Liverpool conference with a painful misgiving. They felt that if, in order to union, they must surrender an iota of what they believed to be the truth in Jesus, they could not purchase even so great a blessing at such a perilous price. Looking over all the tenets in their creed, they could not find one so mite-like that they dared to buy even union with it. And in this they were right, for there is not a

tenet in "the faith once delivered to the saints" so insignificant, but some saint has thought it worth while to be a martyr for it.

But such apprehensions were entirely chimerical. The conference was no conspiracy to inveigle the members into a sanction of each other's opinions, or into a surrender of their own. No man was asked to leave his peculiarities outside the door; and it was not the fault of the conference if each did not carry back to London and Leeds, to Dublin and Edinburgh, all the theology which he brought to Liverpool.

It was felt and allowed that important diversities of sentiment exist among those who give every evidence of sincere discipleship; and it was also felt that it would be a happy day which witnessed the melting of these diversities into a blessed unanimity. But then it was equally acknowledged that some other things must first be effected, and it was for one of these anterior things that the conference had now assembled. It was not met for the discussion of dogmas, but

for the diffusion of brotherly love. It was not to sit as a reconciler of conflicting sentiments, but as the restorer of ancient affections. It did not arbitrate denominational differences, but it sought the outlet and increase of Christian charity. It rejoiced to find that the points were many and momentous on which all present agreed; but it neither said that the points on which they dissented were trivial, nor that these disagreements could be discussed and settled there. It allowed that all the members might be equally sincere in their creed, and honest in their peculiarities; and not wishing any man to abandon his convictions till he could abandon them *conscientiously*, it left all to keep intact and inviolate their respective opinions, till the flow of mutual love had increased their common Christianity.

2. But more than this: the Evangelical Alliance asks no one to *conceal* his religious convictions. A lover of truth loves to proclaim it. When he finds it, he calls his

friends and neighbors to rejoice with him. He invites them to share it with him ; and to bid him be silent, is to bid him be selfish. But if it really be truth which the man has discovered, and if it really be philanthropy which makes him proclaim it, he will neither emulate the roar of the lion, nor borrow the Pharisee's trumpet. Truth, as the gospel conveys it, is benignant and mellowing ; and the man who finds it in joy will speak it in love. He will also speak it at right times and right places, and in tones whose intensity shall bear some proportion to the intrinsic worth of the subject. But with such provisoes — provisoes which the Christian wisdom of many has already suggested to themselves — the Evangelical Alliance would concede to all who hold in common vital truth, the utmost freedom of discourse. As it asks no man to surrender an iota of his creed, so it would ask no man to abate by a single atom his Christian "liberty of prophesying." As it is not a union of de-

nominations, so neither is it a silencing of particular testimonies.

3. After this, we need scarcely add that the Evangelical Alliance does not ask any cessation of denominational effort, nor demand of any community to suspend its attempts at ecclesiastical development. Just as every individual disciple is in constant danger of seeking his own things more than the things of Jesus Christ, so every Christian society incurs the same hazard; and whether they be individuals or societies, they cease to be in a wholesome state when their own things become dearer than the church of Christ and its wide interests. It is a sad inversion of the apostolic spirit, when the transference of a conspicuous proselyte from one section of the church to another is a source of higher exultation than the accession to the church of the saved of some notorious sinner from an ungodly world. The one event excites rapture in heaven; perhaps the other is too trivial to attract any notice there. Still there is a

limit within which denominational zeal might be innocent, and even salutary. In civil society we have often witnessed an honest rivalry between different families — a strife who should count up the largest list of worthies, and send out into the commonwealth the goodliest band of brave, or patriotic, or learned sons ; and this competition occasioned no heart-burnings and no bloodshed — nothing but a higher style of family nobility. Would to God that the different clans and families in the Saviour's kingdom had the same loyalty and patriotism ; and instead of wasting their strength in mutual extermination, were striving who should send out the noblest missions and the most devoted ministers — who should produce the holiest people and the most numerous converts — who should supply the largest contribution to the common Christianity, and achieve the greatest services for the common Saviour ! To do this, the perfecting of denominational machinery, and the development of denominational resour-

ces, might be needful ; but there would be no need to demolish our neighbor's implements, or abstract our neighbor's workmen. There need be no breaking into each other's fold, so long as there are so many sheep in the wilderness ; and there need be no strife between the herdmen, so long as each may dig his own well, and write over it — "REHOBOTH."

But it is time now to be telling what the Evangelical Alliance actually is, and what is its absolute aim.

Its objects are —

1. To promote a closer intercourse and warmer affection among the people of God now scattered abroad.

2. To exhibit before the world the actual oneness of the church of Christ.

3. To adopt united measures for the defence and extension of the common Christianity. In other words, MUTUAL AFFECTION, MANIFESTED UNITY, and COMMON MEASURES, are the one, though threefold, object of the Evangelical Alliance.

I. The Evangelical Alliance seeks to extend and strengthen the mutual affection of the people of God, irrespective of the countries where they dwell, and the communities to which they belong. This object is specific, and of itself sufficiently important to merit all the effort. Love to the brethren is as much a duty as sobriety or the sanctification of the sabbath, and it is a duty much forgotten. If it be worth while to form societies for the better observance of the fourth commandment, or the sixth, it is surely as legitimate, and at the present moment as needful, to establish one for the better observance of Christ's personal commandment: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." And though the Alliance should turn out nothing more than a peace-society for Christendom — a society for softening asperities, and for healing deadly feuds between individual disciples — it would accomplish a sufficient end: one which would identify it with the

Prince of Peace, and serve it heir to the seventh beatitude.

So precious are kindness, and confidence, and mutual endearment, that the intercourse of secular life is chiefly an effort to secure them. The visits of neighbors to one another — their friendly meetings and fireside communings — are an acknowledgment that love is a pearl of great price ; and although the genuine pearl can not be found in the field of secular society, it is well worthy of the most wistful search. The meetings of learned men, their literary reunions and scientific conversaciones, imply, not only that their frequenters are the devotees of science, but that their ardor for discovery has given them an affinity for one another. They are not content to read the researches of their brethren, the dry results in the transactions of their several societies, but they long to see their associates face to face. And if Christians had as much brotherly love as worldly men have neighborly kindness ; if they had as much zeal for Christianity as

our philosophers have zeal for chymistry or natural history, they would long to find themselves in one another's company; and though they might differ on some questions of detail, like two astronomers on opposite sides of the nebular hypothesis, but on the same side of the Newtonian theory, their large agreement and common ultimatum would make it a happy meeting, and supply materials for animated and long-remembered intercourse. And if at this moment there are Christians so cold to Christianity, or so shy of one another, that they had rather never meet, it is an urgent reason for their coming together without longer loss of time. Nothing will so soon banish from their fancies the printed chimera as a sight of the living saint.

The Evangelical Alliance will therefore seek to "cherish in the various branches of the church of Christ the spirit of brotherly love, and will open and maintain, by correspondence and otherwise, fraternal intercourse between all parts of the Christian

world." Evangelic Christendom is at this moment in the predicament of a country which has suffered from the repeated shocks of an earthquake. In its territory there are many flaws and fissures ; but the great gulfs are few. So narrow are some of the separations, that they would long since have healed ; the crevices would, of their own accord, have closed, had not party zeal driven down its wedges to make the gap perpetual ; and even where the chasms are widest, they are not so wide but a lofty intellect or a loving spirit might easily cross them. The real barrier to intercourse is not the breadth of divisions, but the bitterness of controversy. It is not the separate-ness of the church's different portions, but the sectarianism of the separate. It is the rancor of debate, the personal malignity, the *odium theologicum*, which, if not the grand perpetuation of party, is the stronghold of bigotry, and the great obstacle to Christian intercourse. It is this which into the narrower clefts forces the wedges

which shall keep them for ever open. It is this which plants its sentinels along the obscure boundary, to prevent uninstructed feet from overstepping it. It is this which seizes the gangways which conciliation or magnanimity has thrown across the wider rents, and hurls them indignant down into the deep. And it is this which flings from its Tarpeian rock the traitors who have been detected paying friendly visits beyond the interdicted line.

Now, controversy may for the present be needful ; but there never was, and never will be, need for its rancor. We may have all its victories without its virulence, all its truths without its personal tragedies ; and that will be the most wholesome state of the church when discussions wax kindly, and controversies are conducted in the spirit, not of party feuds, but of friendly investigations. Iron sharpens iron : and the day may come, when, like honest experimenters in physics, earnest inquirers in theology will employ their respective acumen,

not in perplexing one another, but in pursuing joint researches ; and will find their full reward, not in a bewildered public, but in a text clearly interpreted and a doctrine finally demonstrated, in a long debate concluded, and a weary question for ever set at rest.

Dear brethren, the Evangelical Alliance is primarily a society for the increase and diffusion of Christian love. Love is a noble grace, and any pains expended in fostering and spreading it will be well bestowed. The magnanimity which bears the infirmities of the weak, the charity which receives one another as Christ also received us, the considerateness which denies itself and pleases a neighbor for his good, the love which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things"—*this* love is as rare as it is Christ-like, as difficult as it is divine. To our proud carnality there may be something more commanding in the boisterous and belligerent attributes ; but to a sanctified apprehension there is something more sublime

in his brave charity who quells a feud, or subdues his own offended spirit. He may be a valiant man who points the gun in the hour of battle; but he is a bolder man who lifts the shell from the crowded deck and flings it hissing into the surge. He may be a valiant spirit who, muzzle to muzzle, plies his roaring artillery on a belabored and reluctant church, and waves his victorious stump as he sees the hostile flag come down; but he is the truest hero who, espying an explosive mischief on the deck—a bomb fraught with foolish questions and wordy strifes—contrives to pitch it timely overboard. There may be something august in the dark thunder-cloud as it frowns and grumbles over quaking fields; but there is something mightier and more wondrous in the lightning-rod which is gradually stealing from that cloud its fiery elements, and converting its dingy wrath into harmless vapor. And there is something commanding in the flashing zeal and muttering orthodoxy of the surcharged disputant—something that

calls a rueful attention to himself in the wilful spirit as he heaves his lowering bulk between a happy church and the smiling firmament ; but there is something nobler in that wise and quiet spirit, that lightning-rod whose gentle interference and noiseless operation are drawing off the angry sparkles, and thinning the gloomy mischief into azure and daylight again. And there may be grandeur in the hailstorm which hurls its icy boulders over a dismantled province— which strews the battered sod with dead birds and draggled branches, and leaves the forest a grisly waste of riven trunks and leafless antlers. But who does not rather bless the benignant rain as it comes tenderly down on the mown grass, or the rainbow as it melts in fragrant drops and glowing flowers, and then from grateful fields and laughing hills glides back into its parent sun? Even so there may a terrible importance attend the rattling zealot who sends a storm of frozen dogmas through Christendom, or through his particular society, and

leaves it a desolation ; who certainly kills some weeds, but demolishes each radiant flower, and annihilates the season's crop. Yet who does not rather pray that his may be the brotherly kindness which dissolves in mild enchantment on sullen natures, and in genial invigoration on such as are drooping or dying — a transforming love, like His whose calm descending is forthwith followed by the flourishing of righteousness, and the abundance of peace ?

II. A second object of the Evangelical Alliance is to manifest the large agreement which actually subsists between the genuine members of the church of Christ ; that is, to exhibit as far as possible the existing oneness of the Christian church. It may sometimes be a mere pretext for carelessness, but we believe it is often a real stumbling-block to earnestness, that Christians are so divided ; and though it may be very just to argue that amid all this diversity there is an actual identity, it would be more convenient to exhibit it. The communion of saints is

a tenet in every creed, and a matter of regenerate consciousness with every Christian ; but to a worldly man it is a thing so recondite, an affair of such delicate induction, and contradicted by so many appearances, that he may well be excused for overlooking it. As a source of comfort to Christians, this latent unity is valuable ; but before it can become an argument and an element of influence on those who are without, this latent unity must be made obvious and palpable, and, if possible, notorious.

And does not this unity exist ? Independently of the outward character which they exhibit, are there not certain great *facts* which all Christians credit, and certain *feelings* which all Christians share in common ? That the Bible is the word of God ; that our earth was visited eighteen centuries ago by the Son of God incarnate ; that in his sufferings and death he effected an atonement for sinners of mankind ; that this atonement is available to the entire and instant justification of the sinner who be-

lieves in Jesus ; that Christ now lives and reigns the head of his ransomed church ; and that the Holy Spirit is sent forth into the world to convince of sin, and to conduct souls to the Saviour, and to sanctify the children of God : truths like these every Christian credits. There may be favorite ways of stating them, and there may be different ways of systematizing and arranging them ; but there is no variance as to their revealed reality and historic verity : they are *facts* which have the suffrage of consenting Christendom. And even so, there are certain *feelings* which distinguish the whole family of the faithful : complacency in the revealed character of the living God, love to his holy law, hatred of sin, a desire to do their heavenly Father's will and possess his conscious favor, zeal for his honor, love to his people, and delight in his worship : these affections, whether constant or intermitting, whether vivid or more vague, every disciple of Jesus knows them. Every man is a Christian who rests on the

Lord Jesus as his Saviour, who obeys him as his Lord, and who rejoices in him as his all-sufficient friend. And as these are their common characteristics, why should they not unite in proclaiming to the world that **LOVE AND LOYALTY TO THE LORD JESUS**, in which they are all agreed?

The *basis* of the projected union comprehends a body of doctrine, regarding which the Evangelical Alliance might send forth, if needful, its united testimony. Should a controversy arise respecting the composition of some mineral, and should ten chymists all agree in discovering gold and silver in it, while some detected traces of other metals, would there be any harm in the ten subscribing a declaration regarding the two ingredients which they all alike had ascertained, leaving it to the rest to send forth their separate statements regarding those additional substances which they believed to be also present? And when the question is asked, "What saith the Scripture?" and the further question—

“What doth it mean by these sayings?” if there be certain paramount doctrines which we all alike discover in these sayings, but others regarding which we are not absolutely unanimous, is our disagreement regarding the latter sufficient reason for not signing a joint declaration regarding the former? The Evangelical Alliance asks no man to abandon the amplitude of his denominational articles; but if in his own more copious confession he has already included certain vital doctrines, we beg his suffrage in the general testimony. And should he belong to a society which owns no confession but the Bible, we do not ask him to impose our basis on his society; but if he has found these truths in his bible, we ask him to join his name to ours in telling the world that these things are so. And thus, in some form, which may meet the views of all, we hope to be able to tell the world some truths of surpassing moment, in which we are all agreed; and when the

Jew, or the skeptic, or the Romanist, asks, "What is evangelical Christianity?" we shall find in our basis of union the materials of an answer—the manifesto of evangelical Christendom.

But even though no doctrinal statement were prepared, we might exhibit, in the cordiality of our meetings, in the promptitude of our sympathy, in the simultaneousness of our movements, and the oneness of our aims, such a spectacle of vital and inward identity as would answer every purpose. We do not wish to dogmatize on the best means of accomplishing the object. We would rather leave it to the thoughts and prayers of the church meanwhile, and to the Lord's teaching when we meet next summer, to decide the most excellent way. We are content to mention it as one object of the Evangelical Alliance—an embodiment, or visible exhibition, of the actual oneness of the church of Christ.

III. The third object of the proposed alliance is, to adopt united measures for

the defence and extension of the common Christianity.

Even now there are many antichrists. There are systems which make the sinner his own Saviour, and others which reserve what the Saviour revealed, and shut those Scriptures which he bids us search. And while his supremacy is rejected by a lawless world and a large amount of licentious professorship, every office of our blessed Lord is assailed by Socinianism on the one hand, and by Romanism on the other. There are many adversaries; and it is time that right-hearted men were striving together in the defence of the gospel. To meet the insidious infidelity and the atheistic blasphemy of some—the soul-deluding superstition of others—the profligacy and flagrant immorality of many more—to meet the entire ungodliness of this bible-burning, and bible-wresting age, demands the united energies of all to whom the Bible is inspiration, and the Saviour divine.

The victims of persecution are, in many

lands, pining away unbefriended and forgotten; localities which bloomed like the garden of God are given over to the beast of the field and the boar of the forest; the Lord's day is losing its sacredness, and usages of olden piety are melting in the flood of a furious secularity; while the religious silence of our more decent literature supplies no counteractive to the grossness and ribaldry of the more outrageous press. Two thirds of our world's population have never heard the Saviour's name; and if a majority of minds enlightened in saving truth, and influenced by scriptural motives, be needful to constitute a Christian community, there yet exists no Christian land. To exalt the standard of personal piety, to retrieve the interests of public morality, to diffuse through Christendom the conviction that no member shall hereafter suffer, but all the members shall suffer with him—to stem the encroachments of superstition and infidelity, and diffuse the light and joy of the gospel—in objects like these there is

ample room for division of labor and union of effort. Without devouring one another, the martial spirits among us may find outlet for all their chivalry, and use for all their logic, in fighting the battles of the faith; and those whose milder dispositions and less athletic mould are more inclined for peaceful exercises, may find abundant scope in the angelic errands and benignant applications of the gospel of the grace of God.

The small progress and scanty triumphs of that gospel are not owing to its inherent weakness, nor to the fewness of its friends. The gospel is mighty. The truth of eternity—the power of God is in it: and its believers are many—perhaps never so numerous as now; and their aggregate resources are immense. It is astonishing, when you consider the amount of learning, and intellectual opulence, and social influence—it is delightful to recount the various accomplishments and talents which, in one form or another, and within this living age, have been laid at the Saviour's feet. And while

the church is numerous and powerful, there is no lack of zeal. There is vitality, and there is energy, and sometimes stupendous exertion; but the misery is that so much of it is zeal misspent—that so much of it is energy devoted to mutual destruction. The elastic vapor which murmurs in the earthquake, or explodes in the mud-volcano, if properly secured and turned on in the right direction, might send the navy of an empire all round the world, or clothe with plenty an industrious realm. And the zeal which has hitherto rumbled in ecclesiastical earthquakes, and left no nobler mementoes than so many streaming cones—so many mud-craters, on the sides of the great controversial Jorullo—if rightly directed, might long before this time have sent the gospel all over the globe, and covered a rejoicing earth with the fruits of righteousness. The river which Ezekiel saw was a tiny rill when it first escaped from the temple, but a course of a thousand cubits made it ankle-deep, and a few more furlongs saw it a river that

he could not pass over—the waters were waters to swim in. And this is the course of the gospel, when Christians do not hinder it.

But instead of clearing the common channel, and strengthening the main embankments for its universal and world-gladdening flow, the effort hitherto has been to divert it all into denominational reservoirs. Each one has gone with his spade and his pickaxe—has breached the grand embankment, and tried to tempt the mighty stream into his own more orthodox canal. And the consequence of these sectarian efforts—these poor attempts to monopolize the gospel—the consequence is, that like a certain river in the southern hemisphere, which has only been known to reach the ocean once during the last thirty years—between the scorching secularity overhead, and the selfish interruptions of the stream, it is only now and then that the gospel is allowed to flow far enough to fertilize new territory, and gladden weary souls. But a better day

is coming, and in these movements we hail its dawn. Instead of monopolizing or dividing the stream—instead of breaking its banks, or interrupting its course—our individual and our united efforts shall hereafter seek to clear its channel and deepen its flow; and the work of our different denominations shall be, not to pierce the bank or dig diverting canals, but each to strengthen the enclosing mounds, and remove the interrupting rocks as it sweeps alongside of their respective territories. Thus acting, thus seeking not our own things, but the things of Jesus Christ, we shall soon behold the little stream which welled up at Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago, holding on in its prosperous course. We shall see life leaping in its sunny ripple, and a joyful world resorting to its genial current; we shall see one fold reposing on its green margin, and beside its still waters one Shepherd leading them. And best of all, on its teeming brink we shall again behold the long-exotic Tree of Life—its laden

branches mirrored in the tranquil tide, and showering on the azure amplitudes its leaves of heavenly healing.*

November 25, 1845.

* The address, in its original form, concluded with some practical suggestions, which are now superseded by the formation of the Alliance.

RECOLLECTIONS
OF THE
REV. R. M. M'CHEYNE.

AMONG Christian men a "living epistle," and among Christian ministers, an "able evangelist," is rare. Mr. M'Cheyne was both; and for the benefit of our readers, and to the praise of that grace which made him to differ, we would record a few particulars regarding one of whom we feel it no presumption to say, that he was "a disciple whom Jesus loved."

God had given him a light and nimble form, which inclined him, in boyish days, for feats of agility, and enabled him in more important years to go through much fatigue, till the mainspring of the heart was weaken-

ed by over-working or disease. God had also given him a mind of which such a frame was the appropriate receptacle—active, expedite, full of enterprise, untiring, and ingenious. He had a kind and quiet eye, which found out the living and beautiful in nature, rather than the majestic and sublime. Withal he had a pensive spirit, which loved to muse on what he saw; and a lively fancy, which scattered beauties of its own on what was already fair; and an idiom which expressed all his feelings exactly as he felt them, and gave simplicity and grace to the most common things he uttered. Besides, he had a delicate sensibility, a singularly tender manner, and an eminently affectionate heart. These are some of the gifts which he received at first from God, and which would have made him an interesting character though the grace of God had never given more.

He was born at Edinburgh twenty-nine years ago, and received his education at its high school and its college. When it was

that the most important of all changes passed upon him, we do not know; but the change itself is described in some stanzas on "Jehovah-Tsidkenu," which strikingly describe the difference between the emotions originating in a fine taste or tender feeling, and those which spring from precious faith. At the two periods of its history his own susceptible mind had experienced either class.

He was only one-and-twenty when he became a preacher of the gospel; and his first field of labor was Larbert, near Falkirk, where he was assistant-minister about a year. That was the halcyon day of the Scotch establishment, before the civil power had laid its arrest on the energies of the church and the hopes of the people. In every populous or neglected district new places of worship were springing up, with a rapidity which made gray-haired fathers weep for joy, thinking the glory of our second temple would surpass the glory of the first, and which promised in another

generation to make Scotland a delightful land again. Among the rest a new church was built to the westward of Dundee—a district which combines almost everything desirable in a parish—not a few of the more intelligent and influential citizens in the near neighborhood of its industrious artisans, while the flax-spinners of one locality are balanced by the almost rural population of another. The church was no sooner opened than it was fully occupied; and in selecting a minister, Mr. M'Cheyne was the choice of a unanimous congregation. He entered on his labors in St. Peter's, Nov. 27, 1836; and, as an earnest of coming usefulness, his first sermon was blessed to the salvation of some souls. When he became more minutely acquainted with his people, he found a few that feared the Lord and called upon his name; but the great mass of his congregation were mere churchgoers—under a form of godliness exhibiting little evidence of being new creatures in Christ; while he found throughout his

parish such an amount of dissipation, and irreverence, and sabbath-breaking, as plainly told that it was long since Willison had ceased from his labors. The state of his people pressed the spirit of this man of God, and put him on exertions which were not too great for the emergency, but which were far beyond his strength. He knew that nothing short of a living union to the second Adam could save from eternal death; and he also knew that nothing short of a new character would indicate this new relation. He was often in an agony till he should see Christ formed in the hearts of his people; and all the fertility of his mind was expended in efforts to present Christ and his righteousness in an aspect likely to arrest or allure them. Like Moses, he spent much time in crying mightily to God in their behalf; and when he came out to meet them, the pathos of Jeremiah and the benignity of John were struggling in his bosom, and flitting over his transparent countenance by turns; and though he had much success,

he had not all he wished, for he had not all his people. Many melted and were frozen up again ; and many sat and listened to this ambassador of Christ spending his vital energies in beseeching them, as if he himself were merely an interesting study—a phenomenon of earnestness. The vehemence of his desire and the intensity of his exertions destroyed his strength. It seemed as if the golden bowl were about to break ; and, after two years' labor, a palpitation of the heart constrained him to desist.

Each step of a good man is ordered by the Lord. This “step”—the sickness of Mr. M'Cheyne—led to the visit of our deputation to Palestine, and gave a great impulse to that concern for Israel which is now a characteristic of Scottish Christianity ; and the temporary loss of their pastor was the infinite gain of St. Peter's church. When, after twelve months' separation, Mr. M'Cheyne returned, it was like a husbandman who has lain down lamenting that the heavens are brass, and awakes amid a

plenteous rain. During his absence a singular outpouring of the Spirit had come down on his parish, and the ministry of his substitute was the means of a remarkable revival. Mr. M'Cheyne came back to find a great concern for salvation pervading his flock, and many, whose carelessness had cost him bitter tears, "cleaving to the Lord with full purpose of heart." We remember the Thursday evening when he first met his people again; the solemnity of his re-appearance in that pulpit, like one alive from the dead; his touching address, so true—"And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech;" and the overwhelming greeting which awaited him in the crowded street when the service was done—many, who had almost hated his ministry before, now pressing near to bless him in the name of the Lord. From that time forward, with such discouragements as the impenitence of the ungodly, the inconsistency of doubtful professors, and the waywardness of real disciples, oc-

asionally caused him, his labors were wonderfully lightened. The presence of God was never wholly withdrawn; and besides some joyful communion-feasts, and several hallowed seasons of special prayer, almost every sabbath brought its blessing. St. Peter's enjoyed a perennial awakening, a constant revival; and the effect was very manifest. We do not say that the whole congregation or the whole parish, shared it. Far from it. But an unusual number adorned the doctrine; and it was interesting on a sabbath afternoon to see, as you passed along the street, so many of the working people keeping holy the sabbath, often sitting, for the full benefit of the fading light, with their bible or other book at the windows of their houses; and it was pleasant to think how many of these houses contained their pious inmates or praying families. But it was in the church itself that you felt all the peculiarity of the place; and after being used to its heart-tuned melodies, its deep devotion, and

solemn assemblies, and knowing how many souls had there been born to God, we own that we never came in sight of St. Peter's spire without feeling "God is there;" and to this hour memory refuses to let go, wrapped round in heavenly associations, the well-known chime of its gathering bell, the joyful burst of its parting psalm, and, above all, that tender, pensive voice, which was to many "as though an angel spake to them." On sabbath, March 12, he met his people for the last time. He felt weak, though his hearers were not aware of it. On the Tuesday following, some ministerial duty called him out; and, feeling very ill on his way home, he asked a friend to fulfil an engagement for him, which he had undertaken for the subsequent day. He also begged his medical attendant to follow him home; and, on reaching his house, he set it in order, arranging his affairs, and then lay down on that bed from which he was never to arise. It was soon ascertained that, in visiting some people sick of the fe-

ver, he had caught the infection ; and it was not long till the violence of the malady disturbed a mind unusually serene. At the outset of his trouble he seemed depressed, and once begged to be left alone for half an hour. When the attendant returned, he looked relieved and happy, and said, with a smile—" My soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of a fowler ;" and thenceforward, till his mind began to wander, he was in perfect peace. During those last painful days of unconsciousness, he fancied he was engaged in his beloved work of preaching, and at other times prayed in a most touching manner, and at great length, for his people. His people were also praying for him : and on the evening of Friday se'nnight, when it became known that his life was in danger, a weeping multitude assembled in St. Peter's, and with difficulty were dissuaded from continuing all night in supplication for him. Next morning, he seemed a little revived ; but it was only the gleam before the candle goes out. At a

quarter past nine he expired ; and all that day nothing was to be heard in the houses around but lamentation and great mourning, and, as a friend in that neighborhood writes, " In passing along the high road, you saw the faces of every one swollen with weeping." On Thursday last, his hallowed remains were laid in St. Peter's burying-ground, their proper resting-place till these heavens pass away.

If asked to mention the source of his abundant labors, as well as the secret of his holy, happy, and successful life, we would answer, " His faith was wonderful." Being rationally convinced on all those points regarding which reason can form conclusions, and led by the Spirit into those assurances which lie beyond the attainment of mere reason, he surrendered himself fully to the power of these ascertained realities. The redemption which has already been achieved, and the glory which is yet to be unveiled, were as familiar to his daily convictions as the events of personal history ;

and he reposed with as undoubting confidence on the revealed love of the Father, Son, and Spirit, as ever he rested on the long-trying affection of his dearest earthly kindred. With the simplicity of a little child, he had received the kingdom of heaven; and, strengthened mightily by experience and the Spirit's indwelling, he held fast that which he had received.

A striking characteristic of his piety was absorbing love to the Lord Jesus. This was his ruling passion. It lightened all his labors, and made the reproaches which for Christ's sake sometimes fell on him, by identifying him more and more with his suffering Lord, unspeakably precious. He cared for no question unless his Master cared for it; and his main anxiety was to know the mind of Christ. He once told a friend, "I bless God every morning I awake that I live in witnessing times." And in a letter six months ago he says, "I fear lest the enemy should so contrive his measures in Scotland as to divide the godly. May

God make our way plain ! It is comparatively easy to suffer, when we see clearly that we are suffering members of Jesus." His public actings were a direct emanation from this most heavenly ingredient in his character—his love and gratitude to the Divine Redeemer. In this he much resembled one whose "Letters" were almost daily his delight—Samuel Rutherford ; and, like Rutherford, his adoring contemplations naturally gathered round them the imagery and language of the Song of Solomon. Indeed, he had preached so often on that beautiful book, that at last he had scarcely left himself a single text of its "good matter" which had not been discoursed on already. It was very observable that, though his deepest and finest feelings clothed themselves in fitting words, with scarcely any effort, when he was descanting on the glory or grace of the Saviour, he despaired of transferring to other minds the emotions which were overflowing his own ; and after describing those excellencies which often

made the careless wistful, and made disciples marvel, he left the theme with evident regret that, where he saw so much, he could say so little. And so rapidly did he advance in scriptural and experimental acquaintance with Christ, that it was like one friend learning more of the mind of another. And we doubt not that, when his hidden life is revealed, it will be found that his progressive holiness and usefulness coincided with those new aspects of endearment or majesty which, from time to time, he beheld in the face of Immanuel, just as the "authority" of his "gracious words," and the impressive sanctity of his demeanor, were so far a transference from Him who spake as no man ever spake, and lived as no man ever lived. In his case the words had palpable meaning: "Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord."

More than any one whom we have ever known, had he learned to do everything in

the name of the Lord Jesus. Amid all his humility, and it was very deep, he had a prevailing consciousness that he was one of those who belong to Christ ; and it was from him, his living head, that he sought strength for the discharge of duty, and through him, his righteousness, that he sought the acceptance of his performances. The effect was, to impart habitual tranquillity and composure to his spirit. He committed his ways to the Lord, and was sure that they would be brought to pass ; and though his engagements were often numerous and pressing, he was enabled to go through them without hurry or perturbation. We can discern traces of this uniform self-possession in a matter so minute as his handwriting. His most rapid notes show no symptoms of haste or bustle, but end in the same neat and regular style in which they began ; and this quietness of spirit accompanied him into the most arduous labors and critical emergencies. His effort was to do all in the surety ; and he proved

that promise—"Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."

He gave himself to prayer. Like his blessed Master, he often rose up a great while before it was day, and spent the time in prayer, and singing psalms and hymns, and the devotional reading of that Word which dwelt so richly in him. His walks, and rides, and journeys, were sanctified by prayer. The last time he was leaving London we accompanied him to the railway-station. He chose a place in an empty carriage, hoping to employ the day in his beloved exercise; but the arrival of other passengers invaded his retirement. There was nothing which he liked so much as to go out into a solitary place and pray; and the ruined chapel of Invergowrie, and many other sequestered spots around Dundee, were the much-loved resorts where he had often enjoyed sweet communion with God. Seldom have we known one so specific and yet reverential in his prayers, nor one whose

confessions of sin united such self-loathing with such filial love. And now that "Moses, my servant, is dead," perhaps the heaviest loss to his brethren, his people, and the land, is the loss of his intercessions.

He was continually about his Master's business. He used to seal his letters with a sun going down behind the mountains, and the motto over it, "The night cometh." He felt that the time was short, and studiously sought to deepen this impression on his mind. To solemnize his spirit for the sabbath's services, he would visit some of his sick or dying hearers on the Saturday afternoon; for, as he himself once expressed it to the writer, "Before preaching he liked to look over the verge." Having in himself a monitor that his own sun would go early down, he worked while it was day; and, in his avidity to improve every opportunity, frequently brought on attacks of dangerous illness. The autumn after his return from Palestine, many of his hearers were in an anxious state; and on the sab-

bath before the laboring people among them set out for the harvest-work in the country, like Paul at Troas, he could not desist from addressing them and praying with them. In one way or other, from morning to midnight, with scarcely a moment's interval, he was exhorting, and warning, and comforting them ; and the consequence was, an attack of fever, which brought him very low. But it was not only in preaching that he was thus faithful and importunate. He was instant in every season. In the houses of his people, and when he met them by the wayside, he would speak a kind and earnest word about their souls ; and his words were like nails. They went in with such force, that they usually fastened in a sure place. An instance came to our knowledge long ago. In the course of a ride one day, he was observing the operations of the workmen in a quarry ; when passing the engine-house, he stopped for a moment to look at it. The engine-man had just opened the furnace-door to feed it with fresh fuel ;

when, gazing at the bright, white glow within, Mr. M'Cheyne said to the man, in his own mild way, "Does that fire mind you of anything?" And he said no more, but passed on his way. The man had been very careless, but could not get rid of this solemn question. To him it was the Spirit's arrow. He had no rest till he found his way to St. Peter's church, where he became a constant attendant; and we would fain hope that he has now fled from the wrath to come. His speech was seasoned with salt, and so were his letters. As was truly remarked in the discriminating and affectionate tribute to his memory, which recently appeared in the "Dundee Warder," "Every note from his hand had a lasting interest about it; for his mind was so full of Christ that, even in writing about the most ordinary affairs, he contrived, by some natural turn, to introduce the glorious subject that was always uppermost with him." It was always quickening to hear from him. It was like climbing a hill, and, when weary or

lagging, hearing the voice of a friend, who has got far up on the sunny heights, calling to you to arise and come away. The very subscriptions usually told where his treasure was: "Grace be with you, as Samuel Rutherford would have prayed;" "Ever yours till we meet above;" "Ever yours till glory dawn, Robert M. M'Cheyne."

The tenderness of his conscience—the truthfulness of his character—his deadness to the world—his deep humility and exalted devotion—his consuming love to Christ, and the painful solicitude with which he eyed everything affecting his honor—the fidelity with which he denied himself, and told others of their faults or danger—his meekness in bearing wrong, and his unwearyed industry in doing good—the mildness which tempered his unyielding firmness, and the jealousy for the Lord of Hosts which commanded, but did not supplant, the yearnings of a most affectionate heart—rendered him altogether one of the loveliest specimen's of the Spirit's workmanship.

He is gone, and in his grave has been buried the sermon which for the last six years his mere presence has preached to Dundee. That countenance, so kindly earnest ; those gleams of holy joy flitting over its deeper lines of sadness ; that disentangled pilgrim-look, which showed plainly that he sought a city ; the serene self-possession of one who walked by faith, and the sequestered, musing gait, such as we might suppose the meditative Isaac had ; that aspect of compassion in such unison with the remonstrating and entreating tones of his melodious voice ; that entire appearance as of one who had been with Jesus, and who would never be right at home till where Christ is there he should be also : all these come back on memory with a vividness which annihilates the interval since last we saw them, and with an air of immortality around them which promises that ere long we shall see them again. To enjoy his friendship was a rare privilege in this world of defect and sin ; and now that those blessed hours of

personal intercourse are ended, we can recall many texts of which his daily walk was the easy interpretation. Any one may have a clearer conception of what is meant by a "hidden life," and a "living sacrifice," and may better understand the kind of life which Enoch led, who has lived a day with Robert Murray M'Cheyne.

APRIL 3, 1843.

THE BLESSINGS OF THE GOSPEL:

A LECTURE

INTRODUCTORY TO

A COURSE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY,

DELIVERED IN THE ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE,
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GENTLEMEN: There never was a period richer in the bequests of its predecessors, or more restless in the consciousness of undeveloped power, than the period on which your lot is cast. The sciences are all teeming with so many new results, that even those which keep their old names have wholly changed their character. It matters little which way you turn your eyes—wealth of observation and brilliance of discovery on every side encounter you. Be-

ginning with the most stupendous, and, perhaps, most primitive of all the sciences, what a revolution has befallen astronomy since the wise men of the east first watched the sparkling heavens! An instrument of which they never dreamed has revealed neighbor worlds in our system, and dispersed into myriads of blazing suns those films of vagueness, those ghosts of light, scarce known to them as galaxies and nebulæ. And while that instrument suggests the thought, that immensity may yet contain systems whose messenger rays have not had time to bring us news of their creation, and is at this very moment endeavoring to telegraph across the silent abyss of space tidings from other worlds—a balance, of which these ancients had no idea, has weighed each measured orb, and a calculus unknown to them has predicted their minutest movements for all time to come, and shown that, in all their intricate and tortuous paths, they can never err, nor ever stop, till the voice of the Eternal bid them. Return-

ing to our earth, what strange traditions of forgotten times do we read on its rocky tablets! How suddenly have its stones begun to cry aloud! and what unexpected stories of creative wisdom and munificence, antedating the birth of man, have been heard from the sepulchre of worlds which long since ceased to be! Descending into the arcana of that great laboratory, whence the materials of each organic form are supplied in countless combinations and unerring proportions, what a change since the day when philosophy reckoned earth, air, fire, and water, as the only elements! And ascending again to organized existence, how has the field of observation widened since the time when one sage could speak of all the plants, from the cedar to the hyssop, and knew all that could then be known of beasts, of fowls, and of fishes!

And what makes our age so wonderful, is the simultaneousness of all sorts of discoveries. While the telescope of Herschel was revealing new worlds, the microscope

of Ehrenberg was investigating a new animal kingdom in a drop of putrid water; and while the analytic prowess of Lagrange was demonstrating the perpetuity of the solar system, the sagacity of Dalton was bringing the elementary atoms of each simple substance under the dominion of mathematical laws. And at the same time that the potent agencies of light, and heat, and electricity, were disclosing the secret structure of substances the most recondite and enigmatical, these subtle agencies have in their own turn been subjected to a question as successful as ingenious; and what the sagacity of Franklin, and Volta, and Ørsted, has done for electricity, and what the intuitive wisdom of Black, and the poetic ardor of Leslie, and the careful experiments of Dulong and Petit have done for heat, the elegant expedients, the mathematical resources, and the inductive minds of Young, and Brewster, and Arago, have done for light, detecting new and surprising properties, or bringing properties already

known to arrange themselves under the most beautiful principles. Lavoisier's decomposition of air and water into their unsuspected elements; the publication of the atomic theory in the "Manchester Memoirs;" the dazzling experiments of Davy, which proved that our globe is but a mass of metallic oxydes, and a large portion of our bodily framework nothing more; Faraday's brilliant researches, to demonstrate that the mysterious force which holds a particle of oxygen and a particle of iron together in chymic union is the same which trembles in the magnet, sweeps in the lightning, and roars in the conflagration; Liebig's investigations in the substances of which living organs are composed, and which have rendered the laboratory of Giessen the metropolis of a new science, by which it is hard to say whether medicine or agriculture will profit most; Cross's processes in his conjuring cave at Bristol, by which he can manufacture the most costly gems—good as nature's own—from bits of flint, or coal,

or clay — all these, and many more, have rushed, one after another, with such exciting rapidity, that in the impetuosity of fresh enterprise, and in the quest of new revelations, chymistry has not time to admire her own discoveries. Under the blowpipe of Berzélius, and the goniometer of Wollaston, in the diligent hands of Klaproth, and Mohs, and Hauy, and Jameson, and Thomson, mineralogy, from a confused handful of ores, and spars, and pebbles, in a dusty cupboard, has grown up to a graceful fane of goodliest stones and fairest hues — a science as elegant as it is well defined. How Father Linnæus would rub his incredulous eyes, could he see the comely stature to which his favorite Flora, his “*amabilis scientia*,” has attained in the fostering hands, and under the faithful tutorship of Jussieu, and Smith, and Decandolle, and Hooker — too tall a pet to dandle now. And entomology — its hawking eye has hunted out as many sorts of bees, for instance, or butterflies, as people once im-

agined there were of insects put altogether ; and while the dissecting needle of Bonnet has shown the resources which Infinite Skill has lavished in making one caterpillar complete and comfortable, the arranging eye and busy fingers of Latreille, and Kirby, and Burmeister have shown that it takes nearly half a million different sorts of these forgotten minims to fill up the Creator's scheme, and give each plant its appropriate tenants and each animal its congenial food. Time would fail to tell the labors of Cuvier, and Owen, and Fleming, in Comparative Anatomy—the toils which in some departments have left the zoologist little more to do. And though it might be pleasant to ramble with Wilson, and Audubon, and Charles Bonaparte, among the woods and waters of the western wilderness ; or to visit, with Gould, the quaint old-fashioned birds of New Holland ; or take a turn with Lamarck in his grotto of shells, or with Ellis in his coral cave ; or grope with Buckland and Lyell, Brogniart and Agassiz, with Murchi-

son and Miller, through the steaming forests, the muddy seas, and chaos-lighted fields of a world before our own—we forbear. We are content to say again—what it would take too long time to prove by enumeration—there never was a time when science was more wealthy, or the stimulated mind of man more certain of discovering yet greater things.

And it is our great advantage to live in this age of clear-seeing and clever-working. Now that London is the city, and all England the suburb—now that the brother in New York is nearer than the brother in Edinburgh once was—every urgent letter that twinkles from the land's end to the capital, and every anxious journey by which you dart like a volition to the distant scene of danger, is a gift from science, a favor done you by James Watt, the Glasgow engineer. The invalid who recovers from diseases once deemed fatal, or, instead of the rough and torturing remedies of a ruder age, finds health and vigor charmed back by the gen-

the treatment and elegant prescriptions of modern pharmacy, owes something to physiology and modern chymistry — just as the man who escapes entirely the most dismal of diseases, may bless the memory of Herbert Jenner. The sailor who can traverse ten thousand miles of ocean with gay security, owes his steady track to a science of which he possibly never heard the name — is guided to his haven by an Italian philosopher, who has been in his grave 200 years. The student who, for a few sovereigns, can surround himself with a store of books, such as it would once have needed the fortune of Mœcenas or Ptolemy to purchase, is much indebted to the man who first made paper, and to that other man who first printed on it. Gentlemen, I trust that your faith is too firm to fear any of the sciences, and that your minds are sufficiently expanded to love them all. I trust that you will ever be ready to “give honor to whom honor is due,” and to acknowledge your obligations to living wisdom as well as to departed

genius. I hope that you feel that "the lines have fallen to you in pleasant places," when your lot was cast on this opulent age, with its quick-running knowledge, its countless accommodations, its unprecedented discoveries, and its vigorous mind. And I am sure I wish you joy of your own high calling, destined in such an age to study and extend a science nobler than them all. I congratulate you who are now preparing to issue forth on the busiest and most intelligent generation which the world has ever seen, with a science and an art in your possession capable of making this busy age a blessed one, and this shrewd and inventive generation a truly wise one.

I am anxious that you should understand what a power for benefiting the world God in his providence is now giving you; and therefore I beg your thoughts for a little to the specific benefits which the science you are now about to study is able to confer. But ere doing so, it may be well to glance at some of the indirect and incidental bene-

fits which it has bestowed on the promiscuous world. Besides that smaller company to whom it has proved the power of God, and on whom its divine energy has told downright, there is a wide multitude on whom it has impinged obliquely, and whom it has affected sensibly, though not sufficiently. Let us look for a moment at some of those benefits it has brought, even where it has not brought salvation.

Imagine, what is very nearly the case, that the world is an island in immensity, cut off from all communication with other worlds, except when some "ship of heaven," such as the gospel is, touches at its shores; and imagine, further, that there were few who availed themselves of that "ship of heaven," to secure in it a passage for the better country; still it is possible that the world might be the better for the visit. The vessel that anchored at Juan Fernández, and released Alexander Selkirk from his long captivity on its desolate coast, did him an unspeakable service. Its arrival was to him

a second birth, for it introduced him anew to the society of living men. But when it left on the shores a supply of esculent plants and domestic animals, it did a service to any future ship's crew which might visit the same harbor, and to any tribe of savage adventurers who might afterward take up their abode in its recesses. To the wistful soul of the captive, that ship's arrival was everything. It was life from the dead; it was a sort of resurrection. But to any voyager who might afterward visit it, or any colonist who might afterward settle in it, the good things which it left behind it would be a mighty comfort—a prodigious accommodation. Now, it is much the same with the gospel. There are a few persons to whom it is everything. To their longing sin-wearied souls it is a second birth—it is a first resurrection—it is life from the dead—it is immortality. But besides this happy few, there is an innumerable company to whom the gospel is a great comfort—to whom it has become a source of unspeak-

able advantages. They do not care for a passage in the ship, but they are glad to get the pleasant fruits which grow—a memorial of its visit; and it may be well to enumerate some of these.

There is among mankind a widely-diffused hope of immortality. It is not a “sure and certain hope,” but, so far as it goes, it is a cheering hope. It is not possible for any man to be absolutely certain of a happy hereafter, unless Christ be his “hope of glory.” None but the Christian can say, “Well, I know that worms will devour this body; but I also know that my Redeemer liveth, and that in my flesh I shall see God.” Still it is a comfort even to a careless world, that there *are* people who can say this. They will not come into the light, and yet they are glad that there is light. And some of them come near the light. They skirt its edge. They dwell in the ambiguous region, which is neither light nor dark; and it is surprising how much dim comfort men have got even in this twi-

light. It has been a source of much heroism. It has saved many from self-destruction. It has whispered like an angel-anthem among the churchyard-weeds ; and it has burst a rainbow of radiant promise amid the tears of agonizing nature. The sure and certain hope is everything ; however, the dim and doubtful hope is much. It goes far to ennoble life, and very far to palliate human wo. The sure and certain hope is the direct blessing which the gospel brings ; the dim and doubtful hope is the indirect blessing which follows in widening wake wherever the gospel has passed before. And though we know that expectations of immortality can be quoted from classic pagans, and are found in different degrees in lands not Christian, we are strongly disposed to think that they are in every case the traditionary lingerings of a primeval gospel, or the faint echoes of the gospel of Jesus ; in other words, were the traditional hints of God's first promise, and the confused reports of later preaching of

prophets and apostles—were these deducted, were all traces of the gospel filtered out of it, there would be left in the cup of human life none of that sweetest ingredient in it—a hope full of immortality.

Then the world is exceedingly indebted to the beneficence of the gospel. There were no hospitals for sickness, no asylums for age, and poverty, and insanity, till the gospel built them ; no retreats for weeping orphanage or groping blindness, till the gospel opened them. Worldly men may patronize these things, but it was Christianity which invented them : they never occurred to mankind till they presented themselves as the natural corollaries from the benignant spirit of the gospel of Christ. So was it with slavery. The world saw no harm in slavery. It seemed perfectly fair and natural that the strongest should enthral the weak, and get their work done for the least possible wages, or for no wages at all, till the principle, “ Do to others as ye would that they should do to you,” working its si-

lent way, has abolished slavery through nearly the whole of Christendom. And just as the gospel has lifted Lazarus from the rich man's gate, and bid blind Bartimeus cease to sit by the wayside begging—as it has extinguished Sathi along the banks of the Ganges, and is breaking the bondsman's fetters all over the world—so, like its heavenly Author, it has extended its mercies to the beasts of the field. And, as if conscious that the only hope for its emancipation hinges on the ascendancy of the cross, the whole creation groans and travails till the sons of God be manifest, and the sceptre of Jesus be supreme.

The world is much beholden to the refining influence of Christianity. It is the true antidote to the natural cruelty of man. The reason why we have not gladiatorial shows, is because we have the gospel. It has softened the heart of Europe. It has all but banished bull-baiting and prize-fighting, and those diversions where flowing blood and cries of anguish supplied the

sport. The gospel is the true antidote to the surly selfishness of man. It is the parent of politeness. Working not on placid orientals, but on rude, cross-grained north-erns, it has smoothed our Gothic gruffness into something like civility; and even at a period when its more palpable influence was lost, its refining influence effloresced strangely enough in the gallant and high-souled courtesy of the age of chivalry; and now it diffuses itself more widely in that conventional urbanity which makes intercourse so easy and society so pleasant. It is at least the wooden pavement, the sprinkled sawdust, over which the chariot-wheels of existence move more quietly than they were wont to do. And so is the gospel the real remedy for the natural lowmindedness of man. Good taste and intellectual activity go along with the gospel, vulgarity and mental torpor recede from before it; and though we dare not say that, but for the gospel, there would have been no science, we fearlessly affirm that, but for the

glad impulse which the gospel gave to the mind of man — but for the elation, and conscious strength, and healthy energy, which the Reformation lent it — discovery would have advanced with drawling steps, if it had ever begun its modern march at all. The gospel, with its constant mementoes of immortality, with its hints of realities greater than those we see, with its joyful suggestions and its noble impulses, is the great dignifier of human nature, and so the great prompter to research, and the great guide to discovery. In the sense most eminent, the gospel is light. Its bland halo encircles the cradle of man's infancy, and, soon as he is ready to start in the career of active life, its guiding ray is ready to start before him : it hovers like the star of Bethlehem above the spot where any great discovery or glorious advent lies ; and when that path is terminated, it settles down a watch-fire of faithful promise on man's sepulchre. To this great leading light we directly or indirectly owe most of the surprising dis-

coveries and dazzling inventions of this modern time ; for apart from the intellectual quickening which the gospel has infused into the general mind of Christendom—without this precursor to clear his path, and this preceptor to direct his thoughts, there would be no one philosopher the mighty man he this day is.

The gospel is thus a public benefactor to mankind. Its saving benefits may be limited, but its humanizing, its comforting, and elevating influences, are abundantly catholic. It is much in the predicament of an opulent and open-hearted resident in some countryside. His stay may have been so long protracted, and his bounties may have become so customary, as to be almost conventional—as to be a regular ingredient in the everyday life of the neighborhood, and counted on as things of course. And it is not till he takes his departure—it is not till they see the weeds growing in the untrodden avenue, and the raven perched on the smokeless chimney—it is not till hungry families

begin to miss the weekly dole, and weary invalids the frequent visit — it is not till they find that their former comforts were something more than a mere peculiarity of their climate — something more than a natural growth of their soil — that they begin to connect their by-past privileges with the kind heart of their benefactor, and feel that they ought to have been grateful. Now that he and his family are off and away, and enjoying themselves in other scenes, and gladdening another home, it is ascertained how important their presence was. Were the gospel to quit, not our kingdom, but the world, and take with it all which, from time to time, it brought; were it to soar away to its native skies, and take with it all that it has scattered on this abode of man, from the hour that, near the forbidden tree, God spake the primeval gospel — that promise which, in one form or another, has hitherto kept the world's heart from breaking; were the gospel to glean back into itself all that it ever gave — it is not sabbaths

only, and bibles, and sanctuaries, which would disappear, but civilization would flee away: freedom would flee away; happy homes, and smiling villages, and peaceful neighborhoods, would flee; schools and colleges would vanish; books and all the sciences would be annihilated; and in the universal blank of human joy I question if "Hope, the charmer, would linger still behind."

But the benefits now enumerated are incidental and indirect. To see what the gospel really is, we must consider what it does, or is capable of doing, to its willing subjects—to those who, not content with its reflected lights and indirect illumination, come joyfully under its immediate effulgence.

1. And first of all, it gives them peace with God. The most unnatural state of the creature is enmity against its Creator—the most unnatural, and therefore the most wretched. The gospel slays this enmity, and so neutralizes the most torturing ele-

ment in human misery. The gospel, when credited, reconciles the sinner to God, and sends him on his way rejoicing. It bids him eat his daily bread with alacrity, for God hath accepted him. The gospel turns the sinner's confiding eye to a propitious God, and snatching him from the fearful pit of alienation and antipathy, from the miry clay of guilty convictions and fearful forebodings, it puts a new song in his mouth, and, with a firm footing on the Rock of Ages, gives him the upright bearing, and elastic step, and established goings of a freely-forgiven sinner. And it is here that you will see the superiority of your science to every other science. The gospel alone is able to make men happy. Philosophy can not do this. The utmost it can do is to gauge the mind of man, and tell how capacious it is—how much of the ingredient called happiness it needs to fill this greedy soul of ours. But philosophy is only a gauger of empty barrels, and can neither supply the new wine of consolation nor tell

you where to find it ; and if you would know how much misery may coexist with much philosophy, you have only to read the inner life of such a man as Mirabeau — a man of universal knowledge, of gorgeous imagination, of dazzling eloquence, the idol of a people who, alas ! had no gods but the like of him ; but himself without God, and so without a hope, at last almost without a motive ; or of such a man as Rousseau, from whom nothing in the human heart seemed hidden, whose sentimental museum was stored with delicate casts and colored delineations of the morbid anatomy of each affection, and the minutest branchings of each desire and feeling ; whose mournful pathology wrought out the true conclusion that the universal malady, the long life-fever, is a search of the impossible, a delirious determination to find joy in the joyless, infinite joy in the finite ; but who with that induction stopped — a skilful pathologist but no physician, and, ignorant of the remedy, found his nearest approach to happiness in melodious sigh-

ings after it. And as mental science will not make you happy, so neither will the more tangible sciences which deal with matter. It is contagious, it is enough to make a man a chymist to accompany Davy in his investigations, and witness the poetic enthusiasm with which he prosecuted his midnight researches, and the boyish ecstasy with which he skipped about his laboratory in possession of some unprecedented prize. But it is heart-withering to read the records of wretchedness, the exclamations of *ennui* and dreariness, with which his later journals abound. And neither can the arts of life make you happy. Art has done its utmost to make the outer man easy, and outer life amusing; but it all stops outside. You may put an aching heart into a balloon, and send it up into the fields of light and air, but it will come down the same bruised and broken heart which it first ascended. You may whirl a guilty conscience along the gleaming track of the railway some forty miles an hour, and leave stormy skies or the smoke

of cities far behind ; but the cares, the remorse, and forebodings, which went in at the one end of the line, will all come out at the other, and haunt that conscience still. You may put a wounded spirit into a picture-gallery or a playhouse, and regale it with the wondrous creations of genius ; but the picture of joy is like the picture of fire : it makes nobody warm ; and from the exhibition of some radiant landscape or blissful home-scene, or the rehearsal of a most diverting comedy, the joyless worldling may walk out into the midnight of his habitual gloom, or wakening up to the drearier daylight of a wretchedness all too real, may seek his guilty refuge from it in self-destruction.

2. It gives the sure and certain hope of eternal life. A man who does not believe the gospel may have a wistful desire or an eager hope, but he can not have the assured confidence of a glorious immortality. A thoughtful unbeliever may send a voice of plaintive inquiry into that dim future which

lies before him ; but no answer comes back from the unechoing void. It is the believer in Jesus who gets the answer from within that veil—no dubious echo, but a distinct response : “ I am He that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. He that believeth in me shall never die.” The believer knows that, within that veil, hidden from his view merely by the fogs of mortality, is One who has worn human nature for eighteen hundred years ; one who not only lives, but hath life’s fountain within himself, and one who has identified the believer’s life with his own, by the omnipotent pledge, “ As I live, ye shall live also.” And so conscious, in the hours of his healthiest faith, is that believer that his eternal life is already begun, that he wearies till this life’s mist shall melt, and he behold himself conclusively in the sunshine of immortality.

3. The gospel gives the believer an ever-living Friend. Many of the productions of art, the hook and its eye, the joint and its socket, the tenon and mortice, however

exquisitely finished, are incomplete without their counterparts. Their perfection consists in their incompleteness—consists in their being so formed, that they are not complete till they have received their complement. So is it with the soul of man. Just as when you see the ball of the hinge, it suggests the socket in which it ought to play; just as when you see the tendrils of the vine, they suggest the prop to which they ought to cling; so when you see the outgoing affections of the soul of man, you see that it is formed for union with other minds—that its completeness consists in a junction with reciprocal and congenial minds. Accordingly, you find that the usefulness and elevation of character greatly depend on fitting on to some superior mind, or associating affectionately and intimately with characters capable of elevating and ennobling your own. But when these characters are merely human—helpful as they often are, they labor under certain drawbacks. They are imperfect: even though

they could transform us into their own likeness, we should still, in many things, fall short of the will of God. They are creatures : the love of them is apt to degenerate into idolatry. And they are mortal : they melt from our embrace, they vanish from our view. But the Alpha and Omega does not change. We can never lift our eyes to where we used to meet his own and encounter vacancy. We can never send him word of our griefs or our desires with any fear that the message will miscarry. We can not love him too much, for the more we love Immanuel the less idolatrous we are. We can not be too like him, for the more exactly we resemble him the nearer shall we approach to perfection. Remember this : it is not a theological formula, nor an historical fact, which the gospel offers to your acceptance, so much as an ever-living and all-sufficing Friend.

4. The gospel gives a man a conscience. There is a natural conscience, but it is not good for much. It is easily tampered with.

It may be bribed, and silenced, and perverted. There is scarcely anything to which a natural man may not reconcile his conscience. But a conscience which the love of God has mollified is a tender one. It is distressed about sin in the heart as others are about sin in the life. Its sensitiveness shuns the appearance of evil, and its filial instinct makes it a far surer index of right and wrong than the evasive, extenuating, and special-pleading conscience of the unconverted man.

5. The gospel gives a man a heart. There are some people who look with a languid eye on everything; and there are others who have an interest in nothing which does not contribute to their own comfort. There are some absolutely joyless spirits, from which every particle of zest has evaporated — who lag through life so listlessly that nothing makes them smile, and nothing makes them weep — and merely to look at them is enough to give you wintry sensations on a summer's day. Then

there are others who have some evident joy of existence, but who are as evidently their own all in all—trim and tidy souls, like a box-tree clipped and rounded—not troubled with any tendrils—any outgoing affections or redundant emotions—snug, comfortable people, who carry their universe in a carpet-bag, who love some people very dearly, but who also love with the same sort of love the velvet cushion or the easy-chair, which fits their dispositions and accommodates their varying fancies. It is not good to have no heart at all, or a heart only for oneself. There is no need to be in such ignoble case. The gospel not only says, “My son, give me thy heart,” but it gives the man a heart to give. The moment its joyous life wells up in a weary soul, the desert blossoms like the rose. Seeds of unsuspected gladness are quickened into life, and existence begins to wear a face of interest and gayety, which perhaps it did not wear, even when viewed over the

cradle's merry edge. And the churl's heart grows bountiful. The little self-contained soul of the worldling expands till it comes in contact with a broad surface of existence, and wonders to find so much that is kindly and forthdrawing in objects which he formerly dreaded or despised ; and in the dilatation of his delighted heart, in the ready rush of his benevolent and compassionate feelings, and in the newly-tasted luxury of doing good, he enters on a domain of enjoyment, whose existence he formerly regarded as a hyperbole or a fairy tale. But, above all, perfect peace casteth out selfishness. The joy of an ascertained forgiveness ; the happy outset on a Zionward pilgrimage ; the felt shining of God's uplifted countenance : it gives the man all the generosity of excessive gladness, the comprehensive good-will of a peace which passeth understanding ; that eye-kindling, lip-opening gratitude, which relieves itself in doxologies of brotherly kindness, in deeds of tender mercy ; and the love of God shed

forth abundantly, teaches the man the new lesson—to love his brother also.

6. The gospel gives a man a soul—a mind. There is no theme on which we could so eagerly expatiate as the mental emancipations which the gospel has bestowed on the world at large. But we are now speaking, not of its general services, but of its specific influence on the individual intellect. If that mind be a vigorous or wealthy mind before, the gospel apprehended brings it at once fresh opulence and power. “The gospel,” says the greatest of modern historians, “is the fulfilment of all hopes, the perfection of all philosophy, the interpreter of all revolutions, the key to all the seeming contradictions in the physical and moral world. It is life. It is immortality. Since I have known the Saviour, everything is clear; with him there is nothing I can not solve.”* And just as it swept in a flood of sudden illumination over the wide page of universal history, as that page had long lain

* Müller, quoted by D'Aubigné.

enigmatical before the philosophic eye of Müller, so has it proved an intellectual birth to many an humbler mind. That gospel whose inspiration enabled the grovelling and besotted debauchee in the days of his moral renovation to write Oliver's hymn — "To the God of Abraham;" that gospel which taught the blaspheming tinker of Bedford to write the "Pilgrim's Progress;" that gospel which put the pen of a ready writer into the rough hand of the negro-kidnapper, and enabled Newton to compose his letters of delectable wisdom and sunny benevolence, as well as the good matter of his spiritual songs : that gospel is indeed the power of God. It renovates the intellect. It can give all the perspicacity of a clear conscience, all the discrimination and prudence of an honest heart, and all the animation and vivacious energy of an intellect quickened from on high. The gospel path is so plain, that a wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein ; but he will not run in it long till he cease to be a fool. And

so persuaded are we of the gospel's enlightening efficacy, that when we meet with a Christian professor remarkable for want of judgment, we stand in doubt of him. We question, and question justly, if he can have received the truth in the full power of it; for, in every sense, it is light to the eyes, and makes wise the simple.

7. Perhaps it is saying the same thing over again, but we are disposed to add—the gospel gives a man an eye. An ignoble heedlessness characterizes the mass of worldly men. You point them to the stars, but if King David had been of their opinion, the eighth psalm never had been written: for they never “*consider* the heavens, the moon, and the stars,” which the Lord our Lord ordained. You point them to the flowers, but so far as they are concerned, the Great Teacher said in vain, “Consider the lilies,” for the lilies they will not consider. You send them to animated nature, but they refuse to go. The birds singing among the branches—the high hills, with

their wild-goats, and the young lions in their darkling dens, are all alike to them. Their tuneless souls do not swing to the cadence of the hundred and fourth psalm. You send them to the structure of the earth, and bid them view the marvels of creative skill entombed in its rocky caverns ; but so indifferent are they to the sublime research, that had they been among the morning stars when earth's corner-stone was laid, and its foundation fastened, they would have refused to sing, and been offended with the sons of God for shouting so joyfully on such an occasion. And it is not so wonderful that men do not care to study mere lumps of matter and cold material laws. But when a soul is visited by the day-spring from on high, a flush of joyous beauty spreads over the face of nature, and there is nothing tame, and nothing formidable, when, born from above, the beholder can say, "My Father made them all." Truly, the saints inherit the earth ; for notwithstanding the strange frowning of some good men on the natural

sciences, and all the unaccountable contempt which some eminent Christians have poured on the handiwork of Immanuel, they are the disciples of Jesus still who most admire and most enjoy the works of God. The eyes which have scanned the sparkling firmament, or dwelt on the ruby and sapphire dust of the insect's wing — which have glistened over the laughing leagues of the golden harvest-fields, or tingled as they gazed on some fairy flower; the ears which have oftenest listened to ocean's "billowy chime," or to the grim cloud's thunder-psalm — which have drunk the ravishment of multitudinous joys in the rich music of spring, or hearkened to the evening tune of the wilderness-bee, and felt it like a hermit's orison: those eyes and ears have been chiefly theirs to whom the brightness of each scene is the love of Jesus, and to whom the burden of every stanza in Nature's ode of countless voices and uncounted ages is — "In the beginning was the Word, and all these things were made by him."

I might say more. I might go on to show how the gospel gives to each one who receives it, and sufficiently avails himself of it, a pure morality, engaging manners, good taste, fitness for a higher and holier state of being, and above all, a peculiar charm, a beauty of outward holiness and a gloriousness within, an exquisite attractiveness which, by the instinct of congenial sanctity, draws toward him who has it the love of each who has got the same new name, and the complacency of God himself. So far as the gospel is credited, and its omnipotent resources for hallowing the family home or the individual heart admitted, there is no limit to the beatific influence of a dispensation which transmits no joy to earth which is not at least an equal joy to heaven.*

And if it be matter of congratulation to enter the ministry of such a gospel in any age, and especially in an age which has made its road so ready, and would make its triumphs so signal, as our own; it is no

* Luke ii. 13, 14; xv. 6, 7. Isaiah liii. 10, 11.

less matter of congratulation to commence the appropriate studies for that ministry at a time when the gospel is so firmly established, so well understood, and so variously applied.

The gospel is essentially a matter of fact, and its great FACT was never more fully ascertained than in the days in which we live. Not long ago the question might be raised, and the answer might occasion some anxiety, how do you know that the New Testament is not a forgery of the dark ages? And even if it were not, how do you know that the events it records are true? But, thanks to the progress of exact criticism, we are now as sure that the New Testament was written in the apostolic age, and by such men as itself alleges, as if we had seen the pen in the living hand of Matthew, Luke, and John; and, thanks to the progress of the laws of evidence, we are now as sure that its main events took place, as if our actual eyes had seen the miracles, or our own ears had listened to its words

of wonder. After the punctilious collation of manuscripts by Wetstein and Griesbach, and after the principles of internal criticism developed by Bentley, and Marsh, and Isaac Taylor, in England, and a more numerous band in the United States and Germany, no scholar will impugn the apostolic antiquity and textual genuineness of the New Testament Scriptures. And after the prodigious accumulations of Lardner, and the brief but resistless deductions of Paley, and the philosophic expositions of Chalmers, few who pretend to common sense will question the historic truth of the events which these Scriptures record. It has come to this happy issue, that the intellect which is not too obtuse for understanding anything, or the judgment which is not too unstable for believing anything, must, if in earnest, be shut up to the faith of Jesus. We do not say too much when we aver that, to a serious mind, the dilemma is now the simple one of believing the Scripture testimony concerning Jesus, or believing no

testimony whatsoever. And just as the evidences of Christianity are now so redundant as to make new corroborations little more than matters of curiosity, so the essentials of Christianity are so well ascertained, that few vital truths are the subject of longer controversy. After the unanswered arguments of Magee, the dispassionate statements and scriptural erudition of Smith ; after the transparent reasoning and logical felicity of Wardlaw, and the candor, acuteness, and cogency of Moses Stuart ; few who believe the Bible to be the word of God will deny that the pillar and ground of the truth is God manifest in flesh. And after the calm and dignified prelections of O'Brien, and the vigorous expositions of Haldane—perhaps too dogmatic in his tone, but nobly tenacious of the text—few will gainsay the reformation doctrine of justification by faith alone. And though there are some fearful departures from the faith, and some keen debates among the faithful, we question if the church of Christ

has possessed the truths of Revelation more copiously, or realized them more vividly, or avowed them more unanimously, since the apostles fell asleep, than now, when all are so agreed in looking on Immanuel as the Alpha and Omega in religion, the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of the Father's person, and in regarding the gospel as the divinely-contrived and divinely-conducted scheme for reconciling sinners to the character of God, with a view to renewing them into the image of God; and when almost all are so agreed in believing that before men are convinced of sin, and righteousness, and judgment, the Holy Spirit must come, and that where he is come, the living faith and the holy life, the fruits of his presence, will appear.

Besides, it is a distinction of these times that the gospel has entered more largely than ever on its legitimate domain. **MAN, IN HIS MIGHTIEST UNDERTAKINGS AND MINUTEST ACTIONS, IN HIS MOST ISOLATED STATE AND MOST COMPLICATED AS-**

SOCIATIONS, IS THE GOSPEL'S RIGHTFUL SUBJECT. This truth, often forgotten, and still oftener perverted, is now beginning to be better understood, and, notwithstanding all which "now letteth," is working its onward way to its inherent and, predicted vindication. Within the years of our own memory, several steps have been taken in advance toward the great conclusion, and several doors have been opened to let the gospel in to the fields of its rightful occupancy; and while hitherto the gospel has been kept almost entirely within the precincts of churches and closets, an attempt is now making to send it up into cabinets and down into workshops — to give it control over the kingdoms of this world and the councils of nations, and to inscribe its mark of consecration on the horses' bells and bridles.* In other words, while it has heretofore been too common to reserve evangelical religion for the upper room of Christian intercourse or the calm retreat of secret meditation, an

* Zech. xiv. 20, 21 ; Isaiah. lx.

attempt is now making to bring it down into the morning parlor, and out into the market-place, as well as to give it a voice in the public prints and in the nation's parliament. A literature, in which our American brethren have taken the unrivalled lead, has introduced the gospel into the large territory of daily life, and has shown how the slightest movement and the humblest meal come under the jurisdiction of the all-pervading Christianity. "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks unto God, even the Father, through him." And ascending from this to the highest territory — from the independent man in his isolated acts to society in its miscellaneous interests and complicated movements, we recognise one pre-eminent name* challenging for the gospel the same ascendancy over communities,

* It scarcely requires a note to say that Dr. Chalmers is here intended.

and nations, and universal man, which all concede in the case of the individual or the family. And whether he have stamped his impress on this age or not, the great philanthropist of our day can reckon on the establishment of those evangelized ethics, and that Christianized political economy, for which his life has been the protest, and much temporary fame the sacrifice — as not later than the final answer to the Lord's prayer, and coeval with that time when God's kingdom having come, his will shall be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Gentlemen, I trust that before you pass forth upon this ministry, you will find yourselves in possession of something which you will not only deem it important for the world to know, but so important that you would rather die attempting to make it known than that the world should die without it. I hope you will be content with the old theology — the theology of the Bible, but that you will not be content till your own clear apprehensions and vivid experience give it all the

zest of novelty. I hope that you will hold revealed truth so firmly, and survey the surrounding world so wisely, that you will be able to give your old theology fresh and effective applications every day. I trust that you will seek to give yourselves up in a joyful and exulting loyalty to the Lord Jesus, and in a meek submission to his teaching and transforming spirit. And thus issuing upon the world on the noblest errand and in the might which is alone resistless, I would not despair that the world should see in your persons a more devoted ministry, and should recognise in your preaching a more developed gospel, than these later times have been wont to witness ; nor doubt that ere going hence you may do something to exalt and endear on earth that Name which is above every name, and in whose universal supremacy a consenting world at last will find the long-sought secret of its happiness.

PARABLES

ILLUSTRATIVE OF SCRIPTURE DOCTRINE.

THE PILGRIMS AND THEIR PITCHERS.

IT was long ago, and somewhere in the eastern clime. The king came into the garden and called the children round him. He led them up to a sunny knoll and a leafy arbor on its summit. And when they had all sat down, he said, "You see far down the river, and hanging as on the side of the hill, yon palace? It is a palace—though here it looks so little and far away. But when you reach it you will find it a larger and sweeter home than this; and when you come you will find that I have got there before you. And when you ar-

rive at the gate, that they may know that you belong to me, and may let you in, here is what each of you must take with him." And he gave to each of the children a most beautiful porcelain jar—a little pitcher so exquisitely fashioned that you were almost afraid to touch it, so pure that you could see the daylight through it, and with delicate figures raised on its sides. "Take this, and carry it carefully. Walk steadily, and the journey will soon be over." But they had not gone far before they forgot. One was running carelessly and looking over his shoulder, when his foot stumbled, and as he fell full length on the stony path the pitcher was shivered in a thousand pieces; and one way and another, long, long before they reached the palace, they had broken all the pitchers. When this happened I may mention what some of them did. Some grew sulky, and knowing that it was of no use to go forward without the token, they began to shatter the fragments still smaller, and dashed the broken sherds among the

stones, and stamped them with their feet ; and then they said, “ Why trouble ourselves about this palace ? It is far away, and here is a pleasant spot. We will just stay here and play.” And so they began to play. Another could not play, but sat wringing his hands, and weeping bitterly. Another grew pale at first, but recovered his composure a little on observing that his pitcher was not broken so bad as some others. There were three or four large pieces, and these he put together as well as he could. It was a broken pitcher that could hold no water, but by a little care he could keep it together ; and so he gathered courage, and began to walk along more cautiously. Just then, a voice accosted the weeping boy, and looking up, he saw a very lovely form, with a sweet and pleasant countenance — such a countenance as is accustomed to be happy, though some thing for the present has made it sad. And in his hand he held just such a pitcher as the little boy had broken, only the workmanship was more

exquisite, and the colors were as bright as the rainbow round the stranger's head. "You may have it," he said, "it is better than the one you have lost, and though it is not the same, they will know it at the gate." The little mourner could scarcely believe that it was really meant for him; but the kind looks of the stranger encouraged him. He held out his hand for the stranger's vase, and gave a sob of joyful surprise when he found it his own. He began his journey again, and you would have liked to see how tenderly he carried his treasure, and how carefully he picked his steps, and how sometimes, when he gave another look at it, the tear would fill his eye, and he lifted up his happy thankful face to heaven. The stranger made the same offer to the playing boys, but by this time they were so bent on their new amusements, that they did not care for it. Some saucy children said, he might leave his present there if he liked, and they would take it when they were ready. He passed

away, and spoke to the boy who was carrying the broken pitcher. At first he would have denied that it was broken, but the traveller's clear glance had already seen it all; and so he told him, "You had better cast it away, and have this one in its stead." The boy would have been very glad to have this new one, but to throw away the relics of his own was what he could never think of. They were his chief dependence every time he thought of the journey's end; so he thanked the stranger, and clasped his fragments firmer. The boy with the gift-pitcher, and this other, reached the precincts of the palace about the same time. They stood for a little and looked on. They noticed some of the bright-robed inhabitants going out and in, and every time they passed the gate, they presented such a token as they themselves had once got from the king, but had broken so long ago. The boy who had accepted the kind stranger's present now went forward, and held it up; and whether it was the light glancing on it from

the pearly gate, I can not tell, but at that instant its owner thought that it had never looked so fair. He who kept the gate seemed to think the same, for he gave a friendly smile, as much as to say, "I know who gave you that;" and immediately the door was lifted up and let the little pilgrim in. The boy with the broken pitcher now began to wish that his choice had been the same; but there was no help for it now. He adjusted the fragments as skilfully as he could, and trying to look courageous, carried them in both his hands. But he who kept the gate was not to be deceived. He shook his head, and there was that sorrow in his look, which leaves no hope. The bearer of the broken pitcher still held fast his useless sherds; but he soon found that it was vain to linger. The door continued shut.

THE MOUNTAIN IN THE PLAIN.

THERE was once a mountain in the midst of an extensive plain. The plain was a wild common, on which lived many people, some of them very hard-wrought, some of them very wicked, and most of them very wretched. They busied themselves rooting out the furze, the thistles, and briers that grew plenty on the plain. But it was amazing how fast these weeds grew up again, and what scanty crops repaid their toil. And besides all this, hardly a day went by but some one was torn by wild beasts which infested the neighboring forest, or plundered and beaten, and possibly murdered by robbers who haunted there. Yet they took little notice of the mountain. Its sides were rugged. None of the people in the plain had ever been on the top of it. But a few of the more noticing had made some observations on it. They remarked that a perpetual sunshine settled on its summit, and they inferred that it must be a very

genial time, for by the help of their prospect-glasses they could make out golden fields and gardens bright with blossoms, and over the mountain's edge folded thick bunches of verdure heavy with purple fruits. Still nobody had been on the top, and few paid much attention to the mountain in the plain. One day as a man was musing on the common near its foot, and was grudging to think what a perilous toilsome life he was leading, he heard a solemn whisper in his ear. It was such a startling whisper that it raised him to his feet. It said, "Tarry not in the plain." And he felt an instant force upon him. He began to move before he had time to deliberate. He cast an eye at the mountain, and he saw high up and far away some of its inhabitants walking in its light, he said to himself, "Happy people! Would that I were with you." And he wandered round and round the hill, but found nowhere that he could go easily up. At last he came to a sort of gulley or ravine that promised to take him to the top. He went winding

up some way without much difficulty, till suddenly he came out upon a ledge which overhung a dark lake far below. But still the rocky pass promised to conduct him higher, and determined not to look down if he could help it, he began again to clamber upward, till at last he found himself in a niche of rock behind which he could not go. He looked up and saw cliff hanging over cliff, and not even a thread of pathway by which to scramble higher. He looked down, and the moment he did so the sweat began to ooze from his finger points, and his heart to flutter with faintness and fear, for he was clinging by a jutting crag, and he had scarcely courage to draw a single breath, lest it should loosen his slippery hold and send him and the rotten rock a-spinning to the lake below. Just then the same voice which had startled him on the plain whispered softly in his ear, "Cast thyself down hence." The proposal was a strange one, but the voice was so friendly and encouraging, that he almost hesitated

whether he would not comply, when it spoke again in a sweet whisper as before, but this time such a secret might went with it, that the man could not refuse, though he almost wondered at himself. "Cast thyself down." And he let go his hold, when, instead of bolting down to the abyss, a powerful arm caught hold of him; he felt himself securely borne, and, wafted upward on viewless wings, was landed safe on the mountain's crown, and as soon as the amazement of deliverance had somewhat subsided, he flung himself on a fragrant bank where some fruits newly shaken from the tree were lying. He was full of blessedness, and wept a while. That evening one of the people of the plain passing near the mountain, thought he heard the voice of an old neighbor singing far up on the summit. But it was a new song, not known there-away, and except one verse, the man could remember none of it:—

" He took me from a fearful pit,
And from the miry clay,
And on a rock he set my feet,
Establishing my way."

THE KING'S BANQUET.

A CERTAIN king prepared a sumptuous banquet in honor of his son. The first invitations were issued to the nobles of the land, and sundry families, who had long been favorites with the prince. But the banqueting-hour arrived, and did not bring them. A sulky fit had seized them;—and, as if by combination, they all remained away. But the king was resolved that his munificence should not be lost, nor the honor intended for his son defeated. And, as all the people round about were alike his subjects, he said to his servants, “The feast is ready, but none of the guests are come. Go out into the highways and hedges, and bring in all you can find.” The servants went, and great surprise there was when they told their errand. One poor laborer was returning from his work, and, after toiling all day, had got no wages from the man who hired him, and was trudging wearily home to his empty cupboard, when

the king's messenger accosted him, and told that a feast was prepared for him. After the first gaze of incredulity, seeing by his uniform that he was the king's servant, and really in earnest, the poor laborer turned his steps toward the palace. The next was a cripple, who sat by the wayside begging. He had gathered little that day, when the messenger told him he would find a feast at the palace, and the king desired to see him. He had heard that something remarkable was going on at the court, and that the king was giving an entertainment in honor of some special event in his son's history ; and though he scarcely expected anything more than a ration of bread and wine at the gate, as he knew that the king was of a very sumptuous and gracious disposition, he did not hesitate, but raised himself on his crutches, got up, and hobbled away. Then the messenger came to a shady lane, down which a retired old gentleman lived on a small spot of ground of his own. The messenger had far more trouble with him. It was not

so much that he questioned the message, or that he did not like the invitation, but that he was annoyed at its abruptness, and at his own want of preparedness. He asked if there were to be no more invitations issued next week, or if there were no possibility of postponing the visit till the following evening ; for, considering his station in society, he would like to appear in his best, and could have been glad of a little leisure to get all things in order. “ However,” said the messenger, “ you know the custom of our court : the king provides the robes of state ; all things are ready—come away ;” and as he posted on, the old householder thought that, rather than run any risk, he had better go at once ; though some noticed that as he passed along he occasionally eyed his threadbare garment with a look that seemed to say, he could have put on better, had longer time been allowed him. Then at the palace it was interesting to see how the different parties acted. According to the custom of that country, and more es-

pecially after the magnificent manner of that king, each guest was furnished on his arrival with a gorgeous robe. They were all alike — exceeding rich and costly ; and the moment he came up, one was handed to each new-comer, and he put it on and passed in to the dazzling banquet-hall. Some awkward persons, who did not know the usage of the place, and who had carried with them the mean notions which they learned among the highways and hedges, scrupled to receive these shining robes, and asked what price they must pay for them. And one individual was observed to come in with rather better attire than the most, and, when offered a robe of the king's providing, he politely declined it, and stepped forward into the state-apartments. He was no sooner there than he rued his vanity : for his faded tinsel contrasted fearfully with the clothing of wrought gold in which the other guests were arrayed. However, instead of going back to get it changed, he awaited the issue. All things were now ready : the

folding-doors opened, and from chambers all radiant with purest light, and redolent of sweetest odors, amid a joyful train, the king stepped in to see the guests. A frown for a moment darkened his majestic brow as he espied the presumptuous guest; but the intruder that instant vanished, and, with a benignity which awakened in every soul such a joy as it had never felt before—with a look which conferred nobility wherever it alighted, and a smile that awakened immortality in every bosom—he bade them welcome to the ivory palace, and told them to forget their father's house and their poor original, for he meant to make them princes every one; and, as there were many mansions in the house, they should there abide for ever.

You will observe that a welcome from the King depends entirely on having on what the gospel parable calls “a wedding-robe.” This robe, according to the custom of old and eastern times, is provided by the lord of the house, and, as a matter

of course, is put on every guest as he enters—of course, only if he be willing—but none who is willing need want it, for it is gratuitously given to all. That robe is righteousness—not man's, but Jēhovah's—the righteousness of God's providing; that righteousness which is imbodyed in Christ Jesus, as it was wrought out by him; that righteousness which made Paul so careless about worldly calamities, and so disdainful of his own performances. (Phil. iii. 8, 9.) And, dear brethren, be persuaded: put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ. Say that you henceforth take your stand, not on what you yourself ever hope to be, but on what the Lord Jesus already is. Do not deny your own vileness, but, as you would ever be saved, do not deny his worthiness. Ye poor and blind! step in to the feast; ye halt and maimed! creep in. When at heaven's gate they ask in whose right you come, make mention of Jesus's righteousness, and the everlasting doors will open to receive you. The word is nigh thee, even in thy

mouth : speak it out. Confess the Lord Jesus ; believe that God hath raised him from the dead, and, by raising him from the dead, has accepted him in the stead of sinners. Lay the stress of your salvation on that Redeemer whom God hath raised again, and whose righteousness God hath accepted already, and thou shalt be saved. Believe in Jesus, and in Jesus you are righteous. Avow your faith in him by the life and language of discipleship, and you serve yourself heir to his promise : “ Him that confesseth me before men, will I confess before my Father and his holy angels.” — “ Submit to the righteousness of God.” *Submit* to enter heaven in another’s name and in another’s right. *Submit* to be saved without doing any great thing for yourself, but by the great things which Jesus has done for you. The Lord has not bid you do some great thing, not even sent you to wash in Jordan seven times. *Submit* to wash in a better stream — once and for ever in the fountain opened — and see if your flesh do

not come again like that of a little child ; see if, believing in Jesus, you be not born again, and brought into the kingdom of heaven. Submit to put on the wedding-garment. The Holy Spirit offers you the robe of Christ's righteousness. Submit to put it on, and condescend, as you pass in to the marriage-feast, to say —

“Jesus! thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are and glorious dress.”

THE PLANT OF RENOWN.

THERE was a small colony planted on a creek of a vast continent. Their soil was very fertile, but its limits were somewhat narrow. However, its size and resources were sufficient for the inhabitants. We said that its limits were narrow. On the landward side it was enclosed by an amphitheatre of rocky mountains, so precipitous, that nothing, save the white clouds and the dwindling eagle, could pass over them ; on the other side, it looked out on the bulging

expanse of the immeasurable main. At the time we speak of, a pestilence had broken out, which made fearful havoc all through the population. It was a dreadful disease, before whose touch the sturdiest manhood crumbled down, and the brightest beauty withered away. It was not long till two appalling discoveries were made. First, it was found that no one had escaped it: for, though some exhibited its virulence more fearfully than others, the little child in the cradle and the shepherd in the distant plain were smitten, as well as the grown people in the village streets; and next, the doctors declared that it was beyond their skill—they could do nothing for it. Just at the time the plague was raging worst, a stranger appeared and told them there was a cure. He said that there was a plant which healed this disorder, and he described it. He mentioned that it was a lowly plant, not conspicuous nor very arresting to the eye; that it had a red blossom and sweet-scented leaves, and a bruised-looking stem, and that it was

evergreen. He told a number of other particulars regarding it; and, as he could not tarry longer at that time, he left a paper in which, he said, they would find a full description of it, and directions how to find it. The tidings diffused considerable activity through the sickly colony. A plant of such efficacy deserved the most diligent search. Almost all agreed that it must be far away; but a discussion arose whether it lay beyond the cliffs or across the sea. Most thought the latter: and some set to work and built a ship, and, when they had launched her, they christened her "*Ecclesia*," and hoisted a red-cross flag, and sent round word that the fine ship *Ecclesia* was about to set sail in search of the famous plant, and all who wished to escape the plague were invited to take passage in this good ship. A few others, however, thought that the ship was going the wrong way, and that they would have better success by trying to get over the cliffs. This was an arduous enterprise; for the precipices were beetling steep and

extremely high. A few attempts were made to climb by ravines and gulleys, which, however, ended in walls of glassy smoothness ; and, after many weariful efforts, the climbers either grew dizzy and fell back, or allowed themselves to slide down again to the crumbling debris at the bottom. But others, more inventive, busied themselves constructing artificial wings and aerial engines of various kinds, *imitatio Christi*, asceticism, penitential prayers, and such like ; and some of them answered exceedingly well for a little, and rose so high, that their neighbors really thought they would reach the top ; but, after getting a certain height, whether it was owing to the weakness of the materials, or a powerful current which they always met at a certain elevation, and which by a sort of down-draught blew them back from the brow of the mountain, they uniformly found themselves again on the spot from which they first ascended. A long time had now passed on, and multitudes had died of the plague, without any

clearer views of the specific plant ; when a poor sufferer who had already gone on a fruitless expedition in the ship, and from the severity of his anguish was eager in trying every scheme, lay tossing on his bed. He got hold of a large paper-roll which lay on a shelf beside him. It was very dirty, and the ink was faded ; but, to while away the time, he began to unfold it, and found from the beginning that it was the Book of the Balm of Gilead.* He at once suspected that it was the book which the stranger had left so long ago, and wondered how they had suffered it to fall aside ; and he had not read far till it told him that if he would only read on, it would put him on the way of finding the Plant of Renown. It gave a full description—many particulars of which he had never heard before—and as he advanced in his feverish earnestness, unrolling it fold by fold, and reading rapidly as he went along, hoping that it would tell him the very spot where he

* Title of New Testament, and Matt. i. 1.

should look for it, he found the plant itself! There it lay in the heart of the long-neglected volume; and LUTHER'S eye glistened as he read, "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." — "But where is Christ to be found? Must I ascend the height, or descend into the deep? Must I climb these cliffs, or cross that sea? Oh! no. Christ is here — nigh me — God's present gift to me conveyed in the volume of this book. I see him. I accept him. I believe." From that moment Christ was Luther's righteousness; and in the flash of sudden joy with which he discovered the Lord his righteousness, though it did not so strike him at the moment, Luther's eternal life began.

The apologue has prematurely betrayed itself; but no matter: it is so historically true, that it could not be hid. The cure for a plague-stricken, dying world, was long concealed in the Bible, till, led by the Spirit of God, Luther found it there. You have only to go where Luther went, and you

will find it again. But so inveterate is the disposition to travel far, or do some great thing for the sake of some surpassing good, that few are content with a salvation which has already come to their house. Leaving their bible behind them, they go to sea in the ship of a so-called apostolic *church*, or they make to themselves the wings of a mystic piety, and, by dint of *personal effort*, try to bring Christ down from above. But all their labor is futile. That only "Christ" who is the "end of the law" and the "sinner's righteousness," is in the Bible already, and as such, is God's free gift to me—a gift unspeakable in its intrinsic value—unspeakable in the everlasting results which its acceptance involves—Godlike in the freeness with which it is offered, and Godlike in the nearness with which it is brought; but missed by many because so nigh, and rejected by others because so free.

THE END.

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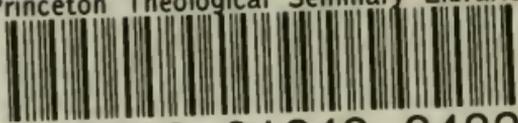
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