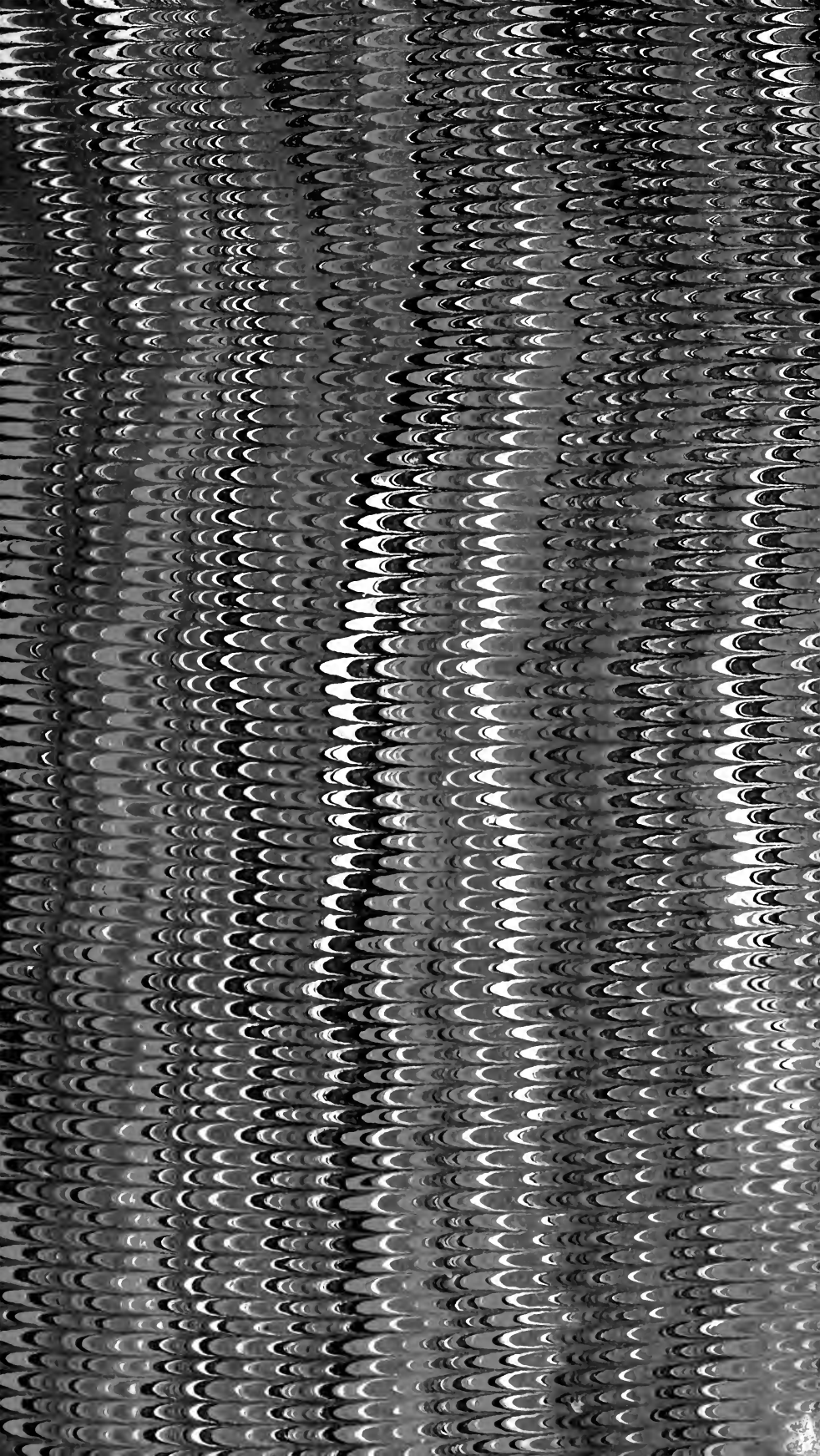


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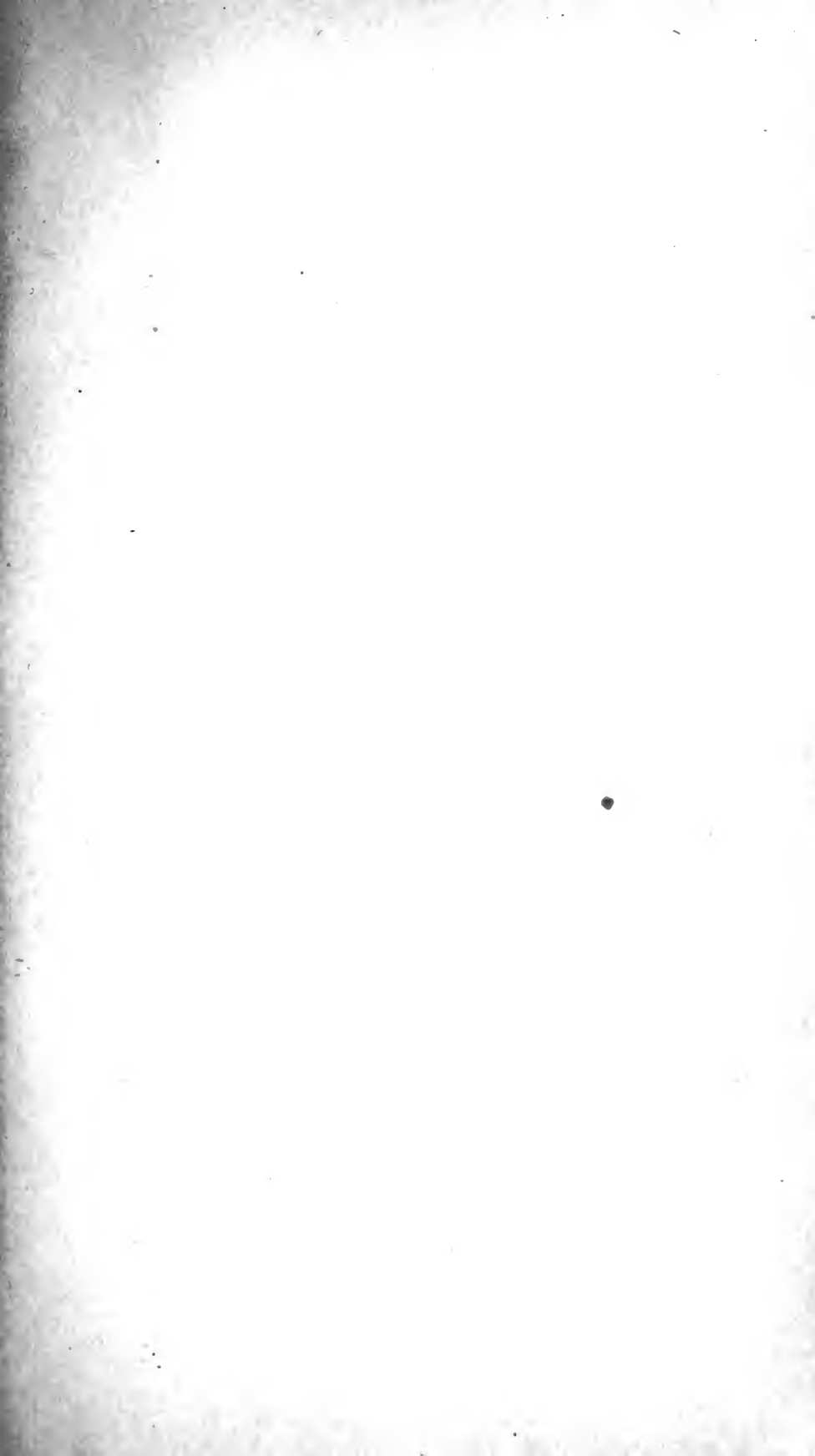
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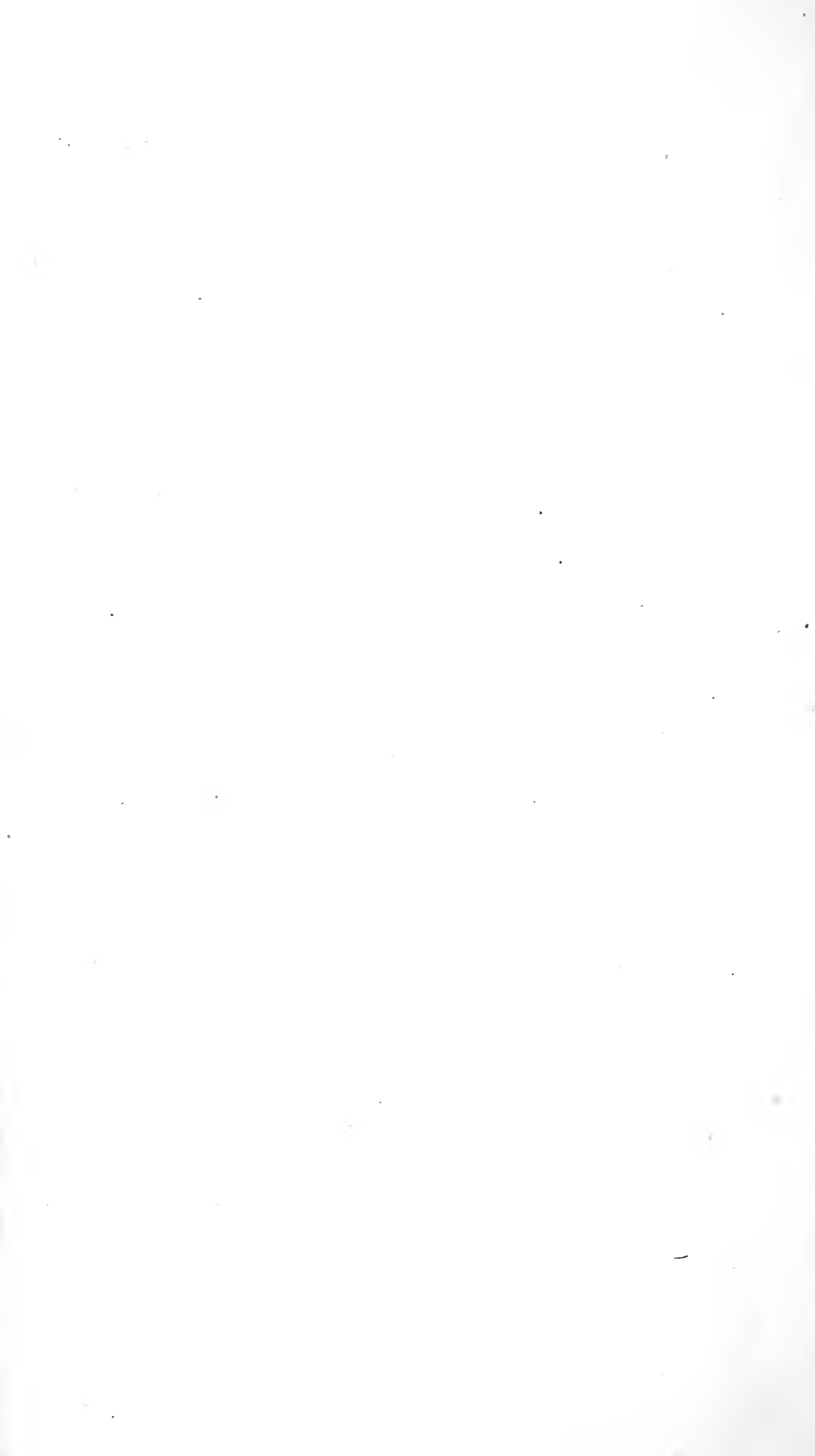
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ZION'S

PILGRIM.

—::o::—
BY ROBERT HAWKER, D. D.
VICAR OF CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.
—::o::—

They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten.

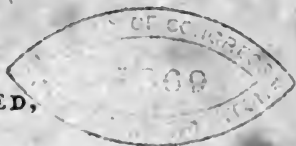
JEREMIAH i. 5.

And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

HEBREWS xi. 13.

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The First American from the Fourth London Edition.
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TO WHICH ARE ADDED,



SELECT PIECES BY DIFFERENT AUTHORS.

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ZION'S PILGRIM.

IT was not until that I had passed a very considerable portion of time in the life of man, that I felt the full conviction of my being but *a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth*. And it becomes even now, one of the most astonishing circumstances, in the new view of things which are continually opening before me, that there should have been so much ignorance in my mind by nature, on a subject which, in itself, appears so exceedingly plain and evident. Not that I was altogether void of apprehension, that the present life formed a bounded prospect. But yet my ideas were like those of the great mass of unawakened characters, who believe as though they believed not; and who, though ready enough to confess in the general, that man is but a dying creature, yet in the particular instance, as it concerns themselves, live as though they never thought to die.

I pause——in the moment of recollection, to look back upon the whirlpool, in which for so many years I was hurried on by the unceasing current! unconscious of the perilous situation in which I then moved, and unconcerned at what I saw of the sudden departure of those around me, swallowed up in the vortex!

B

Dread Power ! awful even in thy mercies ! Do I now stand secure on the edge, upheld by a strength not my own, no longer within the reach of the tide, and beholding the solemn prospect of thousands still ingulfed ? Can I call to mind the past danger and present deliverance, unmoved with pity over the unthinking throng, and untouched with gratitude to thee the sole Author of every mercy ? I feel (blessed be the grace that inspires it) the rising hymn of thankfulness in my heart, while the tear drops from my eye ; *Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world ?*

— The reader, who condescends to interest himself in the history of a poor traveller to Zion, must be content to admit of these occasional interruptions by the way.

You may, perhaps, my brother, consider every thing of this kind, but as the unnecessary parenthesis of the tale. But they are not so to the writer. The life of a Pilgrim, and of Zion's Pilgrim particularly, furnishes but a comfortless view in the retrospect. It is like treading over large tracts of waste, thorny, and unimproved ground. Every little spot, therefore, which can be looked back upon with delight, is like the sweet herbage, and the refreshing stream, here and there only to be found on the barren heath ; and which are beyond all calculation, precious to the traveller.

If the reader cannot enter into a full participation with the writer, in these enjoyments, he hopes he will at least suffer them to remain, as so many *episodes* in the history. It is possible, from an unison of hearts, some fellow traveller on the road

to Zion may find in them an harmony of sound corresponding to his own song of praise : and to him they will not be uninteresting.

One reflection, I think, cannot fail to strike the gracious mind with force, in the review of a long period of unawakened nature, when once brought out of it ; and that is, *the distinguishing properties of preserving grace*. I never knew, until grace taught it me, how much I owed, and was continually accumulating the debt, during the season of my unregeneracy, to this one principle. But now, under divine teaching, I have learnt somewhat of this spiritual arithmetic, and can enter into the full apprehension of what the apostle means, when he says, *preserved in Jesus Christ and called*.*

Do you ask what that is ! Every man's personal experience becomes the truest commentator. But for the grace of preservation *in Jesus Christ*, there would never have been a calling *to Jesus Christ*. Calculate, if you can, how long a space you lived, unconscious of your state, *without God and without Christ in the world*. And had you been cut off in the awful state of an unawakened, unregenerated mind ; where would have been your portion ? And were there no seasons of peculiar peril, no sickness, no intemperance, no hair-breadth escapes, in which life hung as by a thread over an hopeless eternity ? Oh ! the countless instances of preservation *in Christ Jesus*, before the redeemed of the Lord are brought to the apprehension of divine things which are *of Christ Jesus* ! Have you never seen the unconscious babe watched over, in all its helpless, defenceless hours, by

* Jude i. 1.

the sedulous tenderness and care of its anxious parent? Such, and infinitely higher, must be his preservation of his people, who not only watches over them *every moment lest any hurt them* ;* but, what peculiarly endears his loving kindness to the heart, he watches over them for good, in those moments also, in the days of their unregeneracy, when they are *making Him to serve with their sins, and wearying him with their iniquities*.† Is this view of the subject *wholly* unprofitable to the soul, not in the actual possession of grace? I trust not. Is not every one a monument of *sparing* mercy, while continuing on praying ground? And if preserved in Christ Jesus, why not hope there may be yet a calling to Christ Jesus? I have often thought, that if the most senseless mind could be but brought to stop in the mad career of folly, and put the question to the heart;—"For what purpose am I preserved to this hour; and why is the morning light again vouchsafed to one who but lives to abuse it?"—Such a solemn appeal to the heart, in the cool moment of reflection, might be blessed by divine grace; and induce a new train of thought, and new principles of conduct in the mind. *How doth the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you? and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.*‡

I hardly know at what period to commence my history. All that part of life which I spent prior to my conversion, I cannot reckon in the estimate of really living. He only lives, who lives

* Isaiah xxvii. 3.

† Isaiah xliii. 24.

‡ Isaiah xxx. 18.

to God's glory. All else is but a blank in creation. And were the sum total of my days to be made up under this numeration, it could only correspond to the character of him, who being regenerated after he had attained the age of three score, ordered for the inscription of his tombstone ; " Here lieth an old man of four years old."

I can only tell the reader, that if from my first apprehension of divine things must commence the calculation of my real life, I have but a little path to go over. But from this era would I desire to date my history.

What were the *secondary* means, which the Lord in his providence was pleased to employ, it is not so interesting to the reader to be informed of, as to behold their efficacy under grace. It will be sufficient for him to know, that from an ardent pursuit, like that of the generality of the world, of the several objects which attract attention in the circle of life, I found my mind suddenly arrested by matters of an higher nature ; and among the first evidences of the renewed life, I discovered two or three leading principles manifesting the mighty change. As for example ; from being occupied in an unremitting regard to things temporal, I now found my heart earnest to pursue the things which are eternal : and if at any time, the necessary and unavoidable claims of the world broke in upon me, to call off my attention ; my heart, like the needle under magnetic influence, which cannot be long diverted from the object of its attraction, soon was turned again to its favourite pursuit. In like manner the troubles of life, and the disappointments necessary to the present preliminary state,

which in the days of my unregeneracy operated with all their severity, now lost their power, or at least became lessened, in the greater anxiety of what might be my situation in the world to come. This, like the ocean, whose boundless bosom takes in all the rivers flowing into it, swallowed up every lesser stream of sorrow; and an awakened concern for the *one thing needful* made me forget every other consideration. Add to these, I had been exceedingly prodigal of time, while I knew not its value; and have been literally sending out into the streets and lanes of the city to invite passengers to take it off my hands. But when it pleased God to call me by his grace, I found every part of it to be so precious, that like the fugitive man-slayer hastening to the gate of refuge, I dreaded every moment lest the adversary should seize me before I had found a sanctuary from his fury. As well as I recollect (and great cause have I to recollect every thing connected with a situation so critical) I was in this state of mind when my desires were first awakened to an inquiry after Zion; and the question involuntarily was bursting from the fulness of my heart, *Who will shew me any good? Lord, do thou lift up the light of thy countenance upon me; and it shall put more gladness in my heart, than in the time when corn, and wine, and oil increase!*

Awakened to a concern which I had never before experienced, and called upon continually by a voice from within, which neither the engagements of pleasure nor the clamour of business could wholly stifle; I found myself, insensibly, as it were, entered upon the road to Zion, eagerly disposed to ask every one by the way, *Who will shew me*

any good? though unconscious at that time, what that good meant, or whether there were any means of attaining it.

It was in the midst of one of those highly interesting moments, when my heart seemed to be more than ordinarily impressed with the consideration of the importance of the inquiry, and perhaps too ready to receive the bias of any direction which might first offer, that it occurred to my recollection, there was a person who lived in the neighbourhood, who might help me in my pursuit of happiness, whom, for the sake of distinction, I would call

THE MORAL MAN.

His house lay on the left hand side of the road in the way to Zion; and therefore it would not be going much out of my direct path to call upon him. I mention this for the better information of those travellers who may come after me on the same errand, concerning both his situation and character.

I had long known him, and not unfrequently been witness to some striking instances of the benevolence of his mind. He was well known indeed to all around for the extensiveness of his charity. The poor man never went from his door with his tale of misery unheard, or his wants unrelieved. And it was said of him, almost to a proverb, by the pensioners of his bounty, that if any man went to heaven it would be him. I considered myself particularly fortunate in the recollection of such a character, to whom I might unbosom myself on the subject which lay so near my

heart : so that calling upon him, with that kind of freedom which necessity begets, and which a confidence in the person you address will always excite, I communicated to him, without reserve, the state of my mind.

He heard me with great attention ; now and then only, as I stated my distress, expressing much pity for my concern on a subject which he considered to be perfectly unnecessary ; wondering, as he said, that there should be a single person upon earth, weak enough to interrupt the enjoyment of his own happiness with an anxiety so ill founded ; and which, according to his ideas, tended to reflect so greatly upon the goodness of the Deity. “ For my part, (says he) I have too high notions of God, to imagine that he ever made any creature to be miserable ; neither can I fancy the possibility of what some gloomy minds are so much alarmed about—of the doctrine of future punishments. It appears to me altogether inconsistent with the benevolence of the divine character.”—

——“ Hold, Sir, (I interrupted him) and pray satisfy my mind on this point, before you go farther. I readily join issue with you in the highest acknowledgments of the goodness of God ; and am most fully persuaded, that all praise must fall infinitely short in the description of what it really is. But I see as plainly as though written with a sunbeam, that much misery may, and in fact doth, consist with the divine goodness, in the present life. And, as I suppose, no one will venture to impeach God's goodness, in the permission of evil *here*, I cannot form the vestige of an argument, why that goodness may not be as consist-

ent with the existence of evil *hereafter*; especially, when revelation comes in to the aid of my feeble reason, declaring in a tone of the most determined and unalterable decision, that *the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*.^{*} Can you explain to me, how I am to reconcile these things with your opinion? And do you not imagine that there is great danger in entertaining such unqualified notions of the divine character—of complimenting God's goodness at the expense of God's truth?"

My neighbour waved the question, taking shelter under the general covering of a supposed inoffensiveness of conduct, and a well intentioned frame of mind. "I do not (he replied) trouble myself with matters of this nature. Providence hath blessed me with ample circumstances, and I do all the good I can in my little sphere of usefulness. While therefore I enjoy the present, I am thankful for the past, and fearless for the future. My opinion is formed on that excellent maxim of the poet,

' For God is paid when man receives;
' T' enjoy is to obey.'

These are my sentiments, (added my neighbour) and in the discharge of moral duties, I rest satisfied for the event."

"It would be very unbecoming in me (I replied) to controvert your opinion, having called upon you for instruction, and not to instruct. But forgive me if I err in the apprehension, that what you have advanced in the eulogy of moral virtues, re-

* 2 Thess. i. 9.

lates more to earthly concerns than heavenly—more to the present well being of man than to the future enjoyment of God. There is unquestionably a loveliness in moral virtue, which cannot fail to gain the esteem of every beholder; and happy would it be for the circumstances of mankind, if its influences were far more general than they are. And while a proper distinction is made between the duties connected with the present world, and the preparations suitable for another, too much cannot be said in praise of morality. But if, in the sight of God, an imperfect obedience to a moral system could have answered the purposes of futurity, (I say *imperfect obedience*, because no one upon earth will venture, I imagine, to think higher of his practical attainments in this science, than that they come short of perfection;) the religion of Christianity would have been an unnecessary revelation. What nation ever exceeded in point of morals the Roman and the Lacedemonian commonwealths? And yet, after all, we can only place them in the class of unenlightened heathens in respect to religion. Is there not some grand deficiency in that system which totally shuts out, or at least throws far into the back ground of the piece, the acknowledgment of Him, who, one should suppose, would form the first and principal character?

“ Permit me to place the argument in a point of view, which may in some measure tend to decide it. If I mistake not, you have a large family of children, all branched out in life; and you have already made for them a most ample provision: and it is by your liberality that they are enabled to move in a sphere suited to their rank and circum-

stances. Put the case now, that these children of yours live in the greatest love and harmony with each other ; and, not content with the bare practice of moral honesty and justice, are kind, affectionate, friendly, tender, even to the anticipation of what one conceives may promote the other's happiness. But suppose, that in the midst of all this attention to the mutual and general felicity of each other, they are never heard to express an affection towards the person of a father, from whom, as the source, they have derived all their enjoyments ; would not any man consider them as deficient in the first and best of all possible obligations ? And is not this the very state of those who, priding themselves in the discharge of moral duties to their neighbour, pass by the reverence, the love, the gratitude, and obedience they owe to GOD ?

“ Bear with me, I beseech you, Sir, and correct me if I am wrong. I merely state the objections to what you have advanced, as they appear to me, in order that your better judgment may remove them. But, indeed, it hath often struck my mind very forcibly, that there must be some latent principle of evil lurking under a fair form ; when I have beheld characters of the greatest respectability, who appear to be every thing which is amiable to their fellow creatures—generous, noble, affectionate ; but at the same time totally dead to devout sentiments. Often it hath been my lot, in times past, to have been introduced to their tables ; where the plentiful provision of all the bounties of GOD's providence seemed to be continually inviting the conversation to some remarks on the goodness of the Great Provider.

But alas! during the many hours which I have sometimes spent at one meal, not a word hath dropped in honour of the Almighty Master of the feast. The gifts have been enjoyed, but the Giver totally forgotten. It hath been frequently my reproach, I assure you, Sir, when returning from such tables, in the days while I attended them, (for I have long since given them up) that there must be some baleful principle in the human mind to produce such effects. Will you help me to account for it?"

My neighbour seemed a little hurt at the closeness of the question. "You will excuse me, Sir, (he replied) it is not my province to preach. I would recommend you rather to the worthy vicar of our parish, who is allowed by all, who attend his church, to be one of the most elegant preachers of the age. Perhaps he may be able to satisfy your inquiries; and I shall very much rejoice, if your mind can be made easy."

Disappointed as I found myself in the information proposed from my visit, I could not but be thankful for my neighbour's candour; and finding my anxiety increase rather than diminish, in desires after the attainment of *something*, which I knew not by what term to distinguish, I thought it might be right to follow up my neighbour's advice; and accordingly, on the next Sunday, I went to hear

THE MORAL PREACHER.

HE took his text from the prophecy of Micah, chap. vi. verse 8. *He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of*

thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. I felt much pleasure in the very idea of the subject proposed from this text of scripture, the moment it was mentioned; and therefore listened with the more attention, in order to discover some leading points, which might be brought forward to give me comfort. The substance of the preacher's sermon, when separated from the flowery ornaments of it, was directed to shew, that the path to happiness was set before every one; that God had shewn man what was good; and that it was man's own fault if he did not follow it: that what the Lord required was nothing harsh, or unreasonable, or difficult; but the plain, easy, self-rewarding virtues of moral obligation. And that, if, in addition to the line of *doing justly*, the circumstances favoured *the love of mercy*, in relieving the wants of the wretched, where ability reached, and dropping over them the tear of sympathy where it did not; and instead of studying to be wise above what is written, respecting divine things, *to walk humbly with God*; these made up the sum and substance of all moral and religious concerns.

"Well, Sir, (cried my neighbour, who had attended also the church that morning, and was coming out of the porch at the same moment with myself) well, Sir, what are your sentiments now? I hope our worthy vicar has fully satisfied your mind." And this he said loud enough to be heard by those around, and with that kind of triumph which a man feels when he fancies he has fully established an opinion long disputed.

"It is my mercy, (replied a poor man, who overheard my neighbour's observation) that I

have not so learned Christ. God hath indeed shewn me what is good ; and could I look up and say that I have followed it, all might be well. But alas ! *I have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* I know not what others feel : but I am free to confess, that in many instances which my recollection now reproaches me with, and others, no doubt, which my treacherous heart hath long since forgotten, I have neither *done justly, loved mercy, nor walked humbly with my God.*

“ Though I have reason to be very thankful, that God’s preventing and restraining grace hath kept me from the more open and flagrant acts of injustice ; yet I am conscious that self love and self interest have betrayed me into the *doing* of many things, which would not bear to be ascertained by the strict equilibrium of a standard of justice, which admits no partiality. I am no less convinced also that in *speaking*, I have committed, on numberless occasions, a breach of that golden rule of justice, which forbids reporting to another’s injury, what, in similar circumstances, I should have thought wrong to have had spoken of myself. And from the imagination of man’s heart, which scripture declares to be *only evil continually*, I am persuaded, that, in *thinking*, many unkind thoughts have arisen in my mind against my neighbour, which become a violation of that law of charity which *thinketh no evil*. I dare not, therefore, whatever others may do—I dare not risque the final decision of my everlasting welfare on the point of *doing justly*.

“ Neither under the condition of *loving mercy* can I find greater confidence. For I discover in

my nature, anger, resentment, pride, and the like corrupt passions; which in spite of all my endeavours to suppress them, like the eruptions of a volcano, which plainly bespeak the heat within from the lava thrown without, too clearly testify that the *love* of mercy is not the ruling passion! and therefore never to be estimated by the few casual acts of alms-giving. which, if the heart would be faithful to acknowledge, are sometimes more the result of pride, than the pure effect of real love and charity.

“ I blush at the bare mention of *walking humbly with God*, in the recollection how often my rebellious heart hath risen, and is continually rising, in opposition to his government and authority. Fretful and impatient under the slightest afflictions; unthankful for the greatest mercies; and though desiring in my daily prayer, that his will may be done, frequently wishing it may not; and even displeased if it be, when it thwarts my own! —Can such a creature be said to *walk humbly with his God*? ”

My neighbour listened to the poor man's observations, and when he had finished, walked away without making a reply. For my part, though it appeared that his reasoning was conclusive, and unanswerable, yet I ventured to say, “ If this be the state of the case, what becomes of the morality of the Christian religion; and in what sense are we to accept the sermon on the Mount, with which the great Author of it opened his commission? ”

“ The morality of the Christian religion (replied the poor man) stands where it ever stood, upon its own fixed and immoveable basis; and *soon-*

er shall heaven and earth pass, than one jot or tittle of the law shall fail. GOD doth not lose his authority to command, because man hath lost his power to obey. The creditor foregoes not the right to his just due, because the debtor is become insolvent. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.** Hence the great Author of the Christian system opened his commission with the promulgation of this law, that its unalterable, unaccommodating terms might ever stand in the front of his gospel; and *the man that doeth them shall live in them.†* If, therefore, any man can appeal to this standard of decision; can look up with an uncovered, undaunted front, and challenge the strictest scrutiny over every thought, and word, and action; if there be such an obedience found as can give life, *verily righteousness shall be by the law.‡* But if both scripture and experience have concluded *all under sin, if all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; and by the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight; then it will be found, that the moral sermon of the great Author of Christianity on the Mount, as well as the moral system of the great Jewish lawgiver in the wilderness, were both designed to act as the schoolmaster to bring unto Christ;§* and, that *he is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.¶*

Pause therefore one moment, and examine how the account stands between GOD and your conscience. In the present season of lightness and inattention, a multitude of occurrences of frailty, and sometimes what deserves a harsher name, pass

* Rom. iii. 20.

† Gal. iii. 12.

‡ Gal. iii. 21.

§ Gal. iii. 24.

¶ Rom. x. 4.

away in the stream of time, noiseless and inaudible, and are soon swallowed up in the gulf of oblivion. But in that hour, when the Lord will lay *judgment to the line and righteousness to the plummet*, if you and I have no better righteousness than our own to trust in; no Surety to stand in our stead; no Advocate to plead our cause; an effect infinitely more awful than that which loosed the loins of the *impious monarch* we read of will take place, when *weighed in the balance and found wanting*.”*

I knew not what to reply, and therefore remained silent. The poor man, bidding me farewell, left me to ruminate on the solemn inquiry: *How should man be just with God?*†

The effect wrought in my mind by reason of the poor man's observations, was not unsimilar in permanency, though producing very opposite sensations in point of pleasure, to what the poet hath described of our first father's feelings, in the garden of Eden, on the close of the angel's relation concerning divine things—

The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice, that he awhile
Thought him still speaking, still stood fix'd to hear.

MILTON.

I felt the same force, but not the same sweetness, from what he said. It was a harsh sound, and the vibration long dwelt upon my ear, *How should man be just with God?* It followed me to what Job calls *the visions of the night*;‡ and even

* Dan. v. 6.

† Job ix. 2.

‡ Job iv.

then, like the spectre which he saw, the same expostulating voice seemed to cry, *How should man be just with God?*

The stern demand rang through all the chambers of the conscience, as if a thousand voices had concurred to proclaim the utter impossibility of answering the question, in the very moment of proposing it. And as an echo reverberates from broken walls, so the sound of conviction returned from my broken heart ; by *the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight.**

It is with some degree of grateful recollection, that I look back upon this part of my history, and bless God, while I trace his divine hand, graciously interposing by the instrumentality of this poor man, to rescue me from the dangerous path of delusion, into which I had turned, when seeking justification by the deeds of the law. I can now enter into a participation of *David's* experience upon a similar occasion, and feel somewhat of that spirit which he felt in the instance of the wife of the Carmelite, when under a deep conviction of that sin-preventing providence, he cried out, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me ; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou.†* In like manner I find cause to bless God in the review of this instance as the *Author*, the *poor man* as the *instrument*, and his *advice* as the *mean*, which the Lord was pleased to commission, for the emancipation of my mind from a self-confidence ; which if cherished must have ultimately ended in my eternal ruin.

* Rom. iii. 20.

† 1 Sam. xxy. 32.

—And my reader will I hope forgive me if I interrupt the progress of the history for a moment, only to remind him, that unless the mind be brought under similar conclusions respecting the unalterable and unaccommodating right of God's demands, *wo unto him that striveth with his Maker !* We may fancy what we please, and frame a standard of our own, for God to go by, according to *our* notions of the fitness of things ; as if an arraigned culprit at the bar should stand up and prescribe laws to his judge ! but it would be well to consider before it be too late, the very solemn tone of decision in which scripture hath settled the point, which leaves the subject at once determined and without appeal. *Behold, he putteth no trust in his saints ; even his angels he chargeth with folly. What then is man, that he should be clean ? And he which is born of a woman, that he should be righteous ?**

There is an interpretation, which I have since learnt, to the text of the prophet, Micah vi. and verse 8, which the moral preacher discoursed upon, very different from his ; and which I bless God the Spirit for teaching me. *To do justice, and love mercy, and walk humbly with God.* The prophet himself, in the very words as they stand, declares that these separate acts are *with God*, in their performance. And without all possible dispute, the first and highest instances of all duties must have a priority of reference towards him. Hence, therefore, I *do justice* with God, when from a clear conviction, that I have broken his righteous laws, and as such, stand exposed to the

* Job iv. 18. xv. 14.

penalty due to the breach of them, I confess, that I merit nothing from his almighty hand, but *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish*. I love mercy, in the fullest and truest sense of loving mercy, when I acknowledge upon my bended knees and in the most heartfelt rejoicing, that *it is of the Lord's mercies that I am not consumed, because his compassions fail not*. And I defy any one to *walk more humbly with God*, than the believer, who, while daily confessing himself to deserve nothing but punishment, is receiving nothing but mercy. This is indeed to follow up the divine precept, and becomes the best comment upon what, it may well be supposed, *the Lord requireth*. But the view of the prophet's words, according to this interpretation of them, is what I did not learn in the early part of my pilgrimage. The reader will forgive the introduction of it here.

THE FAMILY AT PRAYERS.

FOREVER driven from the asylum of moral duties as a justifying principle before God, and still restless and uneasy from the suspense of an awakened mind, in respect to the solemn events of futurity, I found myself compelled to go farther in the pursuit of the wished-for happiness ; though what path to explore, or where to direct my inquiry, I knew not.

There lived a family of long reputed piety, whose place of residence lay not far out of my way ; from whom it struck me that some information might be obtained. I instantly directed my steps towards the house. And I was led to consider it

as a very peculiar coincidence of circumstances, and not unfavourable to my purpose, that the household were engaged at their morning devotions, just in the moment that I entered their dwelling.

There is a principle, I know not by what term to call it, which acts with singular energy on the human mind, at the very appearance of religious worship. The heart is instinctively brought within the sphere of attraction, and is secretly inclined to participate in what it beholds. I felt this influence operating the moment I entered the room. I considered what this family was engaged in, as a common interest, a common concern; so that without giving any interruption, I dropped upon my knees, unbidden and uninvited, in the midst of the circle.

When the devotion was finished, the master of the house desired me to be seated, and our conversation, naturally taking its rise out of the incident of the moment, turned on religion.

“It is my uniform custom, Sir, (said he) to begin and end the day in prayer—I consider it to be my duty. I know it exposes me to the sneer of the fashionable world; but I cannot help that. It appears to me to be the obligation of every master of a family, to set up the form of religion in his house; and for example’s sake, to lead his household to the church on Sundays. For the same reason I make it a point that all the elder branches of my family,* *after they have been confirmed*, should attend the monthly sacrament; and it is my wish,

* The author is an Episcopalian, and by confirmation means the public profession of the Christian religion by an adult person, solemnly performed in the church in the presence of the bishop.

that my wife and daughters should go to prayers on the week days and festivals : And I believe they are pretty constant in their attendance. And, Sir, we all find the good effects of it. We are prosperous in the world, and cheerful and happy as you see. Religion has nothing gloomy with us. No family, I persuade myself, is more comfortable than ours."

The master of the house said this with so much complacency and satisfaction, and there seemed to be so much cheerfulness appearing in every countenance of his household, that I began to hope the object of my visit was answered, without further inquiry. I concluded with myself, that if the observance of religious duties was capable of inducing so much happiness in their instance, it would have the same tendency in mine. I only remained therefore long enough among this apparently happy family, to present my congratulations on what I had seen ; and then took my leave, to put into practice the lesson which I had learnt from them.

It is impossible to tell my reader, what a round of duties I laboured through, of reading, hearing, fasting, watching, praying. And to the constant routine of this kind, when the monthly sacraments came about in their periodical returns, I added every page which is prescribed in the weekly preparations. I could not have ventured in those days to the Lord's table, with any of the appointed forms unfulfilled for the world. And as this path in the trammels of devotion opened a continual feast to feed the pride of my heart upon, I soon began to feel the sweet effects of it in the gratification it afforded me. For finding greater confi-

dence from the supposed rectitude of my life, and dutiful obedience towards God, than heretofore, I concluded that I stood on much safer ground for acceptance with him. Not that I then thought that my goodness *alone*, and without the merits of Jesus Christ, would be sufficient to salvation: (for by this time I had learnt somewhat of the nature of the Christian religion) but I took it for granted, that what I did would be the sure method of recommending me to God for it. So that upon the whole, I was well pleased with myself. There were indeed certain seasons, now and then, when upon the omission of any duty, or the commission of any sin, my mind would misgive me, and for the moment induce fear. But these were but transient impressions, which I endeavoured to efface as fast as possible, in atoning for the evil, by increasing diligence in the path of what I thought good. And thus, by carrying on a commutation with God, I strove to make up what was remiss or offensive in one instance, by an over attention in another.

—How long I should have gone on under a delusion so fatal I know not. But a circumstance occurred, which at once threw to the ground the whole edifice I had been building up for myself with so much labour, and levelled all my fancied goodness in the dust. I had been reading a chapter in Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy, when those words arrested my attention so forcibly, that I could not help dwelling upon them: *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.** What if this should be

* 2 Tim. iii. 5.

my ease, I thought with myself; and after all, I am taking up with the *form*, while destitute of the *power* of godliness? The very idea made me tremble; and the bare possibility of the thing itself induced me to bring the matter to an instant issue by examination. And the result terminated but to my confusion. That single appeal of the apostle, which I found I could not make, convinced me all was wrong. *God is my witness* (says he) *whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.** “Alas,” I cried out, “I am no *spiritual* worshipper. I have the *form* indeed, but not the *power* of godliness. Mine is the shell, the carcase, the shadow only of piety.”

Under this renewed conviction and distress of mind, I sat down pensive and melancholy. I considered now, that all hopes of salvation were over, and was in a state little short of despair. I knew not at this time, that these were the blessed effects of divine teaching; and that GOD, the Holy Spirit, was thus, one by one, removing all the props of self confidence, and emptying the soul, in order to prepare it for receiving out of the fullness of the Saviour. Oh! it is a gracious process of mercy. We must become poor, in order to be made rich; and the apostle's paradoxes must be literally verified; to be *dying that we may live; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things.†*

Oh! ye mourning saints! be not astonished at your afflictions. Be they ever so heavy or of ever so long continuance, there is a *needs be* for every one of them. *Your GOD* is faithful in sending the

* Rom. i. 9.

† 2 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

affliction : and your God will be equally faithful in carrying you through it. Settle this in your mind as an everlasting maxim ; every one of them shall terminate to your benefit. The Lord appoints it for the exercise of your faith. And if your faith gives glory to God, God will confirm and honour your faith. This is among the *all things* which must work together for good to them that love God.



THE TRAVELLER.

IN the frame of mind just described, I was seated pensive and melancholy, when a traveller approached me. " You seem dejected, Sir," (he cried, as he advanced towards me.) " Yes, Sir, I am indeed, (I replied) I have discovered sin to be a heavy burthen."

" Sir, I ought to congratulate you (the man answered) on this discovery. The knowledge of our misery is the first step towards a cure. There is a striking analogy between the diseases of the mind and those of the body. The man in supposed health will reprobate the application of medicine. It will be grateful only to the sick. And our Lord says, that the *whole need not a physician*. It is one of the sweetest and most affectionate recommendations of his character, that he came not to heal the healthy, but to cure the diseased. If you know your malady, depend upon it you are not far from obtaining relief. It hath been long my complaint, that *in me dwelleth no good thing*. And though I have been some years

in the school of self-knowledge, I have made but small proficiency in the science. A science indeed so general, which comprises the whole of man, is not easily acquired. The deepest investigations do not reach to the bottom. For we are told by an authority not to be questioned, that *the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked ; and that none can know it, but he who trieth the heart and searcheth the reins.** For it is not this or that particular instance of sin only, but our whole nature which is virtually *all sin* ; and not a member or faculty of the body, but what is tainted by it. Ask the most devout saint the earth ever produced ; Can you restrain the *mind* from wandering in seasons of worship ? Even if you close your eyes from all the objects around, will not rude and impertinent thoughts rush into the mind, like unbidden and unwelcome visitors ? Do you always find freedom for the *affections* to mount on the wings of faith and prayer, when you draw nigh the mercy seat ? Alas ! there is not a single sense but what is in confederacy to promote sin in the soul ! Our *eyes* are continual purveyors of evil, and our ears inlets to bring home subjects of defilement. What a train of filthy and impure ideas will sometimes pass over the chastest breast, which no education can restrain, but which a man would blush to unbosom to his nearest friend !

“And what makes this awful view of man’s total depravity still more awful is, that there is no exemption from it, but it is universal. Corrupt nature is the same in all. This hand of mine is

* Jerem. xvii. 9, 10.

as capable of perpetrating any one act of sin, and the heart, which gives birth to the action, of devising it, as that of the vilest wretch that ever lived. For the only distinction of character between man and man, is in what God's grace effects, not what man's merit deserves. You seem to be surprised : but such is the fact. Look here, (he cried, taking a handful of seeds out of his pocket) here are a number of seeds, all taken from one and the same stock : if I were to put *all* of them into the earth in the same soil, the same situations, under the same aspect of sun, and rain, and dew, they would as certainly produce the same in equal fruitfulness. But if I put a *part* only into the earth, and reserve the remainder in my pocket, is it not equally as certain, that the part reserved will remain inert and unproductive, and *that* which is cast into the ground be alone fruitful ? The human heart, like those seeds, being from one and the same stock, and in its genius, species, and kind in all instances the same, must invariably in all cases be alike, if all other circumstances concur. So that if this be not induced, it arises not from a diversity of character, but from other causes. It is grace which prevents the sun, and rain, and dew, (if I may be allowed the figure) of temptation and opportunity, from exerting their influence ; and then, like the seeds in the pocket, in the absence of those causes, they remain barren and unfruitful."

" But Sir, (I replied) if such be the universal state of mankind, what a deplorable situation is our nature in ! And how then can any be saved ?"

" It is this very state of our nature (the traveller answered) which made way for salvation by

grace. Because man is fallen, Christ died. If you were not a sinner, what necessity would there have been for a Saviour?"

"Tell me, (I cried with great earnestness) is that Saviour for me?"

"I shall be ready (rejoined the traveller) to answer any questions you think proper to propose to me upon the interesting subject, as far as I am able; from whence you may be assisted to gather information on the point."

"I thank you, Sir, (I answered) but one circumstance I will beg you previously to explain. In calling lately upon a family, whom I found at their devotions, I discovered nothing like what I have since felt of the deadness and unprofitableness of my heart; but they all seemed to be perfectly cheerful and happy. From what principles will you account for this?"

"The thing speaks for itself (replied the traveller.) In a state of unawakened, unregenerated nature, the carnal security and blindness of the mind induces this false joy, and prevents a real concern for the *one thing needful*. False reasonings, presumptuous hopes, and views of religion different from those of the openly profane; these act as mighty persuasives on the imagination, and speak *peace, peace, where there is no peace*. Like children amused with a rattle, such persons take up with the carcase and shell of religion, and are ignorant of the vital principle within. An outward form of godliness satisfies for the inward *power* of it. And thus resting upon the means, and unconscious of the end, their forms and ceremonies of devotion, instead of leading the heart to God, tend to carry the heart *from* God, and they

know nothing more of religion than the name. And herewith their conduct uniformly corresponds. You will find such characters as well at the playhouse as at the church. They can sit both at the Lord's table, and the card table, and are as well known at the one as the other. Thus they live in the vanity and ignorance of the mind ; and thus not unfrequently they die ; ignorant of themselves, ignorant of their own corruptions, strangers to all the principles of grace, without God, and without Christ. The portrait of these persons is accurately drawn by the pencil of God in holy scripture, and you may view two correct outlines of it in the 21st chapter of the book of Job ; and the 73d Psalm of David. Very different is that which the Blessed Spirit hath given us in sweet miniatures of his people, throughout his whole word. But, come Sir, as you have seen the gaiety of the *formal* worshipper, let me lead you into the assembly of the *real*. I am just going to a *prayer-meeting*, where you will be introduced, if you think proper, among that *poor and afflicted people, which the Lord said he would leave in Zion.*"

—I arose, and followed my guide towards the place, with strong expectations of improvement.



THE PRAYER MEETING.

—My guide led me into a room upon the first floor of a dwelling, in which every thing around indicated the humble circumstances of the owner,

where we found several persons assembled for the purpose of devotion. They had just began their evening service, and were engaged in singing an hymn, as we entered. The words of the hymn were interesting ; and, as I thought, not inapplicable to my state and circumstances :

“Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore ;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity join'd with pow'r,” &c.

—The hymn was followed up by prayer, which issued from a voice that I thought I had heard before. And it was an agreeable surprise to me, at the close of it, to recognize in the person praying, the countenance of the *Poor Man*, whose observations at the church-porch had made such impressions upon me. He noticed me also, and with that kind of regard which seemed to say, “ I am glad to see you here.” But the purport of the meeting so occupied his whole attention, that he appeared to have no leisure for other objects. By what followed I was led to conclude, that if any place of pre-eminence was found in this humble circle, it was his province. For as soon as the prayer was ended, and the company seated, he took up the Bible, which lay upon the table before him, and read from the part where it happened to open, the 16th Psalm. I could not be mistaken as to the number of the Psalm, by what followed in his observations upon it.

THE POOR MAN'S EXPERIENCE.

“IN relating my experience (he said) of the Lord's gracious dealings with my soul, I desire to acknowledge, *to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made me accepted in the Beloved*, that I can, with all humility of mind, adopt this language of the Psalmist, and say as he did, *the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup. He maintaineth my lot.* Since that blessed period, when it pleased God to call me by his grace, and to quicken my soul which was before *dead in trespasses and sins*, through a long series of *five and twenty years*, I have been learning, by little and little, to discover more and more of my own emptiness and poverty, and of the infinite fulness and suitability which is in the unsearchable riches of Christ Jesus to supply all my wants. And the attainment to which at length, under the teaching of God the Holy Ghost, I am arrived, is to know, that Jesus is the only portion of his people, for there is salvation in no other. The inheritance lost in the *first Adam* can only be recovered in the *second*. Jesus is the fountain of all blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, “Men shall be blessed *in Him*.” And out of Him there is not a single favour provided for any of the bankrupt race of Adam's children. And it is my peculiar mercy, and a lesson which I have learnt from our Great Master in the Lord's school, that while the Blessed Spirit declares in his church, that *the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot to his inheritance*: my heart can make reply to the sweet sound, from the persua-

sion of a reciprocal interest in the Redeemer, *the Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup. Thou maintainest my lot.**

“ It hath not been, however, without many hard lessons to flesh and blood, with which I have been exercised, that I have arrived to this knowledge. It was a long time before I could rightly understand, and still longer before I could rightly relish, when understood, the humiliating doctrine of living out of myself, and living wholly upon another. The pride of my heart continually revolted at the idea of depending, like the beggar at the gate, for my daily supply. Though the heavenly *manna* became doubly sweet by its freshness, yet I frequently found a rising desire within me to have a little stock, which I might call my own. And even now, though repeated lessons ought to have taught me better, and though the preciousness of every gift is enhanced by its being received immediately out of the hand of the gracious Giver ; yet such is the remaining power of the unhumiliated pride of my heart, that I discover much rebellion at times rising within. And I am prompted very frequently to tell my heavenly Instructor, that surely now I might without danger be rendered somewhat more independent. Blessed be the patience of him with whom I have to do, that whenever this is the case (so very gracious and condescending is he) a renewal of my old lessons soon sets all to rights again, and makes me bless his holy name, that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own. By carrying my forgetful heart back to the first princi-

* Compare Deut. xxxii. 9, with Psalm xvi. 5, for a precious evidence of this doctrine.

ples of learning in the divine science, and by calling to mind my *original* stock, and *present* measure of indwelling corruption, I learn the peculiar blessedness of having *all my fresh springs in him*. And the sweetness of this life, when grace is in exercise, is inexpressible. While I am enabled to see that Jesus is my portion, every dispensation comes in a way of mercy. When my heart is under the assurance that my Lord is in it, it matters not what it is. His presence alone hath the wonderful property of converting crosses and pains into enjoyments and pleasures. Every affliction which comes directed by his hand, hath the sure mark of affection folded up within the cover. And while I sit down with tenfold pleasure to the enjoyment of the thousand mercies which my God is continually giving me, because I behold with the eye of faith his presence at the table smiling graciously upon all; I no less am enabled, in the hour of calamity, to wait the issue, because I can and do hear with the ear of faith that soul-sustaining voice, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*. Oh! the sweetness of having *Jesus for our portion!* and of *living a life of faith upon the Son of God, who hath loved me and given himself for me!*"

—I was musing upon the happiness of a frame of mind like this, as the Poor Man ended his relation, and reflecting on the little probability that I should ever arrive at such a state of blessedness; when a deep sigh, accompanied with a voice of complaint from a person near me, roused me from my meditation, and at once spoke my feelings and his own.

THE MOURNFUL BELIEVER.

“OH that it were with me as you describe !” said the mourner, “but my case is far different. I fear that I have only *a name to live, while I am dead before God!* It is not possible, surely, that such a state as mine can consist with a life of grace in the soul. If the love of Christ was shed abroad in my heart, could I live as I do, so far from him? My mind is at times as lifeless and unconcerned towards Christ, as theirs can be who never loved his name. It is true, I feel at certain seasons great desires after the Lord. And I know, that a change hath taken place in my mind. For the world and its pursuits, which my heart was once running after with the greatest eagerness, now have lost their influence. And the society of the people of God, who were once my song of reproach, I now above all things value. Yet still, so much sin is mixed with all I do; so little do I live to Christ, and to the remembrance of his dear name; and the throne of grace is so often neglected by me, from day to day, that I very much fear my hope is all a delusion.”

—Had I been called upon to relate my own experience, I could not have done it in more suitable words. I felt my heart drawn towards the speaker, from the affinity that existed between us; and waited with the most awakened expectation for some kind brother in this humble society to say a word of consolation to a case so much my own. It was not long before the *Poor Man*, to whom I owed so much before, took up the subject, to answer the doubts and remove the fears of the

mournful believer ; and in doing this, he added to my obligation to him ten-fold.

——“ Your case, my friend,” cried the Poor Man, addressing himself to the Mourner, “ is by no means singular. It is the uniform complaint of the faithful in all ages. What *one* ancient servant of the Lord groaned under, *all* of them have found, that when *we would do good, evil is present with us*. And the reason is obvious. It ariseth from the workings within of the different principles, grace and corruption. There are in every regenerated person two principles, a body of sin, and a spirit of grace : *the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh ; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things which ye would*. There is not a part of the mind but what feels the influence of both. In the renewed nature, the understanding is enlightened, the affections spiritualized, the will inclined to God ; while in the unrenewed nature still remaining, there is darkness in the understanding ; carnal and earthly affections still continuing in the heart ; and the will stubborn, rebellious, and frequently inclining to disobedience. In short, the mind is like the region of the earth, while twilight is upon it. It is neither dark nor light, but a mixture of both : no portion of the hemisphere being so light, but the shades of darkness are blended with it ; and none so dark, but the tints of light are beautifully incorporated. And this is perfectly accountable. A state of grace is a middle state, between that of nature and glory. In a state of nature, unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed, sin reigns with unrivalled sway. In a state of glory, grace reigns uninterrupted, and without any op-

position. But the intermediate state is a state of warfare. Every one in this state feels and experiences the conflict. And as it is said, in allusion to this very circumstance, in the allegory of the bondwoman's son and the heir of promise, so believers find it ; *as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him, that was born after the spirit ; even so it is now.**

“But however mortifying this doctrine be to our nature, (and abundantly so it hath ever been found to the best of men) yet as it tends, under divine grace, to make the believer go softly all his days ; as it makes Jesus more dear, and as it affords to the believer one of the truest evidences of the renewed life, he ought rather to inquire, how such a state may be over-ruled to God's glory and his own benefit ; than, by a false estimate, to question the tender mercies of the Lord toward him, in the very moment of receiving the strongest proofs of them. Let me desire you to examine your own complaints again ; and to see whether in every one of them, even in the midst of your groaning under the apprehension that there is no grace in your heart, whether great grace is not then in exercise. You say, that if the love of Christ were shed abroad in your heart, you could not live so far from him as you do ; that if you really were under grace, you could not stay away from a throne of mercy as you do. But say, could you complain of the want of love to Christ, if you had never tasted what that love is ? And if you visit not a mercy-seat so often as you wish, say, are not these things your continual burthen ? Do you not

* Gal. iv. 29.

groan under such marks of a dead and lifeless heart ? And are not these sorrows of the soul, for the unallowed sins of the body, very plain evidences of the spiritual warfare ? *They* never groan at *sin*, though they may in the prospect of the *punishment* of it, who have no renewed nature. It is the believer only who dreads the sin, more than the penalty due to it. And if grace be thus in exercise to endear the person of the Lord Jesus, still more in proportion as we see our daily want of him ; to long for the time to come when sin shall be rooted out ; and to cause a sense of our weakness to prompt the soul to a greater dependence upon divine strength ; by thus overruling all dispensations to his glory, and his people's welfare, we see a *needs-be* in every dispensation, and discover the beauty and tendency of that scripture, which says, *after that ye were illuminated, (not before, but after) ye endured a great fight of affliction.** In a word, however we may long for an exemption from all sin, and would purchase it, were it possible, with the price of a thousand worlds ; however we may, and do, groan under this body of sin and death, which we carry about with us ; yet, while Jesus, who could, if he saw it right, deliver his tried ones, whom he hath chosen in the furnace of affliction, with a word speaking, sees it not fit, let us not despond. If your sense of sin, and unallowed infirmities, lead you to a more firm reliance upon him ; if it make his promises dearer, his faithfulness more evident, and his presence more desirable, depend upon it,

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* Heb. x. 32.

by and by, your groans will be changed into songs of rejoicing, and your language will be like that of the apostle, *Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

THE CRIES OF UNBELIEF.

THERE sat a man upon my right hand in the prayer-meeting, to whom the leader of this little circle next addressed himself, in order to inquire into the Lord's gracious dealings with his soul. "I hope," said the poor man, calling upon him with all the freedom of one who had been long acquainted, "I hope, (said he) that you will now be able to give us some testimony of the word of his grace. I long methinks, to hear, from an old disciple, like you, some evidence of the faithfulness of our covenant-making, and covenant-fulfilling God."

"Alas!" replied the other, "my language must be much the same as you have often heard. I still groan under the burthen of unbelief, and know not when I shall obtain deliverance from it. It will be a long time, I fear, before I shall be able to *comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith I myself am comforted of God.* I frequently compare myself to the unworthy spies, whom Moses sent to view the promised land; and fear that, like them, I shall never attain the possession of it, through the same besetting sin of unbelief. If I attend the means of

grace, I return, for the most part, unbenefitted through the suggestions of this evil heart of unbelief. If I hear the word of a preached gospel, though I think I know the truth as it is in Jesus, and love to sit under the sound of it ; yet too often, like the Israelites, it doth not profit me, *not being mixed with faith*. If at any time I read the Bible, and turn to those *exceeding great and precious promises*, which belong to the Lord's people, their sweetness is lost in me, through a fear that I have no interest in them. And how many of the providences of my God, which I well know to be every one of them fraught with a sure blessing in their final issue to his people, are perverted in their effects on me, by the impatience and distrust of my unbelieving heart ! And can such a creature say any thing by way of encouragement to the Lord's exercised family, when he himself is so faithless and unbelieving ?”

“ I confess,” rejoined the Poor Man, “ that such a state as you describe cannot afford much assistance to the cause of Christ. But blessed be our God, this is the Christian's charter, that, *if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself*. Your want of faith indeed is injurious to your peace, but not to his cause. Unbelief, like a worm of the bud, cankers the bloom and fragrancy of the sweetest flowers of grace. And had our fathers of the church in the wilderness been in this frame of mind, instead of surrounding the Christian pilgrim as they now do, with such a glorious *cloud of witnesses*, they would have stood in the highway only as so many *pillars of salt*. But let me tell you, my drooping brother, that I am too well acquainted with your real

character, as well from an insight into your experience, as from my own, (long exercised as I have been by unbelief, both in times past, and even now too frequently feeling its remains) not to know, that the very sorrow which you express, on account of the supposed want of faith, carries with it an evidence that you must have some faith thus to complain. That your faith is not equal to your wishes, I will readily allow. For, indeed, whose is? But that you differ most essentially from those that are shut up in total unbelief, is most evident. In proof of what I say, compare your situation now, with what it was in the days of your unregeneracy. You were then, not only *without Christ and without God in the world*, but absolutely unconscious of the want. Whereas now your most earnest desires are that *Christ might dwell in your heart by faith*, and be fully formed there *the hope of glory*. If there were no faith in your heart, whence arise these desires for more? It is the preciousness of the gift, which makes you long for greater manifestations of the Giver. And it is a consciousness of the remains of unbelief, that makes you apprehensive that you have no faith at all. While, therefore, you groan under those remains, every sigh proves that they are but *remains* from which the merciful goodness of our God will in his own time deliver you. Carry your complaints to him who is both the *Author and Finisher of faith*. Let us copy the apostles' prayer, *Lord increase our faith!* And depend upon it, that if our faith be but as a grain of mustard seed, however small and inconsiderable it may be; still it is not of nature's growth, nor of nature's production. That

small portion which you possess is the gift of the same Almighty power who created the faith of Abraham. Receive it, I entreat you, as *the earnest of the promised inheritance, to the praise of his glory.*

“And while I say this much, by way of convincing you, that in the midst of all your complainings you have great cause of thankfulness before God; let me remind you also, that what you complain of, forms a part of the complaints of all the Lord’s people. Nay, more ; the greatest instances of faith we meet with in scripture afford at the same time the greatest examples of unbelief: As if the dear Lord of his people intended to teach *all* this important lesson, that man is nothing in himself, but that all his sufficiency is of him. Abraham, who is handed down to us in the church’s history, as the great pattern of faith, and who could and did exercise such unparalleled confidence in the Lord, in the instance of his intended sacrifice of Isaac ; yet even this man could not, upon another occasion, trust in God’s faithfulness to extricate Sarah from danger.* Job, under the influence of faith, could confidently say of the Lord, *though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ;* yet so much, at another time, was he borne down under the pressure of trouble, that he impatiently cried out, *Oh that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me.*† And David’s whole life, as it may be gathered from his Book of Psalms, was made up of conflicts between believing and doubting. I need not

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* Gen. xx.

† Job vi. 8, 9.

mention Peter's case, as an additional proof of the fluctuating state of the human mind, who, in the mount of transfiguration, gave so glorious a testimony, and in the hall of Pilate uttered so shameful a denial of his Lord's character.* All these, and ten thousand lesser instances, serve to shew what man is in himself, and what the same man may be when supported by the grace of God. Let me beg of you, then, in the estimate of your spiritual state, as it stands before God, never to lose sight of these things. And while a deep sense of the unbelief of your heart makes you humble, and is continually leading you to a mercy seat for an increase of faith, from him whose gift alone it is, do not overlook that portion of the blessing which the bountiful Lord hath already bestowed upon you. Never forget, that the smallest degree of faith is faith; perfectly distinct from all the operations of nature, and far above all human power to produce. Forget not, also, that it is not the quantity, but the quality, which constitutes the principle. *By him* (says the apostle) *all that believe are justified from all things.* Observe the expression, *All that believe.* He doth not say, believers of such a description and character, or that come up to such a standard, but *ALL that believe.* While therefore you possess the smallest degree of faith, bless God for *that.* The smallest measure indicates from whom it came; and declares whose you are, and to whom you belong. It is the one uniform family-feature of the Lord's household of faith; for *as many as believe are ordained to eternal life.* Large portions of so pre-

* Compare Matt. xvi. 16. with xxvi. 69.

cious a grace, are, no doubt, highly desirable. But to poor, timid, *unbelieving* believers, (if I may be allowed the expression) it is a refreshing thought, that the Great Shepherd *gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom*; and they are as dear and precious in his sight, as the strong of his fold.

“ Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
’Tis Jesus inspires and bids you still seek;
The God whom thou seekest will not tarry long,
And by him the weakest are safe as the strong.”



A BELIEVER UNDER THE HIDINGS OF GOD’S COUNTENANCE.

“ YOUR observations, my dear brother,” said another, who sat at a corner of the room, “ are truly refreshing to my soul. I have been long exercised under the hidings of the divine countenance, and sometimes tempted to cry out, with the church of old, *My hope is perished from the Lord*. But I perceive, from what you have been saying to our friend, mourning under the unbelief of his heart, that the same arguments, by a parity of reasonings, are applicable to my case also. Spiritual darkness, and spiritual doubtings, are but too nearly allied, and proceed from the corruption that dwells within. It may be said of both, *it is your iniquities which have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you*. And when this is the case, when as in *Paul’s* voyage, *neither sun nor stars for many days appear*.

ed, and no small tempest is added to the darkness of the horizon, faith will be at a low ebb, and all hope, that the soul is then in a state of safety, will for a time be taken away. But, blessed be God, when I can find no comfort in myself, I know that Christ is the same. I still see a loveliness in his person, and a suitableness and all-sufficiency in his power to save, when I cannot say that I see my interest in him to be clear. *When wilt thou come unto me*, is frequently the language of my heart, though I cannot always call him mine. And the recollection of past experiences is sometimes a lift to me during the passing cloud. I call to mind the time and place, and the gracious manner and means, when, where, and by which the Lord hath heretofore comforted and refreshed my soul. So that, like the wife of Manoah, I am led to conclude, *if the Lord had not intended mercy he would not have shewed me all these things*. And I always find that sweet text of the Prophet to be consolatory, during the heaviest night of this kind of trial; *Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, and walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.*"

"I rejoice truly, my dear brother," replied the Poor Man, "in the testimony you bear to the faithfulness of your God, under your sufferings. It is an easy thing to speak a word for God's goodness, when the Lord is surrounding us with the sunshine of his blessings. But it must be a gracious soul indeed to rejoice in God, when he hath nothing but his word to trust in. And when God hides his face from his people; stands at a distance from their prayers; seemingly thwarts all

their desires ; gives no answer by *Urim* and *Thummim* ; then, to hold fast by God, and to lie passive before him ; this is what the prophet felt, and what none but those who are taught of God the Holy Ghost can say with him ; *Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat ; the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls ; yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation."*

I had entered with so much earnestness of participation into every man's case, as they related their several experiences one after another, that I was unconscious of the lapse of time, and felt not a little distressed, when I heard one of the company say, "our hour is come, it is past eight o'clock." The following hymn was then given out and sung ; which appeared to be a very suitable conclusion to the solemn service :

No more, my God, I boast no more

Of all the duties I have done ;

I quit the hopes I held before,

To trust the merits of thy Son.

Now for the love I bear his name,

What was my gain I count my loss ;

My former pride I call my shame,

And nail my glory to his cross.

Yes, and I must, and will esteem

All things but loss for Jesus' sake ;

O may my soul be found in him,

And of his righteousness partake !

The best obedience of my hands

Dares not appear before thy throne ;

But faith can answer thy demands,

By pleading what my Lord hath done.

But, if I felt myself pleased with the hymn, my mind was more abundantly refreshed and delighted

with the concluding prayer, which followed it ; in which the person who prayed, did not confine himself to general expressions ; but, more or less, included therein the wants and desires of all the Lord's tried family ; and in particular, the several cases which had been spoken of during the evening. Neither as a stranger and visitor in this little society did the leader in prayer forget to mention *me*, at the mercy-seat ; that the Lord would supply all my wants, whatever they might be, out of the abundant riches of his grace, which are in Christ Jesus.

After withdrawing from the room, and taking leave of the friend who had conducted me thither, I retired to my closet to meditate upon what I had seen and heard. And the conclusion I formed upon the whole was this : I had discovered in the scriptures of truth, that in all ages of the church, the Lord has had a seed which served him. I no less discovered also, that this seed were distinguished from the rest of mankind by certain marks and characters. I observed very clearly in the little circle to which I had now been introduced, that its members were widely distinguished from the unawakened world, in all their pursuits, complaints and desires. I remarked yet farther, that although their complaints and desires differed in their degree of earnestness, yet, like a family-feature, there was a sufficient similarity in all, to manifest their relationship to each other. But what became my highest gratification, was the discovery, that, however unconscious of it before, their situation was my own. And I felt that union of soul, which the mind feels in a state of nature on the discovery of affinity, so as to be drawn to-

wards them in the warmth of a lasting love and affection. I resolved therefore to cast in my lot among them, and to have the same portion. The sweet language of Ruth to Naomi exactly speaks the feelings of my heart: *Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God, my God. Where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.*

—My mind had been much exercised through the night in reflections upon what I had seen and heard at the prayer-meeting. And the morning had but just opened upon the earth, when I arose to prayer and meditation. There is somewhat peculiarly solemn in the first dawn of day, before the noisy world is risen. It very powerfully calls the soul to devotion.

“ Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet
With charms of earliest birds.”

MILTON.

I felt the influence, and having *bowed the knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, I entered upon the meditation of the subject, which had engaged my attention so much the preceding evening. The more I considered it, the more I stood convinced, that there is a seed in the earth, which the Lord hath distinguished from the world. And I felt no less conviction also, that it is divine grace alone, which makes all the difference between *him that serveth the Lord, and him that serveth him not*. But that *I should*

be the object of his grace, when I sought it not, nor was even conscious of the want of it—here appeared the greatest mystery !

I found my eyes overflowing in the contemplation of such unmerited goodness of my God towards me, and was lost in the thought, when a call at the door roused me from my meditation. It was the *Traveller*, whom I have before mentioned, who had kindly introduced me to the prayer-meeting, and who was come to inquire what were my sentiments concerning it, and to offer me that assistance which I had requested of him at our first interview.

I very frankly opened my whole heart to him upon the subject, and hesitated not to tell him, how much I felt interested in what I had heard ; and particularly in the case of *one* who had spoken, from the similarity of his experience to my own. “ How, or when, (I said) or by what means the Lord hath begun the work of grace in my heart, I know not : but like the poor man we read of in the gospel, I trust I can say, that *whereas I was blind, now I see*. It is, indeed, but a confused and ill-formed view of things, which I have at present, in looking at the bright objects of divine truth. I see but indistinctly, *men as trees walking*. Yet, I cannot but hope, that he who hath graciously touched mine eyes, will touch them again, and make me see clearly.”

“ Doubt not (replied the Traveller) the divine faithfulness. The *earnest of the Spirit* becomes no less the *earnest of the promised inheritance*.* And an apostle says, *we may be confident of*

* Compare 2 Cor. v. 5. with Ephes. i. 13, 14.

this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. As nothing, under divine grace, will tend to open your apprehensions more clearly to *the truth as it is in Jesus*, than the possessing right notions of the covenant of grace, on which the whole system of the gospel is founded, I have brought with me a sermon, written upon the subject, and which, according to my conception, places the doctrine in the plainest point of view possible. If it be agreeable, (he added) I will read it to you."

"Nothing," I answered, "can be more desirable to me." He accordingly took it from his pocket, and read as follows :

THE SERMON.

Isaiah lv. 3.

"THE SURE MERCIES OF DAVID."

IT was a very sweet note, which God the Holy Ghost put into the mouth of his servant the prophet, when commanding him to proclaim salvation in the mountain of Israel ; when he called it *an everlasting covenant, even the sure mercies of David*. In nothing did the Lord more consult the wants and happiness of his people, than in folding the gospel up under such a cover, and marking it by such distinguishing characters.

Tell me, my brother, do you not feel a very high gratification in the consciousness that salvation is

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not a work of yesterday, but founded on that *everlasting love* wherewith the Lord hath *loved his people*?

Besides; an everlasting covenant naturally connects with itself all those properties, which are necessary to its completion and design. There must be included in it everlasting wisdom to guide, everlasting counsel to direct, everlasting strength to secure, and everlasting faithfulness to make good all its promises. Every attribute stands engaged in its establishment; and it is the consolation of the true believer in Christ, that all the perfections of Jehovah are pledged for the accomplishment of that purpose, *which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began*. The *sure mercies of David* imply as much to make them *sure*. Nothing new to God can ever arise to counteract the divine purposes concerning them. Neither can any one circumstance occur, for which provision is not already made. In the *everlasting* covenant, God himself is the only contracting party. Jehovah answers both for himself, and for his people. *I will: and they shall*. Such is the language of it.

Tell me once more, my brother, doth not this consideration also very highly gratify you? You see, that as nothing of merit on your part could have given birth to a covenant which is from everlasting to everlasting; so nothing now of demerit shall arise to defeat its operation, which can owe nothing to you.

The subject opened to our meditation in these words of the Prophet leads to the most delightful view, with which the human mind is capable of being exercised, in the present unripe state of our faculties. The text indeed contains but *five*

words, but it would furnish a sufficient subject for as many volumes. It is a text in which, as we say, every word *tells*. I consider it a perfectly unnecessary service, to lose time by way of pointing to his person, who is here called *David*. No one for a moment can imagine, that it means David the son of Jesse. For, as an apostle hath observed, this David, *after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption*. But he of whom the Prophet speaks in the text, who is David's Lord, *saw no corruption*; but when God the Father raised him from the dead, (as if in confirmation of this very subject, and to shew its personal application to him) he expressed himself in these very words, *I will give you the sure mercies of David*.*

In the farther prosecution of this subject, the arrangement I propose shall be as follows: My text, in allusion to this everlasting covenant, calls it the *sure mercies of David*. I shall first therefore follow up this idea in shewing, that the redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ, is a system of grace and mercy from the beginning to end. I shall then, secondly, go on to prove that these mercies are *the sure mercies of David*; being founded on that everlasting covenant, by which *grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord*. May God the Holy Ghost, who first commissioned the prophet to proclaim, now enable the preacher to explain those mercies of David; that *our gospel may come not in word only, but in power, and in much assurance of faith!*

* Acts xiii. 33, 34.

My first intention is to show, that the redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ is a system of grace and mercy from beginning to end. And nothing can more decidedly manifest the truth of the observation, than the character in which the prophet was commissioned to promulgate it. For when it is distinguished by the property of an *everlasting* covenant, the very term carries with it a most positive testimony, that it must be all founded in grace, unconnected with any human power, not depending upon any human merit. For what first originated in the free and unmerited mercy of God, confirmed as it was by covenant engagements between the Father and the Son before man was created, and is promised to be carried on in all its purposes and effects, by the same divine power, independently of man's agency after his being brought into being, can come under no other description surely than that of grace. Whatever God hath done, or is doing, in the accomplishment of his designs concerning it, must all be referred back into the eternal counsel of his own mind, by virtue of its everlasting nature. To this most evidently it is, that believers owe their being chosen, called, and regenerated. And their establishment in grace, their dependence upon the promises, and their hopes of eternal glory ; all are founded on that *everlasting* love, wherewith God hath loved his people before the foundations of the world were laid. *I have said*, (is the language of God) *mercy shall be set up forever*. And the reason follows : *I have made a covenant with my chosen*.

Look, my brother, into yourself, and into your own experience, for a confirmation of this doc-

trine. A covenant founded in grace can derive no aid from works. You can have nothing to give but what you have first received. And what you have first received is not in fact yours, but the great Giver's. And what he hath given may, without any impeachment of his justice, be again recalled. Neither can you have any thing to offer, but what God hath a right, as his own, to demand. Even all those sweet effusions of the soul, which appear in the worship of the faithful, when drawing near the mercy-seat; as these are wholly the result of the blessed Spirit's work, who brings them forth into exercise, as the sun by his warm beams, draws forth a fragrant smell from the flower, and have their origin in God's grace and not in man's merit, so there can be nothing of claim in them before God. The language of such a creature as man, even in his highest attainment, and, among the first order of the glorified spirits of *just men made perfect*, must still be the same: *by the grace of God, I am what I am*. Every thing that has a reference to salvation centres in Christ Jesus; and may be clearly traced up to its origin in that *everlasting* covenant, which God made with him before this world had being.

Nay, I will advance yet one step farther in the argument; and, in ascribing the *sure mercies of David* wholly to grace, observe, that it was most unmerited grace which admitted the Lord Jesus to be man's surety and sponsor, to fulfil in our stead the law which he had broken, and in his sacred person to endure the penalty due to the breach of it. There could have been no impeachment of the divine justice, if God had insisted on

the sinner's suffering it himself. *The soul that sinneth shall die.* And was it not then an act of free, spontaneous mercy and grace in our God, to admit the substitute ?

II. speaking therefore of our subject in *general* terms, as applicable to the church of the Lord Jesus at large, it must be confessed that the everlasting covenant is very properly called the *sure mercies* of David. For it is nothing else but a system of grace and mercy from the beginning to end ! And I am very confident, that every humble soul in *particular*, who is the happy subject of such bounty, by a *personal* interest therein, will be ready to join issue with the apostle, and say, *But God who is rich in mercy for his great love, wherewith he hath loved ME, even when I was dead in sins, hath quickened me together with Christ ; for by grace am I saved.*

And as the original cause in conversion sprung from grace, so the preserving and carrying on the great work in the soul since, is wholly owing to the same great principle. When you call to mind, my brother, the coldness and deadness of your best affections ; your wanderings and backslidings from God ; the provocations and sins wherewith your life hath been marked ; (Oh to grace how great a debtor !) will you not, with the utmost humility, exclaim with the apostle, *Unto him who doth exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us : unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end !*

But while it thus becomes delightful to the soul under divine teachings, to be able to see that redemption's work from the beginning to end is

wholly a system of grace ; it becomes doubly sweet at the same time, to have a clear apprehension, that this *grace* worketh and *reigneth through righteousness* ; that these mercies of David become *sure mercies*, being made so by virtue of that *everlasting covenant* of righteousness in Christ Jesus, by which God can be *just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus* ; and the sinner, though in himself nothing but sin and iniquity, can look up and plead the righteousness of Christ as the foundation of his acceptance before God : because, in that covenant, *God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

This was the second point of doctrine I proposed to prove, and which I now proceed to illustrate and explain, under a few leading particulars.

The mercies of David become *sure mercies* to the Lord's people by virtue of that *everlasting covenant* which occupied the divine counsel in the ages of eternity before the creation of the world, in which there were mutual promises made by the high contracting parties. Jesus on his part undertook to answer all the demands of his Father's righteous law, for the objects of his and his Father's eternal love ; who, it was foreseen, would subject themselves to everlasting ruin by the breach of it. And God the Father promised on his part to remit that punishment to the person of the sinner, by inflicting it on the person of the Lord Jesus as the sinner's surety ; and, then to entitle the sinner, by virtue of the Redeemer's righteousness, to everlasting life. These were the terms by which each party guaranteed to the other the sure

fulfilment of the covenant. Jesus therefore was to assume at a certain period, called the *fulness of time*, our nature, and in that nature to repair God's broken law, and sustain the penalty due to the breach of it. Moved with unbounded love to our fallen race, all this the Lord Jesus actually performed; when leaving *that glory which he had with the Father before all worlds*, he came into this world, and accomplished all those great events which we read of in the history of his life. And when, by *doing and dying*, he had wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, he returned to the bosom of the Father, to make efficient the whole process of his redemption, by sending down his Holy Spirit, to apply his merits to his people's necessities; while he himself is exercised in the high character of our Intercessor, to plead the efficacy of his death, and continually to appear *in the presence of God for us*. These are the great outlines of the *everlasting* covenant, as referring to the engagement of God the Son. And the promises on the part of God the Father were, that he would anoint Christ to the work, and accept of him in lieu of the sinner. And that when the Redeemer had made his soul an offering for sin, *He should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand*. *My righteous Servant* (said God) *shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities*. *As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith Jehovah, my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and forever*. Such then be-

ing the stipulated terms between the high contracting parties, and having been fulfilled on the part of the Lord Jesus, the mercies promised on the part of God become *sure* mercies to all the Lord's people. *Grace reigneth through righteousness.* And the positive assurance of pardon and salvation is brought home to the heart, by a conviction founded in the veracity of that God *which cannot lie.*

Let any man now review the ground we have hastily trodden over, in quest of the testimonies with which these mercies of David are made *sure*: let him behold an *everlasting* covenant, founded in grace, accomplished by the great Representative of his people in grace, and in all ages accomplishing in his people by grace: let him observe how each principle harmonizes to secure God's glory, while it tenderly secures man's welfare: let him carefully remark how *grace reigneth through righteousness*, and I venture to hope, if God the Holy Ghost be the teacher, that the result will be the most absolute conviction, that our text very properly characterizes this great salvation by calling it the *sure mercies of David.*

The application of this doctrine, though of all other considerations the most interesting, may be brought within the narrowest compass: the whole terminating, as it respects every individual, in this single question: Am I, or am I not, the highly favoured object of these *sure mercies of David*?

If it be said, how shall this point be ascertained, and by what marks or characters is it to be known? the answer is direct: God hath not left himself without the witness of his Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of his people. And al-

though it is with the children of God in grace, as it is with the children of men by nature ; in the infancy of life, while the faculties of the mind remain unopened, the child is unconscious of the inheritance to which he is born ; so they to whom *he hath given power to become sons of God* will frequently remain a long time unassured of the *incorruptible inheritance, to which they are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.* But as the spiritual apprehension is unfolded by the Heavenly Teacher, they are brought by little and little, as children under education, to see their interest in the *sure mercies of David*, from the characters in which they find themselves distinguished in the everlasting covenant.

See, my brother, see whether you do not possess what Jehovah promised, by virtue of this covenant, to give to Jesus' people. Have you not the *new heart* and the *new mind*, which God, by his covenant, is engaged to bestow ? Do you not feel those covenant-impressions, which are common to his people ? Is not the *Messenger of this covenant*, whom God hath chosen, become the object of your choice also ? If God the Spirit be promised to certify your interest in this covenant, *have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed ?* In a word, if these, and these only are the sure mercies of David, are you seeking salvation in no other way ; and do you say, as David did, *this is all my salvation, and all my desire ?* These are precious tokens of being interested in the sure mercies of David ; when pardon, mercy, grace, righteousness, sanctification, and strength equal to our day, are sought for in nothing else but God's everlasting covenant.

My unawakened brother ! what do you know of these sure mercies of David ? I cannot, I dare not be silent, while endeavouring to comfort the people of God with a view of their privileges, without calling upon you to examine and look diligently lest you fail of this grace. O that the Lord may incline your heart, that you may come ! O that you may hear the joyful sound and live ! that God may give you also these sure mercies of David !

How shall I conclude my sermon better, than by desiring the afflicted, mournful, exercised believer, of every description and character, to fold up the sweet text of the Prophet in his bosom, as a motto of consolation for every occasion ? And may God the Holy Ghost write upon every heart, *I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.*



THE REMARKS.

WHEN my friend had ended this discourse, he waited, as I perceived by his looks, for my observations upon it. I anticipated his inquiry for my opinion, by giving it unasked. It appeared indeed to me very plain, that the sermon comprised the leading principles of the covenant of grace : which, though certainly a subject of all others the most interesting, is perhaps the least understood. For my part, I am free to confess, that, previous to this explanation, I had very imperfect conceptions of it. My first object, as soon as he had finished reading the manuscript, was to thank him

for his *labour of love*, in bringing me acquainted by this means with a doctrine so highly important. How sweet and consolatory is the view, that redemption-work originated in grace, is carried on and completed in grace; and yet, as if to remove all fears and apprehensions from the believer's mind, it is *grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord*: so that, though founded solely in mercy, it calls in, to its assurance to fulfil, the covenant engagements and covenant-faithfulness of Jehovah. Well might one of old in the contemplation of it say, *mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other*.

One branch of this subject particularly arrested my attention; to which, on account of my imperfect conceptions of it, I ventured to communicate to my friend my objection. The scriptures of truth (I observed to him) very strikingly distinguished those *sure mercies of David*, as arising out of an *everlasting* covenant. This being the case, the operation of those mercies, must by their very nature be perpetual, and without any interruption. There can be no period, in which they cease to act, for what was promised to be *eternal*, can never admit the smallest alteration in *time*. Is there not, however, sometimes a suspension of those mercies, when afflictions abound in the lot of the Lord's family?

“No, never (replied my friend) is there the least interruption in the unchanging mercies of God in Christ Jesus. And however dark and seemingly mysterious, at times, the dispensation may appear to us, yet there is but one and the

same purpose of mercy, invariably pursued by a faithful God to his people. And the difficulty of apprehending this would be soon removed, by only taking into the account the *whole* process of the divine administration towards believers, and not forming a judgment upon every single and detached part of it. As men regulate their opinion of some admirably well constructed machine, from a contemplation of the whole when complete, and not of its several constituent parts in a state of separation, so God's divine ordination, respecting the government of his people, must be viewed upon the whole—causes with effects ; and then all is grace, mercy and loving kindness. An earthly parent considers it as no diminution of his tenderness to a beloved child, that he sends him abroad for education, or that he himself instructs and disciplines him at home ; because his future prospects in life are best promoted by this process. And why should our heavenly Father be supposed to have lost sight of the *sure mercies of David* to his children, because absence and discipline are made use of by him, to forward his gracious designs of greater tenderness towards them ? But when we call in question the evidences of divine love, we forget where we are, and the reasons for which we are here. And hence, it is not among the smallest testimonies of those very mercies of David, that the Lord makes use of the ministry of affliction to proclaim, that *this is not our rest because it is polluted*. Had Jesus intended this world for the enjoyment of his people, in a state of worldly prosperity, very different would have been their accommodations. But they are

strangers and pilgrims upon earth, and are going home to their Father's house. And what does ever make home more desirable to the traveller, than the ill reception he frequently meets with on the road ?

“ Sir ! look at the subject again, and see whether it doth not challenge your highest admiration and praise, when you discover that the afflictions of the Lord's people are among his tenderest mercies ; in that they are so admirably contrived, that not a single trouble shall ultimately do them *harm* ; but, on the contrary, shall as positively work for their *good* ? Set down this as an everlasting maxim ; and compare with it either your own experience, or your observation of others. Let us suppose now, for example's sake, that in the great mass of characters in the Lord's tried family, some are labouring under heavy afflictions of body, and some under anguish of mind ; some impoverished in worldly circumstances ; some smarting under the lash of false tongues ; some groaning under the pains of sickness in their own persons ; some bitterly bewailing the effects of it in others : yet, be the trial what it may, (and wisely ordered it is, exactly suited to every one's necessities) look only forward to its final issue, and you will find, that not a single individual of the Lord's household is injured by it. Each affliction becomes to them a messenger of sanctification and wisdom, and acts medicinally on the mind, as much as physic on the body. And can those things be properly called evils which minister good ? Will any man blame the physician of approved judgment, when inducing a state of convalescence, because the medicine he administers

is found somewhat nauseous to the taste, and operates roughly ?

“ But it is not enough to say that afflictions do no harm ; they must also do good. The promise else would be lost—*all things work together for good to them that love God.* So that, unless in every single instance good is wrought to the lovers of God, the truth of scripture would become questionable. But of the perpetual occurrences which are going on through life, in attestation to this precious assurance, a volume would only give the mere outlines. And who is competent to describe them ? Generally speaking, all afflictions, which tend to bring the soul to God, keep up a life of communion with the Redeemer ; make us sensible of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit ; spiritualize our affections ; wean our hearts from a world, from which we must soon part ; and promote a more intimate acquaintance with that in which we are shortly forever to dwell : whatever things induce, these blessed principles are undeserving the name of afflictions ; they are among the sweetest mercies of David. And when God removes every earthly comfort, in order to make room for heavenly ; empties the soul of all creature-comforts, that he may fill it from all the fulness of Creator-mercies ; can there remain a question, but that the believer is a gainer by the exchange ? Nay, I am fully persuaded, that if grace were in full exercise, we should embrace our afflictions, as affording the choicest proofs of divine love. And how refreshing would it be to a by-stander near the bed of some suffering saint, to hear him say, Praise my God with me, for the pains I now endure ! For the dearest friend which

I have upon earth, if his affection for me and his wisdom were equal to those of my heavenly Father, would inflict every pain and trial, which I now feel from *his* gracious appointment."

THE DEAD CHILD.

My friend was going on in his discourse, when a shriek from a window in the street, accompanied with a loud voice of distress, interrupted him. We heard the lamentable cry, "My child is dead!" We hastened to the door to seek the cause of this sorrow. Upon inquiry, we found that it was the only child of an affectionate mother, which had that moment breathed its last in her arms. Alas! thought I, Rachael's case is not singular: the same voice which was heard in *Ramah*, is heard throughout the world. The sorrowful mother refuseth to be comforted, because the child is not.

"See here, my brother," cried my companion, taking me by the arm, and leading me, as he said it, involuntarily down the street, "see here an exemplification of our subject. Let us only suppose, that this afflicted mother is a *gracious* woman, and her history, I will venture to assert, shall sooner or later prove the truth of all that I have been saying. In the first paroxysm of grief, she is perhaps insensible of it: for nature is nature, and is allowed to express, if without murmuring, her sorrows. But suppose, that you or I were permitted to call in upon her at some future

period; how different should we find her sentiments! A plain proof this, that it is the state of the mind, and not the affliction itself, which constitutes the difference. And when the appointment comes, as it must come to every *gracious* soul, in a covenant way, the united wisdom of men and angels could not have ordered any event equally suitable, so as to have answered the purpose of God in his merciful dispensations towards her. However painful, it could not be spared. Let us consider it for a few moments, as it concerns herself, and as it refers to the child.

“As it concerns herself. It is more than probable, that this beloved, this *only* child, stole away her heart from the Lord. Perhaps her visits to the throne of grace were less frequent than heretofore. Perhaps her anxiety for the future provision of this babe made her omit or diminish her charities to the poor: made her question the providences of God; made her affections more earthly; her conversation more savouring of the things of time and sense; and, in short, induced a train of conduct, all tending to lead the heart more *from* God, and not bringing it (as ought to have been the case) *to* God. And was it not, then, think you, among the choicest *mercies of David*, to remove the cause of all this evil? Was it not time for God to recal his gift, when that gift formed a cloud on the mind to hide the hand of the Giver?

“And as it refers to the sweet babe. Supposing the most favourable thing which can be supposed, that it was a child of grace, a child of many prayers; are the *sure mercies of David* altered in their property, because those prayers are

answered, and Jesus hath housed a lamb of his fold beyond the reach of the prowling lion, or the ranging bear? Say, ye long tried, long exercised soldiers in the Redeemer's army, are the summer's heat and the winter's cold, the furious assaults of the enemy without, and the distressing fears within, so very desirable, that you regret the close of the campaign? Oh! how much the reverse! And who knows but that the gracious Lord, reading in the index, the whole volume of this infant's life, in mercy shut the book, to stop at once the parent's anxiety and her offspring's sufferings. Thus, then, here is at once a whole chapter of mercies; mercies to the old, mercies to the young; and nothing but mercy to all, both in time and eternity. And where is the cruel parent, that would retard the flight of his child under such circumstances, and hinder it from taking wing, to meet the Lord in the air? Surely, might the infant say, in just reproof to such mistaken fondness, *If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I go to my Father!*

“And what if we reverse the circumstances; (for grace is not hereditary) let that parent determine, for none else can determine, what it must be to see a graceless child rising up in life, in spite of all our remonstrances, all our prayers, at once regardless of his present peace and future happiness. Oh! how awful!”——

THE SUICIDE.

As my friend uttered these words, a crowd of persons ran across the street in which we were walk-

ing, which excited our curiosity to inquire into the cause. The information was a sad one ; a youth, it seemed, unable to brook the various disappointments, which a long pampered habit of false education had induced, dared to defy Omnipotence, by putting a period to his earthly existence. The crowd was running to behold the unhappy object. As for me and my companion, we both stood motionless, struck with horror. At length, my friend recovered himself and broke silence. " Dread Lord !" he cried, " what an awful world is this, through which thy people are passing ! How close we walk on the confines of everlasting misery, while in the very moment we are the monuments of thy saving mercy ! Blessed God, (he exclaimed) write, I beseech thee, that solemn truth upon my heart ; they that are kept *are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation*. Oh ! what a lesson is here, my brother, (he cried) for the sorrowful mother whom we just now noticed ! And what would this young man's parents give (for perhaps he may have both to survive him) had her case been theirs !"

My heart was too full to reply. I felt all that kind of sensation which the poet entered into, to the contemplation of a subject so hopeless, and awful, when he said,

——Then if it be an awful thing to die,
How horrid yet to die by one's own hand !
Self-murder !—name it not !—dreadful attempt !
Just reeking from self-slaughter, in a rage,
To rush into the presence of our Judge ;
As if we challeng'd him to do his worst,
And valu'd not his wrath !——'Tis mad !
'Tis worse than madness ; nought can describe
A phrenzy half so desperate as this !

BLAIR'S GRAVE.

—It was some time before I prevailed on myself to remove from the spot of this awful scene. But at length I caught the arm of my companion, and we walked away together towards the end of the street, which terminated in the fields. We had gone a considerable space, without any conversation ; the minds of both being, I imagined, fully absorbed in ruminating on a subject, that was beyond all others the most distressing ! For my part, the circumstance had awakened in my breast a train of thoughts, which tended to dissipate all my new-formed hopes. What (I said to myself) if an end so horrible should be at length the termination of *my* pilgrimage ? What if all my fond desires of grace should ultimately prove a delusion ? Are the people of God exposed to such overwhelming temptations of the enemy ? May they really be awakened to the life of God in the soul, and yet finally fall away ?

I found these, and the like distrustful questions, involuntarily arising in my mind, and inducing much anxiety ; when my friend, as if privy to what passed within me, broke silence. “How gracious (he exclaimed) is our God, in the midst of such awful judgments, as are walking by our side through the world, to keep us unhurt ! Do you not perceive the evidence of that scripture ; *A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand, but it shall not come nigh thee ; only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked ?** Oh ! it is a blessed, soul-reviving thought, amidst all the melancholy proofs around us that we are passing through the enemy's

* Psalm xci. 7, 8.

territories, that there is a gracious *nevertheless* in the covenant which screens us from his malice. *Nevertheless* (says the apostle) *the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal ; the Lord knoweth them that are his.* Let mine outcasts dwell within thee, Moab ; be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.†* This is enough. *Outcasts*, and sometimes considered as the *off-scouring of all things*, they are. But still they are God's outcasts. Tempted they may be, and certainly will ; but conquered they shall not. And could a looker-on but see objects spiritually, he would discover, as the impious *monarch* of old did, *one walking with his people in the hottest furnace, that even the smell of fire may not pass upon them.*‡

“ You very much rejoice my heart (I replied) by what you say. My fears were all alive in the view of this awful scene, lest an event so truly hopeless might one day be my portion.”

—“ That (answered my companion hastily) is impossible to a child of God. The promise is absolute. *No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.§* And God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able ; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.”

“ But is it not said, (I replied) that some who were *once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, have fallen away ?*”

“ Yes, (rejoined my companion) but none of those so spoken of were ever children of God, or

* 2 Tim. ii. 19.

† Dan. iii. 25, 27.

‡ Isaiah xvi. 4.

§ Isaiah liv. 17.

born again of that incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth forever. Only observe the vast distinction of character, by which those enlightened persons whom the apostle speaks of are marked, from the scripture-features of the truly regenerate ; and the contrast will immediately appear. They are said to be *once enlightened* ; that is, with *head-knowledge* ; not renewed in *heart-affections*. They are described as those who have *tasted of the heavenly gift* ; tasted but not approved : like persons whose stomachs nauseate what the taste rejects, and digest it not. They are said to *have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost* ; that is, in his common operations upon the understanding ; not in his quickening and regenerating grace in the soul. In all these, and the like instances, there is not a single syllable said of the Spirit's work, in the great and essential points of faith and repentance, and the renewed life. But the whole account is confined to the common operations of nature, as distinguished from grace ; in which natural men frequently excel ; and sometimes indeed to such a degree, as to surpass in head-knowledge children of grace : And God the Holy Ghost is pleased to work by their instrumentality, while they themselves remain unconscious of his power. He blesses his people *by* them ; but they feel not his power *in* them. For rather than his household shall want supply, he will feed them even from the table of their enemies. They become therefore like channels of conveyance, which conduct to others, but retain nothing themselves : or like the direction-posts on the road, which point the traveller to the right path, but never stir themselves a step towards it. These things may be done, and

perhaps very often are done, by men perfectly strangers to vital godliness. And therefore when they cease to appear in their assumed character, they are said by the world to have fallen away from grace ; whereas the fact is, they never were *in* grace. Every thing in such persons is derived from natural causes, is supported by natural means, and adopted for natural purposes ; and thus beginning in nature, they end in the same. And if a proper attention was paid to these things, to discriminate between nature and grace, it would, under the divine blessing, very much tend to diminish the apprehensions of the humble and fearful believer, respecting the danger of apostatising from the faith."

"But is there not a difficulty (I said) to the cordial reception of this doctrine, in the cases of those unhappy persons who die by their own hands, and, as is generally supposed, from the effects of religious melancholy ?"

"Not the least, (replied my friend) by those who consider the subject in a proper point of view. It is the grossest mistake to ascribe such instances of suicide to a *religious* melancholy, when in fact they are induced altogether from the total want of *religion*.

"Men, from the awakenings of conscience, and from the dread of divine displeasure in the recollection of a mis-spent life, may be driven to despair ; and, if there be no grace given to them of God, to make application of the sweet promises of the gospel in the hour of temptation, but left to themselves, may be prompted to do an act at which nature shudders ! But who would presume, but a

fool, to put this down to the score of religion, when every circumstance tends but to prove the very reverse, in the total want of all religion? Let us only suppose a case in point, which is enough at once to answer all the childish observations which the world hath made on a subject of this nature. Let us suppose, a man, under the immediate pressure and alarms of a guilty conscience, in the prospect of the wrath to come, feels the rising temptation to make away with himself. Let us suppose further, that in this distressed state of mind, some precious revelation and promise of the gospel is, through divine grace, revealed to his heart; that he hears and believes what that gospel graciously proclaims, *that though his sins are as the scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though red as the crimson they shall be as the wool; that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin:* is it not evident, that if the mind of such a man is brought to believe in this precious promise, there can be no despair, and consequently there can be no self-murder? And will prejudice itself, even the grossest prejudice, venture to say, or even believe, that a single instance of suicide was ever committed under such circumstances?—

“Hence, therefore, you see, my brother, (continued my friend) that it is not faith, but the want of faith; not from religion, but from the total absence of religion, that a melancholy pervades the mind, which sometimes terminates so fatally as in self-destruction.

THE PLOUGHMAN.

I WAS about to reply, when the voice of one singing attracted my attention. It was an husbandman at his labour, busily engaged in ploughing the field, and at the same time exercising his mind in strains of melody. From the solemnity of the tune, I was induced to believe that it was a psalm or hymn that he was singing. How mercifully (I thought with myself) hath the Lord provided for the labouring part of mankind; that while the hands are engaged day by day on things of the earth, the heart is unfettered, and able, through grace, to soar among the objects of heaven! As we approached nearer, we paused, and could very plainly distinguish the words: and thus he sung,—

“Arise, my soul, my joyful pow’rs,
And triumph in my God:
Awake, my voice, and loud proclaim
His glorious grace abroad.”

My friend whispered in my ear, “Do you recollect what the prophet predicted of the last gospel days: *In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord?** Such shall be the gracious prelude to that day, when there shall be no more the *Canaanite* in the land, that *the highway* and the *way of holiness* shall be so plain, that the *wayfaring men*, though

H

* Zech. xiv. 20, 21.

fools, shall not err therein.”* The farmer still sung ;

“He rais’d me from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell ;
And fix’d my standing more secure
Than ’twas before I fell.”

“Is not this strange doctrine ?” I cried to my friend. “Ask him yourself, (he said) for if he sings *with the spirit and with the understanding also*, he can explain.”

“Are you not mistaken, honest man, (I said) in what you are singing ?” “Oh, no, Sir ; (he immediately answered) he that raised me from sin, preserves me now from falling ;

“The arms of everlasting love
Beneath my soul he plac’d ;
And on the Rock of Ages set
My slipping footsteps fast.
The city of my bless’d abode
Is wall’d about with grace ;
Salvation for a bulwark stands
To shield the sacred place.
Satan may vent his sharpest spite,
And all his legions roar ;
Almighty mercy guards my life,
And bounds his raging pow’r.”

“Does this seem strange to you, Sir ? (continued the countryman.) Surely, you ought to know better than I : but, for my part, I thank God, I know enough to know, that they are safer that are kept by grace, than they who never fell. The angels, who kept not their first estate, fell from having no security but their own strength. And our unhappy first father, who had more strength

* Isaiah xxxv. 8.

of his own than ever any since of his fallen race have had, soon manifested what that strength was when left alone.

“ I do therefore desire to bless God, that my strength is in another, and not in myself. Oh ! it is a sweet morsel to my soul, which says, *O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.** Besides, Sir, had Adam continued in his original state of uprightness, and all his children have partaken in the same ; this would have been no other, after all, but the righteousness of the creature. Whereas now, *the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. He is the Lord our righteousness ; and therefore he is himself our strength in the time of trouble.*† And while the soul, whom divine grace hath snatched, as the Lord hath me, from the gates of destruction, can take up that scripture, *Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength ; God the Holy Ghost applies that other precious assurance of his word, Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation ; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.*”‡

——The countryman waited not for a reply, but resumed his labour and his song together ;

“ Arise, my soul, awake, my voice,
And tunes of pleasure sing ;
Loud hallelujahs shall address
My Saviour and my King.”

Happy soul ! (thought I) thou hast *that* which empires cannot purchase ; God for thy father, Jesus for thy portion, and the Holy Ghost for thy comforter !

* Hosea xiii. 9.

† Psalm xxxvii. 39.

‡ Isaiah xiv. 21.

I saw the countenance of my companion glow with pleasure, at what the countryman had said, while he finished the observations of the labourer, with asking and making answer himself to some few questions of his own. "Why (says he) is it, that the divine promise of perseverance should be so difficult to be received by our unbelieving hearts, but because we think we must have strength enough of our own? Why is the doctrine of the Redeemer's righteousness, as the sole means of justification before God, so hard to be accepted by us, but because the unhumbled pride of our nature cannot brook the mortification of being saved without doing *something* towards it? And wherefore is it, that sinners are so averse to believe, that their salvation is wholly the result of being *chosen* in Christ, *before the foundation of the world*, but because it becomes a gratifying compliment to our proud nature, to have it thought, that we have first sought Christ? But the poor sinner desires that it should be always kept in view, that if *we love him*, it is because *he first loved us*. His language is, Lord, it is all distinguishing grace from beginning to end. I know I should fall every hour, but for the promise of being upheld by him, who, having *loved his own, loveth them unto the end*. And as I am fully conscious, that I have no righteousness of my own, how precious becomes that assurance to my soul, wherein thou hast said, *My salvation shall be forever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished.*"*

* Isaiah li. 8.

THE STRAYED SHEEP.

AT that instant a sheep leaped over the hedge, just where my companion and I stood, as if pursued by some enemy. The poor animal seemed much distressed and affrighted. He looked at us, but appeared disappointed. As he stood still, I called to him ; but he knew not my voice. At length a man appeared at the fence, over which the sheep had broken ; and calling in a particular tone which the poor animal understood, he turned and looked upon him. The shepherd then came over the hedge, and advancing gently towards him, still continuing his call as he approached him, the sheep came to meet him, and seemed rejoiced at his presence ; and they went away both of them together.

“ Ah ! (I cried) I think I could spiritualize this occurrence.” “ Do so, then, (replied my friend) for such should be the custom of Zion’s pilgrims, to extract improvement from every thing which they see or hear.” “ I would suppose (I said) this poor strayed sheep to be the emblem of the wandering sinner ; and the man pursuing it as a friend, which the silly animal fancied an enemy, to personate the man Christ Jesus. And under those images, if I mistake not, several very sweet doctrines of the gospel may be discovered. As for example : that the Lord Jesus had a fold before the foundation of the world is evident ; for in the close of his ministry, he thanks the Father for them which he had given him, and of which *he had lost none*. This fold, by the entrance of the

prowling wolf into Paradise, wandered and was scattered abroad into the wide wilderness of the world. For so the Lord speaks of them: *My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth.** But though wandering and scattered, they were the Lord's sheep still. That little foolish wanderer, we just now saw, was never altered in his nature, though wayward and perverse in his track. Though he left the sheepfold, yet he was still the sheep, and not the goat. In like manner, Christ's spiritual sheep did not lose their relation to him, when they left his fold. This character of Jesus's sheep should never be forgotten by us; for it is plain, that Jesus himself never loseth sight of it. In the moment he speaks of them as wandering and scattered, as diseased and weak, he calls them still *my sheep*. And hence, in the recovery of every one of them, the same idea is carefully preserved: *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.†* And what can be more refreshing and encouraging to a poor sinner, than the consideration that, if of the fold of Jesus originally given by the Father, however scattered over the face of the earth, however pent up in the den of beasts by the accursed enemy of souls; still he is the sheep of Jesus, concerning whom the promise is made and passed, *My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.‡* The eye of the Good Shepherd is ever over them. He beholds

* Ezek. xxxiv. 6.

† Ezek. xxxiv. 16.

‡ John x. 28.

them as *his* sheep, while they appear among wolves ; and when the hour is come, according to his blessed promise, like that poor animal we just now beheld, they shall hear his voice, and follow *him*, though they flee the voice of strangers. How expressive to this purpose are the words of God by the Prophet : *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out ; as a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered ; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.**

“ And if this doctrine be well-founded, (I continued) what a volume of consolation it holds forth to the sheepfold of Jesus, under their own diseases, weaknesses, and wanderings ; and the long wanderings and wayward obstinacies and rebellions of their unrecovered relations and friends, for which they mourn so frequently at the mercy seat ! The lion and the bear may have taken the tender lamb from the fold ; but our David will in *his* time, and not ours, and the properest time too, go out after him, and deliver him from his devouring mouth. *My sheep* (saith Jesus) *shall never perish.* That’s enough !—*Fear not, then, little flock ; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.†* And how eternally secure must be every one of the fold, when the final presentation of them before the throne of glory is to be expressed in these words ! *Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me !”‡*

* Ezek. xxxiv. 11, 12. † Luke xii. 32. ‡ Isa. viii. 18.

——When I had finished my remarks, my friend thanked me. “I am much pleased, (he said) I assure you, with your ideas on the subject. You have, in my opinion, very sweetly spiritualized the incident of the strayed sheep : and you certainly have ample authority from scripture for the several observations you have made. The frequent allusion, which is there adapted to the various circumstances of a sheepfold, is expressly done with this intention, to describe the Lord’s gracious dealings with his people.

“There is one view of the subject which hath often struck me, but which, so far as my reading extends, hath not been sufficiently noticed, if at all, by any writer ; I mean, where Jesus is following the thousands of his fold ; through all their wayward paths, amidst the lion’s den, and over the mountains of darkness, his eye is still over them for good, and his arm unremittingly stretched forth to keep them from everlasting ruin ; though they, as yet in their unconscious state, senseless either of his presence or his favour, are *making him to serve with their sins, and continue to weary him with their iniquities !* There is somewhat in this view, which opens to them a most precious and endearing trait in the character of the Lord Jesus ; when once the film which obstructed vision in them is removed, to see things as they are, and that he hath brought home any of his wanderers to his fold, *on his shoulders rejoicing !*

“If you and I, my brother,” he added, “had the faculty of discerning objects spiritually, we should discover many in this situation now, who appear, to every eye but his who knows his own under all disguises, as *goats*, from their behaviour ;

but yet are the real *sheep* of Jesus, which, by and by, he will gather out, and say to them, as he did to the church of old, *Come with me, my spouse, from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards.*

"Gracious Power!" he exclaimed; "while speaking of thy long-suffering to thy people, oh! let me never forget, for how many years that long-suffering was extended to *me!*"

"And to me," I cried.——A moment of silence followed, when my friend resumed his discourse.

"I cannot help remarking, my friend," he said, "how wonderfully the Lord hath brought you on your way; and particularly in the knowledge of divine things. Many there are, who, notwithstanding they are very precious plants which the Lord's right hand hath planted, do not make great advances. But I may truly say of you, as the apostle did of the church of the *Thessalonians*, *your faith groweth exceedingly!*"

"Alas!" I replied, "I fear I do not grow at all. I cannot perceive in myself any progress." "Do not say so," he answered, "for this borders on unthankfulness. In our desires after greater measures of knowledge and grace, let us never overlook the less; nor, while we earnestly beg the Lord to bestow more, unthankfully forget what he hath already given. It is very true, as the apostle observes, that our highest attainments in the present state are only as the attainments of children; and that *if any man think he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.* Nevertheless, an apprehension of the very first principles in grace, nay, the circumstance of

being *matriculated* in the school of Jesus, is an unspeakable mercy, which a whole life of thankfulness is not sufficient to acknowledge.

“Look back, my brother,” he added, “from the first traces you can discover of God’s manifestations in your mind, to the present period, and compare your situation then with now, and you will at once perceive what rapid advances you have been making in the divine life, under the teachings of God the Holy Ghost. And this is, in fact, the only method whereby to form a true estimate of ourselves. For when we draw conclusions from the present only, or calculate our growth merely by our desires of being finally saved, or when we erect as a standard, whereby to judge ourselves, the excellency of others more advanced; all these models, being ill-constructed and ill-chosen, must invariably induce mortifying views of ourselves by the comparison. This is not, therefore, the right plan, by which we are to ascertain our state. But if we so judge of our progress in grace, as we estimate proficiency in the works of nature, the method will be more accurate. In the vegetable kingdom, for instance, however certain an advance in growth may be, yet the most intense eye can never discern any one plant actually growing. But by the comparative observation of a few days, every one is enabled to discover, that a progression has taken place.

“And while I am speaking of this subject of growth in grace, I would desire to add another observation, which is intimately connected with it. The apostle says, *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* Now,

if I really grow in grace, (as increasing grace humbles more and more the soul) I shall grow more sensible of my own worthlessness, and Christ's all-sufficiency ; deeper views of sin in my fallen nature will induce all those gracious effects, which tend to enhance the Saviour ; a conscious sense of want will awaken as conscious a desire of having those wants supplied ; and every day's experience will make self more lowly, and Christ more exalted. This is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord together. The progress of grace therefore, connected with the progress of the knowledge of the Lord, must ever produce those effects. A little grace, like the dawn of day, when shining in the heart, enables the believer to discover by this twilight somewhat of the darkness around. In proportion as the light advances, he sees the objects clearer. But he then only becomes sensible of all the evils lurking within, when the meridian brightness is completed. Grace, in like manner, shining in its full lustre, discovers to us more clearly the corruptions of our nature ; and while it accomplisheth this purpose, it answereth the other blessed purpose also, which the apostle connects with it, of giving us *the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*"



AN INN.

It became a matter of much satisfaction, I believe, to my fellow-traveller, as well as to myself, to behold the appearance of an inn on the road ;

for we both needed rest and refreshment, so that without any deliberation we entered the door.

"Can you accommodate us?" (said my friend to the host, who happened to be near the passage as we approached the house.) "Certainly, (answered the man) and shewed us into a room."

"You do not forget, my brother," whispered my fellow-traveller to me, "which it was among the pilgrims passing through this world, who could not find this accommodation; *there was no room for him in the inn.* How sweetly is it arranged in all the various circumstances of life, to discover somewhat of his bright example going before us in almost every situation; not by way of reproach, but of pointing out to us, in numberless instances, the superiority of our accommodations to his!

"There is something in the very nature of an inn, (continued my friend) which serves, as it appears to me, to promote the sacred purposes of a pilgrimage like ours, more effectually, than almost any other situation; and had I my choice on this point, I should like it, of all others, for my abode in the dying hour; for every one is so taken up with his own concerns, that there is neither time nor inclination to attend to the affairs of others; so that here a man might be free from the troublesome importunity of attendants, which sometimes becomes a sad interruption to the soul, in her preparations for her journey into the invisible world, while the carriage is at the door."

Our refreshment, consisting of a little tea and bread, was soon served up; which, my friend having first implored the divine blessing to sanctify the use of it, we really enjoyed. "Tea is a

very pleasant beverage (said my friend) to my taste; and I should find some difficulty to get any thing as a substitute, were I to be deprived of the use of it. I have heard many speak of it as pernicious; but I verily believe, that one great reason why it proves so is, because it is a *graceless* meal. If we do not beg God's blessing over our food, how can we be surprised, if, instead of being wholesome, it proves hurtful?"

After we had finished our repast, and like well-fed guests had arisen from the table, blessing the kind Master of the feast *who giveth us all things richly to enjoy*, we were about to enter upon the perusal of the "word of God," by way of profitably filling up the measure of time till the hour of rest; when a circumstance occurred, which at once arrested the attention of us both.

THE JEW.

THE instant we arose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the court-yard of the inn, opposite to the room where we were sitting, a Jew (as he appeared to be) with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door to inquire of him, whether he knew a man of the name of *Abraham Levi*, one of their people. "Yes, (he said) I know him very well; but he is not one of my people." "How is that, (replied my friend) are not you a Jew?" "No, (the poor man said) I thank the Lord I am not. I was once, indeed; but, I trust, I am now a lover of the Lord

Jesus." The effect wrought upon my mind by this short conversation was like that of electricity. "Pray, my friend, do us the favour (continued my companion) to walk into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers, like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus; and we shall much rejoice, if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought." "That I will most readily, (replied the man,) for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change, to which I owe such unspeakable mercies.

"Without going over the whole of my history from my childhood, (he said) which hath very little interesting in it, and is unconnected with the circumstances of my conversion, it will be sufficient to begin it at that part which alone is worth your hearing. It is about two years since, that I first began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable state of our people. I discovered, from reading the scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies with which, from age to age, the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also, how, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people, the Lord had punished us. But what struck me most forcibly was, that prophecy of scripture, *That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until the Shiloh should come.** Whereas I saw very plainly, that our nation was without a sceptre, without government, without temple. I remarked

* Gen. xlix. 10.

moreover, that our people were a light, and vain, and worldly-minded people, who took it not to heart. And if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, ours deserved his displeasure more. Added to all these considerations, which very powerfully operated upon my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God ; and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, that the Shiloh was come, and to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labour.

“ It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that, my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I paused, as I stood on the bridge, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I cried out, *O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who hast declared thyself as keeping covenant-mercy for thousands ; look down upon me, a poor Jew, vouchsafe to teach me what I must do. Thou knowest my desire is to serve thee, if I knew the way. Thou art justly displeased with our nation and with our people ; for we have broken thy commandments. But, oh ! Lord, direct me.*

“ It was with words somewhat like these (continued the poor man) that I prayed, in which I wept much. At length I walked on, and passing by a place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought with myself, but the Lord

may have directed me hither ? I went in, and near the door finding a seat unoccupied I entered into it and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If this Saviour was my Saviour, I thought, how happy should I be ! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept. And many times, during the continuance of the service, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain.

“ I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behaviour ; so that, as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came towards me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt their worship with my drunkenness. But when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told them the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me, that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.

“ Not to fatigue you with my relation, it will be sufficient to observe, that from that hour my mind began to discover hope. And as the kind people, into whose congregation I had thus entered, undertook to instruct me in the principles of the Christian faith, I soon learnt, under God, the fulfilment of the Jewish scriptures in the Christian. And now I find cause, every day, more and more, to bless the Lord for what he hath done for my soul.

“ One little event more (he added) I will, if you please, relate, which happened soon after my go-

ing into this church. My business of selling my pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt ; and calling at a pastry cook's shop, who occasionally dealt with me, a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman, dressed in black ; the mistress of the house stood behind the counter, and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably ill, came in for a tart. " Ah ! John, (cried the old gentleman) what, you have left the infirmary ! Is your disorder declared to be incurable ? " " Yes, Sir, (replied the poor man) they say they can do nothing more for me. " " Well, John, (answered the old gentleman) there is one Physician more which I would have you try : and he never fails to cure. And he doth it also *without money and without price.* " The poor man's countenance seemed to brighten at this ; and he said, " Who is he ? " " It is the Lord Jesus Christ, (said the gentleman) pray go to him John, and if he be pleased to heal your body it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed ; and if not, he can and will heal your soul. " The poor man did not relish the advice ; for he went away looking angrily. As for me, I cried out, (for I could not refrain) May the Lord bless you, Sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Saviour ! He is indeed all you have described him, for he hath cured both my body and soul. Astonished at what I said, the gentleman expressed his surprise in observing, " I thought you were a Jew ! " " I was, Sir, (I answered) once ; but by grace I am

now a Christian." He caught me by the hand, and entreated me to go with him to his house, where I related to him, as I have to you, the means under God of my conversion. And when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer. And oh! Sirs, the fervour and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord's mercy to my soul, never shall I forget. The recollection, even at this distance, continues to warm my heart."

When the poor man had finished his narrative, my friend and I looked at each other, then at him, and then upward. One sentiment, I am persuaded, pervaded both hearts; and this was the language, *Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!*

My companion offered him money, at which he seemed hurt. "I am sorry, (he said) that you should think so unfavourable of me." "Well, but (answered by friend) we have detained you from your employment, and it is but just; as you have so highly contributed to our pleasure, we ought not to make it detrimental to your interest." "I should be very sorry, (replied the poor man) if my diligence would not make up for those occasional interruptions, which are so sweet and refreshing in my own heart, while giving satisfaction to others. No, Sir, I thank you for your intentions; but I cannot accept your offer. Besides, I need it not; I have enough and to spare. God supplies all my wants, and enables me sometimes to help the wants of others."

The poor man took his leave, after mutual wishes and prayers for our spiritual welfare. And the night being now advanced, after reading the scriptures and prayer, we departed each to his chamber.

—The town clock struck five, just after I awoke from a state of sleep much refreshed. I called to mind that sweet promise of God to his people, and found cause to bless him, in that it had been again verified to my experience ; *When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid ; yea, thou shalt lie down and thy sleep shall be sweet.**

I recollected also, that many of the Lord's children were at that moment in a state of pain and suffering, and, like Job, complaining that *wearisome nights were appointed unto them.†* I felt my heart drawn out, under the fulness of the impression, to adopt the language of the sorrowful sisters, and to tell the Lord, *many whom thou lovest are sick.‡*

When we consider the defenceless state of sleep, and the many dangers to which our poor, fallen nature is then peculiarly exposed ; not merely to the ravages of *enemies*, against which bolts and bars might cast up some little security ; but the carelessness of *friends*, from which none but his watchful eye, *who never slumbers nor sleeps*, can guard us ; how suitable is that sentiment of the church of old, to form the first impression of the mind at the dawn of day ; *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not ; they are new every morning.§*

* Prov. iii. 24.

† Job vii. 3.

‡ John xi. 3.

§ Lam. iii. 22.

I have often thought, when looking upon some dear child of my affection, in its unconscious state of sleep, what creature of all God's works is so truly helpless, and so much exposed to danger, as man in that season ! But I have not unfrequently found relief therefrom, in the assurance that this very state, in the necessity of it, implies the existence of a peculiar superintendence. And, indeed, the eventual experience of thousands is continually bearing testimony to the truth of that precious promise ; *My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.**



THE DIARY.

ACCORDING to my constant custom, since the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, I opened my diary in my little *pocket companion* to inquire, *What is the word of the Lord recommended to my serious consideration to day ?* For it is a favourite maxim of mine, with the first dawn of day, to seek a morning blessing from the Lord in this way, in one of his sweet promises. The promises of God are the present heritage of his people. They are evidently intended to be their support and stay in the house of their pilgrimage. In a little book, which I always keep by me for this purpose, to have recourse to as occasion may require, and which I call my pocket companion, I have also a *diary*, containing some refreshing portion of scrip-

* Isaiah xxxii. 18.

ture for every day in the year. And though it cannot be supposed (neither will any one I should hope imagine) that by a selection of this kind a preference is given to one gracious promise to the exclusion of the rest, *which in Christ Jesus are all yea and amen*; yet, as the mind is not sufficiently capacious, nor sufficiently alive, to exercise itself in the meditation of them all, it should seem to be no unpromising plan of usefulness to have recourse to one or more of them in this manner.

I shall be exempt, I trust, from the charge of presumption, if I add, that I have found, at times, the promise in my diary so strikingly suited to my then circumstances, as if a voice had accompanied it like that of the apostle to the men of Antioch, *To you is the word of this salvation sent.*

The promise for this day I found to be Psalm cxxi. 5. *The Lord is thy keeper.* Sweet and precious indeed to all his people is this assurance! My mind, as I lay upon my bed, was much exercised in the contemplation of God as a covenant God, in keeping his people. It is he which keeps them in the faith; keeps them in the hour of temptation; keeps them from the power of the enemy; from a thousand unseen, and as many visible evils; from finally falling, and from eternal death. And though he hath nowhere promised to keep his people from tribulation, or persecution, or the strife and slander of tongues, from sickness, or sorrow, or the like; yet he hath promised, that *no weapon formed against them shall prosper; no temptation shall take them, from which he will not make a way for them to escape. He will bruise Satan under their feet shortly.* Oh! the blessed privilege of those who have the Lord for their keeper!

MARKET-DAY.

FROM the very great noise which I heard in the street, as I arose from my bed, occasioned by the passing of horses and the tumult of the people, I concluded that somewhat more than usual occupied the public attention. In looking for the cause from the window of my chamber, which opened into the street, I discovered that it was *market-day*. Though the hour was so early, and the sun had not far advanced in climbing the heavens, yet the world was risen, and every one eagerly engaged in preparation for the sale of their different commodities.

Ah! thought I, how just is that aphorism of our blessed Lord, *The children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light*. If, in the market-days for the soul, (I mean the public festivals and Sabbaths of the church) they, whose office it is to bring forth out of God's treasure things new and old to the people, were truly as anxious as those men of the world, what gracious effects might we not hope would follow under the Spirit's blessing!

The apostle to the Gentiles desired the church of Corinth to consider him and his faithful companions under this character. *Let a man* (saith he) *so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God*. A steward is an upper servant in a family; one whose office (according to our Lord's own explanation of the Jewish householder) is to provide for the family, &c. whom *his Lord hath made ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season*.

And were that also properly considered, which the apostle adds, that *it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful*, the solicitude of the earthly market-man would fall infinitely short of that, which he feels who ministers in heavenly things, in proportion as the object and the end of the latter transcend in importance those of the former. How early would the stewards of Christ's mysteries arise, in order to prepare the *feast of fat things, of wine on the lees, and of fat things full of marrow, for the mountain of the Lord's house!* How extremely anxious would they be, that no hungry nor thirsty soul of God's household should be overlooked or neglected! And conscious, after all their best and most earnest preparations, that there can be no actual enjoyment, no real participation on the people's part, but from the predisposing grace of the Lord; how ought every steward to bring forth what he has prepared with prayer and supplication, that the Lord himself would direct every heart and influence every mind!

Imagination can hardly form a character more truly valuable, than the man who ministers in holy things; who spends his time, his talents, his gifts, in short, his all, to this one purpose; who becomes indeed the *faithful and wise steward*, to feed the *babes of Christ's household* with the *sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby*; and them that are of *full age, with strong meat, when by reason of use their spiritual senses are exercised to discern both good and evil*; and who, to both, can humbly recommend, like the apostle, the goodness of the food, as being what *he himself hath seen, and looked upon, and tasted of the*

word of life. It must be a refreshing consolation, I can well conceive, in the close of life, to every *faithful* steward, after that the day's fatigue of the market for spiritual food is over, to be able to take up the same language as the apostle Paul: *I have kept back nothing that was profitable; I have not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God; I have fed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; and now I commend you to God and to the word of his grace!*

When I came down from my chamber, I found my friend waiting breakfast for me; for the hour was by this time past eight: and, as his custom was, he proposed inviting as many of the family as felt disposed, to attend our morning prayers. The mistress of the house, with one servant only, accepted the offer. And after my companion had read a portion of God's word, he followed it up with prayer.

When the mistress and the servant had withdrawn, we sat down to breakfast; my friend having first implored the usual blessing on our food.

THE GRACE.

“BOUNTIFUL Father of mercies, who art supplying the daily wants of the millions which are looking up to thee from all parts of the universe; we desire grace to praise thee for this seasonable and suitable portion of food, which thou hast spread before us for the support of our perishing bodies. And we entreat thee for grace from thy

Holy Spirit in the use of it, that we may receive this and every other blessing, as coming from our reconciled Father and God in Christ Jesus. Vouchsafe, dearest Saviour, to sit at the table which thou hast furnished ; and may we be among those, *which shall sit at thy table in thy kingdom* ; and while, as thy children going home to thine house, thou art refreshing us thus by the way, though all the benefit be ours, let thine be all the glory. Amen."



THE PARALYTIC.

WE had scarcely finished our repast, when the mistress of the house came in to inform us of the situation of a poor man in the street, who had been bed-ridden for *fifteen* years. "He is a very pious creature," added the mistress, "and a great number of gentry go to visit him. I thought it might be pleasant to you to hear of him." "That it is, (replied my friend) and we thank you for it. We will go to see him. Where is his dwelling ?" "Five doors only below our house," she answered, "and the waiter shall shew you."

When we came into the poor man's room, though every thing manifested the indigence of his circumstances, yet it was that kind of poverty which recommended itself by its cleanliness. There stood a lady at the foot of his bed, in conversation with the sick man. "How do you live ?" (I heard her say as I entered the chamber.)

“Live, madam !” replied the poor man, “I am in very good circumstances, I am not only rich by reason of present possessions ; but I am heir to a large estate.” “Astonishing !” said she, “you were pointed out to me as a very poor man, and I came to give you some relief.” “That you may still do, madam, if you please, (answered he) for the riches I possess, and the inheritance to which I am born, do not at present make me above charity. I am only *rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom.*” “Oh !” replied the lady, “is that all ? But in the mean time how do you manage for this world ?” “My God,” cried the poor man, “*supplies all my need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry ; both to abound, and to suffer need. When my worldly stock is reduced low, and I have neither scrip, nor bread, nor money in the purse, I make use of bank-notes.*” “Bank-notes !” (exclaimed the lady.) “Yes, madam,” he answered, “here is a book full of them ; (taking up a Bible which lay upon the bed, and opening it) and often times I find many folded up together in the same place to which I open. Look here, madam,” he continued ; “see, here is a promise suited to every poor man’s case. *When the poor and needy seek for water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them. I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of vallies.** And the high value of those promises is that they are sure and

* Isaiah xii. 17, 18.

certain. Faith draws upon the Almighty Banker, and his is all prompt payment." While the poor sick man said this, he opened the Bible to another part, and he exclaimed again, "See, madam, here is another promise to a soul under doubts and fears. *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go ; I will guide thee with mine eye.** And thus madam, in every state and every circumstance of life, in this blessed book are assurances exactly suited to the wants both of my body and soul. Promises of provision for the way; deliverances under danger; preservation in seasons of affliction; support under trouble; direction in times of difficulty; and the Lord's assured presence in every time of need. *Fear thou not ; for I am with thee ; be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.†*"

The lady, without adding any thing, put a piece of money into the poor man's hand, and withdrew. What her sentiments were, I know not. But, as soon as she was departed, my companion addressed the sick man. "I am much delighted," he said, "to see you, my friend, so cheerful. It is a pleasing consideration, that your sickness is sanctified. But are you enabled always thus to rejoice in the promises?"

"Oh! dear Sir, (the poor man answered) no. Very frequently, through unbelief, I am tempted to exclaim, with the church of old, *my hope is perished from the Lord.‡* I have seasons of darkness, and times of temptation: notwithstanding, I can

* Psalm xxxii. 3.

† Isaiah xli. 10.

‡ Lam. iii. 18.

and do say, through grace strengthening me, sometimes under both, *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; for though I fall, I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.** Yes, in my haste, I cry out, *all are liars.* But, blessed be the Lord under all, my God is faithful. He is better to me than all my fears."

At the poor man's request, my friend and I sat down, and we had a most refreshing season. I could truly say, It is good to be here!

We parted not till we had spent a few minutes in prayer. And in the conclusion, the paralytic broke out in a faint and trembling voice,

" My willing soul would stay
In such a frame as this;
And sit, and sing itself away
To everlasting bliss."

Our departure from the sick-room was affecting. We parted as those who were to meet no more on this side the grave.

At our return to the inn, our intention was to tarry only for the moment, just to settle with the host, and be gone. But an event took place, which not only retarded that intention, but finally set it aside. How short sighted is man! What a perilous path he is walking!

We were returned to the inn: and while my friend left me to discharge the expenses which we had incurred there, he visited, as his manner was, the stables, in order to drop a word on *the best things* among that class of people who inhabit those places, and who are not in the way of hearing it elsewhere.

* Micah vii. 8.

He used to say, that, in his opinion, no order of beings whatever, stood in a situation more pitiable. Formed, as their society is, for the most part, of the children of the poor, they are introduced from their earliest days into this path of life, without the smallest education, or the least idea of its usefulness. And as they advance in years, though advancing at the same time in all the phraseology and corrupted manners of the stable, they remain totally destitute of any apprehension of divine truths. Perhaps without a breach of charity it may be said, that very few of the whole body of this order, whether considered as postillions, chaise-drivers, stage-coachmen, or ostlers, have any more consciousness of *the things which accompany salvation*, than the cattle with whom they herd.

What a vast body of such characters (could the imagination form the group) do the various inns of the kingdom contain! And what a mass of corrupt communication is perpetually produced in their daily intercourse with one another, without a single sentiment flowing from the lips of any to *the use of edifying*, so as to *minister grace unto the hearers!* And what tends to make the evil greater, as if the contagion of the stable, in the corruption of manners, had not sufficient scope for exercise during the six days labour of the week, there is no remission to this unhappy class of beings on the Lord's day. The warning bell of the church, which kindly calls all ranks without discrimination to the house of prayer, calls in vain to them. Unaccustomed to any means of grace, and unacquainted with either the morning prayer or the evening worship, they who among them find no

immediate employment, lounge their time in the stable ; while by far the greater part are engaged as drivers of stages, and diligencies, and chaise, to conduct, in defiance of all laws human and divine, a set of Sabbath-breakers like themselves, in their several journies of business, and journies of pleasure. The number which the various inns of the kingdom pour forth upon those occasions every Lord's day is incalculable.

How frequently hath it excited my commiseration, when in some sweet morning of the Sabbath, the *Diligence* hath passed the street under my window. "Alas ! (I have said) what a wretched way of life must that be, which loses the very distinction of days by such uninterrupted labour ! Surely, except in form, there can be no difference of character between the driver and the horses ; when both are trained to expect the going over the same tract of ground in their daily labour." How irresistibly hath my heart, sometimes when pursuing the reflection, been impelled to admire, and in that admiration to adore, the distinguishing grace of God ! *Who maketh thee to differ from another ?* is a sweet morsel for the gracious soul to feed on, whenever such occasions of reflection occur. I have felt the full force of it many times on the Lord's day ; particularly when in the same moment in which I have beholden a party of pleasure-loving creatures, driving through the streets on their various excursions, in order to consume this blessed day in idleness and dissipation, I have seen some gracious souls gladly hastening to the house of God, to adore his goodness, to hear his

word, and to implore the effusion of the Holy Spirit on his churches, both ministers and people, on this sacred day of rest!

—The reader will pardon this *digression*, I hope, induced by the impulse of the moment.

My friend, as was before observed, had left me in the inn, in order to visit those regions of ignorance and sin which the stable furnisheth. And never surely was a mission to the most darkened nations of any hemisphere more needed, than to such British heathens of our own.

My friend possessed every requisite for the office. Added to a natural gentleness of manners and a suavity of deportment, he had acquired the most winning art of persuasion. He knew how to adapt his discourse in the least offensive method, so as to arrest the attention of his hearers. And although few perhaps were ever better formed to shine in the circle of the great and the learned; yet he had imbibed the full spirit of the apostle's lesson, and knew how to *condescend to men of low estate*.

His first endeavour was directed to find out some leading trait of character in the poor, uninformed mind of the person he addressed. His next object was to suit his discourse in correspondence to his apprehension. And in cases where but little opportunity offered of a personal conversation, if providentially any of the fraternity had acquired any knowledge in letters, he had the pleasing art of prevailing upon them to accept of one or more of the pious, little tracts, which are now so generally circulated, and which he always carried about with him in his pocket for this purpose.

THE STABLE BOY.

It so happened that a poor boy, who acted as subordinate to the ostler in the stable, and indeed as a general underling to all the menial servants of the inn, was engaged in rubbing down one of the horses in the stall, when my friend entered the stable. The gentleness and condescension with which my friend bid him "good morrow," so very dissimilar to the surly language which he in general received from his companions, soon called up his attention. And as my friend entered farther into conversation with him, first on subjects pertaining to his office, and then by an easy transition, and by a manner peculiarly his own, on matters of an higher nature, the poor lad's heart, like that of Lydia mentioned in scripture, was opened to attend to things spoken.

The subject (as I afterwards learnt) to which my friend adverted, was the happiness of *that rest which remaineth for the people of God*, in the upper and brighter world; contrasted to the toilsome and unsatisfying nature of all things here below. And when he came to describe the love of the Lord Jesus in purchasing this rest for his people, and his affectionate desires that the poor and the weary, and the heavy laden should come to him, and find this rest unto their souls, the poor youth, unable to contain his emotions, melted into tears. He did not in so many words say what he felt, but his eyes expressed it. My friend, who possessed great quickness of penetration, perceiving the effect, without seeming to notice it, then made his discourse somewhat more personal; and held

forth the pleasing consideration to his view, that this love of the Lord Jesus was intended for *him*. The poor boy wiped away the tear which had fallen on his cheek, and drew nearer to my friend, as to one whose kindness had begotten confidence and affection; and manifested that kind of sympathy of soul, which seemed to thank him for what he had said, and to request him to say more.

THE DISASTER.

INTERESTED in the highest degree with this awakened concern in the youth; my friend had forgotten the situation of one of the horses in the stall near him, and was unconscious of any danger until he felt its effect. By a violent kick, which he received in his side, just beneath the ribs, he was thrown on the pavement in the stable, and remained in a state of insensibility for a considerable time, after we had brought him into the house and placed him on the bed. The alarm, given on the first rumour of this disaster, soon reached my ears; and it was some consolation to me, in the very afflicting circumstance, that I was present to see him taken up, and very gently carried to his chamber.

As soon as he had recovered from his fainting, I ventured to approach his bed-side, and, taking him by the hand, expressed my great concern for what had happened. "How unfortunate (I exclaimed) is it, that you should have gone to the stable! How sad a thing that you should have stood near this horse! If one could but have fore-

seen"——“ Be patient, my kind friend, I beg of you, (he interrupted me with saying) and in your affection for me, do not forget the first principles of your holy faith. You are looking wholly to *second* causes, to the mere instrument ; and totally shutting out our gracious God from the government of his own world, and all his tender concern and gracious watching over the persons and interests of his people. Alas ! my dear brother, (he continued) by this method you increase every trouble, and rob yourself of a thousand comforts. Would you have me to be angry with myself for going into the stable, or displeased with a senseless horse, for acting according to his nature as an horse ? As well might we take offence at the winter's cold, or summer's heat. Mere instruments are nothing, but as they are acted upon : and what folly it would be to ascribe to them a power with which they have no connexion ! No, no, my good friend, (he continued) never lose sight of that gracious and Almighty Being, who *ordereth all things according to the counsel of his own will* ; and then you will discover wisdom, and faithfulness, and love in every providence. It is not enough, (said he) in my apprehensions, merely to acquiesce in the divine will. Every true believer in Jesus ought to do more ; he should approve of it. It is one thing to say, *the Lord's will be done*, and another to say, *good is the will of the Lord concerning me*. And this is no more, after all, than what is frequently observed in the common circumstances of the world. If, for example, I see an artist of esteemed excellence in his profession, constructing his machine upon various principles of a complicated nature ; though the whole appears to my

view intricate and confused, yet I take it for granted that *he* knows how the several parts will harmonise together, and I yield an implicit obedience to his superior judgment. And shall we so readily ascribe such sagacity to men, and yet venture to question wisdom in the arrangements of God?

“Do, my brother, (he rejoined) do settle this in your mind as an everlasting maxim: our God, our gracious covenanted God in Christ, is unremittingly pursuing, in every minute event of his government over his church and people, their real welfare, whether it be through the path of pain or pleasure. If they are exercised with suffering, or even deeply drenched in affliction, it is because there is a *needs be* for it. Not a single pain or trouble could be dispensed with. It is not sufficient barely to say, that the affliction will ultimately do them no harm. This is but a negative kind of approbation. We must say more. It will do them, sooner or later, much good. And so infinitely interesting is the most minute circumstance in their life, that to prevent (were it possible) one trouble, or to add one prosperous event, would derange the whole plan of God's government. Oh! depend upon it, we are under a wise as well as a gracious superintendence. A synod of angels could not add, or diminish, without manifest injury.

“With respect to the present providence, (he added) I know not what is the will of my God concerning me: but one thing I know, that *all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.**

* Psalm xxv. 10.

And, lifting up his eyes, he cried out, It is my mercy, thou dearest Lord of thy people, that *my times are in thy hands!* I have long been enabled, by thy blessed Spirit's grace, to commit my *soul* into thy keeping. Well may I then leave this *body* of sin and death to thy care."

My companion had quite exhausted the little strength left him, when he had finished these words. I requested him to spare himself. He moved his head, as if consenting, and turned his face upon the pillow.

To every one present, besides my friend, it appeared to be a matter of great uncertainty, for many days together, whether the injury he had sustained would terminate fatally. The surgeon, whom I had desired to be called in on the occasion, did not (for indeed he could not) speedily decide upon the question. The contusion was very great from the violence of the blow; and the extravasation extended far around the region of the loins; but the surgeon only ventured to speak of it in a general way, as a case which must necessarily be attended with great danger. But however *others* thought, the patient himself had already formed *his* opinion; and the event proved, that that opinion was too justly founded. The period was arrived for his *going down to the house appointed for all living.*

For my part, my concern was so great, that I seldom, unless from necessity, left his chamber. He had been as a father to me; and I felt all that tender affection for him which a kind father might be supposed to excite in the mind of his son. And, indeed, independent of all personal attachment, my small services, during his confinement,

were abundantly recompensed by the spiritual good that I had gathered from the many precious observations which dropped from his lips. And although I had so highly profitted from the great lessons on religion, which he had endeavoured to teach me while *living* ; yet in his *dying* hours he favoured me with the sweetest instructions I had ever received. He had been as a kind taper, burning with much brightness, to lighten me on in the path of grace. But, like a taper, the most vivid rays were those which were emitted while expiring in the socket.

The reader will forgive me once more, if I pause to remark, how exceedingly mistaken, in their calculation of the means of happiness, are the children of the world, who seek it in the various haunts of what is called pleasure, notwithstanding the constant and uniform experience of thousands, in every age, has determined that it is not there to be found. If my reader will give me credit for the assertion, (and I do most solemnly assure him of the fact) never, till the hour of my friend's confinement when *living* in his chamber, did I know what that pleasure of the heart is, which arises from all those solemn but infinitely interesting reflections which engage the mind under sorrowful dispensations : such (I mean) as considerations of the awful government of God ; the rich discoveries of the importance of salvation ; the littleness of the earthly pursuits ; the sweetness of the sympathetic feelings ; and, in short, all that train of thought, connected with those ideas, which a sick chamber is so admirably calculated to induce. Circumstances of this kind, no doubt, are solemn ;

but if solemn, they are only the more congenial to the soul's purest enjoyments. *The countenance may be saddened, but the heart is made better.**

But to return : The stable-boy before mentioned, in whose spiritual interests my friend was so warmly engaged at the time when this providence visited him, soon manifested the concern in which this affliction had involved him. It would indeed exceed all description to say what were his feelings. Every little portion of time, which he could spare from the demands of the stable, was employed in running up to the chamber door, to inquire after my friend. One trait in his character of this kind was peculiarly affectionate. He was always found with the first dawn of the morning, watching at the door of the room, in order to gather the earliest information from the persons who should first come out, how my friend had passed the night.

Neither had the good man, amidst all his pains, forgotten him. He mentioned to me several times, with much pleasure, the hopes which he had conceived of serious impressions forming on the youth's mind, from the conversation which he had with him. And upon being told of the lad's frequent and earnest inquiries after him, it served to confirm him in this opinion the more ; and he very much wished to see him. The poor boy was soon introduced, and the interview was truly affecting. After frequent visits, the youth acquired some little confidence ; and my friend found many opportunities of instructing him in that wisdom, which, under God the Holy Ghost, maketh *wise unto salvation.*

* Eccles. vii. 3.

It was seemingly a long season of uncertainty for the exercise of my mind in waiting the Lord's will, respecting the final issue of my friend's state. Sometimes my hopes were high, and at others low, according as the symptoms appeared to vary. But, having acquired a little portion of that precious lesson in the school of grace, that the Lord's mercies are nearest unfolding, when our expectations of them are nearest closing, I felt, I thought, much sweetness in that scripture ; *it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.*

It was in the midst of these exercises the surgeon informed me, that his apprehensions were, that a mortification had taken place. He had, as usual, in his morning visit, examined my friend's bruised body ; and then, for the first time, it was that he discovered the advancing gangrene. Our hopes now were all over. Whether my poor suffering friend, from our looks, or from the whispering of the surgeon, was led to suspect the cause, I know not ; but so it was, that he anticipated the question, by saying, "I believe, Sir, that you find a mortification hath taken place. I have been free from pain in the part injured for several hours." The surgeon expressed his hopes, that it might not be so. But my friend, with a look of complacency which I shall never forget, replied, "Why would you wish so ? It is not the smallest reproach, surely, to men of skill and ability, when the ordination of the Lord baffles all the efforts of art. And with respect to my feelings, allow me to assure you, Sir, that it is an event more to be desired than dreaded. I have long been looking forward to this period, as to the

happiest moment upon earth. Although I have the least cause of all men to be dissatisfied with the pilgrimage of this world, (few travellers through it having been more highly favoured) yet I long to be at home in my Father's house, and cannot but rejoice in the pleasing prospect; knowing that when I am *absent from the body, I shall be present with the Lord.*"

The surgeon expressed much satisfaction in seeing his patient so composed and tranquil; and soon after withdrew. When he was gone, I sat down by his bedside. Taking me by the hand, with that warmth of affection which distinguished his character, he thus spoke: "My kind friend and companion, I am going to leave you; but I would say to you, as Joseph did to his brethren, *God will surely visit you.* I have nothing to bestow upon you, but my prayers. Had I indeed the wealth of the whole earth, it would not be worth your consideration. The most invaluable legacy I pray the Lord to give you, is, what the apostle coveted above all things for himself; *to know Jesus, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.* If the Lord gives you this, possessing it, you possess all things. And *the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that you have suffered awhile, will make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, and settle you.*

"With respect to myself, (he continued) and my views concerning the awful state about to open before me, blessed be God, from the security I possess in him, *who is the resurrection and the life,* I have no fears. I have been enabled again, and again, during my confinement on this bed of sick-

ness, to take the most deliberate reviews of the evidences of the renewed life. And the result of the whole enables me to rejoice in the finished salvation of my God. It is indeed a solemn idea, that in a few hours I am to appear before God, *the Judge of all*. But it is my mercy, that I am come also to *Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant*. While, therefore, I look at him, who is *Fellow to the Lord of host*, I find holy confidence. For I discover in him, and his redemption, a full, complete, and all-sufficient righteousness, adequate to every want, and answerable to every demand, to satisfy the law of God.

“Under the influence of this well-grounded persuasion, which God the eternal Spirit, I trust, hath graciously wrought in my soul, I have more than once, since this illness, been refreshed by the same comfortable promise, with which the Lord favoured the patriarch of old, to encourage him in his journey, *Fear not to go down into Egypt, I will go down with thee*. So, methinks, the Lord encourageth me. And I know indeed, that Jesus will go down with me to the chambers of the grave. *He hath the keys of hell and the grave. He openeth, and no man shutteth. He shutteth, and no man openeth*. Oh! it is a rapturous consideration to my soul, that in all places, and in all states, my Redeemer is with me. The covenant holds as firm as ever in the grave. And death, which dissolves all other bonds, looseth not the bonds of the everlasting covenant. Our union, my brother, (he proceeded) with our great mystical Head, is as perfect when in the dust of the grave, as when that dust is animated in the body. When Jesus from the bush proclaimed himself the *God of*

Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, this blessed distinction of character was carefully marked and preserved, "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for *all live unto him.*" Those patriarchs, though mouldered at that time for many years into dust, were still as much *living* to God, in all the purposes of covenant connexions, in their dust, as when in an animated body. And hence the apostle observes, *whether we live, we live to the Lord ; or whether we die, we die to the Lord ; whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord's.*"

My friend paused a moment to recover strength, and then proceeded—"This body of mine, my dear brother, will very shortly be fit only for worms and corruption. And when in this state, the tenderest hearted friend, the fondest lover would say of such a carcase, however engaging before it might have been, as Abraham did of Sarah : *Bury my dead out of my sight.* But as these sensations are not *his* with whom we have to do ; as Jesus never set his affection at first upon his people, for the comeliness of their persons ; so neither doth that affection lessen, when their *comeliness is turned into corruption.* Neither is their union with his person, even for a moment only, interrupted by death. For as the divine and human nature of the Lord Jesus received not the smallest separation, when he died upon the cross ; so of that union between Jesus and the members of his mystical body, there is no dissolution, when their bodies are gathered unto their fathers, and they see corruption. For their souls are received into his bosom ; and with respect to their bodies also, they still live to him. *Because I live, saith Jesus, ye live also.*

Every particle of their dust is the same to their great spiritual Head, when dust, as before that change. For as the union of Jesus with their whole persons, that is, their bodies as well as their souls, is indissoluble, it is evident that the same must continue with the dust of their bodies. And hence when Jesus saith, *Fear not to go down into the grave, I will go with thee*, it explains in what a tender and consoling sense we are to understand this. And indeed as in death, so in the resurrection, the certainty of this glorious event ariseth from the same consideration; *for if*, saith the apostle, *the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.** And thus the resurrection of the just is certified to them, not simply by the power of God, but from the indwelling residence of the same Spirit of God, by which they are first awakened in grace to a new and spiritual life, and then finally quickened to eternal glory, by virtue of their union to the person of Jesus, from the operations of the Holy Ghost."

My friend would have proceeded, but his strength did not admit of it. He took occasion, however, at every interval possible, to say somewhat suited to the circumstances of a dying saint. The poor stable-boy was indulged by his master to spend much of his time in the sick chamber; and the many precious sayings which fell from him by way of caution, encouragement, advice and entreaty, became truly edifying and refreshing both to him and to every attendant around.

* Rom. viii. 11.

It would swell the history of my pilgrimage to a large volume indeed, were the whole of the circumstances which attended my friend's departure to be set down in it. The reader will excuse the omission, I hope, and rest satisfied without any further enumeration of particulars, than just to observe, that he continued to the latest moment in the perfect enjoyment of his senses and the divine consolation. He sunk gradually ; and as he fell lower and lower, the words which he uttered evidently proved that his views of the glory about to open upon him were fuller and brighter. I sat by him, with his hand clasped in mine, when he died. The last words on his trembling lips were —“ Dear Lord !”

I buried him without pomp, and without any mourners, but the poor stable-boy and myself, in a vacant corner of the parochial church-yard.

The youth returned with me to the inn, where we took an affectionate leave of each other. I could only say, *May he who hath, I trust, begun a good work in you, perform it until the day of Jesus Christ !*

On the morrow, having discharged all expenses incurred at the inn, I left it without regret. The situation of our first parents, so tenderly described by the poet,* seemed applicable to my case ; and I quoted the passage to my mind as I crossed the court-yard.

“ Some natural tears they dropp'd, but wip'd them soon.
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.”

* Milton.]

The time was now arrived, when a reverse of situation was to take place in the circumstances of my pilgrimage. Hitherto I had met with little else but *joy and peace in believing*. Some few natural fears and apprehensions, arising from the remains of unbelief, had now and then, it is true, arisen in my mind ; but the Lord had so graciously overruled them, that they generally ended in my stronger assurance.

I have been often led since to reflect, with peculiar pleasure, on the wisdom as well as the mercy of that process of grace, through which the Lord is leading his people. Like Israel of old, in their emancipation from Egypt, of whom it is said, that God *led them not through the land of the Philistines, although that was near, lest, when they should see war, their minds should be tempted to return: but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness.** Similar to this now, is the first opening of the spiritual path ; the difficulties and discouragements are by no means like those which believers meet in the after stages of their pilgrimage. Thousands there are, who, like Israel, have sung the song of triumph, as they did at the *Red Sea*, when a forty years travelling through a dreary wilderness lay still between them and *Canaan*. And many, no doubt, like *Israel* too, afterwards, in the midst of some heavy, unlooked-for trial, have been prompted to exclaim in the bitterness of their soul, *Is the Lord among us or no?*

The reader will indulge me again to pause over this remark, and ask him if his experience hath nothing of a correspondence with it ? I am per-

* Exodus xiii. 17.

suaded the case is very general. The gracious leader of his little flock, who feeds them, as it is said, like a shepherd, *gathers (we are told) the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom, and gently leads those that are with young.* He always suits the strength to the day. He proportions the burden to the back. Hence the earliest manifestations of divine love are generally the most pleasing, and, according to our conception of things, in that period, the most powerful. It is in grace, as it is in nature; first impressions are most affecting. When the eye of the body suddenly emergeth from darkness into light, the transition is most strongly felt. And in like manner, when the eye of the soul is first opened to see the *wondrous things* of God's law, the effect is proportionably greater than when accustomed to their view.

I could wish the reader of long experience would consider this more than, I am persuaded, is generally done; and mark it down in the diary of his pilgrimage. These things formed many hard problems in David's life; until frequent experiments, aided by frequent visits to the sanctuary, explained them. It was not in the first trials that he adopted that sentiment, *I know that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.** It becomes a very blessed proof of advances in grace, when the tried soul can use such language.

But to return. The season was come when my exercises were to be given me. And for the better opportunity of trial, all human aid was to be first withdrawn; that like the pelican in the wilder-

* Psalm cxix. 75.

ness, being solitary, Jesus might be my sole resource. My faithful friend and companion, the Lord had removed out of my sight. He had sent the worm to destroy this highly prized gourd. And now the storm began.



MY RELATIONS.

I HAVE not, according to the usual mode of histories, brought my reader in the former part of my tale acquainted with an account of my connexions in the world. The reason hath been, that objects of an higher and more interesting nature claimed a priority of attention. It would not even now be at all important in the memoirs of a Pilgrim to Zion, to inquire “to whom related, or by whom begotten.” But if he wishes to know, he may be told, that I have not been without the enjoyment of those sweet charities of life. The Lord hath given me many who are very near, and very dear, to my affection in the ties of nature. Even in the very moment while writing, I feel all the tender influences of the claim ; and pause to lift an eye of humble supplication to the God of all grace, that he may give to *every one of them* grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Grace doth not destroy, it only heightens and refines our feelings.

Among the number there was *one* more intimately wrapped about my heart, whose influence in every thing but religion, I have ever found it to be both my interest and my happiness to feel : for whom there needs no other claim than nature’s

feelings to call forth every energy of the mind in the promotion of *her* welfare ; and in grace, my earliest and latest prayers for her salvation will cease but with my breath.

Perhaps some reader, circumstanced in the same particularity of situation and of sentiment, may feel his mind drawn out in a similar affection. *As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.**

I sustained very much of conflicts and persecution from the whole of my unawakened relations. But from her, in the sweet and almost irresistible claims, in which her arguments were encircled ten-fold more than all. “You have made up your mind, I suppose, (said one of them to me, in a very pointed and half-angry manner, one day when the conversation had been serious) to forego all your future prospects in this world. Neither the profits nor pleasures of this life can be worth *your* attention. And as to the scorn and derision of mankind, no doubt you move in an atmosphere too high to be sensible of it.” “I do very earnestly wish (said another) that you would reflect, before it be too late, of the folly and scandal of associating yourself with such low and ignorant persons, as you have lately made your companions. A man of your education and ability to be seen with such ! Have you no pride, no regard to your own character ?” A *third* upbraided me with blasting all the hopes of my family ; and that I should certainly bring myself to beggary. And a *fourth* very jocularly desired me first to be assured of the reality of what I professed to be looking forward

* Proverbs xxvii. 19.

to another world for, before that I relinquished all the prospects and enjoyments of this.

But all these were trifling, compared to the solicitations, the remonstrances, the jealousies, displeasure, and a long train of other persuasions, with which that very near and tender friend before mentioned armed herself to prevail upon me to relinquish my pursuit. And if no power but nature had been with me to resist her claim, very sure am I, that I must have yielded to entreaties coming from an advocate so endearing. "If, (said she, in a moment of peculiar solemnity, after speaking of a dear friend to both, departed into the world of spirits) if those new sentiments of yours be really founded in truth, what is become of *him* whom we followed to the grave? It is impossible that so much sweetness and amiableness can be lost?" The reader who knows what the conflicts of nature and grace mean; whose heart at times is like that of the Shulamite in the contentions of two armies, will know somewhat of what I have felt in those seasons.—Adored Redeemer! I have not wanted, thou knowest, that evidence of being thy follower; in plucking out an eye, cutting off an arm, and taking up a cross! It was the legacy of my late companion, that I might know the fellowship of Christ's sufferings. And here was an answer to his prayer.

It was much about the same period, in which my mind was thus deeply exercised with the unceasing importunity and persecutions of my relations, that I received a more formidable assault from another quarter. While I was seeking consolation from retirement and reading, in the inter-

vals of more important engagements, a circumstance arose in consequence of the latter, which very much affected me.

THE BOOK.

I FOUND an author, whose writings were particularly directed to the subject of divine grace. The title first attracted my notice, and invited me to the perusal. But the trial it afterwards proved to me, will be (I hope) thus far useful, to caution me against curiosity in future. *It is a good thing* (the apostle saith) *that the heart be established with grace.** But it is dangerous in the unexperienced and the unestablished, to be running about in quest of novelty. The leading doctrines of this writer's creed, founded on what hath been generally distinguished by the *five points* of the *Dort* Assembly, from being originally formed there, were to this purpose: That grace is equally free, and equally offered to all; the acceptance or refusal of it depended upon ourselves. And hence, that the improvement or mis-improvement rests upon the will of man: That the regeneration of the Holy Ghost doth not so operate as to be irresistibly effectual, but that a man's own conduct may frustrate the life-giving power. And, lastly, the final perdition of the people of God is very possible, notwithstanding all that the everlasting love of the Father, and the infinite merits of the Redeemer, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, hath wrought, in order to prevent it.

* Heb. xiii. 9.

The reader who hath accompanied me thus far in my pilgrimage, hath seen enough of my weakness not to know, that such a train of doctrine was sufficient for a time to throw a damp upon all my confidence. I am like the sensitive plant in these things; the least touch makes me recoil. To hear, therefore, of the bare possibility of falling from grace, in the close of life, and apostatizing from *him whom my soul loveth*—(and apostatize I certainly should, if the perseverance depended upon myself) what a distressing apprehension!

Neither did my trials end here. There was yet another in reserve for this season of temptation. What David remarks of the *natural* world is equally applicable to the *spiritual*: *Thou makest darkness, and it is night; wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.* When the Lord withdraws his shining on the soul, the *enemy*, who knows the time of darkness to be the most favourable for his work, *goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* And never till the *sun ariseth again, will he lay him down in his den.**



THE BROTHERS.

It happened of an evening, while my mind was reeking under all these united attacks, that I walked forth into the way. My path lay through a field, in which there were two men; who, from the congeniality of their sentiments, more than

* Psalm civ. 20—22.

from the tie of consanguinity, I considered to be brothers. They were so engaged in conversation, as they walked before me, that I escaped their notice ; so that I had opportunity of hearing the whole of their discourse unperceived.

“Can you reconcile your mind to the doctrine of redemption, (said the one to the other) and place the least confidence in the merits of Christ ? For my part (continued he) I am quite a free thinker. I see no necessity upon which it is founded. The world, take it altogether, according to my opinion, is good enough ; and cannot need an expiation. And, indeed, when I consider what modern discoveries have been made respecting the immensity of creation, and that the globe which we inhabit is but as a speck in it, the idea lessens the doctrine of revelation altogether in my esteem.”

“You are perfectly right, (answered the other) I have long thought as you do, and have made up my mind to reject it altogether. All the doctrines of Christianity, excepting the moral part of it, (and that the world had before) are, in my esteem, only calculated for weak and vulgar minds. And indeed their authority is precarious : depending upon writings that, for ought we know, may or may not be true.”

The reader will at once conclude that these observations tended not to dissipate my former gloom. And although, low as my spirits then were, I thought a mere child in grace might easily have refuted their false reasonings ; yet my mind was too sore and too sorrowful in the moment, to enter into controversy. Every application to a wound, if put on with roughness, acts like a caustic.

I had heard enough not to covet more ; and therefore withdrew from the brothers as unperceived as I came. The words of Job struck my mind with great force as I left them : *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him : He that reproveth God, let him answer it.**

It was a considerable time before I was enabled to shake off the ill effects induced in my mind by reason of the conversation which I had overheard between the brothers. Not that my faith (I bless the great Author and Giver of it) was in any danger of being overthrown thereby. For a faith like mine, founded in grace, will ultimately triumph over all the powers of nature. He that is born of an *incorruptible seed* liveth and abideth forever ; and therefore nothing *corruptible* can destroy it. It may apparently be choked with weeds, and may at times languish and seem ready to die. But die it cannot ; for the seed is incorruptible. And, by the way, I would desire my reader to set this down, in the memoranda of his mind, as an everlasting maxim, that what originates in God cannot be lost by man. Divine teachings baffle all the malice of human reasonings.

But my distress induced by the conversation which I had heard sprung from another source. There is in every man's heart, even when in a renewed state, a much stronger propensity to evil than good. Hence nothing is more easy, than the introduction of a train of corrupt thoughts into the mind, which the greatest exertions, void of divine aid, cannot afterwards expel ; while on the

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* Job xl. 2.

contrary, the chaste and pure images of grace, tending as they do, in every instance, to mortify and subdue the corrupt desires of our nature, nothing but an higher influence than what is human can gain admission for them at the first, or cause them to be cherished when received. And this explains why it is that false impressions, from being more congenial to our nature, are more easy of access, and more permanent in their duration, than the true.

I know not, reader, what *your* feelings on this point are; but with me, I confess, this is quite the case. It is a work of much difficulty with me to keep alive in my mind the remembrance of some sweet portion of scripture, or some delightful verse in a psalm or hymn, to help me on to the hour of meditation and prayer. Whereas the idle, corrupt jingle of some unmeaning song, which was lodged in the memory of my boyish days, too frequently rises to my recollection, in spite of all my endeavours to suppress it; and I fear that, if encouraged, I could repeat it with the greatest exactness. Pause, to observe with me what a decisive proof this is of the remains of indwelling corruption!

It was an ill effect of this kind, which the sceptical conversation of the brothers left upon my mind. By the ludicrous turn which they gave to some portions of scripture, and the impious and bold reasonings which they made on others, they gave birth to a train of images within me, which, like a spectre, arose continually to my view.

I stop the reader one moment, again to remark, and what I (humbly conceive) if closely adopted,

will not prove an unprofitable remark ; how little they consult their own happiness who mix indiscriminately with the world ; and who are not sensible of the dreadful consequences of seeing and hearing the corruptions which are going on in life. What from the lightness and indifference to divine things, with which some treat the truths of God, and what from the open contempt poured upon them by others, it is really like running into the midst of pestilence, to come within the circle of their society. Our eyes are purveyors of the evil, and our ears inlets of the corruption. And never was that aphorism of Solomon more necessary to be observed, than in the present moment : *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it ; pass not by it ; turn from it, and pass away.** For my own part, I have never found my peace of mind so unbroken, as since I have totally withdrawn myself from all but the necessary and unavoidable intercourse with men of the world. By ceasing from their communion, we live *out* of the reach of the contagion of their principles ; and we live *above* the influence of their good or bad opinion. And it is a maxim of as much salutary consequence to the mind, as it is to the body, to breathe a pure atmosphere. You cannot come within the region of any thing filthy and corrupt, but its poisonous effluvia will attach themselves to you.

I have often thought what a peculiar providence it was, that while my mind was under the impression of such accumulated trials, God should direct my steps towards the means of relief. But

* Prov. iv. 14.

so it was, that in prosecuting the path of my pilgrimage, as I passed the road, there stood an house on my right hand, with this inscription in the front of it;

THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER.

I CONSIDERED it then, as experience hath taught me to regard it many times since, as among the special appointments of a covenant God, that my path was directed this way. He hath promised to *bring the blind by the way they know not*; and in this instance nothing could be more pointed.

I pity the man from my heart, who passeth through life and discovers nothing of divine wisdom arranging and ordering all the events of it; and particularly in those instances where the Lord's enemies are promoting and forwarding by their unconscious conduct the very designs, which they are seemingly opposing. There is something very striking in proof of a divine superintendence, when men unintentionally fulfil that will, which all their designs and actions are directed purposely to thwart. When the sons of Jacob sold their brother for a slave, little did they dream that Joseph's future dignity and Israel's salvation were to result from this cruelty. Nay, (what is infinitely more important, and an higher testimony than this) when the Jews had nailed the Lord of life and glory to the cross, who should have thought that from that very cross all the everlasting happiness of his people was to spring? And, (to compare small things with great) when the persecutions of my *relations*,

the false reasonings of the author whose *book* I had read, and the conversation of the infidel *brothers*, which all conspired to give me such distress, became the very foundation under God of my establishment in grace; who will but conclude, that such a peculiar coincidence of circumstances cannot be the result of any thing fortuitous, but *cometh forth* (as the prophet speaks) *from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.**

It will be, no doubt, one portion of the felicity of heaven, to look back and trace the whole of our eventful history to the full. But it is now, in my esteem, walking in the highway of communion with God, when at any time we are enabled to trace it in part here below.

The house of the interpreter.—I have read of such an house and of such a character, as being in the pilgrim's path, when in my days of childhood. But I knew not at that time, that I should myself live to behold either of them realized. A thought, however, struck me as I read the inscription; "Perhaps I may find here some help to explain to me the difficulties with which I am at present exercised!" I recollected what Job had said, that *if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness; then he is gracious unto him.†* Encouraged by these considerations, I drew near to the house. The door was wide open. Jesus hath said, *Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.‡* I found that it open-

* Isaiah xxviii. 29.

† Job xxxiii. 23.

‡ Rev. iii. 8.

ed into a spacious vestibule ; in one of the compartments of which there was written, in large characters, as follows :

THE RULES OF THIS FAMILY.

First. It is expected that every one who comes under this roof, fail not to be present at family prayer, and the reading of the scriptures.

Secondly. It is hoped that, beside these things, attention be given to the private engagements of the closet. They who begin the day in prayer, will probably find cause to end it in praise.

Thirdly. The apostle's maxim is to be invariably followed, under the divine blessing: *in all things having conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ : that no corrupt communication may proceed out of the mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.* Ephes. iv. 29.

Lastly, Whatsoever is done in word or deed, all is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him. Colos. iii. 17.

To every one who, looking up for grace to render it effectual, sincerely desires to act in conformity to these rules, the good man of the house saith, "*Come in, thou blessed of the Lord, wherefore standest thou without ?*" Gen. xxiv. 31.

Thus invited, I entered the door, and found that it led into a large room like an hall. There were several persons seated round a table, at the head of which a venerable old man appeared to preside. Having taken my place at the bottom, to which the

kind looks of the master at the top seemed to invite me, I soon discovered, by what dropped from his lips in discourse, that the characters around me were Zion's Pilgrims like myself, and that the Lord of the way had directed them in his providence hither for refreshment and counsel.

It is a very precious thing, when little societies meet together on gracious errands. There is a restraint upon the mind in the assembly that is mingled. *Two cannot walk together except they be agreed.* I venture to believe that more or less, every follower of the Redeemer knows somewhat of this in his own experience. And it should seem that the dear Lord himself, at his last supper, restrained those sweet and incomparable discourses, which the apostle John hath recorded in the fourteenth and following chapters of his gospel, until Judas the traitor had withdrawn. For as soon as he was gone out, Jesus said, *Now is the son of man glorified*; and immediately the Lord began his farewell sermon.

At this assembly of the Interpreter's, there was somewhat visible in every countenance, which indicated that *they were all of one heart and of one soul*. They were come together to lay down their several burthens, and to unbosom their minds to each other. And the good man of the house seemed to be deputed to speak a word of consolation to every case.

I found my mind much relieved under one part of my burthen, (I mean under the sorrows induced from the persecutions of my *relations*) by what the Interpreter said to a woman in the company under similar circumstances. "My best advice to you (he said) will be, to recommend you to seek grace

in order to adopt the prophet's example. For when he found no favour from man, he recollected that he had the favour of God. So that however wicked the times were in which he lived, yet the righteousness of Jehovah was unchangeable. *The best of them* (he said) *was as a brier, the most upright is sharper than a thorn hedge.* Who therefore could venture to come near either?

“Your case, you see, is not singular, in the unkindness you sustain from your relations on account of your religion. In all ages it hath been the same. And hence the prophet saith, *Trust ye not in a friend; put ye not confidence in a guide; keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom. For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.* But what was the prophet's conduct under these heavy troubles? *Therefore, (saith he) I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.** The more the world frowns, the sweeter will be the smiles of Jesus. And the greater unkindness you meet with from your relations, the greater will be your esteem of the affection of the Redeemer. What, though all your earthly connexions fail, and their friendship is continually fluctuating and changeable; yet in Jesus you find an unchanging friend *at all times; one born for adversity, and who sticketh closer than a brother.*

“And it should very evidently seem, that God overrules those very events which tend to loosen

* Micah vii. 4, 5, 6.

our attachment to every thing here below, on purpose to raise our affections, and to fasten them on the great objects which are above. By *tinging* our most innocent enjoyments in this mortal state with vanity and disappointment, what is it but in effect saying, *Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted?* There is much meaning in that word of the prophet, *therefore*; when he says, *Therefore* I will look unto the Lord; that is as much as to say, Because all things else are dissatisfying, I will look where I am sure not to be disappointed. Though all creatures leave me, my Creator is the same; and though every earthly friend fail me, my heavenly Friend never will. O, depend upon it, let a child of God be persecuted, forsaken, slighted, or despised ever so much by man; yet while he hath a God to look up to, and a covenant-God to trust in; while he can say *My God*, he may at the same time with full assurance say, *He will hear me.*

“And I believe it possible, nay more than possible, even frequently induced by divine grace, that where the love of God is shed abroad in the heart in its fulness and strength, it drives out all lesser considerations; as the effulgent brightness of the sun puts out the fire of the hearth. And it is in this sense we must accept that otherwise seemingly harsh doctrine to flesh and blood, where the Redeemer saith, *If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his life also, he cannot be my disciple.* That the apostle Paul felt the influence of this hating his own life, no one will question, who attends to the holy

saint's groaning under *the body of sin and death*, which he tells us he carried about with him. And that a believer in the present hour, who knows what it is at times to loathe and even hate his own flesh from the corruptions of it, may without violence to the purest affections be well supposed to feel something of obedience to the Redeemer's precept, in hating every tie which tends to separate the soul from the great and unrivalled object of its love, will not be doubted. *Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee*, is an appeal, which many besides David have been enabled to make."

When the Interpreter had finished his discourse to the woman, he addressed himself to me; and concluding from my appearance among the circle, that one and the same motive as brought others to his house, had brought me also, he desired to know what was the immediate subject of my present attention.

I simply repeated to him the distress with which my mind had been exercised, since I had perused a little *book* on the subject of grace, and had overheard the conversation between the *brothers*.

He prevented my adding more, by saying, "I know very well that author's writings, and can easily conceive how his reasonings may have operated upon your mind. But a moment's reflection, under God the Spirit's teaching, will be enough to refute doctrines of such a tendency.

"To suppose that the gift of God's grace depends upon man's merit, is to invert the very order of things, and make the creature the first mover in his salvation; which is in direct opposition to the

whole tenor of scripture. This, if true, would destroy God's *foreknowledge*.

“To imagine that our acceptance or refusal of grace is the result of our own pleasure, is to rob God of another of his glorious perfections of character : for it is in effect saying, that man is more powerful than his Maker, in that what God wills, man may defeat. And this takes from God his *omnipotence*.

“To fancy that our improvement, or misimprovement of grace, will render it effectual, or the contrary, is committing another breach on the divine attributes ; for this is reducing the covenant of grace to a covenant of works. And hence, after all God hath said and promised, concerning the freedom, and fulness, and sovereignty of his salvation, in this case, the event of it would depend on the merit of the creature. And this is taking from God both his *wisdom* and his *glory*.

“And to believe, after what God the Father hath given, and God the Son hath accomplished for the salvation of his people in a covenant way, that souls renewed by God the Holy Ghost, and called with an holy calling, may yet finally perish ; this is bringing down redemption work to so precarious and uncertain an issue, as must leave it altogether undetermined, whether a single believer shall be saved, or not. And this throws to the ground the distinguishing character of God's *immutability*.

“I will very readily grant (continued the Interpreter) that grace is brought forward into many sharp and trying dispensations in the lives of the faithful. God is certainly exercising the gifts of his Holy Spirit which he bestows upon them, by

temptations and troubles, and a variety of providences. And, in fact, such must be the case. For unexercised grace would otherwise find no scope to manifest itself. But for any one to imagine from hence, that our acceptance with God depends upon the event of those exercises, would be to make the present life a life of probation and trial, as some injudicious teachers have taught their people, and to render the Redeemer's merits and death still questionable, whether it would become available for the sinner's justification before God.

“Blessed be the divine benignity, things are not so ! It is our mercy that the finished and complete salvation of the Lord Jesus doth not rest upon so uncertain a tenure. An *everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure* can never leave the issue of it doubtful. What Paul saith, when resting the whole stress of the sinner's hope for acceptance before God, upon the justifying merits of Christ Jesus, may be equally applied to the case of every believer ; *I do not* (says he) *frustrate the grace of God ; for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.*”

My heart rejoiced in the consolation. God be adored, (I cried) who hath brought me to this place, and hath given you (taking the Interpreter by the hand as I said it) *the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary.** I see now the fallacy of those arguments, in that book, by which my mind hath been exercised with distress.

* Isaiah li. 8.

THE PICTURE ROOM.

AFTER this conversation, the Interpreter led me, and the few pilgrims also who were standing at that time around him, into the *Picture Room*, to explain to us a beautiful representation of the *Jewish passover*.

“ Perhaps (said the good man of the house) it may never have struck you, that so infinitely important a point in the salvation of sinners is the precious death of the Lord Jesus, that the Holy Ghost caused it to be shadowed out, by various representations in his church, according as the several objects intended to be accomplished by it required.

“ See here (said he, pointing to the first compartment in the painting) the *passing over* the houses of the Israelites, by the destroying angel. Here are no bolts, no bars to their windows. But behold that blood on the *lintel*, and on the *two side posts*; this became the security. Now this represents the deliverance of the sinner from divine visitation for sin. Hence the Lord Jesus is said *to have delivered us from the wrath to come*.

“ But it is not enough to deliver from the wrath to come, if that had been all that the Lord Jesus had accomplished by redemption; our nature, though rescued from merited punishment, would still have continued polluted and defiled, without an expiation; and, consequently, incapable of drawing nigh to God. See here, therefore, (cried the Interpreter, pointing to the second compartment in the painting) the great doctrine of atonement, represented in the death of the Lamb. And

this doctrine is again more fully typified by the sin offering on the day of atonement. *Levit. iv.*

“Neither is that all. Our deliverance from wrath and the expiation of our souls from sin, though exempting from merited punishment, and cleansing away the guilt of our nature, yet could not qualify for the enjoyment of happiness without a change of heart. Hence, therefore, the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, as essential to prepare the mind for divine communications here, and glory hereafter, became an interesting point in the doctrine of salvation. And this was represented in the Jewish church by the typical purifications enjoined under the law. Here (cried the Interpreter, pointing to a third division of the painting) is a cluster of them sketched together. In the passover *the leaven was put away*: implying, the regeneration of the heart maketh all things new. And the cleansing of the *leper*, and the *living bird* dipped in the blood of the slain over running water, and causing it to fly away in the open field: these all shadowed it out. *Levit. xiv.*

“And, finally, you see, (said the Interpreter) in order to confirm all the new covenant promises, Moses is here described as sprinkling the people with the blood, to intimate, that, in the conveyance of those mercies in Christ Jesus, it is not enough that the blood of Christ is *shed*, but it must be personally *applied*. This office of the Holy Ghost is therefore here represented in the fourth compartment of the picture, to testify that *Christ is made God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.*

“I hope (said the Interpreter, when he had finished his remarks on the picture) that God hath given you grace to understand all these things. Now let me conduct you to a spot, which, if I mistake not, will do more under his blessed teaching to relieve your mind from the distressing doubts the sophistry of the *infidel brothers* hath occasioned, than all the volumes of human learning. What a man's real sentiments are will best be known in his *dying* moments. In that hour the mask of deception falls off; and you may be sure then to see his real features.”

Saying this, the Interpreter took me by the hand, and led me into an outer court; the rest of our little company followed us. After descending a very deep flight of steps, we came to a cave. He opened an iron gate, and upon entering it I found myself surrounded with

MONUMENTS.

IN this solemn spot, the first thing that caught my attention was the tomb of the *Author of the Leviathan*. Alas! (said I) is that the memento of that celebrated infidel of the last age? “The very same, (answered the Interpreter) that is the man whose writings poisoned the mind of the *Earl of Rochester*, as that nobleman himself declared, after his conversion. The author of the *Leviathan* lived to be an old sinner, for he was upwards of ninety when he died. His life was rendered remarkable for the many blasphemous expressions he uttered against God and his holy word. He was always bold in impiety when in company, but very timid when alone. If he

awoke in the night, and found his candle extinguished, he was full of terrors. His last words, as related of him, were, "I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world!"

And pray whose monument is that (said I to the Interpreter) which hath a bust on the tablet of it, looking so pensive? "Read the inscription it bears, (replied the Interpreter) and, from his latest confessions, which are there recorded, you will recollect whose it is." I looked with attention, and read as follows:

"I have run the silly round of business, and of pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the felicities of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low. Shall I tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No. For I really cannot help it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing now but killing time the best way I can. It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of my journey."

"Well, my friend, (cried the Interpreter, when I had finished reading the inscription) what are your ideas of infidels now? *Here* they speak plainly what are their real sentiments."

I think (answered I) my situation is like that of David's, when he went into the sanctuary of God: I now understand the end of these men—How truly awful!

Turning myself round, by way of passing from the contemplation of a sight so very distressing, I beheld in one *niche* two sculptured figures to-

gether, on one column. Who are these? (I cried.) "This on your right hand (answered the Interpreter) is the great *Apostle of Infidelity*, (as he affected to be called) of a neighbouring nation. And him on your left is a *celebrated historian* of our own.

"The *former* in great agonies of mind exclaimed to his physician, "I am abandoned both by God and man. Doctor, (cried he) I'll give you half I am worth, if you can give me life six months!" And upon the Doctor's telling him he feared he could not live six weeks; "Then (he replied) I shall go to hell!" and expired soon after.

"The *latter* spent his last days in playing at cards, in cracking jokes, and in reading romances. He is said to have acknowledged, that with all his bitter invectives against the Bible, he had never read the New Testament with attention."

My mind was so sickened from the meditation on those few characters, that I begged to hasten from the place. I saw a group of other tombs, some with inscriptions, and others without, *whose memorials were perished with them!* but I could bear no more. We ascended the same steps by which we had come down, and on leaving the dreadful place, my heart exclaimed, *Oh! my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly mine honour be not thou united!*

What impressions the rest of the company felt I know not; but, for my part, never shall I forget the awfulness of the scene. Is this the sure termination (I said to myself) of infidelity? Oh! for that warning voice, and that more powerful grace to make the voice effectual; which the man

of God uttered in the holy mountain, to be sounded in every infidel's ears : *Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong !*

My mind acquired great strength and greater knowledge in divine things during my abode in the house of the Interpreter. I was with him somewhat more than three months, and the time seemed to me but a few days ; like the seven years of the *patriarch's* labour in the service of the *Syrian*, for the reward in expectation which sweetened the whole. At length it became necessary to depart ; and the morning arrived in which I was to bid him farewell.

There were several other of Zion's Pilgrims in the house besides myself, who were also on the eve of departure ; and therefore the good man of the house called us together into the hall, in order to receive his parting blessing.

MOTTOS.

"It is my uniform custom, (said the Interpreter) when Christian friends are about to leave my house, to give them, by way of token, a written motto, consisting of some particular passage of God's word, which, by wearing it in their bosoms, may serve at once, through divine grace, to bring to their remembrance the instructions which they have received from me ; and also furnish them with somewhat of consolation suited to the peculiar frame and constitution of their own minds." In saying this, he presented to a poor man who stood near me, and whose appearance indicated

that the glass of his life was nearly run out to the last sand, a piece of paper, on which was written, Jeremiah xlix. 11, *Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me.* And within this paper there was another folded piece, bearing this inscription, Isaiah liv. 5, *For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole earth shall he be called.* And within this also a third, with this motto, Psalm xxvii. 10, *When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.* As the Interpreter presented this paper to the poor man, he said, "You have heard all that I have said to you, my brother, on the subject of your own everlasting welfare: and I am much pleased to see, from the evidences which appear in your experience of the renewed life, that a work of grace is wrought in your heart, and that your hopes are well founded. But as I know that the several claims of nature in your family have a strong hold upon your feelings, I beg you frequently to have recourse to these sweet covenant promises. The *first* is for yourself. The *second* for the beloved partner of your heart. And the *third* for your children."

To another, who stood also near me, and whose anxiety had been greatly exercised respecting the deceitfulness of his heart, and who feared lest, after all, his religion should be found to be nothing more than a cloak of hypocrisy, the Interpreter presented a paper with this motto; *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.* Psalm

cxxxix. 23, 24. And, as he presented it, he said, "Take this, my friend, and make it the subject of your daily inquiry before God. See whether you can pray with the same earnest desire as David did : or appeal to the great Searcher of hearts, as Paul did, *God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son*, Rom. i. 9. If the approbation of God, and not the applause of man, be the desire of the heart ; if the mind hates sin as sin, and not for its consequences ; if you can bless a taking God, as well as a giving God ; if you feel your soul humbled with a sense of unworthiness, while God is showering down upon you the abundance of his grace ; if Jesus be loved for his own sake, more than for his gifts ; these are all so many marks and touchstones of character, which never can belong to hypocrisy, and therefore may be considered by you as evidences of a well founded hope."

"Young man, (said the Interpreter, to a very hopeful and promising youth that was in the circle) the best motto I can present you with is the declaration which the Lord commanded the prophet to make in the ears of Jerusalem ; *Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* Jeremiah ii. 2. Keep this precious text of scripture in your bosom, as an infallible antidote against all the poisonous influence with which you may be surrounded in the long pilgrimage through which you have yet to pass. The man that hath many days to count, hath many wintry dispensations to be exercised with. Nothing can serve more effectually, through divine grace, to bear up the

mind under all its pressures, than the recollections of early notices *of* God and *from* God; and so sweet a promise of being remembered through all."

"And as for you, my brother, (the good man said, addressing himself to me) there is no passage of scripture more suited to *your* case and circumstances, than that which is contained in the prayer of the Lord Jesus, in the conclusion of his ministry upon earth, (John xvii. 11.) *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* Originally *given*, as all the faithful are, by the Father to the Lord Jesus, *before* the Redeemer manifests the Father's name unto them; evidently the *property* of the Father at the time of the donation, *for thine they were, and thou gavest them to me*; fully proved to be *redeemed* by Jesus, by having the Father's name *manifested* unto them, and having *kept his word*; strongly and powerfully recommended to the Father's keeping, by one whom the Father heareth always, and whose joint interest in the believer is one and the same with the Father's, for *all mine are thine, and thine are mine*; how is it possible that such *can ever perish, or that any should pluck them out of his almighty hand?* Keep this sweet scripture therefore I charge you, always in your bosom, and carry it about with you whithersoever you go; that its influence may be perpetual, and that the *will* of the Redeemer, corresponding with the *gift* and *grace* of the Father, may never escape your recollection; *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.*" John xvii. 24.

The Interpreter conducted me to the door, and, as I stepped over the threshold, I turned about once more to express my thankful acknowledgment of the affectionate manner in which I had been entertained——

Since we part,
 Adieu, kind friend, Interpreter from God,
 Sent from whose sovereign goodness I adore.
 Gentle to me, and affable, hath been
 Thy condescension, and shall be ever honour'd
 With grateful mem'ry.

But it was an event which the coincidence of circumstances in a pilgrim's life, like mine, could only produce, that soon after I left the house of the Interpreter, I met the *poor man*, of whom such honourable testimony is made by me in the former part of these memoirs, accompanied with my *moral neighbour*, at whose instance I attended the elegant preacher's sermon, who is also mentioned in the first days of my inquiry for the way to Zion. Struck with astonishment at what I saw, that such an one should come on pilgrimage, I was going to express my surprise, when he anticipated all my inquiries, by accounting for the change. "To this dear friend (he cried, taking the poor man by the hand) I am indebted, under God, for the gracious conversion of my mind from the error of its ways. I felt no small confusion from the strength of *your* observations respecting the ineffectual tendency of morality to justify before God; and particularly from the manner in which you stated it in your conversation, as instanced in the conduct of brethren towards one another, while deficient in love and obedience towards their Father.

But the remarks of this poor man at the church porch, after the sermon we had heard, were such as threw to the ground, through God's grace, all the building of self confidence which I had been rearing up from the supposed rectitude of my life. And since that time, I have been so thoroughly convinced, from the frequent instructions of this dear friend, whom I have made my constant companion, of the utter impossibility of man's being justified by any thing of his own before God, that all my astonishment now is, not that I have forever relinquished the vain pretension, but that I ever should have imbibed it. I am now most fully satisfied, I bless God, that so far is the highest moral virtue from affording any ground of justification before God, that unless divine grace keep the soul humble under all its attainments, it is apt to produce pride in our hearts, and thereby to subject us to the greater condemnation. It may very safely be granted, that all moral excellencies will be the necessary result of true religion, as good fruit will be the natural production of a good tree ; and that, after the greatest pretensions, we have no authority to call that man religious who is immoral. But it must at the same time be insisted upon as strenuously, that so far detached is morality from religion, in a great variety of instances, that nothing is more common in life, than to see persons who are truly irreproachable in their conduct towards man, who are totally remiss and even profane as to their demeanor before God. Hence, therefore, there are a thousand cases to which the best and most extensive laws of morality cannot reach ; but yet they are all cognizable before him

who trieth the heart. I discovered these truths by this poor man's instruction, through divine grace, and immediately found the fallacy under which I had been living. And, blessed be God, I have now learnt, that, *without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ*, the most punctual and diligent discharge of the moral obligations I owe my neighbour, cannot justify me before God."

My heart rejoiced at what I heard, and secretly I felt within me the full force of that question, *What hath God wrought ?*

I detain not the reader with the relation of what followed this unexpected meeting ; neither do I think it necessary to extend my narrative by an account of a great variety of occurrences with which my pilgrimage hath since been distinguished. I promised him at the commencement of my history, that it should be a short one, from the hour in which the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, to the period in which I sat down to communicate it ; and having brought the subject thus far, I shall therefore now relieve the reader's attention altogether.

To tell him of my present feelings, amidst a mingled state of many precious assurances, tempered with many trying dispensations, would be to relate the uniform history of every pilgrim to Zion. These are the *spots* of God's *children*, and they all prove a family likeness. I am frequently exercised with deep and sharp trials, and sometimes feel a heart disposed to tell my heavenly Teacher, that I think I might be spared many such lessons. But the upshot of the instruction generally brings

me to this conclusion : " How happy it is for me, that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own ! "

I am now waiting the Master's call, rather, I persuade myself (if I know any thing of my own heart) with a pleasing, than an anxious expectation. My desire is *to die daily to the world, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*. I wish to sit as detached as possible from every thing here below, that, when the carriage to fetch me stops at my door, I may rise up instantly, and depart *to meet the Lord in the air*. Under this view, my heart is weaning more and more, I hope, from all things beneath the sun. Little of this world can I speak, for I know but little of its employments. I am seeking *a better country, that is, an heavenly*. And what is it to the man under sentence of death in *Newgate*, what is transacting on the Royal Exchange ?

And as to the *full assurance of faith*, respecting the possession of those immortal objects which open before me, I can and do say, with the humblest, but at the same time with the best grounded confidence, *I know in whom I have believed ; being confident of this very thing, that he who hath begun a good work in me, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*. That crown of righteousness, which the apostle declared was not only laid up for *him*, but for *all them that love the appearing of the Lord*, is laid up for *me* also. I have examined myself by this standard, as well as by every other which I know of : Do I love the Lord's appearing ? Yes ! I love his appearing in the conversion of every poor sinner whom God the Holy Ghost

makes *willing in the day of his power*. I love his appearing in the gracious, seasonable, and suitable relief of all his tried family. I love his appearing in the defence of his oppressed ones from sin and Satan, in the ten thousand instances with which they are exercised here below. And, I trust, I am of that happy number who are said to be *looking for, and hasting unto*, the coming of that great day of his appearing, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*.

Reader, farewell ! May our experience, when Jesus comes, correspond with the declaration of the prophet : *It shall be said in that day, Lo ! this is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us : this is the Lord, we have waited for him ; we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Amen.*

END OF ZION'S PILGRIM.

THE
HARVEST HOME.

WRITTEN IN ENGLAND, AFTER A THREATENING
DROUGHT.

HOW quickly does joy often succeed to sorrow; the day of cheerful hope to that of gloomy fear; and the season of plenty and abundance to that of want and scarcity! Not long since the dearth of bread in this land was such, that every countenance seemed to gather blackness: the very heavens also appeared to frown upon us; for the weather, during a long time, was so dismal that it threatened to blast the approaching Harvest; we were made to feel that we were in the hands of God, and totally dependent on his mercy; having enjoyed many years of plenty without interruption, we had learnt to count upon the continuance of the same blessing; and because God's goodness had been so common, we were so much the less thankful for it. How calamitous would a general blight upon our corn have proved at this season? every mind must shudder at such a thought; such a blight was threatened indeed, but suddenly, and at the very point of time, when it was most needed, the weather changed, and a season unusually favourable for getting in the fruits of the earth has succeeded.

Man, it may be remarked, is more ready to pray to God to help him out of his distresses, than to thank him when he has been delivered; for we

are often merely selfish in such prayers; we feel a pressing want of the blessing, and we therefore cry to God for it; but when it is obtained, our whole end is answered, we now are satisfied, we grow careless about the matter, and forget to think of our Benefactor.

But let us here endeavour to prevent this forgetfulness of our present mercies from taking place in the minds of our readers, and let us invite them to come and contemplate with us that greatness and goodness of our Creator, which are so observable at the time of Harvest.

There is indeed no part of the creation to which we can turn our eyes without meeting with some proofs of the divine power and mercy. Shall we lift up our eyes to the heavens? There shines the brightness of the sun, which God has placed in the firmament to give light and heat to the world. Shall we wait till the sun is set? Then the moon and the stars take up the same language of praise, and tell of their Maker's power and goodness.

Shall we turn our eyes to the earth? See how the surface of it is spread forth like a carpet, decked with every thing to charm the eye, to delight the sense, and to supply the wants of man. Shall we look upon the great and wide ocean? There go the ships; and behold even the sea is filled with food for the use of man. *How manifold are thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast thou made them all.*

The sight of these common objects of nature, used often to carry out the holy men of old in praise and adoration to God, of which we will mention an instance in the 65th Psalm, because it is applicable to the present time: a psalm penned

after a long drought, to which had succeeded some very plentiful and refreshing rains. The psalmist, while he walks abroad, and delights himself with the beautiful appearance of the harvest, and with the prospect of plenty which is on every side, breaks out in the following thanksgiving to the bountiful Giver of all things: *Praise waiteth for thee, O God! in Sion, and unto thee shall the vow be performed. O thou that didst hear our prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Thou makest the out-goings of the morning and evening to rejoice. Thou visitest the earth and waterest it. Thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, (for the clouds are compared to a river in the air, sustained by the hand of the Almighty.) Thou preparest corn when thou hast so provided for it: Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: Thou settlest the furrows thereof: Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof. Thou crownest the year with thy goodness, and thy paths drop fatness; the little hills rejoice on every side. The pastures are clothed with flocks; the vallies also are covered over with corn; they shout for joy; they also sing.*

To every one who is of the same mind with the psalmist, the same kind of meditations will be very apt to occur. Let us, however, here assist the reader, by naming a few subjects which he will do well to reflect upon while he takes his walk amidst the reapers, and admires the plenty that is in the fields.

First, then, how naturally ought the season of harvest to send our thoughts to the *great Author* of it! How clearly is his hand at this time seen! All the power and ingenuity of the whole world cannot

frame so much as a single ear of corn. The part which man has in procuring the corn is very small indeed. He in fact does nothing himself towards its growth; he only places the seed in a situation which from experience he has found to be favourable to it, and then "*He goeth away, and it springeth up he knoweth not how.*" The seed which he plants was in the first place given by God; when the sower has put it into the ground, there is then a work, or operation, carried on, in which man is not only unconcerned, but he does not even know how it is accomplished. The grain dies, and from that death a resurrection takes place, a fresh plant arises out of the ground, and this plant is nourished by means of roots hidden within the earth, which then shoot forth without the aid of man: in this secret manner are the different juices collected and sent through the plant: by and by the flower blooms; the ear forms itself; and the corn takes the proper shape and substance; the rain in the mean time waters it; the dews descend, and the sun shines upon it, till at length it is fit for the use of man. In all this, man can do nothing. It is during his absence even that this work is going on. If the grain is blighted, man cannot help it; if it grows too slowly, he is not able to quicken it; he can only look on with hope and fear, and watch it in its different stages: he must ascribe all its growth to the unassisted power of the great Creator of all things.

Plain as the hand of the Creator is in the production of the corn, yet such is our natural stupidity, that while we gather the corn, we often think no more of God in it, than the very cattle which draw it home. The farmer speaks of his own

skill, and labour, and pains; and when the grain is ripe, he lays it up in his barn, with much self-applause, and begins to count his gains, not considering that all the praise, in fact, is due to God, and that every ear which is laid up is a proof of man's obligation to his Maker.

But let us here notice also the largeness of the divine bounty. The works of God are upon a large scale; they are like himself, infinite. The works of man are little and insignificant; it is but a small spot which his strength can water, but the showers of heaven water a whole territory at once. It is but a few acres which the diligent labours of man can make productive; but God causes his sun to shine, and his dew to descend, and the whole earth is rendered fruitful. Look over that beautiful and extensive prospect: See as far as the eye can reach how the fields are crowned with plenty; extend the scene in your imagination, still the same rich view of the divine bounty presents itself. Cross the wide ocean, and survey the different countries of which the earth consists. In all the varied productions of these different climates, we only meet with more and more signs of the divine goodness. How are we then called upon to admire and adore that glorious Being, who suffers no part of the earth to escape his kind and benignant notice!

With the extensiveness of this bounty let the continuance of it be considered. No sooner is the harvest got in, than again the seed is committed to the ground, and again the same scene returns upon us. Let us carry back our thoughts to the years that have been of old. How unwearied has been our great Benefactor! How unceasing

the exertions of his goodness ! How many generations have been fed and supported by it ! Seasons have changed, but they have only presented different views of the Lord's mercy ; and the cold of winter, the bloom of spring, the heat of summer, and the fruits of autumn, have each in their seasons manifested the same bounty and care of our Creator.

Having indulged in these pleasing reflections upon the divine bounty, it seems proper in the next place to turn our attention to a more melancholy subject ; I mean *our unworthiness of it*. For whom does the Lord open his stores, and provide with so liberal a hand ? For a race of creatures who are touched with the most lively sense of his goodness, and love and honour him in proportion to these great obligations ?

Do we then hear the reapers, while they cut down the corn, speaking good of the name of the Lord, and blessing him for his kindness to the children of men ?—Hark ! is it the hymns of praise which they are chanting in yonder field ? Is the song they sing that song of the psalmist which has just been spoken of ? Methinks instead of it, some song full of profaneness and obscenity is sung aloud. The name of God, indeed, is on many lips, but it is only that it may be trifled with or blasphemed. What then, are these men gathering God's bounty, and in the same moment profaning his name ? But follow them to the harvest home : Surely now, at least, they meet and offer up their prayer and thanksgiving, and while God is in the act of crowning the year with his bounty, each tongue is loud in talking of his mercy, and each grateful heart is swelling with his praise. It is

commonly reported, that there is no season of the year in which so much wickedness and drunkenness prevail among the farmers, as in that of bringing the harvest home. Are these then the returns which in this year also we are making to the divine goodness? Is all our complaining of want, and our prayer to God for deliverance, to end in a drunken abuse of the mercies he so wonderfully bestows?

But not to dwell on vices which are so great, that we would willingly hope they must only be the vices of a few, let us a little consider also the general unworthiness of mankind. Who are they that will be fed by this abundant harvest? Will no idle persons be maintained by it? Will no sinners have their strength sustained, so as to continue their life of sin? Will there be none who will eat with unthankfulness? None who, as the reapers have reaped it without thinking of the Author of the harvest, will, in like manner, feed upon it without thinking of the Author of their food! Again, will no discontented, murmuring, repining people be fed by this goodness of the Lord? Will all those, in short, whose life is prolonged by the bread now sent them, devote that life to the service of him who prolonged it? Surely if we could remove ourselves to a distance from the earth, and become by any means impartial judges between God and man, we should stand astonished at the present rebellion of the creature. He who made man, he who supports him, sending him the very bread which he eats, has a right to his services; and hath made him no doubt for his own glory. Methinks if any

of us were endowed with power to create some little rational animal, inferior to ourselves, and if, after having breathed into him the breath of life, we also daily clothed and nourished him, we should expect his obedience, and constant service in return; and if, after all, such a being should presume to set up for himself, and pretend to have a will of his own, and break all the laws we had given him, we should be ready methinks, to stamp our foot upon him, and to crush him to death at once, for not fulfilling the ends of his creation. We should have no patience with such a little insolent and rebellious animal. And yet God has patience with us, notwithstanding all our forgetfulness of the ends for which we were born, and our unthankfulness for the daily returns of his bounty. Nay, though we go on abusing his mercies, he goes on clothing the pastures with his flocks. The vallies also are again covered over with corn: again *they shout for joy; they also sing*. O let us be ashamed of the baseness of our ingratitude, and repent in the name of Christ, before the day of his vengeance is come upon us!

The season of harvest is also one which should lead us particularly to reflect on our *dependence upon God*. God gave us life at first. He causes our blood to flow, our heart to beat, and our stomach to distribute the nourishment. He too supplies the food we eat, of whatever kind it be. We may combine together different meats; we may dress them in a variety of ways, but we can create nothing; God is the only giver of life and food, and all things: And happy is that man who lives in the lively remembrance of this, who accepts all his comforts as from the hand of the great God, ha-

bitually feeling that he has not of himself power to subsist for a single moment, or to procure, independent of God, one single drop of water, or grain of bread. And this sense of our dependence is not a duty only, it is a great comfort also : for how does it tend to relieve all that anxiety, which is so natural to us, about our subsistence in the time to come ! The more we remember that we are the creatures of God, so much the more shall we trust to him to provide for his large family, even as a child trusts to the care and prudence of his parent. *Behold the fowls of the air, they sow not; neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.*

Next to this sense of our dependence, gratitude to God may be mentioned as peculiarly becoming. Methinks at this time not only the heavens above, but the earth beneath, calls aloud upon us to be thankful. Every field, every ear of corn, seems to bid us speak the praises of God. How do these glorify him, as it were, by an expressive though dumb offering of praise ! But man has a tongue with which he can speak forth the praises of his Maker. It is for the sake of man also that the storehouse of divine bounty is opened ; it is for man that the pastures are clothed with flocks, and the vallies covered with corn ; it is for man that the sun shines, and the showers descend. From him then should the offering of praise continually rise up.

“But why will you suppose mankind to be so unthankful ?” Methinks I hear some one reply, “Do you think we do not know as well as you, that we ought to praise God for a good harvest ? There will always indeed be a few wicked people

in the land, but in general we understand well enough that it is God who sends us bread, and all our mercies : nay, when any of us speak of having got a good crop, *thank God* is the very phrase that is quite common in our lips. I admit it is so, and I hope indeed that many thousand hearts have already offered up the sincere tribute of thanksgiving for the present plentiful season. But we cannot help adding here, that there is a way far beyond that of simple praise, by which true gratitude will manifest itself. It will break out, not in words only, but in deeds—in deeds I mean of obedience to him towards whom the gratitude is felt. What would any father think of the gratitude of a child, or any husband of the gratitude of a wife, which never shewed itself in any thing else but a few warm expressions of obligation. No, it is by the readiness and activity in serving the person praised, and by the desire in all respects to please him, that the disposition to gratitude must be judged of. A man may say, "*Thank God*," twenty times a day, and yet never truly thank him in his heart. Words are cheap. Many men think to pay God off, as it were, by this sort of coin. Let it be remarked also, that there is a satisfaction and self-complacency which are naturally felt on receiving abundance of wealth into our lap : we are put into good humour by it, and when we are reminded that God is the Author of our prosperity, the truth of this is so plain that we cannot deny it, and since our understandings agree to the observation, we fancy that our hearts agree also ; whereas, in fact, we only judge that God ought to be thanked, but we do not thank him ; and as to the good humour we

are in, it arises merely from our being well pleased with ourselves, or with the enjoyments which God has given us, and not from our being well pleased with God. That we practise some such frauds as these on ourselves is but too plain ; for mark now what follows. When the same person, who has been thanking God so often for his mercies, is by-and-by called to do something, to suffer something, or to give up something for the sake of serving this gracious Being to whom he professed such prodigious gratitude, he is then either too idle, or too selfish, or too much governed by the opinion of his fellow creatures, or some way or other too full of excuses to do what is wanted of him : on the other hand, when some temptation comes in his way, he yields to it, and sins against the same God as freely as if he were under no obligation to him. Let us then beware of this hypocritical sort of gratitude, by which we cannot deceive God, though we often delude ourselves by it. Let us shew forth his praise, not only with our lips, but with our lives. Let us shew our sense of his goodness by doing his will, by reading his word, by attending his worship, by readily denying ourselves for his sake, and in short, by laying out our lives in his service, and by standing forth to promote his cause in a disobedient and unthankful world.

Here let it be hinted also, that this may be a good time for laying down our plans for using the plenty which is flowing in to us. God has now given us provision for another year ; but for what purpose has he given it ? In order that we may eat, and drink, and be merry ? What then, have we

not immortal souls? The great end of our Creator is, that we may serve him in this world, and may be prepared to dwell with him forever in heaven. His direction is, that we should employ our health and strength, and all our vigour of body and mind, in fulfilling his will; that we should seek, in the first place, to know God, and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent into the world, and having learnt to know him, that we should then act in our several stations from the motive of love to his name, imitating also his bounty, by ministering to the necessities of our fellow creatures. Are these then our ends of living? Is this what we propose to ourselves? Are these the views with which we reap the harvest? Are we determined that none of it, as far as in us lies, shall be wasted in riot, or in luxury, or in improvident consumption? Do we look forward to it as to a treasure, with which the hungry shall be fed, and the poor be satisfied? Then indeed we may rejoice in the bounty of Heaven, and we may reasonably trust that all the expressions of gratitude in our lips are sincere.

Again, let the consideration of the goodness of God, displayed in the fruits of the earth, raise our minds to the contemplation of those still greater mercies which he is able and willing to give us. It is with him a small matter to provide the earth with food, or to take care of the body. See what a rich provision he has made for our souls; for them he has not spared his only begotten Son, but given him up to be the propitiation for our sins! For the sake of the soul he has sent his Holy Spirit into the world, to guide men into the knowledge of truth. For the soul he has prepar-

ed an eternal harvest of blessings, *an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us.* We may learn to value spiritual mercies from what we see of temporal ones. Temporal ones strike the senses, and being suited to our present fallen nature, are more apt to fill our hearts with joy and gratitude. But we may rest assured that the blessings, which God has provided for the soul, are much superior to those provided for the body, as the soul is to the body, and as eternity is to time. Let us then turn from this earthly scene of abundance to still nobler and larger blessings. Let the fields not only preach to us the immense goodness of our Creator, but let them send our thoughts also to the unsearchable riches that are in Christ. Let the harvest serve to impress a thoughtless world with wonder, gratitude, reverence, and love to Him who is the Author, not of all our earthly treasures only, but of all the blessings of eternity! In short, let the goodness of God lead us all to repentance, and let each of us take care that the mercies of his Maker be not turned into a curse, by rendering our hearts only so much the more full of this world, and more indifferent to the blessings of the gospel.

SIXTEEN SHORT SERMONS.

BY A

CLERGYMAN OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.



1. *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*
Matt. xvi. 26.

HOW little attention does this infinitely important subject gain in the world! How few consider the salvation of their souls as the great business of life! You, who are reading these lines, did you ever lay it to heart, and are you acting accordingly? If this is your case, the following language will express your heart-felt convictions: "I have a soul as well as a body. My soul must live forever, in happiness or in misery. It is capable of inconceivably greater pain and pleasure than my body is. It is a matter of comparatively little importance, whether I am in abject poverty or in the greatest affluence, during the few years I am to continue in the present world! whether I am respected, or despised by my fellow-mortals; whether my body is sickly or healthy, full of pain or at ease. These are matters of small consequence; death is certain, and it is near. "Ashes to ashes, and dust to dust," must soon be pronounced over my lifeless body. In a dying moment, if I could call the whole world my own, what good would it do me? what comfort could it afford me? But whether my soul is to be eter-

nally happy or miserable, the companion of angels and saints made perfect around the throne of God, or doomed to weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, with devils and damned spirits in hell, where the worm never dieth, and where the fire never will be quenched—this is the most momentous inquiry I ought to make. To escape from the wrath to come, and secure an inheritance among the saints in light, ought to be my great concern. Is it so? Which world is most in my thoughts, this or the next? Which am I most anxious about? Am I not often inquiring, “What shall I eat, what shall I drink, and wherewithal shall I be clothed?” But when did I seriously inquire, “What must I do to be saved?” If I have no prevailing concern about my soul, I may be certain its state is bad, and its danger extreme.



II. *Sin is the transgression of the law.* 1 John iii. 4.

SINNER, did you ever inquire what sin is? Did you ever study the word of God, that you might have proper views of this greatest of all evils? If you have never made the inquiry, your state is bad, dreadfully bad. Your salvation is at stake. Look seriously into the text. Lift up your heart to God, and say, “Lord, give me proper views of sin.” “Sin is the transgression of the law.” What law? The law of the most holy God. Where is this law to be found? It is contained in the ten commandments. Did I ever read them with a trembling heart and a faltering voice, asking, have I transgressed this or that part of God’s holy law? Did I ever consider that the

law may be broken by thought, as well as by word or deed? Did I ever reflect that the law is spiritual, reaching to the thoughts, purposes, and intentions of the heart; that every irregular thought is a transgression of the law; that every unholy desire is sin; that for "every idle word that men speak, they must give account in the day of judgment," Matt. xii. 36. that awful day, when the heart-searching God shall judge the secrets of our hearts? Alas! how many idle thoughts have passed through my mind, without the proper conviction, attending each of them, that this is sin! See Gen. vi. 5. How many idle words have I every day spoken without reflecting, that for every one of these I must give account! Matt. xii. 36. When did the evil of my thoughts and words extort an anxious cry from my heart, "God be merciful to me a sinner?" If sin be the transgression of the law, that is, if falling short of the perfection, which the law requires in thought, word, and deed, be sin, as well as doing that which the law forbids; how much have I to answer for, that perhaps I never before thought of! Yet I have often confessed, "We have done what we ought not to have done, and left undone what we ought to have done, and there is no health in us." Alas! I have mocked God, by confessing with my lips what I did not feel in my heart. Let my conscience, O Lord, now be awakened to feel what sin is!

III. *All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Rom. iii. 23.

ALL—and therefore you, my dear reader, and myself. We have sinned; that is, we have bro-

ken God's law, for "there is none righteous, no not one," Rom. iii. 10. There is none that hath kept the law of God. We have transgressed *every* precept of his moral law, either in act, word, or evil desire. The charge is heavy, but the verdict is true. Let us consider the case, earnestly entreating God to enlighten our minds. Take the ten commandments into your hand, and read. We have broken the *first* commandment by trusting in, and loving other things more than God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Matt. xxii. 37. In this we have come short. The *second* respects the manner in which God is to be worshipped, not with outward form and ceremony only, but in spirit and in truth. Alas! how deficient have we been in that serious attention, that inward reverence, and that devout affection which his worship required! God is a jealous God. You say you have never been guilty of profane cursing and swearing, and so think you have kept the *third*: but have you never, in saying your prayers, or in reading the scripture, suffered the holy name of God to pass through your lips, without an awful sense of what you were doing, or even without thought? "God will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain." Have you always employed the whole Sabbath in those religious exercises which the *fourth* commandment enjoins; and performed these exercises in such a devout manner, that the law has nothing to charge you with, in thought, word, or deed? Sinner, lay your hand upon your mouth, and plead guilty. Need I go through the second table? Dost thou "love thy neighbour as thyself?" Hast thou done unto all men as thou

wouldest they should do unto thee? Have you never been guilty of disobedience to your parents? Know you not, that every rising of causeless anger is murder—Matt. v. 22. that every unchaste desire is adultery—Matt. v. 28. that secret fraud and neglect of affording that succour to the poor which is in your power, are theft; that every uncharitable thought is a breach of the *ninth*, and every covetous wish a transgression of the *tenth* commandment? Surely all have sinned in doing that which the law forbids, and in not doing that which the law commands. What have I then done, or what have I not done? “All have sinned.” What is my state? A state of sinfulness and misery. Why have I not felt it till now? Because sin hath blinded mine eyes against the light of truth.

IV. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.* Gal. iii. 10.

WHAT means that awful word “cursed?” The curse of God is the declaration of his just anger and wrath against sin and the sinner. “Who can stand in his sight if he be angry?” Ps. lxxvi. 7. But who is cursed? Every one, whether young or old, rich or poor, learned or ignorant, that continueth not, throughout the whole period of life, without any intermission, failure or defect whatever, in all things, in thought, word, and deed, doing perfectly what the law requires, and keeping himself absolutely free from what the law condemns—“In all things that are written in the book of the law to do them, (the law being under-

stood in its spiritual and most exalted sense and interpretation :) and remember that it is farther said, James ii. 10, "that whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Now consider, has there been a day, an hour, a moment, in which your state has been such as the law requires? The curse is pronounced on every transgressor for every transgression: not only for profaneness, murder, adultery, and such like gross acts of sin, but for every sinful thought, and for every moment in which you have failed to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul." O how many curses then has the law denounced against you and me! It has been revealing the wrath of God against us year after year; for, year after year, we have been sinning against God. Are these things so? Can you from scripture prove them to be false? What! is every sinner cursed for every sin, and have I been perpetually sinning all my life? Is it true, that I have never, from a sincere regard to God, made conscience of one thought, word or action; never performed one duty, or abstained from one sin, on a right motive, love to God? Has my whole life been one uninterrupted course of evil? Is my state, then, a state of condemnation? How astonishing it is! What a proof of the darkness of my mind, and hardness of my heart, that I can live one hour at ease under the curse of God! that I can lie down or rise up without trembling, since the curse of God must plunge the sinner into hell!

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V. *The Wages of Sin is Death.* Rom. vi. 23.

“SIN is the transgression of the law,” 1 John iii. 4. that eternal rule of right to rational beings, the moral law of God. It is sin, all sin, every sin, that is here spoken of. Death, whatever that word means, is the just and certain reward of every sin committed in thought, word, or deed. But what is death? The death of the body is its separation from the soul. You are a sinner; and this effect of sin you have begun to feel in all those pains and sicknesses, which are bringing your body to the grave. You are now a dying man. The death of the body, or its separation from the soul, will occasion its return to the dust, from whence it was taken. But death, in the text, means something more: *the death of the soul*. What is that? It is something as much more dreadful than that of the body, as the soul is of more value than the body. It is the separation of the soul from God, as its life and happiness: hence it becomes a state of unavoidable sin, and, first or last, a state of self-tormenting anguish, arising from the forfeiture of the friendship of God, with all its attendant blessings. For God is that to the soul, which the soul is to the body. Spiritual death, or the death of the soul, consists not in the loss of consciousness or feeling, but in the loss of the image and favour of God. “For in his favour is life;” Psalm xxx. 5, and in his frown is death. If you, my dear fellow-sinner, are not made alive by God’s converting grace, this is your state. Your “are dead in trespasses and sins:” and unless you are quickened by God’s Spirit communicated to you, before your departure hence, in this unhappy state you must forever continue: for the death spoken

of in the text is opposed to eternal life in the following clause. And oh, if the effect of this spiritual death is misery, even in this present life, (as the experience of every man testifies, if he will own the truth) then what must it be in the world to come? Ah! who can tell? We read of "a worm that never dies," to prey on the tormented conscience; of "fire that never can be quenched, to destroy both body and soul in hell;" of "weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" and all this is to last forever. But is there not a disproportion between the offence and the punishment? Let God be true, and every man a liar. He says, "the wages," the just reward, "of sin is death." God's truth binds him to fulfil his threatenings, as well as his promises. O fly from the wrath to come, for "who among us can dwell with devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

VI. *What must I do to be saved?* Acts xvi. 30.

THIS is the anxious inquiry of an awakened sinner. By an awakened sinner I mean the man who knows what sin is, and who painfully feels that he is a sinner, and as such, under the curse of God, and in danger of hell-fire. Are you an awakened sinner? Alas! all men are naturally asleep, and insensible of their danger; and so continue, till they are roused up out of their carnal slumbers by the word and Spirit of God. They cry peace, peace, to themselves, when there is no peace: for God hath positively said, Isa. xlviii. 22, "There is no peace to the wicked." They live on day after day, keeping death, judgment, and

eternity, out of their thoughts; never reading the Bible with a sincere desire to know what their state is, and never crying to God from the bottom of their hearts, "God be merciful to me a sinner." If you live without earnest prayer to God for mercy, habitually neglecting it, you give as full proof that you are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in you," as if you were living in the grossest immoralities. But when it pleases God to fasten conviction on the heart of a man, and to awaken his conscience, then he starts up as one out of sleep. He sees, what he never discovered before, that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against God. He reads in the word of truth, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God;" Psalm ix. 17. and trembles as he reads. He acknowledges, "I have forgotten God, and sinned against him;" and being convinced that "the wages of sin is death," he asks, How shall I escape the damnation of hell? Such a man is deeply in earnest, when he makes the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" He feels that his all for eternity is at stake. The world, with all its pleasures, profits, and honours, becomes tasteless and insipid; it cannot give ease to his aching heart, nor heal his wounded conscience. He now begins to pray. His prayer is now the real language of his heart, not the formal, unmeaning service it was before. A sense of his danger drives him to the throne of grace. The word of God he now reads as the decision of eternal truth, and he reads it as having an interest in every line. O sinner! has this inquiry been yours, "What must I do to be saved?"

has this

VII. *Repent ye, and believe the Gospel.* Mark i. 15.

THESE are the words of our blessed Saviour, addressed to poor, guilty sinners like you and me. But what is repentance? It is the work of the Spirit of Christ upon the heart, producing such an inward sense of the evil and guilt of sin, as makes a man wonder that he is out of hell; such a hatred of sin as causes a man to forsake it; and such an apprehension of the consequences of sin, as makes a man willing to be saved wholly and solely through what Jesus Christ has done and suffered for lost souls. The penitent sinner is convinced that sin deserves punishment; that he himself, as a sinner, is liable to the wrath of God; that sin *must* be pardoned or punished; that he can make no amends for the least of his transgressions, and consequently that his salvation must be all of grace. The man thus humbled is prepared to welcome the news of a Saviour, "who came to seek and to save that which was lost." Matt. xviii. 11. Such is the gospel. It is glad tidings to a lost, guilty world. The sum and substance of it is, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim. i. 15. He died to make satisfaction for their sins; and, being God and man in one Christ, "he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Heb. vii. 25. His blood being the blood of God incarnate, Acts xx. 28, was infinitely meritorious, and it was shed for this very purpose, to take away sin: so that if your sins, poor, self-condemned sinner, are more in number than the hairs of your head, or the sand on the sea shore; if they are great and aggravated, and red like scarlet; yet there is hope:

“the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth (hath virtue to cleanse) from all sin.” 2 John i. 7. “But how am I to become interested in this, and get the comfort of it?” Believe the gospel, rely on what the word of God says about Jesus Christ, and his willingness and power to save sinners. “But may I without presumption believe that Jesus Christ came to save such a wretch as I am?” Yes, “this is God’s commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.” 1 John iii. 23. There can be no presumption in doing what God has commanded, and taking God at his word.

VIII. *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief.* Tim. i. 15.

THIS is the sum of the gospel. Jesus Christ is God: “He made the world, and all that therein is: all things were made by him and for him;” See John i. 1—3. Col. i. 19. But we his creatures broke his laws, and rebelled against him. He might justly have cast us into hell, the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone. But O, wondrous love! God was manifest in the flesh; was born into the world. For what purpose? To save sinners. How did he save them? By dying for them upon the cross; bearing their sins in his own body upon the tree, and washing them from their sins in his own blood. Did I ever consider this wonderful love of God? I am a sinner, born in sin, and, as such, liable to eternal punishment. “Jesus Christ came into the world

to save sinners," even such as I am. Have I ever earnestly entreated him to save me? Do I believe that I am a miserable sinner? Do I feel it and lament it? And am I sensible that unless Christ saves me, I must be a damned soul forever? Alas, how many never go to Jesus Christ to save them! How many are careless and unconcerned about what Jesus Christ has done for sinners! But do I lay it to heart? Are all my hopes built upon this faithful saying, "that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners?" O what a comfortable saying it is, that though I am a sinner, the chief of sinners, yet I may be saved from the sin I have committed, and the hell I have deserved, if, under a penitential sense of my wickedness, I look to Jesus Christ and trust in him! O may the Holy Spirit enable me to look unto Jesus! O what should I, a poor wretched helpless sinner, do, if there were no Jesus to save me! How eagerly should I welcome such glad tidings! Surely the message is "worthy of all acceptance," and ought to be received by all, since all have sinned, and stand in need of salvation; and since all, who feel their lost estate, may come to him who is able to save them. O Lord, the Holy Ghost, enable me to believe to the saving of my soul!

IX. *Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.* John vi. 37.

HOW tenderly compassionate is the dear Friend of poor, lost sinners! How anxious does he appear to remove every objection out of the way of the inquiring soul, that is made willing to be

saved on gospel terms, "by grace through faith!" Eph. ii. 8. Lest such should be discouraged, how graciously does he describe their character and feelings, inviting them with all the eloquence of god-like pity to come unto him! Hear his words, Matt. xi. 28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Are you weary of the slavery of sin, and the bondage of Satan and the world? Are you heavy laden with guilt in your consciences, and fear in your hearts? Behold! the loving Saviour stands with open arms to receive you; and these are the gracious words which proceed out of his mouth, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." He is faithful that hath promised, Heb. x. 23, and cannot deceive you. He will not alter the thing that hath gone out of his lips. Psal. lxxxix. 31. Make the experiment, come to him. He is able and willing to save; wherefore should you doubt?

But you say, "I am a sinner." Be it known unto you, that Jesus Christ is an almighty Saviour. You say farther, "I have continued long in open rebellion against him. I have been many years sinning against him with a high hand." Be it so; you are not out of the reach of mercy, nor is your case too desperate for the skill and power of the great physician. Do you still object, "I am a sinner of no common kind, of sinners I am chief?" Even unto you is the word of this salvation sent. The blood of Jesus is the blood of God, Acts xx. 28, and therefore "cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7. His righteousness is the righteousness of God, Rom. iii. 23. and therefore is sufficient to justify the most ungodly. Do not despair; for thus saith thy Saviour, the lover of thy poor soul,

“Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.” He makes no exceptions; being “not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.” 2 Peter iii. 9.

But you say, “Must I not mend my heart and reform my life before I venture to approach him?” If you wait till you have effected this in your own strength, you will, after all, die in your sins. This he must do for you: and this he will effectually do for you, when you come to his cross, confessing your sins, and trusting in his blood as your atonement. You must come to him just as you are, a poor, vile sinner, to be washed in his blood, to be clothed in his righteousness, sanctified by his Spirit, and fitted for his glory. Why do you object to receive what he is so ready to give, and that freely, “without money, and without price,” Isa. lv. 1, even pardon, holiness and heaven? He professedly receiveth sinners, Luke xv. 3, that he may save them, and has solemnly declared, HIM THAT COMETH UNTO ME, be the person who, or what he may, I WILL IN NO WISE CAST OUT.

X. *Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.* Rom. v. 1.

“THERE is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked,” Isaiah xlviii. 23. An unpardoned sinner can have no peace with God. While his conscience is unawakened, he may be careless and secure; but as soon as his eyes are opened, and his heart is made to feel, he must be miserable, till God speaks peace to his guilty soul. To be justified is to be pardoned and accepted of God. Par-

don and acceptance are only to be obtained by faith in Jesus Christ, as having atoned for sin by his precious blood. When it is given me to believe that Jesus Christ hath taken away my sins, there is nothing more to distress my conscience; then I have "peace with God." The distress of an awakened soul arises from a guilty conscience, and a sense of his sins. As soon therefore as the poor, trembling sinner discovers, that Christ died for such as he is; that Christ being God is able to save the chief of sinners; that this was his errand into the world; and that he has said, "him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out"—John vi. 37—As soon as the poor sinner believes this, he has peace with God: he can call God his father; he can trust God for every thing; he can think of death with comfort, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Sinner, is this your state? Do you know that there is no salvation without an interest in Christ; that there is no peace with God but through Christ; that unless your sins are pardoned your life must be unhappy, and your death the entrance on eternal misery? If I am looking unto Jesus as the only Saviour, and in self-despair have fled unto him for refuge, then God is no longer angry with me; my sins, which are many, are forgiven, my person is accepted, and if I die to night I shall go to God. O happy state to have nothing to fear in life or death! to have God for our Friend, Christ for our Redeemer, the Holy Ghost for our Comforter, death our friend, heaven our home, and an eternity before us of peace and joy! Sinner, is this thy case?

XI. *Unto you which believe he is precious.* 1 Pet. ii. 7.

THE apostle is speaking of Jesus Christ, the dear dying friend of poor lost sinners, who pitied us, when we had no pity on ourselves ; and died for us, when otherwise we must have been cast into hell. Now if you believe this, that your sins would have damned you, if Christ had not taken them on himself ; and that you must have been cursed forever, if Christ had not been made a curse for you : if you feel in your hearts an humble assurance of pardon purchased by his blood ; and if you can consider him as saying to you in the gospel, what he said to the poor, sinful woman, Luke vii. 48—50, “ Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven ; ” then Christ is precious to you ; you love him above all things. You love to think of him ; you love to hear of him ; you love to talk of him ; whatever he has commanded, you desire to do ; and whatever he has forbidden, you would not willingly do, to gain the whole world. You are now become a new creature. You cannot live as you once lived. You are born again. Old things are passed away, and all things are become new. 2 Cor. v. 17. The things which you once hated, such as prayer, praise, hearing and reading God’s word, you now love ; and the things which you once loved, such as vain conversation, and trifling amusements, you now hate. You cannot now go to bed at night without thanking the adorable Saviour for the mercies of day ; nor without committing yourself to his protection for the night, and trusting your soul in his hands, that if you die before morning, he may receive you unto himself : and when you rise in the morning, you cannot go

out into the world about your lawful business, without begging him to keep you from the snares of the world and the temptation of Satan. Your one object is to please your beloved Saviour, and above all things, you fear to offend him. You desire, "whether you eat or drink, to do all to the glory of God." 1 Cor. v. 14.

XII. *Follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.* Heb. xii. 14.

GOD is a holy God : Christ is a holy Saviour : the Spirit of God is a holy Spirit : heaven is a holy place : the angels are holy angels : and all God's redeemed people are a holy people. Am I a holy person ? If I am not, the scriptures assure me that I shall not (cannot) see God. It is not mere decency of conduct ; there may be external morality where there is no holiness, though there can be no holiness without morality. If you are a holy person, you not only abstain from sin, but you really hate it. You hate all sin : whatever is not consistent with the will of God you hate and abhor. Your abhorrence is turned against yourself on account of your remaining sinfulness. You discover sin not only in your life, but in your heart. If you are a sanctified person, you make conscience not only of your actions and words, but of your thoughts. You desire not only to appear good in the eye of the world, but to approve yourself to God, who searcheth the heart. You seek an inward conformity to the mind and will of God. Is this the case ? Remember that it is written, "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Holiness is, in short, the love of God

shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto us. This love becomes the *motive* to all holy obedience; the word of God then becomes the *rule* of the whole conduct; and the glory of God is proposed as to the *end* of our conversation. Now no man can enter heaven till he is made holy. Do you believe it? And is it the prayer of your heart, "Lord, sanctify me wholly, body, soul, and spirit?" If it be, the Lord hath begun the good work on your heart, and he will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ, that you may be presented holy and unblameable before him in love.

XIII. *Looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* TITUS ii. 13.

THIS is the happy privilege of the believer in Christ, to be looking for the second appearance of his Lord. Jesus has promised that he will come again: that he will "come quickly." Rev. xxii. 20. He has declared that his coming will be sudden, like that of the thief in the night. Thess. v. 2. The believer is a man who is expecting it, waiting for it, and preparing to welcome it. He knows, that though "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power," yet, that another end of his coming is, that he may "be glorified in his

saints, and admired in all them that believe." 2 Thess. i. 8, 10. Therefore "he looks for that blessed hope." He has "peace with God through Jesus Christ." Guilt, the cause of fear, is taken away. He believes that the Judge is his friend, therefore he looks forward with a comfortable expectation. He feels that his present state is not his rest; for though the guilt of sin is taken out of his conscience, and the love and power of it out of his heart, he painfully feels, that sin yet "dwelleth in him;" and therefore longs for the coming of Christ, that he may totally destroy it. The hope he has is a blessed hope, because the things hoped for are inestimable in value, eternal in duration, and certain to the man, who looks for them in faith and hope. "We that are in this tabernacle (of flesh and blood) do groan, being burdened," 2 Cor. v. 4. with sin, affliction, and temptation: but at the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, "God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

XIV. *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* LUKE xi. 13.

IN these words our gracious Father, who is in heaven, permits us to decide an important point by the conviction of our own consciences. He appeals to our feelings as parents, in order to encourage our hope, and enliven our confidence, ver. 11, "If a son ask bread of any of you that is a

father, will he give him a stone?" If a hungry child come to a father, saying, "Father, I am starving for want, give me bread to eat," will the father (unless he is worse than a brute) give his child a stone to mock him? "Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? Or if he ask an egg, will he give him a scorpion," to destroy him? Certainly not. "How much more then shall your heavenly Father," whose affection to his poor, sinful children is infinitely superior to yours for the offspring of your bodies, "give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

I am a poor, ignorant sinner. I want to know myself as a sinner before God, and as exposed to his just indignation. I want to know Jesus Christ as a Saviour, for, to know "Him, is life eternal." But this saving knowledge I can derive only from divine teaching. God has promised his Holy Spirit, to lead the poor, ignorant sinner, that feels his ignorance, (for that is the point) into all truth necessary for his comfort and salvation. "O Lord, let thy Holy Spirit teach me!"

I am a poor, helpless sinner: I find I have no power to believe on the Son of God. Yet faith in him is essential to salvation. My conscience is distressed on account of my sins. I want to know him, and the power of his resurrection. But I can no more believe, by any mere exertion of my own powers, than I can make a world. God has promised his Holy Spirit to create faith in the heart of every humble suppliant. O Lord, help me to believe, to the peace of my conscience, the salvation of my soul, and the eternal glory of thy name.

God giveth his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. We can do nothing, we can do nothing but sin, and so destroy ourselves, without his special assistance. Do *you* feel you want it? And do want and absolute necessity drive *you* to a throne of grace for his comprehensive blessing? Do you ask, as a hungry child asks his father for bread? Are you sensible of your ignorance, so as earnestly to seek his divine teaching; and of your helpless state, so as to ask help of God? "Ask, and ye shall have: seek, and ye shall find: knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Consider, God cannot break his word. If you have asked without receiving, it is because you did not ask in earnest. You do not feel your want. Ask of God to give you to feel your wants, and then he will supply them: ask him to teach you to pray. Come to him as a poor, ignorant, helpless child, for "except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. xviii. 3. Lord, give unto us this child-like spirit!

XV. *It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this, the judgment.* HEBREWS ix. 27.

— YOU and I are dying creatures. We have seen many of our friends and relatives laid in the grave: many as young as ourselves, and apparently as likely to live. Some we have seen carried off by long and lingering diseases, and some cut down suddenly without warning. God only knows when we are to follow them into the eternal world. We know not the day of our death. Our times are in God's hand. It may be to-night. We are

certain the moment of death must come ; we are certain it can be at no great distance ; but we know not how near. Now if these things are true, what madness it is to put off the necessary work of repentance to a future day ! We are not certain of seeing to-morrow : and as repentance is “ the gift of God,” if we neglect to ask for it to-day, and refuse to hear his warning voice, he may say to us, as in Prov. i. 24. &c. “ Because I have called, and ye have refused ; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded ; but ye have set at nought my counsel, and would none of my reproof ; I will also laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh : when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind ; when distress and anguish come upon you : Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer ; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me ; for that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord.”

After death comes the judgment. We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to give an account of the things done in the body, whether they be good or bad. Who must appear there ? All, young and old, rich and poor, without distinction or exception. You and I must meet there. But for what purpose ? To give account of all our secret thoughts, and of all our secret actions, to the Almighty Judge. He keeps a book of remembrance, in which all evil thoughts, words, and works, are registered ; every one of which will be then brought forth to our eternal confusion, unless they are washed

away in the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read, Rev. vi. 16, that some, in that day, will call on the rocks and mountains, saying, "Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb." God grant it may not be your case, or mine. But in order to avoid this dreadful state, we must "seek the Lord while he is near ; the wicked must forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, and he will abundantly pardon." This is the day of grace. But it will be too late to seek for mercy when the day of judgment comes. If you die without an interest in Christ, it had been good for you if you had never been born ; for it would be better to have no existence at all, than to have a miserable existence in hell forever. This must be the portion of every unpardoned, unconverted sinner. God hath said it, who cannot lie.

XVI. *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* HEB. ii. 3.

A SALVATION great indeed, beyond description or conception, contrived by the wisdom and love of God for my poor, lost soul ! A salvation procured by the death of the only-begotten Son of God ! How near was I to the brink of hell ! How deeply was I fallen ! How many and great my sins, to make such a salvation necessary ! How dangerous must it be to neglect it ! God has no other Son to give ! If you are unconcerned about it, if you take no pains to secure it, if

you are unaffected with your danger, and with the salvation that is proposed to you, how can you escape ! It is impossible. You reject the only Saviour, and thereby commit the greatest sin : you spurn at God's mercy in Christ, and trample the precious blood of Christ under your feet. Are you not shocked at such a thought ? Be assured that every careless, prayerless sinner, is guilty of this. There is no relief for those who reject Christ. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Their ruin is certain, is near, and will be eternal and intolerable. Remember, "this is the accepted time, and this is the day of salvation." Cor. vi. 2. If you die without Christ, you can never see the face of God with comfort. You must hear the Judge pronounce your sentence, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Matt. xxv. 11. God forbid ! Once more I entreat you, my fellow sinner, before you close the book, stop, and think. Nay, go upon your knees, and pray to God to awaken your conscience, and give you the knowledge of Christ. My prayers are offered up for your salvation. I have no motive in putting this into your hands, but your eternal good. O God, may these sermons be productive of good to the reader's soul in time and eternity. Follow it with thy blessing : and may thy precious truths, therein set forth, "be the savour of life unto life, and not of death unto death." Grant it, O Lord, for Jesus Christ's sake ! Amen. Amen.

THE
SWEARER'S PRAYER;
OR,
HIS OATH EXPLAINED.

WHAT, a swearer pray! Yes, swearer, whether thou thinkest so or not, each of thy oaths is a prayer—an appeal to the holy and Almighty God, whose name thou darest so impiously to take into thy lips.

And what is it, thinkest thou, swearer, that thou dost call for, when the awful imprecations, *damn* and *damnation* roll so frequently from thy profane tongue? Tremble, swearer, while I tell thee! Thy prayer containeth two parts. Thou prayest first, that thou mayest be deprived of eternal happiness! Secondly, that thou mayest be plunged into eternal misery!

When, therefore, thou callest for damnation; dost thou not, in effect, say as follows? “O God! thou hast power to punish me in hell forever: therefore let not one of my sins be forgiven! Let every oath I have sworn, every lie that I have told, every Sabbath that I have broken, and all the sins that I have committed, either in thought, word or deed, rise up in judgment against me, and eternally condemn me. Let me never partake of thy salvation! May my soul and body be deprived of all happiness, both in this world and that which is to come! Let me never see thy face with comfort, never enjoy thy favour and friendship; let me never enter into the kingdom of heaven!”

This is the first part of thy prayer. Let us hear the second:

“ O God, let me not only be shut out of heaven, but also shut up in hell ! May all the members of my body be tormented with inconceivable agony, and all the powers of my soul tormented with horror and despair, inexpressible and eternal ! Let my dwelling be in the blackness of darkness, and my companions accursed men and accursed devils ! Pour down thy hottest anger ; execute all thy wrath and curse upon me ; arm and send forth all thy terrors against me ; and let thy fierce, thy fiery, thy fearful indignation, rest upon me ! Be mine eternal enemy ; and plague, and punish, and torment me, in hell, forever and ever, and ever ! ! ! ” Swearer, *this is thy prayer ! ! !* O dreadful imprecation ! O horrible, horrible, most horrible ! Blaspheming man ! Dost thou like thy petition ? Look at it. Art thou sincere in thy prayer, or art thou *mocking* thy Maker ? Dost thou wish for damnation ? Art thou desirous of eternal torment ? If so, swear on, swear hard. The more oaths, the more misery ; and, perhaps, the sooner thou mayest be in hell. Art thou *shocked* at this language ? Does it harrow up thy soul ? Does thy very blood run cold in thy veins ? Art thou convinced of the evil of profane swearing ? How many times hast thou blasphemed the God of heaven ? How many times hast thou asked God to damn thee in the course of a year, a month, a day ? Nay, how many times in a single hour hast thou called for damnation ? Art thou not yet in hell ? Wonder, O heavens, and be astonished, O earth, at the goodness and long-suffering of that God, whose great name, swearing persons, so often and so awfully profane ! Swearer, be thankful, O be exceedingly thankful, that God has not answered thy prayer, thy *tremendous*

prayer; that his mercy and patience have withholden the request of thy polluted lips! Never let him hear another oath from thy unhallowed tongue, lest it should be thy last expression upon earth, and thy swearing prayer should be answered in hell. O, let thine oaths be turned into supplications! Repent, and turn to Jesus who died for swearers, as well as for his murderers. And then, O then, (though thou mayest have sworn as many oaths as there are “stars in the heavens, and sands upon the sea-shore innumerable,”) then thou shalt find, to thy eternal joy, that there is love enough in his heart, and merit sufficient in his blood, to pardon thy sins and save thy soul forever.....Swearer! Canst thou ever again blaspheme such a God and Saviour as this? Does not thy conscience cry—*God forbid!* Even so, Amen.

THE PRAYER ANSWERED,

In the following, among multitudes of other instances.

IN November, 1786, a person much given to swearing, being disappointed by one of his companions in not returning to the public-house as soon as he expected, *swore* he would never drink with him again, and that if he did, it should be his *last*. Accordingly that day *was* his last. God took him at his word, and thus called him into eternity.

In Nov. 1787, one W—rs, a smith, spending the evening at a public-house, in Leather-lane, quarrelled with one of his companions, and *swearing* the most horrid oaths, God struck him instantaneously dead with an oath on his lips, upon the bench where he was sitting. The jury who sat upon the body, after hearing all the circumstances of the case, brought in their verdict, that “W—rs

was struck dead as a judgment from God." This narration was given by the foreman of the jury.

Another remarkable judgment overtook a person living in Brewer-street, Soho, who, cursing and swearing in a most dreadful manner, was struck speechless, and died the same afternoon.

[*Wills' Register.*]

T. G. who lived in the parish of Sedgley, near Wolverhampton, having lost a considerable sum at cock-fighting, to which practice he was notoriously addicted, swore, in a most horrid manner, that he would never fight another cock, frequently calling upon God to damn his soul to all eternity if he did; and, with dreadful imprecations, wishing the devil might fetch him, if ever he made another bet.

His resolutions, thus impiously formed, were for awhile observed; but about two years afterwards, Satan, whose willing servant he continued to be, inspired him with a violent desire to attend a cocking at Wolverhampton, and he complied with the temptation. He there stood up, and cried, "I hold four to three on such a cock." "Four what?" said one of his companions in iniquity. "Four shillings," replied he. Upon which the wager was confirmed, and he putting his hand into his pocket for the money *instantly fell a ghastly corpse to the ground.* [Evan. Mag.]

Who hath hardened himself against God and prospered? Job ix. 4. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* Exod. xx. 7. *Because of swearing the land mourneth.* Jer. xxiii. 10. *Every one that sweareth shall be cut off.* Zech. v. 3.

Dear Reader, art thou a swearer? O take this friendly warning: thy next oath may be thy last. If thy prayer is heard, thy soul is damned forever!!!



ARDENT SPIRITS.

Look not thou on the liquor when it sparkles, when it giveth its colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright : at the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.

SOLOMON.

THERE is no prevailing evil that in such a degree debauches the morals, poisons the happiness, and threatens to destroy the liberties of the people of this country, as the excessive and increasing use of ardent spirits. The extreme danger to the public, as well as the ruin to individuals and to their families resulting from this pestilent source, ought to be made the subject of frequent animadversion. In vain have the sages of this country formed republican institutions, in vain has the blood of its patriots and heroes been shed, and in vain may we boast (indeed not long can we boast) of civil freedom, if the fatal practice of using ardent spirits as a common and daily beverage should continue and increase. The duties on spirits and on wines imported to this country amount to more than six millions of dollars a year ; a sum more than sufficient to give a constant support to good schools for all the children of the country between the ages of seven and fourteen. You will observe that merely the duties on liquors, imported to the United States, amount yearly to the aforesaid sum, exceeding six millions of dollars ; and how enormous then must be the whole retail cost of these liquors ! A large proportion of them, it is granted, is exported from hence to other countries ; but mean while vast quantities of various kinds of ardent spirits are distilled at home ; and this kind of manufacture rapidly in-

creases every year. There were according to the returns for the year 1800, more than twenty thousand *stills* in this country, and their number since has probably increased to ten thousand more. Our land, exceeding in one respect, the goodly land of old, that flowed with milk and honey, flows with all the necessities of life, but most abundantly with rum, gin, brandy and whisky ; and those streams are eagerly absorbed by its infatuated and ever thirsty inhabitants, who “spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labour for that which satisfieth not.” The sums which in this country are yearly lavished in the purchase and *unnecessary* use of ardent spirits are of astonishing magnitude : they probably exceed the taxes for the support of all our governments, added to a sum sufficient to support a decent school in every considerable village throughout the union.

The immense waste of property is, however, the least part of the evil : an excessive use of ardent spirits, becoming general, is an inlet to almost every evil that can infest and debase society. It weakens and poisons the body, and impairs the intellect, curdles the temper and corrupts the whole mind ; it makes churlish as well as silly husbands, unnatural fathers, rebellious sons, idle and seditious citizens : it degrades man, in some respects, below the beasts that perish, but which never perish in the ignominious manner that many human creatures do—by intoxication.

SPEAKING of ardent spirits, that eminent physician, Dr. Rush, says, “They impair the memory, debilitate the understanding, and per-

vert the moral faculties. It was probably from these effects of intemperance in drinking, upon the mind, that a law was formerly passed in Spain, which excluded drunkards from being witnesses in a court of justice. But the demoralizing effects of distilled spirits do not stop here. They produce not only falsehood, but fraud, theft, uncleanness, and murder. Like the demoniac mentioned in the New Testament, their name is "Legion," for they convey into the soul a host of vices and crimes. A more affecting spectacle cannot be exhibited, than a person into whom this infernal spirit, generated by habits of intemperance, has entered. It is more or less affecting, according to the station the person fills in a family or in society, who is possessed by it. Is he a husband? How deep the anguish which rends the bosom of the wife! Is she a wife? Who can measure the shame and aversion she excites in her husband! Is he the father, or is she the mother of a family of children? See their averted looks from their parent, and their blushing looks at each other! Is he a magistrate, or has he been chosen to fill a high and respectable station in the councils of his country? What humiliating fears of corruption in the administration of the laws, and of the subversion of public order and happiness, appear in the countenances of all who see him! Is he a minister of the gospel? Here language fails me. If angels weep, it is at such a sight." *As to the next life*, the drunkard is preparing for eternal torments. For inspiration expressly declares, "Nor drunkards shall inherit the kingdom of God."

ON THE
LORD'S DAY.

PERMIT a friend, who wishes well to all mankind, respectfully and affectionately to remind you of a divine law, too much forgotten by many, perhaps by *you*—REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY.

This is the command of the great God, the Maker of heaven and earth; "the God in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways;" the God who gave us being; the God who gives us all our time, and who allows us six days out of seven for worldly concerns. "Six days shalt thou labour and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God." He claims this day as his own. And can you refuse so just a claim? He has *hallowed* this day: that is, he has made it holy; he has reserved it for his own service; he has ordained, that from the beginning of the world to the end of it, the children of men should employ the sacred hours in holy acts of private or public worship.

Say now, is it not right, that you should cheerfully obey the heavenly command? Consider how *necessary* and *reasonable* the appointment! It is necessary, were it only to give suitable rest to the bodies of man and beast. Without this merciful institution, how many would have allowed neither themselves nor their servants proper seasons of repose! If there were no Sabbath in a nation, there would soon be no religion; and what then would become of the interests of morality? The merciful God appoints a Sabbath for your

good. It is for your sake, not his own, that he requires it. He needeth not you, nor any child of man. He seeks your good, your everlasting good ; for he has not only *hallowed* this day, but he has also *blessed* it. It is a day of special grace. The King of heaven, sitting on the throne of mercy, gives audience on this best of days to the assembled subject of his gracious empire. Millions of happy spirits now in heaven will bless God to all eternity, for the spiritual blessings of Christ Jesus, which, when on earth, they received on this happy day ; and thousands now on their way to glory, find it good for them to draw near to God, and justly esteem "a day in his courts better than a thousand." So that you are an enemy to yourself, if you profane this day. If you love your own soul, why will you lose the opportunity of being happy ?

If you studied only your present good, you would keep the Sabbath. God honours them that honour him. Many have found that a Sabbath well spent is usually followed by a prosperous week ; for it is "the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich ;" and how can you expect his blessing if you disobey him ? Lord Chief Justice Hale made the following observation : "I have found," said he, "that a due observing the duty of the Lord's day hath ever joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week, that hath been so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me : And on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful, and unhappy to my secular employments."

And has not God frequently manifested his anger against Sabbath-breakers? How many have perished in the midst of their amusements, and been suddenly called to the bar of God, while engaged in actual rebellion against him! How many lovers of pleasure have been known, whose dying agonies have been awfully increased by the sad remembrance of the manner in which they spent their former Sabbaths! And how many unhappy criminals have, in their last moments, ascribed their ruin to this sin! Beware then of a vice so dangerous in its tendency, so fatal in its consequences: for if you forsake God, he may justly forsake you, and then you are undone forever.

Do you hope to go to heaven when you die? I know you do. But consider how the saints in glory are employed. They keep perpetual sabbath, and the worship of God is their constant delight. But how can you reasonably hope for heaven unless you are formed by grace for the business and pleasures of it; and how could *you* enjoy an eternal sabbath, who now turn your back upon God's worship, or say of the Sabbath, "what a weariness is it!"

For God's sake, and for your own sake, "Consider your ways." Let the time past suffice to have rebelled against your Maker. Rebel no longer. Now say "Lord, it is enough. I have fought against thee too long. Forgive my iniquities past, and give me grace for time to come." No more let worldly business, nor vain amusements, engross these holy hours. You must not rob God: the day is all his own. Let it be a whole day—a day as long as others. Say not, What harm is there in taking a little amusement

after divine service? Think a moment, and you will perceive the harm. Why should you erase the impressions of holy things as soon as they are made? Is not *retirement* as necessary as public worship? On other days, much of your time is employed. Improve the leisure of a Sabbath. Retire and read your Bible. Converse with God in prayer. Converse with your own heart. Converse with good books. And above all, be concerned to experience the blessings of the gospel which you hear. Have you been to church, and heard of Christ and salvation by him? Let it be your chief concern to "be found in him;" not trusting to your own works of righteousness, but to the righteousness he has brought in, and which is "to and upon all that believe." Have you heard of the natural state of man as a sinner? Apply this to yourself, and be humbled in the dust of humiliation. Have you been told from the word of God, "that, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God?" Inquire whether you have ever known a change of heart; and pray for the Holy Spirit in all his gracious influences, that you may be a new creature. Has some holy temper, or moral duty, been recommended to you from the pulpit? Endeavour to fix the necessity and beauty of it in your mind, that so you may bring it into practice. This is the way to keep a Christian Sabbath; and thus proceeding in the fear of God, you may humbly hope for God's blessing in the present world, and in the world to come.

Blessed is the man that keepeth the Sabbath from polluting it. Isa. lvi. 2.

THE
FATAL BLUNDER.

A VISION.

DURING one of those waking dreams, when in the laboratory of the imagination, a thousand airy scenes are formed, in which, among various images of no consequence, truth sometimes comes home to the heart with irresistible force, the following object was presented to my view.

Methought an human figure stood before me, of an interesting appearance. On his brow care was depicted in deep lines. His lengthened countenance seemed to say, "Wisdom is mine." In his whole aspect worldly prudence seemed strongly pourtrayed. Near him was placed a pair of scales of prodigious dimensions, the lofty beam of which was suspended from the arch of heaven: and in one of them lay an huge mill-stone, the weight of which kept it immoveably fixed on the ground; while the other, having no counterpoise, was mounted high in the air. The sage philosopher, who stood by it, held in his hand a feather; which the gentle zephyr that played around him, threatened to waft away on its wings. This, with an air of the utmost gravity, and an apparent expectation of seeing the beam instantly change its position, he laid in the empty scale.

I could not forbear laughing at the ridiculous conduct of this deluded being; and was turning away from the scene of absurdity, wondering at the strange flights of my own imagination; when

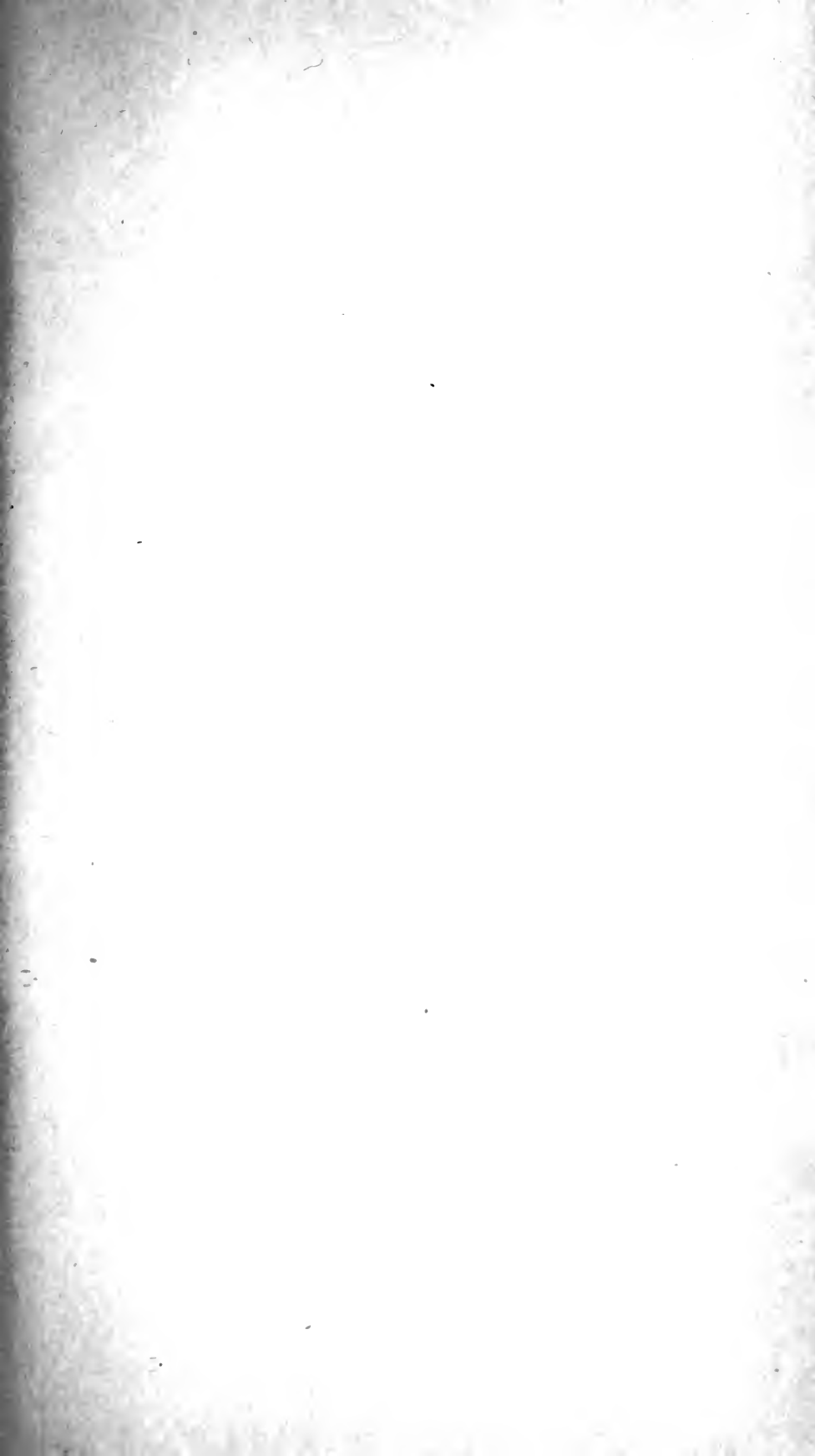
I was struck with a conviction, that there was more of truth in the picture, than I was at first aware of.

The scales of unvarying equity are suspended by the God of truth, in his blessed word. On one side is placed the world to come, with all its awful and everlasting realities; in the other, that feathery trifle, lighter than the thistle's down, this present scene of vanity, which passeth away like a shadow. Man is placed by this balance to look on the objects that are presented to him, and to form his conduct according to the result of the observation he makes. And (strange to say!) the great majority of the human race, like the sage philosopher in my vision, are employed in trying to give a decided preponderance to the feather; and gaze on the experiment with an expectation of seeing the mill-stone kick the beam, and then form their conduct on this absurd expectation. Thus they continue to deceive themselves, till death too late rectifies their judgment.

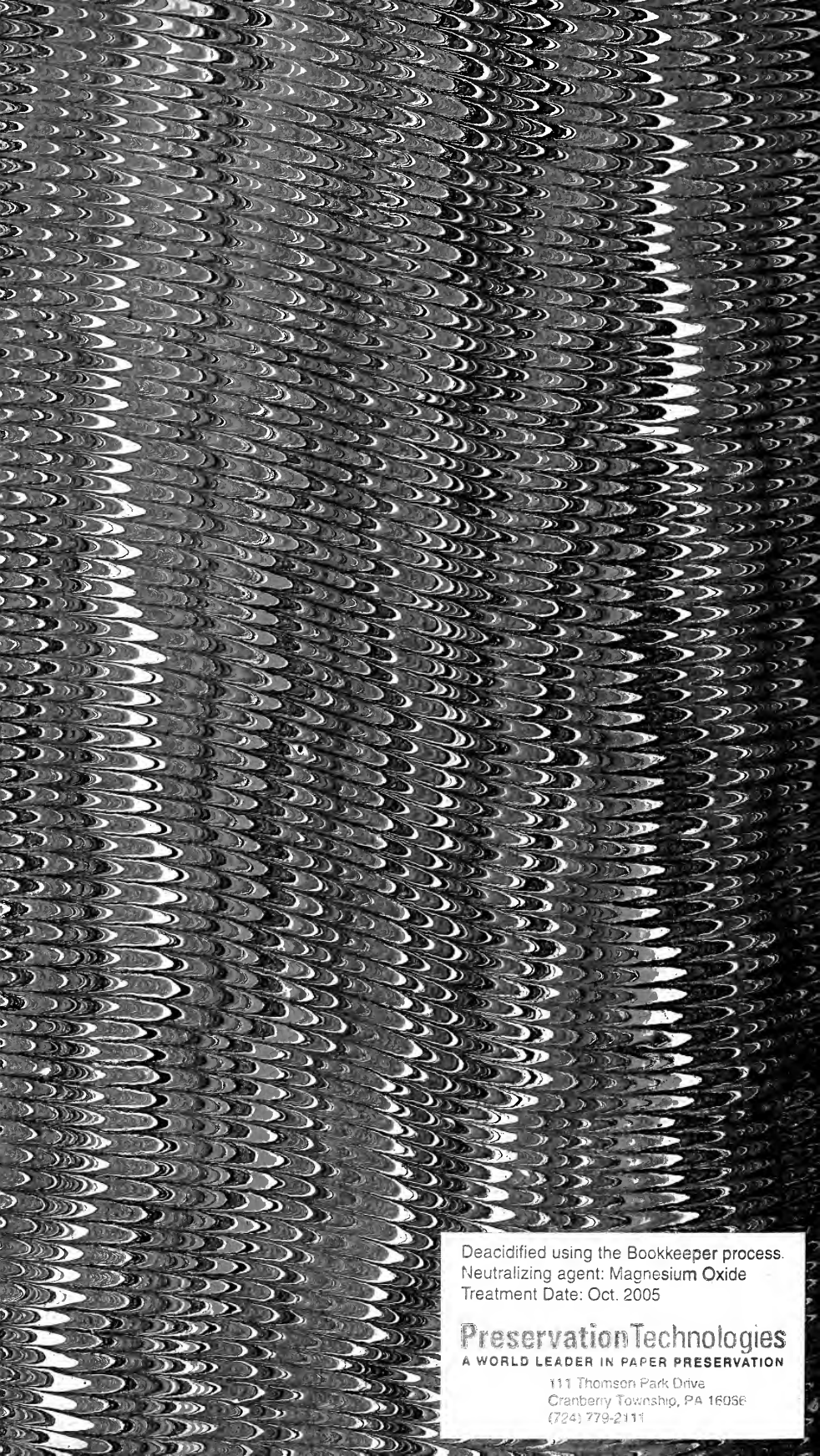
Very different was the determination of a true philosopher, whose wisdom is proposed for imitation in the inspired page. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." Heb. xi. 24—26.

FINIS.

B



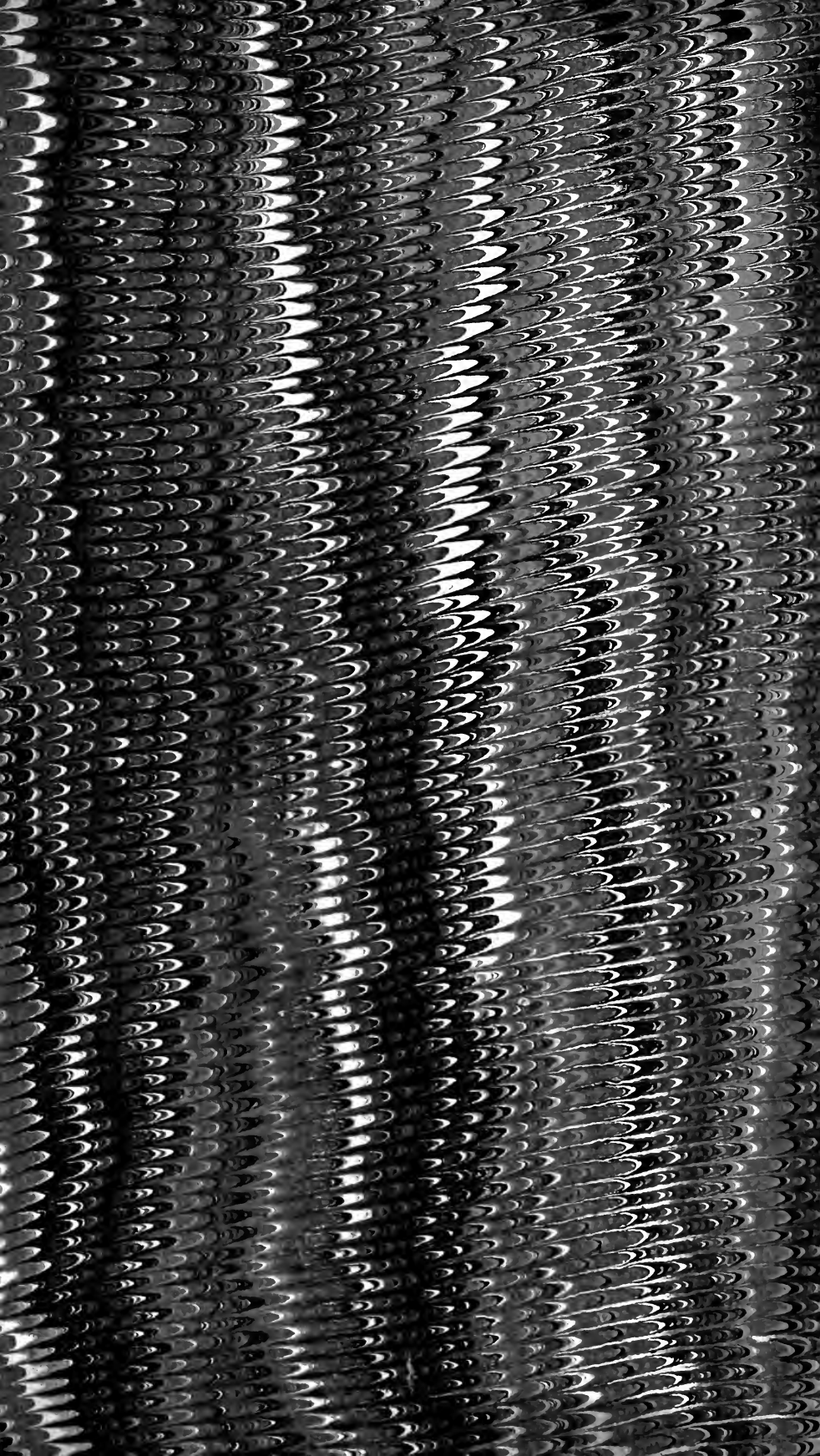
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