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THE

GOSPEL STANDARD.

VOI. XXXI., 1865.

LONDON:
JOHN GADSBY, GEORGE YARD, BOUVERIE STREET.
1865.

LONDON:

ALFRED GADSBY, STEAM MACHINE PRINTER, CRANE COURT,
FLEET STREET,

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[JANUARY, 1, 1865.]

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JANUARY, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

ADDRESS TO OUR SPIRITUAL READERS.

It is a part of the wisdom of God in a mystery that he has seen fit to intrust the ministry of the gospel to men of like passions with their fellow men. (Acts xiv. 15; Eph. iii. 8, 9; 1 Thess. ii. 4.) In this he displays both his sovereignty and his grace; his sovereignty in choosing the vessel, his grace in filling it with his hid treasure. And as this is true of the greatest and highest, so is it true also of the least and lowest of the servants of God. None are more, none are less than God makes them to be. Whatever they possess of light or life, grace or gift, experience or utterance, unction or power, knowledge or wisdom, usefulness or acceptability, their sufficiency to every good word and work is wholly of the Lord, wrought in them by that one and the self-same Spirit who divideth to every man severally as he will. (1 Cor. xii. 4-11; 2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) This, as it stops all boasting in the strong, gives all encouragement to the weak. If any are strong in faith, clear in knowledge, ripe in judgment, deep and rich in experience, well instructed to understand, well enabled rightly to divide the word of truth, bold and faithful in testimony, ready and powerful in utterance, and blessed with abundant success in their work, to them may be addressed, to quell all exaltation of self, all despising of others, Paul's pregnant question: "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" (1 Cor. iv. 7.) If, on the other hand, any be weak in faith, deficient in knowledge, feeble in gift, bound in utterance, limited in usefulness or acceptance, and feeling, from a sense of these things, the heavy burden of the ministry and their own insufficiency, are ready to faint in the work, to them are suitable Christ's words: "My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness;" and Paul's response, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." (2 Cor. xii. 9.) Thus, whether they are strong or whether they are weak, minister to hundreds or minister to scores, are known and esteemed through the length and breadth of the land or are hidden in corners, sovereignty

and grace equally determine the standing and position of every minister of Christ.

But there is another view of the question not less worthy of consideration by all the sent servants of Christ—the *obligation under which grace lays them* to seek the glory of God and the good of his people. As bought with a price, and therefore not their own, but the Lord's; (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20;) as graciously brought under the constraining influence of the love of Christ, and therefore bound not to live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them and rose again; (2 Cor. v. 14, 15;) as set in an honourable and conspicuous place in the mystical body of Christ, that they should have a care for their fellow-members, and seek their spiritual profit, not their own glory or advantage, (1 Cor. xii. 7, 18, 25,) the servants of God are bound by the strongest ties, the ties of the atoning blood, dying love, and effectual grace of the Lord Jesus, to study to show themselves approved unto God, to preach the word boldly and faithfully, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine, knowing that the time is not to come, but even now is come, when men will not endure sound doctrine, but are turning away their ears from the truth, and are turned unto fables. (2 Tim. ii. 15; iv. 2-4.)

Now what is true of those who labour for the profit of the Church of God with their tongue is true also, in good measure, of those who labour for the same end and in the same spirit with their pen. We say "in good measure," for we by no means intend or wish to place the tongue and the pen on the same level. The preaching of the gospel, as the special ordinance of the Lord, (Mark xvi. 15,) stands apart by itself, and claims the just pre-eminence over every other means of edifying the body of Christ. (Eph. iv. 11, 12.) It is the especial display both of the wisdom and of the power of God by "the foolishness of preaching," as men deem it, "to save them that believe." (1 Cor. ii. 18-25.) The ministry of the gospel is a divinely appointed means of communicating faith, (Rom. x. 17,) and through the means of faith thus given to become the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. (Rom. i. 16.) Writing cannot stand upon this foundation, nor rise to this level, for it has not the same divine appointment, and therefore does not inherit the same promised blessing. And yet few who fear God, and have derived benefit from the works of good men, would wish to deny that writing has, in the hands of the blessed Spirit, been made an instrument of edification to the Church of God only second to the ministry of the preached word. Indeed, in some respects the works of men of God have been made of greater and more enduring service to the Church of Christ even than their words, as being both more widely spread and more enduringly permanent. Whatever abundant blessing in their day rested upon their ministry, Bunyan and Owen would have been now mere names, if so much, Hart and Huntington but traditions, had not these men of God been writers as well as preachers. But by means of their writings the light and knowledge, grace and gifts, which were blessed to their generation are

also blessed to ours, and will be handed down to our children's children when we shall have passed away.

Assuming, then, that writing, when the Holy Ghost inspires the pen, is an instrument of edification to the Church of Christ only inferior to preaching, when the Holy Ghost inspires the tongue, does not this conclusion follow, that those whose place and calling it is to write should as much seek the glory of God and the profit of his people as those whose place and calling it is to preach? If the ministry of the gospel were not a divine institution, it would be an act of presumption to be tolerated neither by God nor man that a sinner, even a saved sinner, should stand up publicly to instruct, comfort, warn, and rebuke his fellow-sinners and fellow-saints. But the special ordinance of God and the power with which, as such, he himself clothes it, make what else would be an act of presumption an act of willing service for the minister and of blessing for the hearer. To be thus owned and blessed to the family of the living God; to be the honoured instrument of communicating light, life, liberty, and love to those for whom Christ died; to set forth the Person and work, blood and righteousness of the Son of God, and, by thus exalting his worthy name, to advance his kingdom and endear him to believing hearts; this is, or should be, the aim and object, the reward and crown of every servant of Christ, whether tongue or pen be the instrument employed.

If these views be correct, in harmony with the word of truth and the experience of the saints, may not a writer, let him be only the editor of a fugitive and fleeting periodical which may die to-morrow and leave no trace behind—may not even a writer who occupies so temporary a position, yet who feels the life and power of God in his soul, and who seems, in the providence and by the grace of God, called to the work of the pen, equally labour to the same end and in the same spirit, equally seek the glory of God and the good of his people, equally desire to set forth the same gospel, exalt the same dear Redeemer, and find his main reward in the blessing of God upon his labours? Or, to bring the preceding train of thought into a narrower compass, and direct it more clearly and closely to our present subject, may not even we, without presumption, address a few words at the opening of another year to our numerous readers, as seeking their spiritual profit? So far as we are taught by the same Spirit, have one faith and hope, feel the same love, and are of one accord, of one mind with the living family of God, we may look not on our own things only, but also on the things of others. (Eph. iv. 4, 5; Phil. ii. 2-4.) And if in this spirit, at the opening of another year, we seek to lay before our spiritual readers a word of counsel or of exhortation, giving them no other advice than we feel willing to take ourselves, and laying no other burden on them than we desire ourselves to bear, may it not be a word in season to both writer and reader? And surely these are not days when no friendly counsel is required, no keen reproof needed, no instrumental stirring up of the graces of the Spirit in the hearts of God's people wanted. All who have any good measure of divine light and

life, of gracious discernment, of daily experience, of almost continual exercise about themselves or others; all who know for themselves the power, the reality, the blessedness of that kingdom of God which is within us, and are struggling often through a sea of trials, afflictions, and temptations to find and enjoy in their own bosom that secret of the Lord which is with them that fear him; all thus taught, thus led, thus exercised, see and cannot but see, feel and cannot but feel at what a low ebb vital godliness everywhere is. It is with this as with many other matters of practical observation. The outward appearance may seem fair and good until the thing itself, as it really stands, is measured by a proper standard, or put to some searching, practical test. So long, then, as we are content to measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves with ourselves, (2 Cor. x. 12,) our profession may appear fair and good. But how does it stand when examined by the searching, practical test of the word of God? Take, for instance, the ministry, we will not say of the day, but even of many whom we desire to esteem for their work's sake. Where is the preceptive part of the gospel brought forward, and insisted upon as we find it declared in the words of our Lord, and in the epistles of the New Testament? Where is doctrine so set forth as to have an experimental bearing upon the inward life, and a practical influence on the outward walk? Where is experience traced out, not only in its inward feelings, but in its outward fruits? Now in Scripture doctrine is never held forth in what we may call its dry form. It is always blended either with an experience of its power, or with a declaration of its practical fruits. Thus, for instance, we are declared to be "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father," but it is "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. i. 2.) How graciously blended here is the doctrine of election with the experience of the blood of sprinkling and the practice of obedience. And so experience in the word is never held up as a mere matter of feeling, that is, mere abstract feeling as dissociated from all effects and fruits, but is blended either with some practical influence on the heart, or some gracious fruit in the life. And are not churches as faulty, in some of these respects, as ministers? How many of our Baptist churches can "suffer the word of exhortation?" (Heb. xiii. 22.) What an outcry there would be of "legality" if any minister of truth were to exhort husbands, wives, and children, masters and servants, severally and specially, as Paul exhorts them. The ministers may preach Paul's doctrine with the utmost clearness, and Paul's experience of law and gospel in its depths and heights with the greatest acceptance; but may they preach Paul's practice with the same faithfulness and with the same favour? If this be so, and we leave it to our readers to judge for themselves whether our words are true or false, is not that one thing a sufficient evidence that vital, practical godliness is with us all, for we put ourselves among the number of the defaulters, at a low ebb? If, then, we speak these things and bear this testimony, it is not, we trust, from a spirit of bitterness, or censoriousness, or spiritual pride, or

fleshly holiness, or self-esteem under a garb of humility; it is not from monkish austerity, or self-inflicted seclusion, or narrowness of mind, and absence of what are called large and liberal views; it is not from want of charity, or of allowance for human infirmity; from dimness of eye to see, or slowness of foot to march on with the advance of society and the times, that a conviction has been lodged in our breast how low the life of God for the most part is in churches and individuals. So far from this being the case, we can say for ourselves, and we believe for many others, that we would not shut ourselves up in a narrow corner and make all we can see from thence our spiritual horizon, or draw a kind of magic circle round our feet, inside which all is light and life, outside which all is darkness and death. On the contrary, we are too glad to see and welcome the grace of God in ourselves and others not to hail with joy every appearance of divine life. As he who is lost at night on a lonely moor welcomes the first streak of light in the eastern sky; as the sailor whose ship is on a sandbank gladly marks the rising tide which he hopes will bear her off, so all who truly fear God hail with joy the dawnings of divine light and the springings of heavenly life, whether in themselves or in others. So without putting light for darkness and darkness for light, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, we may look around and see, and as we see gratefully acknowledge, that there are still golden candlesticks amidst which the Lord walks, and still stars in his right hand. There is a love of sound experimental truth in many churches. The glorious doctrines of grace are not wholly hid in a corner. In many places there is a good spirit of hearing, and in our own connection especially there has not been for many years a greater desire for men of truth, or greater difficulty in obtaining their services. Thus though we cannot but feel, and must, as feeling it, declare our conviction that vital godliness is almost everywhere at a low ebb, yet it gladdens our eyes and hearts to see and thankfully acknowledge that all is not ebbed out, that though on every side wide and deep are the mud banks, yet between them runs in a scanty stream the river of the water of life. God has a people yet in this land, bless his holy name, whom he loves, and who both love and fear him. And though these be, for the most part, but men that sigh and cry for all the abominations they feel within and see without, yet have they a mark set upon their foreheads, known and recognised by the Lord, and known and recognised by each other. (Ezek. ix. 4.) It is to such we write. It is for such we labour. It is with such we wish to live, and with such to die. We have no union with the dead, be they dead in sin, or dead in a profession. "The living, the living," these are they, and only they, who "shall praise God" here or hereafter. "Death cannot celebrate him" on earth or in heaven; and "they that go down into the pit" of error or of perdition "cannot hope for his truth," (Isa. xxxviii. 18, 19.) for it is hidden from them, either in its purity or in its power.

Will, then, the living among our readers; will those who have received not merely the truth, but the love of the truth; will

those who, for want of clearer and higher evidences, can only say they "desire to fear God;" (Neh. i. 11;) will those who, deeply convinced of their lost and undone condition, are seeking to realise the fulness of salvation in their own breast, bear with and listen to a fellow-traveller in the way, who, with all his sins and infirmities, would wish to deceive neither himself nor them? And if he do not come with soft and honeyed words, according to the fashion of the day, as if the gospel had no other voice or sound but, "Peace, peace,"—peace at any price, peace at any rate, peace in every state, however worldly, carnal, or covetous in which churches or individuals may be sunk, let it be borne in mind that there is a coming "with a rod" as well as "in the spirit of meekness;" (1 Cor. iv. 21;) and that, so far as we are true soldiers of Christ, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 5.) In this spirit, then, the spirit of faithfulness and love, let us seek to address ourselves to the hearts and consciences of those who are willing to receive a few words from us in the simplicity of truth.

It is but too evident that we cannot be mixed up with the profession and the professors of the day without drinking, in some measure, into their spirit and being more or less biassed by their example. In this we too much resemble the chosen people, of whom the Holy Ghost testifies: "They were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works. And they served their idols, which were a snare unto them." (Ps. cvi. 35, 36.) We can scarcely escape the influence of those with whom we come much and frequently into contact. If these be dead, they will often benumb us with their corpse-like coldness; if light and trifling, they will often entangle us in their carnal levity; if bitter and censorious, they will breathe into us a measure of their condemning spirit; if angry and quarrelsome, they will provoke us to wrath in word or feeling; if worldly and covetous, they may afford us a shelter and an excuse for our own worldliness and covetousness. Nothing but being well weighted with trials and afflictions, and bowed down with burdens and exercises, yet finding in and by them the life of God maintained with some power and vigour in the heart, will keep us from being corrupted by these evil communications. But as few escape their influence, let us simply state what we believe to be, if not the only, yet the safest way to obtain deliverance from a path to walk in which will surely, sooner or later, bring sorrow and grief to every living soul.

1. Now the first step out of a wrong path is to *see and feel that it is wrong*. The carnal professors of the day see nothing wrong, nothing amiss, nothing inconsistent in their conduct or spirit. They have no inward checks of conscience, no keen reproofs from the word, no trembling fears about their state before God, no solemn apprehensions of the Majesty and presence of the heart-searching

Jehovah, no believing views of the Person and sufferings of Christ, no desire to know and do the will of God from the heart. But where there is divine life, where the blessed Spirit moves upon the heart with his sacred operations and secret influences, there there will be light to see and a conscience to feel what is wrong, sinful, inconsistent, and unbecoming. These convictions may for a time be resisted. Sin is of a hardening nature, and we may for a while be so caught in the net, and so held down by it, that our very struggles against it may end only in fuller and further entanglement. How few, for instance, see their own covetous spirit till they find themselves so entangled in it that they fear they shall be utterly given up to its dominion, and yet cannot deliver themselves from it. How often when brother falls out with brother, or a spirit of strife and division gets into a church, every attempt at reconciliation, every effort after peace fans the flame instead of extinguishing it. How, again, we may sink into a cold lifeless state, neglect reading the word, and have little relish for the throne of grace, till our very profession seems to stink in our own nostrils as well as of others.

Now where there is divine life in the soul, the Lord often sets his hand as it were a second time to revive his work upon the heart. The snare is broken either by his providence or his grace. By some affliction or trial the heart is made tender to receive the word, even if it be a keen reproof, for "to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet," and there is that yearning after the Lord which nothing can satisfy but the manifestations of his pardoning love.

2. If this simple sketch meet the experience of any of our spiritual readers, let them next suffer from us the word of exhortation, as couched in the words of the apostle: "*Make straight paths for your feet*, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed." (Heb. xii. 13.)

We read in the word of truth of those "who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness, whose ways are crooked, and they froward in their paths." (Prov. ii. 13, 15.) And as we read their character in the word, so do we also read their end: "As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways, the Lord shall lead them forth with the workers of iniquity; but peace shall be upon Israel." (Ps. cxxv. 5.) Such warnings have their place not only in the word, but in the heart that is made tender in the fear of God; nor are they put away as if we stood so firmly and strongly in the right road that there could be no danger of our ever making a crooked path for our feet. On the contrary, surrounded as we are with a crooked generation, professing and profane, whose ways we are but too apt to learn; beset on every hand by temptations to turn aside into some crooked path, to feed our pride, indulge our lusts, or gratify our covetousness; blinded and seduced sometimes by the god of this world, hardened at others by the deceitfulness of sin; here misled by the example, and there bewitched by the flattery of some friend or companion; at one time confused and bewildered in our judgment of right and wrong, at another entangled, half resisting, half complying, in some snare of the wicked one, what a struggle have some

of us had to make straight paths for our feet, and what pain and grief that we should ever have made crooked ones. But there is one mark of a crooked path which will ever stand both as a warning and a direction to those who fear God. "They have made them crooked paths; whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace." (Isa. lix. 8.) It is this want of finding peace in the crooked path which alarms and terrifies those who are possessed of a living conscience, and often summons up against them a whole host of doubts and fears lest they be deceived altogether. These convictions and these fears plainly and clearly show them their sin and folly in leaving the paths of uprightness to walk in any crooked way; and as the Lord is pleased sometimes by terrible things in righteousness, sometimes by laying affliction upon their loins, sometimes by his keen reproofs under the word preached or applied in secret, sometimes by a startling stroke in providence, to make them know and see that it is an evil thing and bitter to forsake the Lord their God, repentance is wrought in the heart, with self-loathing and self-detestation, issuing in humble and honest confession. This is the first step to return, for with this confession comes the forsaking of every evil way; and to this confession and forsaking, the promise of mercy and forgiveness is annexed. (Prov. xxviii. 13; 1 John i. 9.) When, then, the mercy and goodness of God are thus inwardly felt and realised; when a view by faith of the suffering Son of God manifests at one and the same time the dreadful nature of sin, and the way, the only way whereby it is freely put away; when the superaboundings of grace over the aboundings of inward and outward evil make the soul at once tremble and rejoice,—tremble at the floods of sin, rejoice at the overflowings of the higher tides of grace above them all, then there is a making of straight paths for the feet, and that which was lame and so turned out of the way becomes healed.

3. Closely connected with this is the affectionate counsel that we should *exercise ourselves to maintain a good conscience* before God and man. This was Paul's exercise: "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." (Acts xxiv. 16.) There is no greater blessing than a conscience purged by the blood of sprinkling; and few greater miseries than a conscience loaded with guilt. As the one enables us to look up, so the latter compels us to look down before God and man. Nothing inconsistent or unbecoming may have appeared in our walk and conduct, and yet the silent monitor may make the tongue falter, the knee tremble, and the countenance be dejected. Here, then, is the main exercise, first to obtain, secondly to maintain a conscience so sprinkled by atoning blood as to be void of offence toward God; and then to walk so tenderly in the fear of God, in that sincerity and godly simplicity, in that uprightness of conduct, in that circumspectness in life which shall preserve us from giving just cause of offence to, or putting a stumbling-block in the way of our fellow-men, and thus follow out that comprehensive precept: "Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neither to the

Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God." (1 Cor. x. 31, 32.)

4. Our next word of counsel shall be that which the Lord himself gives to the virgin of Israel: "*Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps; set thine heart toward the high way, even the way which thou wentest.*" (Jer. xxxi. 21.) To look at the past is often a blessed encouragement for the future. If we are travellers in the way Zionward, we shall have our various waymarks. A conspicuous call, or a signal deliverance, or a gracious manifestation of Christ; a promise applied here, or a marked answer to prayer there; a special blessing under the preached word; a soft and unexpected assurance of an interest in the blood of the Lamb; a breaking in of divine light when walking in great darkness; a sweet sip of consolation in a season of sorrow and trouble; a calming down of the winds and waves without and within by "It is I, be not afraid"—such and similar waymarks it is most blessed to be able to set up as evidences that we are in the road. And if many who really fear God cannot set up these conspicuous waymarks, yet are they not without their testimonies equally sure, if not equally satisfying. The fear of God in a tender conscience, the Spirit of grace and supplications in their breast, their cleaving to the people of God in warm affection, their love for the truth in its purity and power, their earnest desires, their budding hopes, their anxious fears, their honesty and simplicity making them jealous over themselves lest they be deceived or deluded, their separation from the world, their humility, meekness, quietness, and general consistency often putting to shame louder profession and higher pretensions—these and similar evidences mark many as children of God who cannot read their title clear to such a privilege and such a blessing. But whether the waymarks be high or low, shining in the sun or obscure in the dawn, the virgin of Israel is still bidden to "set them up," and to "set also her heart toward the high way, even the way by which she came."

4. This, then, shall be another word of counsel, that we should be ever *setting our heart toward the high way*. Christ is the way, there is no other. "I am the way" stands written in letters of beaming light at the head, in the middle, at the end of the path, to guide the child, to nerve the man, to sustain the father. The first ray of light which beams on the soul to guide it heavenward shines from the Person and work of Jesus; should it wander, by this it is brought back; should it faint and stagger, by this it is held up and held on, the eye still turning, the feet still moving, the heart still yearning towards the way, the only way out of darkness into light, out of death into life, out of confusion into clearness, out of restlessness into quietness, out of bondage into liberty, out of sorrow into joy, out of trouble into peace—in a word, out of hell into heaven. Blessed be God, not only that Jesus should be the way, but that the dear Redeemer said himself, in the days of his flesh, "I am the way;" for as these his own blessed words drop with power into the heart, they raise up such a faith in him; (John vi. 47;) such a looking unto him, even at times from the very ends of the earth; (Isa. xlv.

22;) such a coming out of all the rags and ruins of self to take hold of and hide ourselves in him; (Isa. xxvii. 5; Ps. xvii. 8; cxliii. 9;) such a cleaving to him with purpose of heart; (Acts xi. 23;) such a hanging upon him, (Isa. xxii. 24,) that, by the gentle attractions of his Spirit and grace, (Song i. 4; Jer. xxxi. 3; John vi. 44,) he is received and walked in at every step heavenward. (Col. ii. 6.)

And now our limits as well as the fear of wearying our readers warn us to draw to a close. Yet would we still press a few more thoughts on their notice, seeking to condense them as much as we can; and if our words of counsel assume a preceptive form, those to whom they are addressed will kindly bear in mind that we do not mean thereby to imply any power in us or them but that of grace to put them into practical execution.

5. *Keep yourselves separate* from the shallow, light, loose profession of the day. Beware of resting on those shallow evidences whereby so many are built up, from both pulpit and press, on an insecure if not unsound foundation. Rest on nothing short of God's own testimony in your conscience, and the witness of his Spirit to your spirit that you are his child. Hate that spirit of levity, whether in the pulpit or in the pew, which is not only death to every gracious, godly feeling in the soul, but which would turn the most solemn truths of our most holy faith, the very sufferings of Christ himself, into an entertainment for the carnal mind. Abhor that loose profession, that ready compliance with everything which feeds the pride, worldliness, covetousness, and lusts of our depraved nature, which so stamps the present day with some of its most perilous and awful characters.

6. *Choose for your companions*, and let them be few in number, the humble, sober-minded, exercised, tender-hearted, spiritual children of God; those whose company and conversation you find to do you good and to leave a sweet savour on your spirit; whose life and conduct approve themselves to you as becoming the gospel; whose walk in the church and before the world is evidently under the influence of grace; and with whom you feel you can live and die in the close and firm union of brotherly affection and love.

7. *Learn to bear and forbear* patiently and meekly with the infirmities of Christian brethren. There is a time in our Christian life when we want to set everybody right and make everything square. But we begin to find after a while that we cannot set our own selves right, nor make our own spirit and conduct square with the word of truth. This conviction, forced increasingly upon us, makes us less keen to see the mote and more willing to take out the beam; less desirous to condemn others, more willing to condemn ourselves; less sure of the sins of our friends, more certain of our own. Besides which we sooner or later learn that it is one thing to wink at our brethren's sins, another to bear with our brethren's infirmities. We see that we naturally differ from one another, and that though grace changes the heart, the natural disposition is rather subdued by it than altered. Thus our natural tempers, stations and occupations,

education and bringing up, modes of thought and feeling, views of men and things, family and business connections, prejudices and prepossessions, besetments and infirmities, our very knowledge and experience of the truth of God, our various stages in the divine life, our afflictions, trials, and temptations, and many other circumstances which we cannot now enumerate, all so widely differ that you can scarcely find two Christians alike, each having his own peculiar infirmities. As, then, we expect others to bear with our infirmities, let us learn to bear with theirs, loving them for the grace that we see in them, and thus "with all lowliness and meekness with long-suffering, forbear one another in love." (Eph. iv. 2.)

8. *Expect a path of increasing rather than diminishing tribulation.* Lay your account with a daily cross within or without, with bodily afflictions, sharp trials, and painful conflicts. Anticipate no easy road in providence or in grace, in the church or in the world, in the family or in the business, in your dealings with sinners or in your dealings with saints. God means to make us thoroughly sick of this world and of everything in it, that, wearied and worn out with trials, temptations, and conflicts, we may find all our rest in himself, and thus, as through much tribulation we enter into his kingdom of grace, so through much tribulation we may enter into his kingdom of glory.

9. And yet, amidst all your tribulations, seek ever to *hang upon the faithfulness of God to his promises.* With all your exercises, doubts, misgivings, and fears, you cannot deny that he has been a good God to you, both in providence and grace. You have for many years watched his hand in both, and can bear testimony that he has never failed you in the hour of need, and that though he has deeply tried you, yet he has hitherto proved faithful to every promise he has spoken upon your heart, or enabled you to believe and plead. Are not these so many pledges that he will never leave you nor forsake you even to the end?

"Trust him; he will not deceive us,
Though we hardly of him deem;
He will never, never leave us,
Nor will let us quite leave him."

"Brethren, pray for us." We present you with our New Year offering. Accept it in love. Weigh it in the balances of the sanctuary. Compare it with the word of truth and the experience of the saints; and whilst you pardon all in it that is amiss, as savouring of human infirmity, receive in the spirit of meekness what is commended to your conscience as a suitable word of counsel or encouragement. And join your supplications with ours, that if we be still spared to continue our monthly labours, our services may be accepted of God, and be made a blessing to an increased number of his people.

Your unworthy, but affectionate Friend and Servant
in the path of tribulation,

THE EDITOR.

A SERMON

BY MR. BIRCH, FORMERLY OF CRANBROOK.*

“Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law.”—Rom. iii. 31.

THE word “we” includes both preachers and hearers; but not all that profess, either ministers or people. They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither are they all children of the living God who call themselves by his name. The Master of the house will one day sever the goats from the sheep, the precious from the vile; and he oftentimes does it in this world by a new sharp threshing instrument, having teeth. (Isa. xli. 15.) In this house by profession there are servants as well as sons, vessels of wood and of earth as well as vessels of gold and of silver. The people of God dwell among thorns. Briers and thorns are with them, and they sometimes dwell among scorpions.

The “we” here meant are the children of the free woman, who were once in bondage to sin, to the law which forbade sin, and to Satan, and slaves of the world. There is one body, and one Spirit which influences the whole body, of which the Son of God is the Head.

The apostle had asserted in this epistle, 1. That all having sinned and come short of the glory of God, it was impossible that any could be justified in the sight of God, because by the law is the knowledge of sin; 2. That the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, and that he that believes is justified freely by faith only, without the deeds of the law. This, at first sight, might startle some, and they would say, then men will become lawless. But Paul stands to it that he maintains no other doctrine than what was contained in Scripture, that this doctrine had had a most salutary effect on the souls of men, and that the truth of God had abounded through what men called Paul's lie, or false doctrine. The Holy Spirit had given testimony to the truth, had owned it, and by it men had become new creatures, had been transformed. This was what could not be denied. Men received the Spirit, not by the works of the law, but by the hearing of faith. The ways of the Lord are right, however men may revile at them, and his ways are far above ours; (Isa. lv. 8;) but when understood by the Holy Spirit's teaching they are seen to be beauty and strength, comeliness itself. Poor man! Thy wisdom and knowledge pervert thee. (Isa. xlvii. 10.) Learn to know that thou art a fool, and then thou wilt be glad to sit at the feet of Divine Wisdom, and to receive the law from his mouth. (Job xxii. 22.) Happy are they who are instructed by the blessed Spirit to choose the things that please God, to take hold of and embrace the better covenant. (Isa. lvi. 4.) It was the discipline which Paul underwent, of which he gives a description in Rom.

* This Mr. Birch, who was a seceding clergyman and a friend and hearer of Mr. Huntington, must not be confounded with the late Mr. Burch of Sta. plehurst.

vii. 7, which taught his mouth, and added learning to his lips; (Prov. xvi. 2, 3;) which made him speak a pure language, and contend earnestly for that truth which had set his soul free, in which liberty he stood, and counselled others to do the same. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free."

Legality has a strong hold on the human heart, and it requires not a few furnaces and fires to purge a man from confidence in the flesh. But this is one comfort, that the Lord has his fire in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem. The Lord of the house purges and purifies his vessels of gold and silver, that they may be meet for his house and his use.

Paul had many of the circumcision to contend with, and this contention brought forth many savoury truths, which we could not have done without. So true it is that "all things work together for good." These men having never felt the severity of the law, nor known the spirituality of it, laboured hard to put that yoke upon the neck of the disciples; but the Holy Spirit resisted strongly by Paul, and by Peter too, for he says, "Why tempt ye God, and put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" Paul has a whole epistle on the subject, as well as treating of it in this epistle. He had much wisdom given him; and if we may believe Luther, who also had great light into the mystery of the gospel, "there is no author extant, but this one Paul, who has written fully and perfectly on this subject."

Now recollect two things: 1. That the Lord Jesus said to Ananias, "He is a chosen vessel unto me;" 2. That Paul is expressly called, "The apostle of the Gentiles." (Rom. xi. 13.) "For I speak to you Gentiles. Inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office." Blessed be God for such a teacher as Paul, and blessed be the Holy Spirit, who has made that teacher profitable to us.

The doctrines of the law and gospel must be kept apart. They cannot agree. The one is a covenant of death, the other of life and peace. The one genders to bondage, the other to liberty. The one is the ministration of death, the other of life. The one is the ministration of righteousness, the other of condemnation. This was set forth by the two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim. The blessings were promised by the children of the free woman on the one, the curses by the children of the bond servants on the other. They who belong to the one, to them belong the conditional promises and curses of the law; they who belong to the other, to them belong exclusively the unconditional promises of the everlasting gospel, secured and ratified by the blood of the Lamb, the oath and absolute decree of God, and his unconditional election of his people. "The law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God." Man makes nothing perfect; but the Holy Spirit is God, and his work is perfect, and we are complete in Christ. "The law is spiritual, but we are carnal." "The law entered that the offence might abound." "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come." The law discovers sin,

but cannot remove it. It makes no provision for the sins of man, therefore it is not perfect in that respect. It can do anything but save a sinner. It is said of it, "From his right hand went a fiery law for them." How for them? That it might condemn them, and so render them fit for the hearty reception of him who is the fulfiller, the end of the law, of him to whom the law looked. (Rom. x. 4.)

To make void the law is to deny its authority; to set it aside. Faith does not deny either the authority or the Author of the law. Faith says, "The law is holy, and just, and good." Faith says, "The Author of it is holy." Faith says, "Thy commandment is exceeding broad." Faith says, "Justice is the very basis of the throne of God. Follow the law in all its full authority. I diminish not from it. I insist that it must be obeyed in thought, word, and deed." Faith says, "I have trembled at its holy sentence, and it has greatly oppressed my soul, and made it ready to sink into the earth, yea, into hell; and I had fainted unless the goodness of God had been presented before me, and I had seen the end of the law, Christ Jesus." Faith says, "The soul could have no rest until it knew itself to be delivered from the sentence of a just and holy, righteous and equitable law;" and adds, "I make not the law void. I see it in the heart of the Surety, as the two tables of stone, on which it was originally written, were put into the ark. There I see it, and there I leave it." There was nothing in the ark, save the two tables of stone, which Moses put there at Horeb. (1 Kings viii. 9.)

"The law," says faith, "is good if a man use it lawfully." This lawful use is to condemn all flesh. "I see," says faith, "that the Son of God in human nature has magnified the law, and made it honourable. He has given it an honour and a sanction which all the angels in heaven could not give it. He is become by his obedience to it, in the room of his disciples, 'the Lord our righteousness,'—a glorious title indeed, well worthy to be admired, and received, and delighted in, and made the boast of his people." "In God we boast all the day long." (Ps. xlv. 8.) The Gentiles shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory; (Jer. iv. 2;) and if the Gentiles glory in Jesus Christ, we do by no means make the law void, but we magnify it and honour it, for "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." Moreover, the penalty due to the transgression of the law is plainly and openly acknowledged by faith, and faith acknowledges the soul's utter inability to pay it; but true faith says, "I will not have the God of heaven and earth dishonoured because I cannot pay the fine. I acknowledge that the soul is worthy of everlasting punishment; but here is one, my most blessed Lord, who has paid the fine, and I trust and rest my confidence in him. Surely I do not make void the law; nay, I establish its authority by producing a Surety.

The believer does not make void the law, for he acknowledges that the substance of it is put into the heart of every believer. Love is the substance of the law, and love is found in every believing

heart; for faith worketh by love, and love is the fulfilling of the law. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of love, love to Christ, love to his truth, love to his ways, his ordinances, his people; and the Holy Spirit dwells in all believers. The believer does not make void the law, for the grace of God teaches him powerfully to “deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world;” soberly as to ourselves, righteously as to men, godly in the alone way that God has prescribed. This the law calls for, but this the law cannot work in us. The grace of God teaches a man to do justly, to love mercy which has saved him; and, as he is and always will be a subject needing grace and free favour, so this constrains him to show favour and mercy to others. There are none so merciful, both to the souls and bodies of others, as they who have obtained mercy. “Judge me, O God. Plead my cause against an ungodly nation,” a nation that hath not obtained mercy. (Ps. xliii. 1.) Then follows, “O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.” He that has not obtained mercy is in his first-born state, and is a man of deceit and injustice. He has no real morality in him.

Love is of God, and “the carnal mind is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.” (Rom. viii. 7.) But the new man after God “is created in righteousness and true holiness.” In this new man are bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering. Is this making void the law? No; it is the image of God, who is the Author of the law. The soul that condemns itself, that will not allow that which it does, surely knows the law. It is grieved to find such unconformity to the law of the mind, which are faith and love. This is that which God has put into the heart, and which he maintains there, in spite of all the opposition which is made against it.

Again. The Holy Spirit has left upon record a passage indited by himself; and all prayers indited by him are but a transcript of the absolute purpose of God, to give and to work those things which he himself prompts and enables the believer to pray for. The prayer is this, recorded in 2 Thess. i. 11: “Therefore we pray always for you that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.” Here is all the good pleasure of the Lord’s goodness prayed for. Surely this is not making the law void; yea, it is establishing it; for as man has nothing in him, by nature, but what is evil, that covenant which secures all good, and in the end the total eradication of all evil from the soul, and at the great day gives it a holy body, or a spiritual one, can never be said to make void the law, but to establish it.

But we dare not give the law the honour of having done all this. No. We attribute all to free grace. Holiness is the end that God aims at, and which he will accomplish: “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” Love is holiness; and to this image all the elect of God are predestinated. This new covenant is intended to bring exclusive honour to the Son of God. All

holiness is to come by him, not by the law. The people of God are a new people belonging to a new covenant, and God in this covenant does wonders: "I make all things new." (Rev. xxi. 5.) They who are excluded from this covenant have neither part nor lot in this matter. They, indeed, make void the law. They never at any time either fulfil it by faith or by a new creature; and they establish nothing, neither law nor gospel. They are lawless and disobedient. They are cast out and rejected. They are left in their sins, and their evil works will assuredly follow them. Then one day the great controversy shall be decided, whether they who are delivered and not under it, who cleave to the Saviour of sinners with full purpose of heart, are in the right, or they who boast of keeping the law, and, at the same time, hate the Saviour, and are, in the sight of God, lawless.

The throne of Christ is established in righteousness; and as is the King, so are his subjects; and they do no less than blaspheme the God of heaven who speak against his righteous nation, and call them Antinomians. Believers are a righteous nation, and the sceptre which Christ sways over them is a righteous sceptre. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He is a King who reigns in righteousness, and his people are princes, and they rule in judgment. They have a judgment given them to discern both good and evil; and this judgment, which proceeds from the Holy Spirit, is both a crown and a diadem.

The way of regeneration is a way of holiness. It is a path of life, which is opposite to a death in trespasses and sins. "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" which is true of every quickened soul. Paul meets every objection which can be made against his doctrine, which was called by some licentious. He well knew what would be said by the enemies of God and his truth. Calumnies without end were then heaped upon the followers of the Lord Jesus, and so they are now; and we must always expect that "the mouth of the wicked and the mouth of the deceitful will be opened against us." "They compassed me about also with words of hatred, and fought against me without a cause." "If they called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" We must expect to be ill-treated by brutish men. To do good and to have a bad name was the usual lot of the first believers, and it is true of all living souls to this day. So it was foretold, and so it has proved true to this day. The Lord Jesus is called upon to plead his own cause, (Ps. iv.,) and to remember how the foolish man blasphemeth him daily. If you belong to Christ, Satan will soon bespatter your character; and the bolder you are in his cause, the more will he persecute you. When your mouth is opened in praise of Christ, Satan will open the mouth of the wicked against you: "They opened their mouth wide against me." (Ps. xxxv. 21.) Celestial liberty and holy triumph will call forth all the malice of Satan. "But the righteous is an everlasting foundation." (Prov. x. 25.) He is built on Him against whom the floods of Belial cannot prevail, although they make us afraid,

We are said to be established in righteousness: "In righteousness shalt thou be established." (Isa. liv. 14.) The soul that is taught of God knows this, for he never found any establishment until he had lost his own righteousness, and been made to submit to the righteousness of God; for Christ will allow of no co-partner. He will be all in all, or nothing.

"Thou shalt be far from oppression." The law is an oppressor; for every believer is possessed of two natures, and, therefore, as long as we are in the flesh we cannot stand before the law; and the Lord thus has delivered us from it; for which we thank the Lord, and bless his holy name. For thou shalt not fear and quake from terror. "So terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I do exceedingly fear and quake." The Lord Jesus will not have his little ones, his tender lambs, his feeble sheep led to Mount Horeb. We read that he makes them to lie down in green pastures, and leadeth them beside the still waters of comfort. They who lead his sheep to Horeb are no friends of his. With Christ in the hand of your faith, you may answer the law, and the law will itself justify you, and say, "I am satisfied;" it looks at the righteousness which you bring in your hand; it will acknowledge that by blood and by obedience you are acquitted. It will allow that the new man "is created in righteousness and true holiness." It is itself holy. It must allow that the old man, against which it has a charge, was crucified with Christ, and, therefore, accounted for by him.

The mystery of godliness is worthy of God, and is indeed a complete mystery to a natural man; but when understood in the light of the Holy Spirit, it is beauty itself, and well worthy its divine and most holy Author; for he has not only secured his own glory, but the holiness, the liberty, the peace, and the comfort of his people.

Paul was a son of Abraham after the Spirit, and he doctrinally set forth the true use of the law, and in his life he showed that this doctrine was according to godliness, and that he held the mystery of faith in a pure conscience. He laboured to have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man. He was in all things willing that there should be beauty in his conversation. He had a resolution, or purpose (2 Tim. iii. 10) given him so to do. He seasoned many with his heavenly doctrine, and laboured hard to be the means of saving souls, and thus to be a savour of life to them. He was made manifest in their consciences, and fully made manifest among them in all things. The Lord Jesus, his Master, honoured him, stood by him, and preserved him; for he sought the glory of God his Saviour.

Would you be fruitful to God? You must be dead to the law. Would you be fruitful? You can only be so through cleaving to Christ, for he is the true Vine, and all your fruit must come from him. A mere profession will do you no good. Many are in him by profession who never were so in reality, and all such useless, fruitless branches are taken away. Many a one is made manifest in this world, and if not, they continue foolish virgins to the end. Many seem and think themselves to be true believers, and others

think so of them, who disparage and disgrace their profession; but the true circumcision, they that are outwardly such, though reproached as evil doers, yet, no evil things can be truly said of them, as the reproach falls not on them, but on the evil speakers.

THE BRIDEGROOM'S DOVE.

"O my dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs."—CANT. ii. 14.

"My dove," the Bridegroom, speaks.
 To whom?
 Whom think'st thou meaneth he?
 Say, O my soul! Canst thou presume
 He has addressed thee?
 Yes; 'tis the Bridegroom's voice of
 love,
 Calling thee, O my soul, his dove.
 The dove is gentle, mild, and meek.
 Deserve I, then, the name?
 I look within in vain to seek
 Aught that can give a claim;
 Yet, made so by redeeming love,
 My soul, thou art the Bridegroom's
 dove.
 Methinks, my soul, that thou may'st
 see,
 In this endearing word,
 Reasons why Jesus likens thee
 To this defenceless bird; [love
 Reasons which show the Bridegroom's
 To his poor, helpless, timid dove.
 The dove, of all the feather'd tribe,
 Doth least of power possess;
 My soul, what better can describe
 Thine utter helplessness? [love
 Yet courage take; the Bridegroom's
 Will keep, defend, protect his dove.
 The dove hath neither claw nor sting,
 Nor weapon for the fight;
 She owes her safety to her wing,
 Her victory to flight.
 A shelter hath the Bridegroom's love
 Provided for his helpless dove.
 The hawk comes on, in eagle chase;
 The dove will not resist;
 In flying to her hiding-place
 Her safety doth consist.
 The Bridegroom opes his arms of
 love,
 And in them folds his panting dove.
 Nothing can now the dove molest,
 Safe from the fowler's snare;
 The Bridegroom's bosom is her nest;
 Nothing can harm her there.
 Encircled by the arms of love,
 Almighty power protects the dove.
 May 12, 1864.

As the poor dove, before the hawk,
 Quick to her refuge flies,
 So need I, in my daily walk,
 The wing which faith supplies,
 To bear me where the Bridegroom's
 love
 Places beyond all harm his dove.
 My soul, of native power bereft,
 To Calvary repairs;
 Immanuel is the rocky cleft,
 The secret of the stairs.
 Since placed there by the Bride-
 groom's love,
 What evil can befall his dove?
 Though Sinai's thunder round her
 roar,
 Though Ebal's lightnings flash,
 Though heaven a fiery torrent pour,
 And riven mountains crash,
 Through all, the still, small voice of
 love
 Whispers, "Be not afraid, my dove."
 What though the heavens away may
 pass,
 With fervent heat dissolve,
 And round the sun this earthly mass
 No longer shall revolve;
 Behold a miracle of love,—
 The lion quakes, but not the dove.
 My soul, now hid within a Rock,
 (The Rock of Ages call'd,)
 Amid the universal shock
 Is fearless, unappall'd.
 A cleft therein, prepared by love,
 In safety hides the Bridegroom's dove,
 O happy dove! Thus weak, thus safe,
 Do I resemble her?
 Thus to my soul, O Lord, vouchsafe,
 A dove-like character.
 Pure, harmless, gentle, full of love,
 Make me in spirit, Lord, a dove.
 O thou who on the Bridegroom's head
 Didst as a dove come down,
 Within my soul thy graces shed;
 Establish there thy throne;
 Then shed abroad a Saviour's love,
 Thou holy, pure, and heavenly Dove.
 G. G.

A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE FIRE.

Dear Friend,—I do feel a desire to drop you a few lines, but I do not know where to begin; but let us begin where the Lord began.

When the Lord God with rebuke does correct man for iniquity, he maketh his beauty to consume away like a moth. What a mercy it is for thee and me to know these things by experience. The question will arise here, Have we any beauty in ourselves, or have we lost it? for by nature we all think we possess a great deal of beauty. I, for one, before the dear Lord quickened me and brought me to see my awful state as a lost sinner, believed there was none so full of beauty as myself; and I have run to the glass scores of times to admire myself; because I was proud in heart, I could sin cheaply, and hate God's truth; and I could resist all the natural convictions, which the unregenerate ones call the strivings of God's Spirit within. I thought if the Lord would but give me a few minutes to repent before I quitted this life, it would be all well. Here I was full of beauty, and thought I was going to pay the Lord in a few minutes for more than 20 years' sin against him. I was a poor blind pharisee; but when the Lord God began to correct me for iniquity, (which was in the year 1845,) he made my beauty to consume away like a moth. The way the Lord took was to permit Satan to come in upon me to put an end to my life. This temptation made me tremble from head to foot, fearing I should be left to do it; for I was convinced that to do it would be to drop into hell in a moment. This temptation was followed by strong convictions of sin. Horror struck me, body and soul. Here my beauty began to consume away. The first thing I seemed to hate was the glass in which I before admired myself.

At this time I took to reading the Bible, and found that all the threatenings mentioned against sin sank deep into my conscience. "Thou art the very man," I read to my own condemnation, for I was condemned by my own conscience and by God's righteous law. I stood as a guilty criminal before a holy and righteous God, pursued by the devil for my life, insomuch that I despaired even of life. I felt that the powers of hell had hold of me, and I believed, (under such a guilty conscience, and the holy and righteous law of God opening itself in my heart, and showing me what a guilty sinner I was in the sight of the law and in the sight of God,) that I should assuredly go to hell. I envied the beasts in the fields, and wished I could get into their place; and would, have given the world, had I had it, to have been able to do so, for I was assured they had no soul, and that I had.

Here my beauty greatly consumed away, insomuch that I thought I should go out of my mind. My faculties were so impaired, and I was so low and weak, that sometimes I could hardly do my daily employment. I was truly brought low under a feeling sense of my lost estate as a guilty sinner. How I envied persons if I saw them going to a place of worship! I thought that they were holy, and I was all unholiness, and what a wretch I felt myself to be.

I thought there was not such a sinner on the face of the earth as I was. Here my beauty was consumed, and my comeliness was turned into corruption. I was lost, but I could not believe I was found again; but sometimes such passages as these would help me a little, and give me a little encouragement: "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be as crimson, they shall be as wool;" "Thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee."

When I began to understand a little of the word of God, I found that the Lord God had an elect people. Here the devil came in upon my poor soul with such force: "Thou art not one of the elect of God, and there is no hope for any but the elect of God." I felt that if I were not one of the elect, I was everlastingly lost; and I was convinced that I was, if the dear Lord did not have mercy on my soul. I walked, and sighed, and groaned, and sometimes I went into a ditch, when I was in the fields, to beg of the Lord to have mercy upon my soul; but I found that nothing but the blessed Spirit could liberate me.

I was once in great distress, and feared there was no mercy for me, when one night, all of a sudden, I was blessed with a sweet view of Christ. I could see him and his sufferings, and had such a view of the blood flowing from his precious side, and felt such a sweet melting of soul, such as I had never felt before, that it raised a hope in my soul, "Who can tell but the Lord may have mercy on me?" But this feeling did not last long. I soon sank again into the gloom and darkness. This was not a full deliverance; no, for I soon returned to my own place; and I found that my comeliness still turned into corruption, and that my beauty was consumed away like a moth. And how is that? Rub the moth, and his beauty will rub away almost into dust. So I do believe it is with the dear children of God. Their trials and temptations are to make their beauty fade away.

Satan had another trial for my poor soul. He suggested to me that I had sinned the unpardonable sin against the Holy Ghost. O! The thought of that sin sank my soul so low that I thought there was no hope for me, all hope being for ever gone. Says Satan, "I shall be sure of thee now, for the sin is unpardonable." The thought of this sin would follow me wherever I went, like a worm gnawing at the root of my peace. Hast thou ever been tried in this way? If thou hast, thou art the best judge of my trials, which I have said but very little about, compared with what I felt for more than two years before the dear Lord was pleased to bless me with a full deliverance, and during which time I found little else but soul trouble. I do believe that all the way the dear Lord has led my soul has been a right way. I say, I can believe it at times, when the Lord is a little precious to my soul.

I was at this time among a people called the Independents, and I found that those people did lay grievous burdens on my shoulders, and would not touch them with one of their fingers. I was for more than two years under these task-masters; but the Lord's time came

when I was to be delivered from them, for I was led to see, from the record of God and my own experience, that this people needed to be taught of God.

But to return, to tell you how the Lord was pleased to deliver my soul. I believe before this took place I sank into greater darkness and horror of mind than I ever felt, for I thought the very earth would open to swallow me up all the day before the Lord delivered my soul. At night I went to hear Mr. Tiptaft preach. He took these words for his text: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." O, my dear friend, my soul was like a hind let loose, my soul was as full of peace as it was before of trouble. All that the dear man said seemed for me, "a brand plucked out of the fire."

JOHN CREW.

YE ARE TAUGHT OF GOD TO LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

God Almighty bless my very dear Friend and Brother Morris.

Your letter has this moment come to hand, which is the best, nay, it appears to be worth all the other letters I have had from you. I was sunk as deep in the mud as you were in the mire. I was drawing the most awful conclusions respecting my state, calling all my past experience in question, having neither will nor power to pray, and sometimes not caring about my end. I felt backward to all good, with the devil working in every corruption of my fallen nature, making me in my own sight, and I believe in every one that saw me, worse than himself; but glory be to God! What shall I say? I cannot find words to convey my feelings. The moment I began to read your epistle, my hard heart began to melt; the old rusty lock of unbelief gave way; the devil appeared alarmed; my corruptions began to subside; and before I got to the end, I was laid at the feet of my blessed Jesus, clothed and in my right mind. I felt that nearness to you that never was exceeded by either David or Jonathan. I have long been persuaded that the Lord has linked us very closely together; but at no one time have I ever felt a greater measure of love and union towards my dear friend Morris than at present. My poor soul, which for some time has been sunk so low, accompanied with the most gloomy fears and dismal apprehensions, is now sprawling at the feet of Jesus. O my brother and fellow-traveller in the path of tribulation! Look up! We shall shout "Victory" shortly. The promise is that our Captain will bruise Satan under our feet. Though we are absent from each other more than 230 miles, we are present in spirit, and generally rise and fall together; so that as is the one so is the other. None but Jonathan and David are in the secret. Thanks to our God for stirring up Mrs. M. to pray, for directing you to Psalm cxvi., for enabling Rebecca to read it, for applying the same to your soul, for inclining you to write to a worm, and for making the whole such a blessing. Who is a God like unto our God, that rides upon the

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wings of the wind, that says unto the proud waves of sin and Satan, "Hitherto shalt thou go, but no farther," that remembers us in our low estate, "because his mercy endureth for ever?"

I have recently written to two or three of my Sussex friends. I endeavoured to magnify my office, by keeping from them most of my painful feelings, having a desire at the bottom to speak well of God, even though I were lost at last. I assure you, when Mr. M. informed me how well you were all going on at Lewes, instead of rejoicing, I felt murmuring. What is man, when left to himself?

Commit this hasty scrawl to the flames. It is not fit to be read, only by Joseph, escaped from the prison. The moment I laid your letter out of my hands, I began writing this. I thank you for yours. It just came in the nick of time. I wondered at its tarrying; but the vision is for an appointed time. I have waited for it with anxiety, but it now speaks, and silences our fretfulness and re-
 pining.

Yours,

Manchester, March 4, 1812.

W. HUDSON.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. COWPER.

My dear Friend,—I was truly glad, on receiving your very kind and truly welcome epistle, to find you in the land of the living, and favoured with a measure of health and strength. I have often thought of you; and were I not so poor a scribbler, I should have written again and again.

I am, through mercy, kept afloat in a sinking, sickly, dying world; and if ever one man above another has had cause to bless God, I am the man,—born in sin, but born again; dead to God, but made alive; a slave to sin, but made free from sin; once darkness, but now light in the Lord; once afar off, but now made nigh by the blood of Christ; once naked and in the open valley, now covered and bidden to live; once mad, but now in my right mind; and what yet calls for greater gratitude, praise, and thankfulness is, that that blessed God who hath done such merciful things for me, purposed to do so from everlasting, and rests in his love.

I have, my dear friend, had a very troublesome pilgrimage for many years; so much so that I have often thought I must be more brutish than any man, and my depraved nature in a worse condition than that of any who ever truly partook of the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Such untold evils have for hours, days, and weeks together struggled within that I have thought I have only done right in considering myself destitute of the true and saving grace of God; for, instead of cleaving to God as an adopted child, my filthy, sow-like heart would wallow in the mire; and even when chiding myself and calling myself a thousand ill and ugly names, a fresh swarm of old Beelzebub flies have arisen, until I have thought I surely must be stung to death. Sin I have endeavoured to lament and confess; but, "O wretched man that I am!" I have sinned and sinned again whilst confessing sin; and the master sin of all sin, I mean love to

sin, has so prevailed through all my soul that, whilst striving to feel a genuine hatred to it, and endeavouring to implore deliverance from its threatening dominion, my rebel nature would revolt against my own petitions, and conscience has been so alarmed that I have been a terror to myself, expecting a foul if not a final fall. But amidst all, how superabounding the mercy which has helped me hitherto; and not only helped but provided for the full and entire cleansing of my polluted, leprous, and sinful soul, and set before the eyes of the understanding an endless day of rest for each and every burdened and heavy-laden sinner that comes to God by Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. O how the weather-beaten traveller at times leaps for joy that such a hiding-place is provided, such a covert from the storm, the shadow of so great a Rock in so weary a land! "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities." The chastisement of our peace was upon him. May his stripes be doubly dear to us, that as the spring of corruption arises afresh, the fountain of life may spring up afresh; that as the sense of sin is deep, a deeper sense of Christ may extract the bane, satisfy the heart, pacify the conscience, and enable the poor pilgrim to buckle afresh to his burden and bow his shoulder to bear; for an enlarged heart will move the feet.

O that I had borne a better testimony to the power of grace! But my deficiency in preaching and living at times comes upon me with such weight that I am ready to wish I had never had an existence amongst the sons of men; and sure I am that the really regenerated soul feels in a different way and manner than any other person can possibly feel in this world. I do believe the fear of the outbreaking of sin is deeply seated in the heart where grace dwells; and this fear is clean, departing from evil. Mr. Hart wisely says:

" This fear is the Spirit of faith,
A confidence that's strong;
An unctuous light to all that's right,
A bar to all that's wrong."

I was glad to see — so well, and Mrs. S. I found in a better state than I found her in when I was at W—. The poor of this world are chosen to be rich in faith; and I have generally found the rich in this world poor in faith. Grace rarely dwells with wealth, and never thrives with it, but seems to have enough to do just to keep its hold of the heart. God has generally stripped his Abrahams, Isaacs, Jacobs, and Jobs, nor hath he left off to try the righteous; but though their afflictions are many, his mercies are more; and so the living family has ever found.

I am glad to hear Mrs. R. is well, to whom please give my kind regards. Likewise to all friends.

Our congregation continues large, and the church double the size I ever expected to see it,—a very poor people, and, I think, many of them much tried, both in soul and circumstances. I have often wondered why I should be placed here, and though often much tried, helped hitherto.

Dicker, Aug 28, 1847.

W. COWPER.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MRS. STOCKDALE,
OF LEICESTER.

My dear Friend,—What a long time it is since I wrote to or heard from you! I have often wished to write both to you and others, but various hindrances have arisen. You and Mrs. S. have ever my warm wishes for your temporal and spiritual welfare.

“He will leave in the midst of the land an afflicted and poor people;” and truly it is so. How varied, how multiplied are the afflictions of the poor in spirit; and what a mercy that it is so! There is a needs-be for it, at least I am sure I feel it so. I am like a sluggish horse which needs the whip to keep it up, as they say, to the collar, to stir up my mind to keep feeling after God and the light of his countenance; and, blessed be his name, either by a sanctified correction, or a fresh discovery of his love and mercy in Christ Jesus, he does keep my soul alive. He causes all these varied exercises to prove the life of my spirit; so that, though “faint,” I am still kept “pursuing.” What a mercy that ever the Lord of life and glory should deign to look upon such poor sinners as we are, when we blindly go the broad way to destruction, and that he should snatch us as brands from the everlasting burning.

My mind has been much affected this morning (my birthday), being led to review the Lord’s gracious preservation of me in providence and grace, from my birth down to the present hour. Surely I may say, “Goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.” In my natural state, with the seeds of every iniquity in my heart, as ready on temptation to rush into open transgression as any; but a restraint was laid upon me from my earliest infancy, nor was I permitted to oppose or persecute the Lord’s cause or people. This was a mercy. But still I was a poor, ignorant, blind pharisee, diligently going about to establish my own righteousness, travelling the broad road in the garb of religion. This was my state when the blessed Day-star arose in my soul and discovered to me that all my religion was vain, built upon the sand, and that, unless it was given me to believe on the Son of God by the power of the Holy Ghost, I must be eternally lost.

I have sometimes been troubled when I have heard persons speak of the length of time they laboured under unbelief. I seemed to labour much longer under the condemnation of the law, utterly ignorant how I could be saved. I seemed to have no more thought of Christ than if I had never heard his name. To be sure this was all unbelief. I was not so sensible of it as some of the Lord’s people express themselves. When faith was given me to believe in Jesus, the exercise of it was weak; but I believe it was of the power of God, and therefore soul-saving; and, bless his dear name, my hope waxes stronger, though still I am on the look-out for fuller and clearer manifestations of his love.

I find Mr. Chamberlain’s ministry much blessed, at times, to my soul. He is particularly encouraging to the weak. I heard him the last three Sundays with particular sweetness and power from Psalm

xvii. 2, 3. He said some precious things on the presence of God, and of the soul's continual need of its sentence going forth from his presence,—its sentence of justification, pardon, and full deliverance from all condemnation, by the Spirit's testimony to its completeness in Jesus. O how we want continually to grasp and hold fast this truth! How hard sometimes to hold, and how we sink when it is lost sight of! I also heard Mr. C. with much sweetness on the "power of his resurrection."

I hope the little cause at G. prospers. Do you have preaching now? Farewell, my dear friend.

Yours sincerely in the Bonds of the Gospel,

Langton Hall, Jan. 23, 1839.

F. A. ORD.

[Mrs. Stockdale was at this time Miss Ord, the daughter of a clergyman of wealth and family, living at Langton Hall, near Market Harborough. Hers was, indeed, a remarkable case both of steadfastness of profession and of persecution for righteousness' sake. We will mention only one instance; she was for several years never allowed to dine or take her meals with the rest of the family. After some years of thus suffering she was united to the late Mr. Stockdale, a seceding clergyman, who lived at Leicester, and sat under Mr. Chamberlain. We knew her well, and have rarely seen her equal for amiability of disposition, humility of mind, love to and firmness in the truth, and spirituality of conversation.—ED.]

A LETTER BY THE LATE ROBERT PYM.

My dear Brother in Jesus,—precious, precious, unspeakably, unutterably precious Jesus!—Would that I had some one that I could talk to of him in some little way that I hope to do in his presence in glory, filled with him my own self to the utmost the spirits of the just now made perfect in heaven are. Blessed, blessed Jesus! How precious has he been to me all this morning, as I have been meditating on and setting him before me, as I have delighted to have him in my mind's eye this morning in bed. Nothing else now can satisfy me; no, nothing but to be engaged in my mind, thoughts, and affections with him. Then I want some one or more to whom to unburden and unbosom my mind respecting him; and when I have not that, then to be enabled to do it by means of pen, ink, and paper. But I fail in making the attempt. How blessed will it, must it be to be in his presence, have his sweet, sweet company; see him just in the way he will present himself to us in our disembodied state, partakers of a glory suited to that state, derived from him, and looking forward to another more advanced, when suitable bodies will clothe our souls, render us, both in body and soul, capable of more advanced happiness and blessedness than we have ever before enjoyed, and preparing us for that which shall be the utmost manifestation, discovery, or attainment of blessedness to which God can ever raise a creature in that knowledge and sight of himself, in, through, and by Jesus for eternity, which will be our eternal life. It will be Jesus in his actual bodily presence, making over himself unto and filling us with himself as God-Man in the glories of his divine Person, and his human nature united in that Person; in which we shall be enabled to behold the Three, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost

as One; and shall never be insensible, or forgetful, or unmindful that here we are eternally established in a never-to-be-interrupted state of bliss and happiness, as near to God's own self as God can make a creature capable of partaking; supplied by him out of his own fulness, as the fulness of it dwells bodily in Christ Jesus, the glorified, incarnate Son of the Father; in whom to believe now is the security, on the covenanted word of the Three-in-One, that we individually, personally, who do believe in the incarnate, once humbled, abased, now risen and glorified Son of the Father, and One of the Three, shall have this eternal life.

O how blessed to believe, and to company with, talk over, and hold communion with those who do believe! To be in this blessed way enabled and permitted to live for this endless state of unspeakable, inconceivable happiness, through the hope of the gospel; patiently waiting for it of grace, through the Porter, God the Holy Ghost, having graciously opened the door Jesus, in the word, into our hearts; so that Jesus himself might go in and out therein, leading us in and out, up and down in the green pastures of the word, as the Shepherd whose are the sheep, and who in thus tending upon them acts not as a hireling, but as he who has done no less than lay down his life for them.

I have made a great effort to write this. The Lord grant a blessing on it, notwithstanding all my weaknesses in it, &c. &c. There is nothing between Christ and his people but that which is of the union of the Spirit; so between you and me,

Elmley, Jan. 15th, 1862.

ROBERT PYM.

[This is one of the last letters that Mr. Pym ever wrote; and how evident it is that he was standing, as it were, on the very borders of eternal glory.—*Ed.*]

THE Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the sons of God. The witness which our spirits do give unto our adoption is the work and effect of the Holy Spirit in us. If it were not, it would be false, and not confirmed by the testimony of the Spirit himself, who is the Spirit of truth; and none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God. (1 Cor. ii. 11.) If he declare not our sonship in us, we cannot know it. How then doth he bear witness to our spirits? What is the distinct testimony? It must be some act of his, as evidenceth itself to be from him, immediately unto them that are concerned in it, that is, those unto whom it is given.—*Owen.*

THE legalist comforts himself in all his extremities with the law, till the last extremity come, and then he finds himself cheated; and hence O what a mercy it is that the Lord drains a man of his legal comfort, that he may unhinge him off the law, and off his self-confidence! Ofttimes when God is bringing home his elect, he makes all the common work they had to disappear. It may be they had a profession, were morally serious, they had zeal, prayed with life, heard with affection; but behold now all the streams of common influences are dried up. The poor soul finds he cannot pray, he cannot shed a tear, though he should be cast into hell; yea, he cannot think a right thought, though it should bring him to heaven; nay, he finds his heart hardened like a devil, and his mind bemisted with the darkness of hell. Why? This is all in love, to drive him out of himself, and out of the law, to the dear Son of God.—*Ralph Erskine.*

Obituary.

MRS. SOPHIA ELMER.

I SEND a short outline of the experience of Mrs. S. Elmer, daughter of Richard Hide, of Greenfield, Pullan Hill, Bedfordshire. The first part is from her own pen, and the remainder by her father and others who were witnesses of her dying scenes. That from her own pen was written about the months of March, April, and May, 1864, as she was able, a few lines at a time, which is little more than an introduction to what she hoped would have been granted her to write.

“I will try, by the help of God the Holy Spirit bringing things to my remembrance, to relate some of the dealings of the Lord with my soul. I spent all my early years attending the parish church, except now and then hearing the gospel at Westoning; but I often heard conversations between my father and Mr. G. Squires, which so condemned me that I felt, if what they said was truth, I was in an awful state. I had been the subject of convictions at different times from an early age, but I soon forgot them, was soon at evil again, and would go on again in my former ways, blinded by the god of this world. But O! the goodness and mercy of God in sparing me, and not cutting me off in my sins.

“I married at the age of 21, and in due time was the mother of children. Then for some time I did not attend any place of worship, and felt I was wrong in not doing so. I therefore began going to church again, and tried to attend to what was going on with all the earnestness I could. But being dissatisfied, feeling as I came away that there was something wanted which I had not got, I was at length led to attend the chapel with my father as often as I could; but I felt as I entered I had no business there; it was for God's people only. After attending some little time, I heard a sermon preached about the lost and ruined state of sinners in the fall of Adam, and that living and dying in that state they must perish for ever; but as I did not feel the effects so much at the time it was spoken, I cannot call to mind anything but that I felt the solemn impression to follow me. I sank lower and lower in myself. I felt myself to be the character spoken of, and the solemn state I was in, which caused me to cry out in the anguish of my soul, ‘O that the Lord would have mercy on me!’ Thus I went on for some time, sometimes encouraged under the preaching; for at times I did feel a little hope arise, but it was soon gone again. It seemed as though I dared not to think it was for me; but I have felt so comfortable whilst I have been hearing the truth preached that I have thought I could stay for a week if I could enjoy the same feelings. But I have come away and seemed so entangled with the affairs of this life that my better feelings were drowned, and I sank so low again that I thought the Lord could not have mercy on me; and the enemy of my soul was all ready to tempt me to think it was not the work of God, because my sins were not laid upon my conscience as some of God's

children have described. Once in particular, while going to chapel, I was so worried that I thought it was no use going any farther; but all at once I felt, 'Well, I do feel my need of mercy, and deeply too. I will go;' which I did, begging the Lord would appear for me; and I felt encouraged a little; but as I did not have any words applied with power to my heart, nor anything I could state from hearing sermons which seemed as words coming in particular, I determined not to go again, thinking if it was the Lord's work I should have some words of Scripture applied by the Spirit.

"A circumstance took place about this time which caused great rebellion against the Almighty, thinking his dealings with me very hard. My family being likely to increase, and being in a weak state of health, I was very much tried about it; but afterwards I felt so broken down, fearing lest the Lord should cut me off, and I should drop into hell, that I had an inward groaning and crying unto the Lord for mercy, and to spare my life; and, bless the Lord, he did deliver me out of my trouble, and, I hope I can say, gave me a thankful heart for sparing me. Thus I was led on, greatly fearing and wondering where the scene would end, after thinking I might as well give up altogether; but that I could not do. The thought of death was often on my mind, feeling what a solemn thing it is to die without God and without hope. I stayed to see three persons received into the church. They had been baptized in the morning. I scarcely knew how to keep my seat; and when the hymn was given out, and this line:

"What if my name should be left out?"

O, my feelings I cannot express! I felt pierced to the heart. I would gladly have changed places with any one who I thought knew anything of a change for themselves. But no; I must stand for myself. And O! The thought of being in torments for ever, and shut out of all hope of mercy, rent my heart in pieces. I remember sitting by the fire one evening; and, looking at the flame, I thought, 'O, to be in the fire one minute! But what was that to be compared with everlasting burnings?'

"Thus I was led on hoping and fearing until I was taken ill, which I thought at first was a bad cold; but my strength failed very fast, and I soon began to think I should never recover, which greatly increased my fears. I went to bed one night, and O the horror of mind I felt lest I should be cut off before morning. Day after day passed, and death, as I feared, was close at hand. I felt, 'What must I do? O that the Lord would have mercy on me!' In this state of mind I knew not what to do. Mr. Muskett called, and came up stairs to see me. After asking the state of my health, he said, 'And how is your mind?' I felt I knew not what to say; but I said, 'The thoughts of death make me tremble.' He said, 'I suppose you are aware it must be all of free grace and Christ's blood and righteousness to save you.' I said, 'Yes;' for I felt it was all I wanted. 'Give me Christ or else I die,' was the cry of my soul. He engaged in prayer on my behalf, and I hope I can say he spoke out the breathings of my soul before a throne of grace, and I felt a

little liberated. After a little more conversation, he left me; but, alas! my fears soon came on again. I was so afraid I was deceived, that it was not of God, and would not do to die with. I felt that God would be just if he sent me to hell. But, ah! It made me cry more for mercy, begging the Lord that I might know whether I was his or not. I one day took the hymn-book, and read this:

“‘Ye lambs of Christ’s fold, ye weaklings in faith,
Who long to lay hold on Christ by his death.’”

And also this:

“‘Blest soul that can say, Christ only I seek;
Wait on him alway; be constant, though weak.
The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long,
For to him the weakest is dear as the strong.’”

O how this encouraged me again. I felt hope rise.

“I remember after I went up to bed one night such begging of the Lord to show me whether it was his work, and if it was not that it might be begun now, when I was so tried with, ‘You know it is not of God, for if it were you would not have such fears;’ but these words came: ‘Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of his good pleasure.’ I felt the words were from God. The next night I had such fear, and seemed in the same kind of way, when these words came: ‘Let God be true, and every man a liar. I have sworn by my holiness I will not fail David. Hath he said, and will he not do it? Hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?’”

Thus far her own hand spoke the exercises of her heart; after which she could write no more, although she much desired it, that she might encourage others from her own blessed deliverance, which took place a few days after the last-mentioned Scriptures were applied. I called again to see her, and found her greatly exercised. I remember the last time she heard me preach at Silsoe, a village to which I went about once a month on a Lord’s day evening. I said, in the course of the sermon, “I had often felt a spirit of prayer for God’s exercised people, so that I seemed to know deliverance was near. I had felt sure they were the Lord’s before they knew it themselves.” A thought sprang up in our friend’s heart, “How I should like to know if ever you prayed for me;” but she dared not name it. On my second visit to her, amongst other things by which I endeavoured to encourage her, I told her I had felt a spirit of prayer for her, and felt fully persuaded she would not be long without the blessing; at which her soul seemed to make a leap like the babe in the womb of Elizabeth at the salutation of Mary; and in a few days afterwards the Lord granted her request by the powerful application of these words: “In my Father’s house are many mansions. I go to prepare a place for *you*,” (great power resting on the word *you*;) “and if I go and prepare a place for *you*, I will come again and receive *you*” (as before, with great weight) “to myself, that where I am there *ye* may be also.” Now was she full of joy and rapture. Not a doubt was left of her full and eternal safety in the Lord Jesus. She talked to all who knew anything of these things, especially to

her father, to whom, before this time, she could scarcely name the state of her soul. Now was the stammerer's tongue loosed, and the terror of death removed. Death and the grave were subjects she had looked upon with terror, but now joy at the thought of a speedy acquaintance with them, which her bodily disease, consumption, was now fast hastening on. For a few days she was like one baptized in love, and blood, and power by the Holy Ghost.

In the course of a week or two her joys began to decline, although the Lord continued to commune with her by his word. I could have wished this had come from her own pen, as I think I never witnessed a more striking way of the Lord talking with his people by his written word. In fact, her whole state, past, present, and future, was all put before her and before us by suitable Scriptures of the Lord's own finding and applying. But the dear Lord suffered the enemy to try her faith very severely, especially about, "In my Father's house are many mansions," and the emphatic "you" spoken by the Holy Ghost. These words were a prelude to the trial: "Thy shoes shall be iron and brass, and as thy days so shall thy strength be."

After this Satan was permitted to wrest from the grasp of her soul the sweet testimony of the prepared place, &c. But these words were applied with power: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the rivers they shall not overflow thee;" and though these Scriptures did not bring the sweetness of the "many mansions," yet they were like brazen bulwarks to her buffeted spirit.

Such were her exercises between Michaelmas and Christmas, 1863; and although she lived to the 7th of August, 1864, she had but little more of that sweet joy and peace she was favoured with in delivering mercy; but after the new year had set in, she was favoured with one more blessed revival in her soul by the sweet application of the words: "Although ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove, covered with silver, and her feathers of yellow gold." These words so revived her body and soul that she came down stairs again towards the evening, and some hope was entertained by her parents, whose only child she was, that she might yet be spared to see her three children reared, and be enabled to give in her testimony amongst us as a church, and to live in gospel union with us; but the fatal blow was struck. She again failed in strength, and her father continued to bring her down stairs in the hot weather in May, and, I think, the early part of June. She then took wholly to her bed, wasting daily away to the end.

The next text of Scripture applied to her was: "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, and obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the Lord, and stay himself upon his God." And truly this was her state to the end, except during the last day or two. She often said, "I should like to have another blessed visit of the Lord's dear presence in my soul; it is so sweet, I cannot but long for this; not but that I feel my standing on the Rock. I feel I am safe; but, if the dear

Lord will, I should like another smile." In all of which it was observed there was no distress. It appeared like this. The Lord denied her the silver of the dove's wings, but she had the glorious gold of strong faith, by which she was enabled, in a remarkable manner for one so young in the mystery, to glorify God. It was now a solemn march behind the great Leader and Forerunner, to meet the armed men Death and the Grave, at which she never once seemed to tremble. I believe, could this part of her history have been descanted on by her own hand, we might have seen a Mr. Great Heart, rather than Mr. Feeble Mind, or his daughter Miss Much Afraid.

At a later period she had some little comfort from Job: "The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger."

During June and July she gradually wasted, the cough increasing; but she was not racked with pain, either in body or mind. She was like one lying at anchor, waiting for the gale which should waft her over the Jordan of death, and which she knew would be her next and last change. She would mostly say, "I hope still in him. I have nothing else to hang upon."

A few weeks, two or three perhaps, before her death, these words were with her in much power, and particularly sweet: "No weapon formed against thee shall prosper, and every tongue that riseth against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn," &c. I took the opportunity to speak to her from those words, as I had seen her whereabouts all the way through, from the Spirit's application of Scripture; so this Scripture was given to let us know the enemy of her soul, as with Job, had obtained leave to accuse her before God as a hypocrite, as also somewhat in her own conscience, and that she should prove him a liar; and I had no doubt she would have a very peaceful end. She still, at times, wished, if it were the Lord's will, for one more visit of his presence, observing, "It is so sweet," yet at the same time expressing a comfortable hope, which shut all doubtings out as to the ground she occupied; but she said, "Once more shine, Lord, and then let me die."

About a fortnight before her death, a change took place at which her mother became alarmed, but she desired her to be assured she was not going yet; and again, in about a week, another change of a similar kind took place, in all which she was calm and unruffled, except by the violence of her cough.

All the last week she spoke of her death without terror; and though not favoured in the way she desired with the presence of the Lord, her faith became stronger and stronger, and she said several times to her father, "Father, the work is *done*; when I have got through this," meaning death, "sorrow is all over for ever with me."

Being in great pain a day or two before her death, she said, "It is hard work; but what is this to Calvary and the cross of Christ?" To a friend she said, "Death is nothing to me now. I long for it. Come, Lord Jesus. Lord, give me patience; it will soon be over."

I called upon her on Saturday the 6th of August, when I found her in the arms of death, no pulsation to be felt, but in quiet pos-

session of all her faculties, and she could still so speak that, by putting my ear to her mouth, I could hear pretty well what she said. I said to her, "I shall not be long after you." She said, with great emphasis, "Happy meeting!" About midnight she quoted these words:

"Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone;
He whom I fix my hopes upon."

Her father, being very unwell and worn out with watching, took his leave of her, and she of him, and he went and lay down in the adjoining room. After an hour or two, perceiving another change, her mother said, "Call father;" but she made signs and let them know she would not have him disturbed.

A little before she departed, she looked on her husband, and said, "It is hard work. You must come here;" which were the last words she spoke before she yielded up the ghost into the hands of her most merciful Redeemer.

Aug. 11, 1864.

G. MUSKETT.

A NEW YEAR'S THOUGHT AND PRAYER.

THY mercies, Lord, are great indeed
To me, a sinful worm;
My wanderings and my base insults
Thou patiently hast borne.
O! Hadst thou strictly mark'd my sins,
I'd not been spared to see
A new year's day; but must have been
In endless misery.
Thanks to thy name, most gracious God,
For all thy favours past.
O let thy praises tune my tongue
Long as my breath shall last.
Worthless and base I feel I am,
Not worthy of thy care;
Nor in such favours, Lord, do I
The least deserve to share.
If spared to live another year,
May it be at thy feet;
To gaze upon thy hands and side,
And sing, and love, and weep.
In this dear place, Lord, if thy will,
O may I often be;
Cover'd with dust, I there would sit,
And sweetly worship thee.
O blessed place! I love the spot!
Dear Jesus, hear my cry;
Nearer to thee O let me live,
And more to this world die.
And now, dear Lord, just as I am,
I cast myself on thee;
Support, uphold, guide, lead, protect,
Till thy dear face I see.

Stevenage.

JOHN MARTIN.

[FEBRUARY, 1, 1865.]

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

FEBRUARY, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

THE SACRIFICE OF THANKSGIVING.

A SERMON BY THE LATE W. GADSBY, PREACHED ON LORD'S DAY MORNING,
NOVEMBER 1ST, 1840.

“ I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.”—Ps. cxvi. 17.

UNDER the Jewish dispensation, God had appointed a variety of offerings and sacrifices for the Jews, under certain circumstances, to attend to; and if you turn to the seventh chapter of Leviticus, you will find that the offering of the sacrifice of thanksgiving was to be accompanied with unleavened bread mingled with oil, with wafers anointed with oil, and with cakes fried in oil. Now in reality, beloved, there is no sacrifice of thanksgiving without this oil; and it is not necessary merely that the wafers should be anointed with oil, but that the fat of the offering should be mingled with oil. The figure imports the essential necessity of the divine anointings of God the Spirit in the conscience, and the same anointings being made manifest in our external worship. Alas, brethren! If you or I examine the various branches of our external worship and professions of thanksgiving, where do we find the oil? There may be the tongue, there may be the judgment and the bodily exercise; but where is the oil? If there be no oil in our worship, whether betwixt God and the conscience, whether in our families in private, or in the public assembly of God's saints, if there be no oil, there really is no true thanksgiving. And yet our God tells us that “ he that offereth praise glorifieth him, and to him that ordereth his conversation aright he will show the salvation of God.”

If I may be allowed this morning just to give a word of advice before I enter more particularly upon the subject, it will be that you would endeavour to cry to the Lord for oil, that both you and I may feel the solid unction, the divine anointings of God all in all. I do not know anything that has tried me more for the last two days than that I should be suffered to come before you for the first time after this affliction* without oil. O Lord, forbid it! Whatever thou withholdest, graciously grant us the divine oil and anointing of the Holy Spirit, that we may be led feelingly into the truth

* This was the first sermon Mr. Gadsby preached after he broke his leg, on Sept. 14, 1840.

of the gospel of God, and feel its sweetness and unction in the heart.

I shall not attempt to give you any divisions, but just drop a hint or two:

I. That we have all *cause for thankfulness*, whether we are thankful or not.

II. That *God's people have more cause to be thankful* than the holy angels in heaven; for God has done more for them than he ever did or ever will do for the holy angels.

III. I shall give you a *short statement* of some little that God has lately *done for me* to sanctify my affliction.

I. Is there a poor sinner in this assembly who has not cause for thankfulness? Young men and young women, if you are kept in the path of morality and virtue, O what cause for thankfulness you have! Your nature is no more chaste in itself than the youth that is dying with rottenness, and, to all appearance, likely to be damned. It is the Lord that preserves you. May the Lord make you feel it, and teach you to be thankful for it. And if he has kept you hitherto, may he lead you to be cautious, and humbly to seek his aid, to keep you in time to come. Alas! There are some present who tremble, whose consciences tells them they are guilty, and who are ready to say, "Then what cause have I to be thankful?" Why, that God does not cut you off in the midst of your transgressions, and say to you, "Young man, young woman, you have violated your conscience, and set yourself against your common understanding, to sin against me, and I will honour my justice in damning you for ever." He has spared you. And has he spared you, and you have nought to say? God forbid that it may be to fill up the measure of your wickedness! O come, blessed Spirit, with thy divine power, and bring the oil of life into their dead souls, if it be thy sovereign pleasure. Make them thankful that thou hast not given them their deserts; and may they be concerned to cry to thee for favour and preservation in time to come.

Young friends, harden not yourselves in sin. Be assured that the period will come when your sins will find you out. Then you must stand before God naked, exactly as you are, without disguise or covering.

But we have cause to be thankful for the common necessities of life. Few of you, if any, are in that extravagant want and distress that numbers of your fellow-creatures are. And remember that numbers of those who are in the most agonising distress, want, and calamity are as good as you. No thanks, then, are due to you. Thanks are due to a kind, preventive God; to God's mercy that is over all his works. Perhaps some of you, in the stiffness of your hearts, (and it is a stiff heart we have,) will say, "I am more prudent, more economical, more industrious and cautious than many I see in extravagant distress." This may be true; but instead of this pampering you up with pride, it calls for thankfulness. Who has made you prudent? Who keeps you prudent? The Lord. Sin

has rendered us all mad, and there is not a prudent man in the world if God do not make him prudent; not one, if we were left to the workings of our corrupt hearts. There are no bounds to our folly but what God fixes; and therefore we have great and constant cause to be thankful for all the common necessities of life. And we never shall enjoy a particle of the blessedness of becoming pensioners upon God till God makes us feel that, and feel it under need of a little oil. No. Then shall we bless him for all we enjoy more than the damned in hell; for it is God's mercy that we have anything more, or are any way better, than they.

II. But *God's people*, called by divine grace, made partakers of the divine nature, have great cause to be thankful *above all the rest*; yea, above the angels in heaven. I do not know, but perhaps some of you may think this rather extravagant; but I have been brought, through the grace of God, to feel that I would not thank God to make me an angel. I envy them not. If there are different races and orders of angels in heaven, I do not envy, when in such a solemn frame of mind, with the oil of rejoicing in my heart, I do not envy the highest rank of those adoring beings. They are no sinners, but, as Hart very solemnly said:

“ If sinless innocence be theirs,
Redemption all is ours.”

O the riches of the love of God! The redemption of the soul by the blood of the God-Man Mediator is all ours; and the angels cannot even sip it. It is out of the reach of their pure lips and holy hearts; but the Lord, in the riches of his grace, bestows that especial favour, with all the blessings connected with it, upon the objects of his precious choice, of his love, his own love.

Have you, my friends, been brought, as poor sinners, poor broken-down sinners, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ? Have we been brought to cast our cares upon Christ, to feel a little measure of his love and blood? O how amazing, then, how wonderfully amazing the feeling, when sometimes we have been drawn up by the power of God the Spirit to behold the glory of the workings of a faith entering into the bosom and the love of the God-Man, and saying, “My Lord and my God.” How amazing! Reason is confounded; even Unbelief is obliged to skulk away for a moment; but it is such a devil, it will soon come again; but it is obliged for a moment to skulk away, while the soul has solemn, sweet, and blessed intercourse with God in Christ Jesus. To speak of a millionth part of the blessings that God's people have secured to them, which are causes for thankfulness, we never can. Just let us drop a hint or two, if we can, upon the suggestion, and then leave it.

First. Before God made the world, before a creature existed, his loving heart wrapped the people of his choice in himself, and, by an eternal, immutable, unalterable decree, fixed the eternal glory of millions of millions that should live with him at last. And when his blessed Spirit brings you and me to feel, by a vital faith, that we are of that blessed number, does it not call for thankfulness?

“Why,” say you, “do you think you can prove such a statement as that from the word of God?” Really, if I could not, I would as soon have not only another leg broken, but my neck broken into the bargain, if that would put me out of existence entirely,—if I did not believe such a truth as that. “Why,” say you, “what comfort can there be in that?” I will tell you. It is a cord of infinite strength, that ties the blessedness of believers so firmly to God’s honour that God’s honour and their degradation must, blessed be God, go together. If they sink into degradation, the Lord’s honour must sink too. The Lord has coupled the church of the living God and his own honour; and the pages of the written word have connected it with his own honour and glory, and “his glory he will not give to another.” Now this blessed truth, therefore, is what the apostle triumphed in when he said, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, before the foundation of the world.” Again: “Who hath saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began.” O Lord, of thy mercy and grace to us, give our poor, lumpish souls a dead lift, and lead us solemnly and sweetly, by grace, into the mysteries of thy love, to taste the glory of God, as secured to us in Christ; and may we find a rest in our souls that the world can neither give nor take away. Well, now, connect with this that the Lord has given his Son to be a propitiation for us. Believers, if you can forget your poverty, and come to your stock,—I do not mean the stock you are keeping of your good deeds, for that is not a bit better than lumber and rags; it is only fuel for the fire, and I should like to see it all in flames. And yet I am such a fool that I often get another stock of lumber ready for God to burn up. Lord, what fools we are! What a wonderful thing it is, after the working of God in our souls, that we should be such fools as to gather such lumber together, which brings to us so much pain and anxiety. But, then, I mean that stock of treasure laid up in Christ. There is immortal life; there is immortal holiness; there is immortal grace; out of the reach of sin; out of the reach of death, or hell, or Satan. All the vomitings up of the filth of our guilty nature cannot drown it. No, blessed be God, it cannot; I have proved that; and the sea of love and blood secured in the obedience of Christ is a crown of consolation for the church of God in the midst of their trouble. And surely it calls for gratitude and thankfulness.

“But,” say you, “I am such a fool; such a poor, weak, helpless, worthless sinner.” If you were not, I would not give you my spectacles for your religion. That a poor, weak, worthless sinner cannot be saved, is the devil’s invention to deceive souls, and wrap them up in strong delusions; to insult Christ, and to dishonour the revelation that God has made of his Son. But the poor, the needy, the loathsome, and the lost are just fit for Christ, and Christ is just fitted for them; and God fits them together; and there is not a better fit in being. And when the blessed Spirit does put Christ in

us and us in Christ, and fits us together with the bonds of love, and anoints us with oil, O what a sacrifice of thanksgiving there is then! All the powers of the soul have been drawn sweetly and solemnly into exercise, and we are able feelingly to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, and who crowneth thy life with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

Secondly. In this blessed gift of Christ there is strength for the weak; but there would be no need for it if there were no weak folks to be found. Here is wisdom for fools; but if all the fools were out of the world, what must the Lord do with his wisdom? Here is holiness for the unholy; for he "is made of God unto us sanctification." But if all men were holy, then he might keep his holiness to himself, for we should not want it. Here is fulness for the empty: God shall "supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Poor, burdened, dejected, cast-down, broken-hearted, worn-out sinner, as God is God, it is all thine. God help thee to believe it, and to receive it under the divine unction and anointing of the Holy Spirit; that you may then have mingled with the cake of the offering the holy oil, and offer thanksgiving to God in spirit and in truth; that so you may know the blessedness of vital religion, and worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

III. But I must leave this part of my subject, and just take up a few minutes in relating a little of the dealings of the Lord with myself. And the first thing I must do, shameful as it may appear, must be to criminate myself before you all. I had made up my mind for more than a month before this providence took place, that I would spend a few days at Buxton, in what we call a holiday. I had proved, it is true, that the bathing and the air of Buxton had done my poor old hobbling carcass a deal of good, and therefore I expected it would again; but, at all events, I determined to try it. And, therefore, I made up my mind that whoever might write, and however urgent they might be for me to go to preach, I would go nowhere that week; I would have a pleasure and a holiday; and no one nor any set of people should dissuade me from it. So that I was quite as fixed as man could be. You know well that the day before, which was the Lord's day, I was at Oldham. A friend was to go with me to Buxton, and I left it with him to engage our places in a coach that left at two o'clock on the Monday, as I should get home in time to get a few things ready, and call at his house for him, or meet him at the coach office. So I came; and really I cannot see at this moment any real reason why I came off but to break my leg. It appeared that so God had ordered it. I know some people have said my leg was not broken; but I do not think them worth powder and shot; and all I shall say is, if their jaw-bone were broken as much as my leg, they would say a little less; and here I leave them. But I came home, and I found that my friend had sent word that there was no room in the coach. So I posted away my servant-girl instantly to tell him that there was another coach which went a little afterwards. When she was gone, I said, "If

that is full, I will take it for granted that God does not mean me to go." I went up stairs, stripped off my coat, put another on, and went into the garden, and there saw a friend who had been doing a little job for me. I asked him what it would be. I came into the house for the money, and paid him, and then went into the garden and, to cut the matter short, my leg slipped under me and caught; against a side-flag; my whole body fell upon it, and I heard it break just like a stick. I had never sat down in the house. It appears evident that the design of the Lord was that I should come home for that very purpose, to break my leg. And the Lord and I had evidently agreed in this one thing, that I should have a holiday; only we were not agreed as to the place where and the means how. I meant a holiday at Buxton, like a gentleman; and God meant at home, with a broken leg. There was the difference between the Lord and me; but, at the same time, so kind has the Lord been that I have blessed him for his choice since then, and felt satisfied that it was infinitely preferable to mine, and I could not murmur or grumble against the dispensation of God.

The first thing that struck my mind and that I said to myself, as soon as I fell, and found that I could not move, was this, "God would have done right if he had broken your neck." "O, then," say you, "you must be a wicked creature." Yes, the Lord knows I am; but I am a sinner saved by grace. Devils tremble, the Lord is honoured, Christ is glorified, and my soul is filled with joy. "But why should you imagine that it would have served you right if the Lord had broken your neck?" Well, I will tell you. I began to reflect in a moment that my intended journey to Buxton was a job of my own, and I had never asked leave of God. I had never consulted him in prayer, or at least very little upon the subject; and therefore the Lord was determined to let me know that he loved me too well to let my pride carry me anywhere without the guidance of the Lord. And O what a mercy it is when God brings us to feel our own wickedness, when we have not sought him in prayer, and leads us to feel at the same time his tender compassion towards us. Well, his blessed Majesty was graciously pleased to bring that sweet text to my mind, after I was laid in my bed: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting;" and I never saw and never felt more glory in the mercy of the Lord in my life. His mercy, in the solemn opening of his love in a covenant of grace, in the divine operations of the Holy Spirit, was opened in such a glorious way to my soul that I felt a sweet, a solemn giving up of self, and bathing in the flood of the love and blood of the God-Man Mediator, Christ Jesus. No waters, no air of Buxton could be like those glorious, those heavenly waters, those divine breezes, when God's Spirit filled me with love and joy unspeakable, under a feeling sense of the mercy, the atonement, and the everlasting love of our covenant God.

By and by my mind began a little to decline, and I began to tremble and wonder where it would end. At length my whole attention appeared to be interested in Heb. xii. 11: "Now no

chastening for the present seemeth joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them who are exercised thereby." The text dwelt in my mind, especially the words, "Nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness." "Why," said I, "there are tens of thousands that are chastened in various ways. Their property goes, their strength goes; they are brought into a great variety of trials; and yet no fruits of righteousness arise." But then it arrested my mind, "It is God's people that are intended in the verse." "Well, true," said I; "but I cannot help hoping that I am a child of God; yet I have been afflicted myself in a variety of ways, and it has yielded no peaceable fruits of righteousness in me." I began at home, and recollected a number of instances in which I had been afflicted in body and circumstances, and I could not recollect any peaceable fruits of righteousness arising therefrom. And I remembered that others of God's people besides me had been just the same, and have come out of affliction just as they went in. If anything has been yielded, it has been some rebellion of heart against God; but no "peaceable fruits of righteousness." Yet the text says, without any equivocation, that the affliction is afterward to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. How is it, Lord? Must it be solemn, sweet joy, or are they impostors that are afflicted, and no peaceable fruits of righteousness are afterwards yielded to them? I prayed and cried, and [prayed and cried again that God, in his mercy, would open the passage to my soul, and lead me into it. I searched other branches of Scripture to see if I could find the key; and I found some that staggered me almost as much as that: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest." "Well," said I. "this seems as positive as the other. How is it?" At length I believe the Lord solemnly broke into my poor heart, let me a little into the mystery of the text, and let me feel that a deal of the marrow of it is couched in the last two words, "exercised thereby." "Lord, I see it now!" We may have affliction, and no discipline; we may have affliction, and yet never be exercised thereby. We may be like a boy taking a little firelock and putting on a soldier's garments; but by and by he strips it off again, and is just where he was. He has never been drilled; he has never been exercised; and therefore he is just where he was. And so it is with those that are afflicted. I was led to see for myself that sometimes the Lord suffers afflictions of a variety of natures to come upon us, and we wear them just as a person may wear a soldier's garments; yet we are not drilled or exercised. We learn no discipline from them; and therefore they leave us hard, careless, cold, and mad-brained, just as they found us. Here is no exercise. Then I was led a little further, and a solemn feeling I had at this time. There is no real fruit of righteousness without spiritual exercise, and there is no spiritual exercise without God be the exerciser. You may make what you will of it; but I was led to the feeling that God is condescending to be the Commander-in-Chief, to command afflictions, and to govern them, and rule them, and exercise his people thereby. And I

could like to bring him down to a drilling-sergeant, to drill us again and again, until we are made into good and obedient soldiers, marching uprightly, and that when his blessed Majesty called upon us, and our own corrupt nature resisted, he paid no attention to our groanings under it, but went on to hunt us out of self to himself. When this is the case, there is the peaceable fruit of righteousness; and without that exercise, the Lord himself working in it, with it, and by it, there really will be no real fruits of righteousness produced. But when that is the case, it does away with self-confidence and self-hope, and opens the mysteries of the cross of Christ, and brings our souls to a solemn, sweet, and blessed deep feeling of the Lord our God, and the fruits of the love and blood of Christ springing up in the soul, and we adore God for the affliction.

I speak that I know, and set forth a little of the love and truth of God to a poor, perishing sinner like myself.

Well, after a sweet and solemn enjoyment of this truth, my comfortable feelings appeared to go. One thing or another that I had to cross me, that I cannot state, worked upon my very nature, and I began to kick and to rebel again. O, brethren! If God were not to exercise us, we should kick ourselves into hell after all. What a mercy it is that he has commanded; is it not? What a mercy that he does not leave our poor nature to itself. In this fit of rebellion and kicking against the dispensation of God, the Lord was pleased to bring this text with power to my mind: "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." I felt it; I fell under it; and with solemn freedom I said, "Ah, Lord, it is hard to kick against the pricks, *especially with a broken leg!*" There was I. Prior to that, I was kicking against the Lord, and he made it evident that I was kicking against the pricks; but his blessed Majesty was graciously pleased to bring a heavenly calm and serenity into my soul, and I was led once again into the sweet and blessed enjoyment of the mysteries of the cross of Christ.

"Ah," say you, "I would not be such a fool as to be moved about like that." But you never were tried. Do not talk about it. Let a man be brought to feel it, and then he will know that he can only enjoy this as the Spirit is given to him; not a bit more. It comes from the Lord, and the Lord must have the glory.

Well, after that, I came into such a dead, cold frame of mind that I said to myself, "I hope none of the folks will come to see me;" and every time I heard the bell, I was glad it was a beggar, and none of you coming to try me and probe me; for I felt such a poor wretch that I could say nothing but what would be to my own dishonour and your distress.

But to sum it all up in a few words. After all these changes, I live a monument of the mercy of God; and now solemnly declare that I have been brought to adore God for the dispensation. I believe the Lord has prevented something or other that I should have done, I cannot say what, but perhaps I should have been getting into some more lumber, and the Lord has prevented me, and brought me to some sweet and solemn enjoyment of the mysteries

of the love of God, to lead me to salvation, and to taste of the grace, the free grace of God. Every principle that would make it conditional in man, I hate as I do the devil; because God, in the riches of his grace, has brought me so solemnly to feel that it is all a rich, precious teeming out of the love of God.

May the Lord bless you and me with the oil of joy, that we may be thankful to God for his mercies towards us unto this day.

LETTER BY J. KEYT.

My dear Friend,—The discouraging account you gave me on Wednesday night of the affliction of your son, your only son, made a deep impression on my mind, and all the way home to Cornhill the scripture I left with you was continually speaking to me: “Be still, and know that I am God;” so that a fear arose in my heart of something sharp and heavy being mingled in the lot of my poor friend. However, I found a degree of freedom in my supplications to the good Physician on the youth’s behalf when in secret, though at the same time fears arose that there was but a step between him and death. I knew that God was able to save to the uttermost if it were his sovereign will, having found in my own experience that “he turneth man to destruction,” and then says, “Return, ye children of men,” in afflictive as well as spiritual cases. It was a source of inward pleasure to my mind on Sunday when I heard that the child was better; and my earnest hope is that this may be a truly sanctified dispensation to each of my dear friends. May poor Tommy’s health again be established, and may this affliction be the harbinger, or forerunner, of an infinitely better blessing than bodily health. May this trial speak with a soul-quickening voice to my beloved friend and his partner in life, and may it be the blessed means of effectually stirring them up from the supine and lethargic state into which I fear they are in some measure sunk; that the Holy Spirit of life may be pleased to take a sweet advantage of this visitation, to revive his own begun work of grace in both your hearts, and by his powerful operations enable you to give all “diligence to make your calling and election sure,” so as to enable you to delight yourselves in the Almighty as your own covenant God, as your everlasting portion and shield, as your leader, guide, and comforter, all the days of your pilgrimage through the rest of this dangerous and ensnaring wilderness; that when you come to close your eyes upon all terrestrial objects beneath the sun, you may feel in your souls the rich and abundant earnest and pledges of that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for all that love the appearing of the Son of God.

O my dear friends, what will it avail, what will it profit a man if he could gain the whole world, with all the blandishments of sense, and lose his own soul? Could you but take the same view of all sublunary objects as they are at this moment presented before the eyes of my mind, you would at once turn your back upon the whole

delusive scene of worldly vanities, and those earthly gratifications with which our foolish hearts are too often ensnared, and in which we are too apt to nestle. One five minutes' intercourse and fellowship with him who gave himself to redeem us from all iniquity is far more precious than all the treasures of Egypt, of Britain, of the whole world! Yea, there is more blessedness in a sanctified, soul-humbling affliction than ever could be found in any mere earthly good. And what a rich, what a distinguished mercy it is to be chastened by our covenant God for our profit, so that we might be partakers of his holiness! Every fruit of the Spirit of God produced in the souls of his saints hath holiness as well as life in it; and every one in whom these precious fruits are implanted is sure, by gradual degrees, to wither to, and abstain from fleshly lusts that war against the soul; so that instead of sin being our element as it once was, it becomes a plague and burden to us, and it is a source of consolation to us that "grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life."

Accept, my dear friends, these few effusions of a heart that will rejoice in your spiritual prosperity, and that hath poured out many petitions for your eternal good. Providential mercies are of excellent use to those whose hearts are well established with grace; but when, by reason of our native depravity and the subtlety of Satan, we sink into a backsliding state, they then prove hurtful. We are, when that is the sad case, like Jeshurun of old, waxed fat, and forget, if not forsake the fountain from whence these mercies flow. Then our ingratitude brings on the rod, and we learn what Solomon declares, that "correction is grievous to him that forsaketh the way."

Many things more might be said upon this subject; but my paper is full and my hands must attend to other things. Excuse all imperfections, as I have no time to mend it, and can only add that

I remain, very affectionately yours,

April 18, 1826.

J. KEYT.

OUR GOD IS HOLY.

Dear Mrs. S.,—I often think of you and your maid. It is long since I heard of you.

It has pleased the Lord to bring me through deep waters. I have been at death's door, and was confined to my bed-room above eight months. It was a season of heavy trial, as if the Lord said to me, "I have somewhat to say unto thee;" and it was long before I could say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." The first thing that he said was, "Thou broughtest us into the net, and laidst affliction on our loins." I saw that trouble was before me. Then came, "I will sit as a refiner." Ah! Depend upon it, if God says he will sit, that means abiding, not all done in a moment. Then again, the Lord spoke these words on my heart: "As a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down, so will I cleanse Jerusalem."

In vain have I looked within for the least faith, the least hope, the least love. The Lord has deeply made me to feel that in me dwelleth no good thing. He has put everything into the fire, and at times I think all is burnt up. Something whispered the other day, "Have you nothing to praise God for? O! It cut me to the quick, and I said, "Lord, I can praise thee that I am out of hell; for it is of thy mercy alone I am not consumed."

I am anxiously waiting for some renewed taste of his love, his pardoning mercy. I heard Mr. P., when in London, on this text: "I found him in a desert land," &c. It was a great blessing to my soul, not in comfort, but such a solid sense of the Lord leading me in the darkness, so that I could freely accept all his dispensations, and say, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" I could follow every word through the sermon, and was persuaded that the things described had been wrought in my soul, though now covered with a dark cloud.

I am now in great measure restored to health of body, but often ask, "What is the fruit of this long affliction?" I can say with David, "I am as a beast before thee." "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments." I believe "our God is holy." O that I may be hid in the cleft of the Rock in that great and terrible day of the Lord.

Perhaps you will write some time; and should you or your maid ever come to London, remember I shall always have a bed for you. We seem hid in a corner, and hardly know anyone who fears God; and as for the world, they neither want us nor our troubles. Believe me, dear Mrs. S.,

Ever faithfully yours,

P. B.

WE measure the good and evil of providences by their respect to the ease and pleasure of our flesh; but God sees this is the way to cast our spirits into a dead formality, and in removing them he doth but deprive us of the occasions and instruments of spiritual mischiefs and miseries, in which certainly he doth us no hurt.—*Flavel*.

THE sight of God manifested in the flesh is the most gracious and lovely sight that the eyes of sinners can ever behold. O how can their heart help burning with gratitude and love! It is indeed so mysteriously wonderful that the angels can find nothing in heaven like it, and therefore forget the proper glories of their own station to look into, admire, and adore this unparalleled instance of love, condescension, and grace. They cry, in the view of it, "Glory to God in the highest."—*Charles*.

IT is the work of God to beget us to a lively hope, or a hope of life; but the destruction of a false hope precedes this. All light seated only in the head can never accomplish this, nor would this false hope ever be given up if God himself did not destroy it, which is done by the Lord's wreathing our transgressions as a yoke about our necks, and binding them there, so that none can loose us but himself. Under this yoke Ephraim cries out, "Thou hast chastised me as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke;" but "it is good for a man to bear the yoke in his youth; he sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him; he putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope." It is in this valley of trouble that a door is opened unto us.—*Beeman*.

Obituary.

MRS. FERRIS, OF STEDHAM, SUSSEX.

Dear Mr. Editor,—As you kindly inserted in the “Gospel Standard,” for Nov. a short account of my dear mother’s last illness and death, I feel encouraged to write a little account of her call by grace, and of the Lord’s dealings with her, both in providence and grace, during a pilgrimage of 50 years, and to relate a few of the trials she passed through, and the special answers to prayer and the blessed deliverances that followed. Many times have I tried to induce her to write these things herself; and when a similar account has appeared in the “Standard,” I have written over it, “Go thou and do likewise;” but could not prevail on her to do so. On my annual visit to her last year, she furnished me with a few particulars of the Lord’s beginning with her; and as I have been intimately acquainted with some of her heaviest trials, and blessed support under and deliverance from them, I can add my testimony thereto, as well as give extracts from her letters.

She was a woman of prayer, and remarkably favoured at the throne of grace. When I have been in trouble, I have written particulars to her, and asked her to help me, agreeably to Matt. xviii. 19: “Again I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” I shall find some difficulty in leaving myself out in some of the trials in which we were both concerned; but I will endeavour to suppress all I can as concerns myself.

My mother was born at Henley, near Midhurst, Sussex, on the 12th of March, 1784, of what are generally called good, moral, church-going parents. She grew up to womanhood in total ignorance of God, and of herself as a sinner. She was married to my father in 1808, with a bright prospect of doing well in the world, and enjoying life here, which was all the enjoyment she then knew or cared for. Six months after her marriage, the Lord afflicted her very heavily with typhus fever, which brought her, as it is sometimes termed, to death’s door. In the height of the fever she was unconscious for several days, and quite given up by those about her. During this delirium, as she has often told me, she had a vision of heaven and its glories. I am not in favour of these delirious visions; but she insisted upon it, even to last year, that the Lord then showed her heaven, and that if ever he brought her there she believed she should see the same place. The effect it had on her was to make her long to be there, and nothing grieved her so much when she became conscious as to hear them say she was getting better. “O!” she would say, “I wanted to be there, but was quite unfit for the place or company. I was then quite ignorant of the plan of salvation, and knew nothing of myself as a sinner nor of Jesus as a Saviour. No; I must come back, and go the right way, namely, the old beaten ‘path of tribulation.’”

After this illness my mother went on as worldlings usually do, till the year 1813, when she was awakened to a sense of her state as a sinner by reading a sermon in which the word "agony" (Luke xxii. 44,) struck her with divine power. While pondering over it, the sufferings of Christ were presented to her view. She felt a change come over her, which never left her; she began to cry and pray most earnestly for an interest therein; and the whole power of her soul was drawn out after the Lord, more by love than driven by terror. She used to be troubled about this, fearing she had not experienced a law work; but Mr. Parsons once told her not to trouble about that, but to be thankful that the Lord had not led her into those deep waters; that if she had been taught to see herself a lost sinner, and been enabled to flee to Jesus as a Saviour, to rest satisfied and hold fast there: "Hold fast that which thou hast, that no man take thy crown."

About this time a friend, the late Mr. Janes, whose obituary was in the "Standard" some time ago, and who travelled about those parts at that time, used to visit her, and to converse with her on spiritual subjects. He told her of the doctrine of election, which she at once saw, and fell under it and felt herself cut off, as not being one of God's elect. The thought of these things sank her very low, and she felt very desirous to hear a gospel minister, that she might learn if there was any hope for one so lost as she. She used at this time to attend a prayer meeting, on the Lord's day, held by a gracious man in his own house. She told him a little of her feelings, and asked him if she might come. He told her, "Yes," and said, "The Lord puts an inquiring spirit into the hearts of his people, and causes them to inquire their way to Zion with their faces thitherward." This greatly encouraged her, for she felt she had that inquiring spirit.

I cannot remember all she told me she passed through; but it was enough to bring her to the place of stopping of mouths, to acknowledge herself guilty before God, and to justify him in her condemnation.

How long she was in this place I cannot say; but, in the year 1817, or 1818, she went to hear Mr. Vinall, of Lewes, who used to come round those parts occasionally and preach in a barn. He took the text from Exodus xx. 20, 24: "I will come unto thee, and bless thee." It seemed to be all for her, and her soul was set at happy liberty. They sang some of Hart's hymns (Supplement,) which she much enjoyed. The whole service was a gospel feast to her soul. She felt she was the Lord's, and rejoiced in the pardon of her sins, and their removal from her conscience by the application of the precious atoning blood of Christ, and she returned home rejoicing. She went the next evening, expecting another blessing, but got nothing, and returned home much disappointed and cast down, wondering what was the cause. She did not know then, as she did afterwards, that "power belongeth unto God." That is a precious passage, Ps. civ. 28: "That thou givest them they gather;"

and they can get no more. This the Lord's people well know, who have been long in the way.

I feel I must just say here, that some years previous to this time my father had failed in business, and now worked as a farm labourer. My mother was, consequently, obliged to be very careful in all her domestic affairs, for with an increasing family, and the occasional illness of my father, the greatest economy was required; yet even then she was often hard put to it, and would doubtless, at times, have wanted bread, had it not been for the assistance of her brothers, who were very kind to her, especially her eldest brother. The many helps he gave her none but God and themselves knew. He was a man that loved and feared God, and loved them that loved God, and used to have Mr. Vinall and other good men to preach in his malt-house, and the barn in the summer season. Those were feasting times for my dear mother. Everything was laid aside to attend at those times. There she took her children, and there she fed sweetly on the best provisions, such as her soul loved. She used to sit down in that malt-house "under the shadow of the Beloved, and found his fruit sweet to her taste." What a feast she once had from a sermon by Mr. Vinall, from Song iv. 2: "Coming up from the washing, whereof every one beareth twins, and not one barren amongst them." No; not even such a poor thing as herself, for she felt she was not barren.

In the year 1824, her kind and good brother, as she always termed him, put our family into one of his houses at one of his farms. This she looked on as a kind and merciful interposition of her God in Providence. It was indeed a great boon; here was constant work for my father, and plenty of work for the boys, and my mother was allowed to keep poultry. Here the Lord in his providence smiled, my dear mother rejoiced, the Lord got the glory, and her brother many thanks.

In 1830, the Lord opened a way, in his kind providence, for me to leave home, which I did, followed with the earnest and fervent prayers of one of the most loving and affectionate of mothers. O who can estimate the value of a gracious mother besieging the throne of grace on behalf of her children, separated from her roof. I do believe the Lord heard her prayers, and that they were appointed to convey the blessing God had designed to give.

Soon after this, another of her sons left home, and her brother, requiring the house and farm for one of his children, they removed to a cottage close by. Then another son left, and a few years afterwards the younger ones, till all were gone, followed by her most earnest prayers.

My father at this time had left labouring work, and taken to a little business, and was greatly patronised by friends and neighbours; but he did not succeed. He lost all he had, got behind, and became embarrassed. Twice his children helped him, but he was soon in difficulties again. This was a time of trial indeed to my dear mother, and she poured out her trouble to Him that was able to help

her, and he spoke those words into her soul: "When I sent you without purse or scrip, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." This brought joy and peace into her soul, for with tears she said, "I can say the same."

Soon after this the Lord saw fit to lay a heavy affliction on my father, (cancer in the face,) which ultimately brought him to his end, in 1841. She had a hope of him in his death, as she heard him crying for mercy when near his end. He never opposed or persecuted her, but used to go and hear those good men, yet a work of grace was not made so manifest as to enable her to give a satisfactory account of it. She was now a widow, and burdened with a few debts, not of large amount, but to her they were very heavy. Her children subscribed a little sum to enable her to carry on her husband's business, and she soon saw the Lord's hand visibly manifest on her behalf, and that he had appointed this as a means to support her. This she carried on till her death, but did very little the last few years. She was "instant in prayer," constantly looking to and trusting in the Lord, watching his hand towards her, and rejoicing in his kindness and goodness towards her daily. She was like Bunyan's pilgrim, "seldom long at ease," for when one trouble was past, another soon followed. Of some of those I do not know sufficient particulars to relate, and others are complicated and uninteresting. The following memorandum was evidently written after deliverance. "Here will I set up my Ebenezer. 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me.' A great deliverance, for which I bless and praise his dear and precious name to me, a poor, unworthy sinner." Another memorandum is as follows: "Here again will I set up my sweet Ebenezer, and thankfully say indeed, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped me,' and wrought out for me a great deliverance, and beaten down mine enemy that rose up against me in so conspicuous a manner, which I hope never to forget; and here I bless, and praise, and thank his dear and precious name for his goodness to me, a poor unworthy sinner." In a letter she sent to me after this trial, she writes: "I think this has been one of the sharpest trials I have ever been called to pass through, and I never felt more happy in my life than I have since the deliverance. I could get no rest till my dear Lord enabled me to leave it with him; but, alas! I soon took it up again, and found it too heavy for me to bear, and I was constrained to cry, and pray to the Lord, night and day, to bear me up and bring me through; and, bless his dear name, he did, and gave me many sweet texts to comfort me; and when I could, as Hart says,

"Look to the Lord with stedfast eye,"

my burden was gone; but when I took it on myself, like Peter, I sank in the deep. I was enabled at last to leave it in the Lord's hand, and felt composed and comfortable till all was over."

In 1848, the Lord laid a fatal illness on my first child. I wrote to solicit her help at the throne of grace for me. I now give an extract from her answer: "I have received the fatal news, which

was what I expected, and have sincerely prayed that you may be reconciled, and submit to the will of God. Surely 'shall not the Judge of the earth do right?' I cannot express what I feel for you both; but O, look to the Lord, bow before his most sacred Majesty, and say, 'Thy will be done.' The dear babe's sufferings are over, for I will tell you for your comfort, while I was praying earnestly to my blessed Lord, to spare the child, if it could be his blessed will, this text sweetly dropped into my mind: 'Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' I said, 'O Lord, if it is thy will to take it to thyself, thy will be done.' From this I felt pretty well satisfied the Lord would take the child to himself. It is this that comforts me, and I hope it will comfort both of you; and may it lead you to cleave closer to him, when you will surely see that this trial, deep as it is, is among the 'all things' that shall work for your good."

The latter end of the same year, (1848,) my second child (a babe a fortnight old) was found to be affected in the throat similarly to the one we had lost, only much worse. My wife and I certainly thought we should not save the child, and the doctor and nurse were of the same opinion. My wife also was very weak and ill, and this trial was much against her. She hugged her darling babe to her breast with that fond affection a tender mother only knows, while tears rolled down her cheeks in great abundance, saying, "It seems so hard!" I shall never forget the sight. It pierced my very heart. I certainly thought the Lord was about to take both mother and child, and strip me of all my earthly comforts. I seemed to see his hand lifted up to smite. I fell under it, and said, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." I wrote to my dear mother an account of my feelings and my fears, to lay them before the Lord, not to ask for the life of the child, but to do his own will, and give me submission thereto. I now give an extract from the reply: "When I received the sad account of the dear babe, I was truly sorry. I am sure the mother must feel it; but I do hope the Lord will reconcile her to his blessed will. It is the Lord's hand, indeed, and what shall we say? Just what you have said. I am sure it is the best thing we can do, and pray sincerely to be reconciled thereto, though very hard to flesh and blood. The rod is indeed held up, but he can stay his hand, and, so far from taking your dear wife from you, I much believe he will let you keep her, and the babe also. I well know what it is to be in this place, and my dear Lord has always been better to me than all my fears, when I have been enabled to lie passive in his hands. David said, 'It is the Lord, so I opened not my mouth.' Let us do so likewise. I feel constrained to pray for you, being prompted thereto by this sweet Scripture: 'All things work together for good to them that love God.'"

In another letter she writes: "I have been sweetly encouraged this morning in calling upon the Lord for you, for I had not prayed for the life of the child, but quietly left it in the Lord's hands, as I saw you had left it there, and watched the event; and now I am happy to tell you that I have felt great earnestness to pray for the

life of the child; and while in deep meditation this sweet text dropped into my mind, with sweet power: 'Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thy heart.' I said, 'O my dear Lord, it is the desire of my heart that thou wilt heal the dear babe and let it live; I know thou canst do it;' and directly this sweet text followed: 'Believe only and she shall be made whole.' I said, 'Dear Lord, I believe.' This quite melted me down. I dropped on my knees in tears, and said, 'Dear and blessed Lord! Thou hast been pleased to hear and answer my poor petition. Now, Lord, raise up the dear babe, make her strong and well, let her live, and grow up, and be a comfort to her parents, that they may know thou art a God hearing and answering prayer, for such I have proved thee to be;' and this was the blessed answer: 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.' Now, my dear boy, I firmly believe the child will recover; and our Lord says, according to our faith it shall be unto us. I believe the Lord will heal her. Any delay is for the trial of our faith. O Lord, let faith and patience have their perfect work." That child is now living, and in good health.

The next trial of my mother's that I shall relate was occasioned by the illness and death of her third son; a tall, strong, healthy young man, 36 years of age. He got his feet damp when heated with exercise. This gave him a severe cold, which settled on his lungs. Consumption followed, and he was reduced to a mere skeleton, and at last brought to the grave, in 13 months. This was, indeed, a sore trial for my dear mother. She laboured very hard at the throne, that the Lord would heal him, and bless this and that means, that was tried; but could get no satisfactory answer. My brother, finding himself getting worse, went down to his mother's to spend his few remaining days with her, he being a single man. When she saw him, she said, with tears, "O my dear boy, are you come?" "Yes, mother," he said, "to leave you no more till I am taken to the grave." Then she saw where he was, and prayed earnestly for his precious soul. She told me how earnestly she laboured for him and talked to him, but could get nothing satisfactory from him. He had a great dislike to religious people generally, because he had discovered such hypocrisy in many. Thus things went on till his end appeared very near, and my dear mother laboured the more hard and earnestly for him. She said, "I travailed in birth again for him; and my dear Lord so blessed my soul, that it was delightful labour." As his end drew near, she was the more urgent, and begged of the Lord to give her a portion of his word, to satisfy her that he was one of his; and this text dropped into her heart: "Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you." This brought peace and comfort to her soul, and as she sat watching and blessing the Lord, his spirit departed; he was gone. All was still and solemn, and this text dropped into her heart: "The God of peace be with you." She overheard him in the night crying to the Lord for mercy, and she hoped he obtained it. He was very fond of reading Bunyan's works, especially his life, and said he could see features of his own life in it. He died Nov., 1852.

The next trial was the illness and death of her only daughter, married and settled in Suffolk, a mother of three children, in the spring of 1854. She heard that her illness had assumed a serious aspect, and the letters at this time also showed there was good ground to hope a work of grace was begun, and that she was resigned to God's will. This was a great comfort to my dear mother, but she felt she could not give her up so easily. Her husband and her dear little children lay with a great weight on her mind. She had many times told the Lord she could give up her all to him, and especially when in prayer for her son in his last illness. O! If she could but see he was the Lord's, she could freely give him up, or any of her dear children; but now, the Lord called upon her to give up her only daughter. How hard she tried to "change the mind of God" by prayer and supplication. My sister's illness increasing, she wished to see her mother and me. We went down in June; and O what a poor emaciated creature she was; but her countenance gave evidence of joy and peace in her soul. She gave a nice account of the work of grace on her heart, which left no scriptural ground to doubt of its being genuine. My mother stayed with her three weeks, and left quite satisfied she should see her no more in the flesh; but the pain of parting was greatly relieved by the sweet hope she had that she was the Lord's. It was not expected she would last long, but she lived to the end of August; and those who witnessed her end said it was very blessed. They wrote to my dear mother; and, although she had been expecting it for some weeks, yet when it came it seemed almost too much for her. She then related it to me. "I had a long walk to go that day, and left home before the postboy came. I met him in the lane, and he gave me the letter. I saw it was a deep black one. O how it cut me up! I scarcely knew what to do. O! My dear girl is gone, really gone! O how my poor soul sank within me. It was some time before I could open the letter. When I did, I read the sad news. The writer told me how happy and peaceful her end was, and I had believed she was the Lord's; still I could get no comfort from it, and went on my way bowed down greatly. When I got into Eastbourne Park, I was so distressed I felt I could not go on. I looked this way and that way, but saw no one; so I went behind a large tree, dropped on my knees, and cried unto the Lord, begging him to give me a portion of his word to comfort and support me; and the dear Lord heard my cry, and dropped this precious text into my soul: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." I answered, "O yes, my dear Lord, I believe thou hast; but O, my child, my child! How is it with her? And then followed this precious text with great power: "She shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." "O, my dear Lord," I said, "that is enough, that is enough!" I got up and went on my way rejoicing.

"Enough, my dearest Lord,
Did faith triumphant cry;
My heart can on this promise live,
Can on this promise die."

Heaviness in her heart made it stoop, but this good word made it glad. Surely we may say, "never man spake like this man," this God-man, Jesus.

The next trial I shall relate was the illness and death of her youngest son, married and settled in London. He was ill nearly two years. For a long time she laboured in prayer for him, under the impression that the Lord would heal him; but when it became evident that the disease had got too great hold of him for human skill to remove, she felt persuaded the Lord meant to take him from this world. He wrote her a nice letter before his death, which was a great comfort to her. He had led a very consistent life, and attended Mr. Wigmore's ministry. Mr. W. also went to see him in his illness, and from the account he gave Mr. W., he had a good hope the grace of God was in him. He died at the sea-side, where he went for change of air. When my dear mother received the news of his death, she begged of the Lord to give her a portion of his word to satisfy her respecting his precious soul; and this text dropped into her mind: "In him is there found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel." She hoped there was some good thing in him, and that it was from the Lord.

I must now say a little of the Lord's kindness to my mother in providence. Her son, that died first, had saved a little money, and he left the interest to his mother during her life. With this little annuity, added to her business, she became well off for one in her position. She had many times begged the Lord not to let her live to be a burden to her children, and the Lord answered that prayer by bringing her through the trying ordeal of following her son to the grave. She went on in her usual way; and having now some money to spare, she began paying off the debts contracted for necessities the latter part of her husband's life, and continued it till they were all paid, and afterward repaid her children the sums they had advanced to her. She had everything to make her comfortable, and wanted for nothing. She used to say, "Bless my dear Lord, I can get everything I need."

She lived very near the Lord, and made him acquainted with all her affairs. "In everything by prayer, and supplication, with thanksgiving," she made her requests known unto God. "I make him," she used to say, "my blessed All, and he makes me happy in his blessed self." She lived constantly under the feeling that nothing was too great for her dear Lord to accomplish, nothing too trivial to be beneath his notice. I could give many instances of this, but content myself with giving two. We were once in conversation, when a passage occurred to our minds which we wished to refer to, but could not call to mind where it was. After trying for some time, we gave it up; but it suddenly came to my mind afterwards, I looked for, and found it, and told her. "O," she said, "that is the Lord." I said, "What is the Lord?" thinking she meant something in the text referred to him. "O," she said, "don't you see how the Lord brought it to you. I always call that my Lord's doing. Whenever I lose a text, I leave it with him; and when he brings it

to me, I bless and praise him for it, for it is sweet." Thus did she pick up spiritual food that I should have passed by without notice. I do think many, as well as myself, are losers here. She always seemed able to bring her mind to the Lord's will in all circumstances, which to others might appear trifling.

I must close with an extract from a letter she wrote to me on completing her 80th year: "I do in some sweet measure enjoy my dear Lord, to think how he has led me along thus far, and the care he has taken of me. Since I have been left alone, my blessed heavenly Husband has not let me want any good thing, but has given me clearly to see it has been all his own work, which has so endeared him to my soul, and made me so happy in his blessed self. Yes, my dear boy, I can say he has been faithful to his promise. To hoary hairs he has brought me; and though I feel the infirmities of age, it is nothing like some. So, bless his dear name, my soul is enabled to rest upon him, because he says, 'I will uphold thee, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.' This is sweet, and I believe it. How much longer it is the Lord's will for me to stay here, I leave with him; and pray to lie passive in his hands, and say, 'Do with me what seemeth thee good, only give me more of thy precious love and grace to praise thee; and if to the honour of thy dear name, enable me to bring forth fruit in old age, to show indeed that thou art upright.'" She died about three months after writing this letter.

I have written much more than I intended, and have a deal more on my mind, but must not take up more time or space. May the Lord bless the reader, and grant that some of his dear tried ones may be refreshed in reading this account.

Nov., 1864.

ROBERT FERRIS.

WE were created upright, innocent, and very good; but Satan, who envied our happiness, found means to seduce our first parents into sin; and when they, to whom God had given in subjection all things in the world, fell into the enemy's hands, all went to wreck, and all born afterwards were home-born slaves of Satan. Nor was it possible for it to be otherwise; for Adam, having forfeited his right to be a son of God, and having been now poisoned and hurt by sin, could not beget children in a better nature than he had himself, nor could a clean thing come out of an unclean; but all the whole lump of mankind was leavened with the direful leaven, and the curse came upon all.—*Cennick*.

THESE comforts of the Spirit are all the comforts we can account worthy of the name. The misery we feel without them is a proof that we are born of the Spirit. He who can only suck at the breasts of God's consolations must be a child of God. I would put my dear friends in mind that the just shall live by faith; but not by a faith unmixed by doubts and fears, for that is presumption; but a faith which is to endure many a fiery trial. The possessor of it may be in heaviness through manifold temptations—may be reduced to the greatest extremities, from indwelling sin, sore temptations and crosses, poverty and persecution in the world. All this is designed to discover to the poor sinner that he has faith. By head knowledge we merely *hear* we are sinners and undone; but by these trials we feel we *are* such.—*T. Hardy*.

REVIEW.

*The Sovereignty of God in Redemption, &c. By an Old Sailor.
London: J. Gadsby, Bowyer Street, Fleet Street.*

WHEN God bade Moses set up the tabernacle in the wilderness, as a standing type of the sacred humanity of his own dear Son, (Heb. viii. 2; ix. 11; John ii. 21,) he thus spake unto him: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring me an offering; of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering. And this is the offering which ye shall take of them; gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' hair, and rams' skins dyed red, and badgers' skins, and shittim wood, oil for the light, spices for anointing oil, and for sweet incense, onyx stones, and stones to be set in the ephod, and in the breastplate. And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." (Exod. xxv. 2-8.) Thus all the children of Israel might freely bring an offering, each according to his substance, and each according to his willing mind. Being all redeemed by blood and power—the blood of the paschal lamb, and the overthrow of their enemies in the Red Sea; being all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; all eating the same spiritual meat—the manna from heaven; and all drinking the same spiritual drink—the water out of the smitten Rock that followed them, which Rock was Christ, (1 Cor. x. 2-4,) they were all viewed as a holy people, (Exod. xix. 6; Lev. xi. 44, 45; Jer. ii. 3,) standing typically and representatively as God's elect family. (Deut. vii. 6.) Thus Balaam could say of them in the visions of prophecy: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." (Num. xxiii. 21.) Now this was the reason why the Lord asked for and accepted their offerings for the building and service of the tabernacle. As an elect, a redeemed, and a holy people, their offerings were as if sanctified by their standing and position in the covenant made with them and their fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To be allowed, then, to contribute their gifts to the tabernacle in which God was himself to dwell was a high privilege conferred upon them. If our readers will turn to Exod. xxxiv. they will find a beautiful account of the offerings brought and of the willingness of the people in bringing them, accounting it so high a privilege that God would accept their gifts for his own sanctuary and service that they had to be restrained by public proclamation from giving more than was needed for that purpose. (Exod. xxxvi. 5-7.)

Now, one main beauty in the offerings thus made, and in the willingness of the people to make them, was that these gifts were measured not by their actual intrinsic value, but by the ability and willingness of each individual giver. Thus some brought onyx stones, others precious jewels; some offered gold and silver, others brass; some gave blue, and purple, and scarlet, others rams' skins dyed red or badgers' skins; some fine linen, and others goats' hair.

If a man had a precious onyx stone, or a costly diamond, or a beautiful sapphire, or a choice amethyst, what an honour, what a privilege, that instead of being kept in a bag in his tent, or shining in a ring on his wife's finger, the onyx should be worn on the ephod, and the diamond or sapphire on the breastplate of judgment when the high priest went to consult the mind of the Lord in his sanctuary. (Exod. xxviii. 9-12; 15-21.) To what a noble use, too, was the gold put, when, instead of, like Achan's wedge, being hidden in the earth, it was made into the mercy-seat or the golden candlestick, or overlaid upon the altar of incense and the table of shewbread. (Exod. xxv. 17, 18, 23-25, 31.) The very goats' hair spun by the women had an honour put upon it as wrought into one of the curtains within which the ark of the Lord dwelt. (Exod. xxvi. 7; xxxv. 26; 2 Sam. vii. 2.) When, then, the tabernacle was completed, and consecrated by the holy anointing oil put upon every part, (Exod. xxx. 22-29,) and especially when it had been filled with the glory of the Lord, so that Moses himself could not enter into it, (Exod. xl. 34, 35,) every portion of the sanctuary and the vessels of service used therein were equally sanctified, from the precious diamond to the spun goats' hair, from the polished onyx to the rough badgers' skin. All were equally valuable, equally acceptable, equally set apart from common uses, and dedicated permanently and unalterably to the service of the Lord.

Now for the application of our subject, for of course we have not written all this for writing's sake, without any definite train of thought or special purpose. View the matter spiritually. Every one who has been redeemed by blood and power—the blood of the cross, and the work of the Holy Ghost in delivering him from the power of darkness and translating him into the kingdom of God's dear Son; (Col. i. 13;) every one who has been spiritually baptized into Christ, and thus put on Christ; (Gal. iii. 27;) every one who has fed and is feeding on the hidden manna, (Rev. ii. 17,) and drinking out of Christ's fulness the water of life; (John vii. 37; Rev. xxii. 17;) every one who has been made willing in the day of Christ's power, (Psal. cx. 3,) is called upon and may freely offer what he has and is to the Lord's service. In fact, he is no longer his own, but is bought with a price. Therefore his body and spirit are both God's. (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.) And if so, then his time, his money, his gifts, his abilities, whether natural or spiritual, his very life and death itself are not his own, but the Lord's, and are to be freely given and used in his service. Not that any one of us does these things, at least as they should be done, for we are all poor, sluggish, selfish, do-nothing wretches, at our very best but unprofitable servants, (Luke xvii. 10,) and few even see or feel that they may or should do them; but it is our privilege and happiness that we are allowed to do them when there is a willing mind and an obedient spirit; and what is more blessed still is that the Lord accepts them. (Rom. xii. i.; Phil. iv. 18; 1 Pet. ii. 5.) Nay, more, as in the case of the widow's two mites, it is not the costliness of the gift which measures its value, but the ability and willingness

of the giver. (2 Cor. viii. 12.) It is in this way that the lock of goats' hair may be as acceptable as the diamond, and the smallest service done with a single eye to the glory of God and the good of his people—even a cup of cold water given in the name of a disciple, (Matt. x. 42,) may outvalue the most princely gift.

The Author of the Poem before us has brought his offering to the sanctuary, in setting forth in poetic lines, according to the ability given him, "the Sovereignty of God in Redemption." Who he is we know not, and therefore can speak of his little work without prejudice or partiality. He calls himself "An Old Sailor;" and we therefore presume he has been one of those who literally "go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;" and if spiritually, as sailing on the sea of Christian experience, he has seen also "the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep;" if he has "cried unto the Lord in his trouble, and been brought out of his distresses," (Ps. cvii. 23-28,) he is well qualified to speak of the sovereignty of God in choosing the Old Sailor to be a vessel of mercy, and of redemption in redeeming him from a worse death than is to be found in the depths of the ocean. He is no poet in the higher sense of the term; that is, there is no beautiful imagery; no "thoughts that breathe and words that burn;" no glancing with a poet's eye from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; no such a sweeping of the lyre with a master's hand as thrills or melts the soul with indescribable feeling, and leaves a permanent impression on the mind for good or evil. Such gifts, especially for the service of the sanctuary, are as rare as "the topaz of Ethiopia," "the precious onyx or the sapphire" (Job xxviii.) would have been amongst the children of Israel in the wilderness. And yet there may be "dust of gold" where there is no "place of sapphires;" and a poet, as a Christian poet, may have something more to bring for the sanctuary than a ram's skin dyed red, or a hank of spun goat's hair. This poem, we would say, then, has "dust of gold," even as a composition; and if the "price of wisdom is above rubies," so that in comparison with it "no mention shall be made of coral or of pearls," (Job xxviii. 18,) this little contribution to the truth of God, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, will outshine to a Christian mind the rubies of a Byron, or the coral and pearls of a Tennyson.

What has struck us most in this little poem is the remarkable mastery which the "Old Sailor" possesses of a very difficult metre. His command of the metre, the facility and general excellence of his rhymes, the nervous reasoning and sound scriptural argument which he condenses in his terse lines, without confusion of thought or words, are remarkable, and show great power of mind and of expression. We cannot say that his metre, of which we shall presently give a specimen, is a favourite of ours. It is too short and jingling, but is admirably adapted, as Butler and Dean Swift have shown, for forcible, pungent expression and close reasoning. It takes, as it were, an adversary by the neck, and holds him fast by a torrent of words, so clashing and jingling with rhyme, that he is

fairly beaten down by it. Its main fault is, that it wants solemnity and pathos, and thus seems little adapted to sacred themes, which require a certain weight of verse unattainable by a short, rapid, jingling metre.

But these, after all, are mere critical objections, which are of little weight in estimating the real character and value of the poem before us. The author, no doubt, knew what he could do and what he could not do, and wisely chose a metre of which he has such a thorough mastery as that which was best adapted to his own powers and the subject of his pen. His forte is close nervous reasoning, and this led him to expose error and unfold truth in his own peculiar way. We could, indeed, have wished for a little more savour, a little more of the dew and unction of the blessed Spirit to have rested on his verses; a little more of that indescribable power which melts and softens the heart, and makes truth so sweet and yet so forcible. But each man has his gift; and the badger's skin which kept the tabernacle dry, as the outer curtain, was as useful in its place as the "oil for the light," and as much a part of the sanctuary. Doctrine in its place is as useful as experience, and truth in its purity as indispensable as truth in its power. Happy union where both go together—the one to inform the understanding, the other to water the soul.

But our readers will be anxious to have some specimens of the poem, that they may judge for themselves. Take, then, as a sample, the following close, pungent reasoning against what are called offers of grace:

“Whatever it may be about,
 An offer always deals in doubt,
 Can have no independent choice,
 Or speak with full, emphatic voice;
 Another will it must consult,
 And on that will rest the result;
 For, as regards eternal things,
 As all things else, it only brings
 A something for acceptance meant,
 Which, though all-gracious the intent,
 Is all an offer can effect
 For man to take, or to reject,
 With whom the issue then abides,
 And his decision all decides.
 Thus, not God's will, but man's be done
 Is the sad length these offers run;
 Nor is this length at all too long,
 If offers are not wholly wrong,
 But from the truth removed as far
 As east from west these offers are;
 Besides, it would be bad enough
 Poor sinners with self-strength to puff;
 And, proposing and appealing,
 Furnish food to feed this feeling.
 As withered hands cannot outstretch,
 Or fettered feet go forth to fetch,
 Offers cannot the cases meet
 Of withered hands and fettered feet;

While with no power to reach or rise,
 To tender is to tantalize;
 And in things earthly acting thus,
 What would such conduct seem to us?"

* * * * *

“Preachers the tied and bound beseech
 Blessing to take beyond their reach,
 And lead poor sinners to suppose
 That they can with their offers close;
 Press sinning ones from sin to turn,
 And not continue Christ to spurn;
 No more the pleading Spirit grieve,
 But there and then bow down, believe;
 Accept, enjoy a Father’s love,
 And give the angels joy above;—
 As if the dead could make a shift
 Out of the grave themselves to lift,
 And such, so much, resistance show
 As God to make his will forego.
 How sad and shocking so to err
 As truth to force thus to infer,
 Cause indignation to arise
 Such sentiments to stigmatise,
 And the best feelings in the breast
 Against the teaching to protest.
 That God a *saving offer* sends
 Where He no *saving act* intends
 Is such an awful thing to think
 As gracious souls in grief to sink—
 Such a calumny to conceive
 As minds to move, and hearts to grieve;
 And that such statements many make,
 As can no other meaning take,
 Is sad to say, and sad, alas!
 That truth opposed for truth should pass.”

Let us now see how he handles the subject of prayer:

“When God is pleased some good to grant
 He makes His people feel the want,
 Stirs in their souls a strong desire
 The special object to acquire,
 For which the Spirit prompts to pray,
 And then a meet response have they,
 Which is the cause in every case
 Of access to a throne of grace,
 That any find acceptance there
 As they pour out their hearts in prayer,
 And echo back what Christ had done
 In pleading for each pleading one,
 The only secret of success,
 And all the power their prayers possess.
 No stream, however much it spread,
 Can flow above its fountain-head,
 And prayer can take no upward course
 Where God Himself is not the source;
 Only what we from God obtain
 Can we return to God again,

And in the heart He puts the cry
 That fetches down a fit reply;
 As springing from a sense of need,
 Which from the Spirit must proceed,
 An upward glance, a sigh, a groan,
 Rise with acceptance to the throne,
 Where Christ the Intercessor lives,
 And God a gracious answer gives;
 And sanctified and saved are all
 Who on the Lord believing call;
 But lacking faith, though words abound
 The call is but an empty sound;
 Words may from fluent tongues flow forth,
 But nature's words are nothing worth
 In which there is no drawing near
 To God the Father's open ear,
 No soaring in the sinner's cry
 Unless the Lord the wings supply;
 And is not faith entwined with love,
 The wings that bear our wants above?"

One more extract must suffice, and with it we shall close our Review:

"The Shepherd watches o'er the sheep,
 From hurt and harm the flock to keep;
 As objects of His special care
 His eye is on them everywhere;
 Guides them through the desert dreary,
 Gently leads the weak and weary,
 And well supplies the wants of each
 Until their rest above they reach.
 Not drawn of God, no son of man
 To Jesus comes, or ever can;
 The taught of God, and none beside,
 In Christ the Son of God confide,
 And none who *do* need have a doubt
 That they will ever be cast out.

In every land, and on the deep,
 Now scattered are the ransomed sheep,
 Gathered, and to be gathered in,
 Out of a world immersed in sin,
 Where follow some their Father's will,
 And some in Satan's service still;
 But all preserved in God the Son,
 Who purchased each, and parts with none;
 And what is bought, and not a loan,
 Must be, of right, the buyer's own;
 Nor ever will the Lord deny
 Those whom He did so dearly buy."

THE soul that has once had but a distant glimpse of the ravishing beauty and goodness of God, the infinite excellence of holiness, the exceeding greatness of the Redeemer's kindness, the fulness of his merit, and the immense riches of the salvation procured by him; the soul that has once seen and tasted these, needs no compulsive force, in order to love Him who is the fountain of good, and to aspire after that good of which he is the fountain.—*Toplady*.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

ENCOURAGED by the kind way in which our "Meditations on Various Important Points of our Most Holy Faith" have been thus far received by many of our gracious readers, we feel a willing mind to continue following onward in the same track; and as hitherto we have found, we hope, seasonable help from the only Source of all light and life, so would we now at the opening of another year, and the commencement of a fresh subject, lift up our soul in unison. we trust, with theirs, that "the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, would give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened," that as the Lord the Spirit may be pleased to bring before our mind and lay upon our heart any portion of his precious word which may seem to us to be of vital importance, or of an edifying nature, we may unfold it with that "demonstration of the spirit and of power" which shall, as "seasoned with salt," not only minister grace unto our readers, (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29,) but shall, "by manifestation of the truth, commend itself to every man's conscience in the sight of God." (Eph. i. 17, 18; 1 Cor. ii. 4; 2 Cor. iv. 2.)

It is indeed a high privilege conferred upon us, a favour from on high for which we cannot feel sufficiently thankful, that the Lord should condescend to make any use of so weak and worthless an instrument to communicate any measure of instruction, comfort, or encouragement to any of those whom he has eternally loved, and whom he is leading through many a painful path of trial and affliction to a knowledge of his love here, that they may enjoy it in its full fruition hereafter. And as the Lord has been pleased, for his own wise purposes, to lay us aside, for a time at least, from the active work of the ministry, we feel doubly bound to avail ourselves of the privilege still granted to us to communicate with his dear people by our pen, and thus be neither idle ourselves, nor wholly unprofitable to the church of God. We purpose, therefore, with God's help and blessing, to bring before our readers in this and several following Numbers some thoughts upon the preceptive part of the word of truth, and especially as contained in and enforced by the Scriptures of the New Testament.

Several reasons have concurred to direct our mind to this particular point of heavenly truth: 1. First, it is a branch of divine revelation which, without wishing to speak harshly or censoriously, has in our judgment been sadly perverted by many on the one hand, and we must say almost as sadly neglected, if not altogether ignored and passed by, by many on the other. The probable causes of this neglect, or, to speak more decidedly, of this serious omission, we shall presently consider. 2. But a second reason for our taking up this subject is, if we may speak with all humility of ourselves,

that it is one into which of late years we seem to have been more particularly led. 3. And thirdly, the consideration of the preceptive part of the word will, we think, form a not inappropriate sequel to our late papers on its power and authority on the heart.

But let us now, by way of introduction to our subject, for the sake of clearness, first define and explain what we understand by "the precept," or, according to our title, "the Preceptive Part of the Word of God." Great clearness and precision are needed on this point, that we may so run not as uncertainly, so fight not as one that beateth the air, but, as a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, may rightly divide the word of truth. (1 Cor. ix. 26; 2 Tim. ii. 15.) To make, then, our meaning as clear and as distinct as we can, we will view the point from two sides—its negative and its positive aspect. 1. First, then, *negatively*. By the precept we do not mean any part of the old "Do and live" covenant, but we carefully and rigidly exclude every point, fact, or consideration which springs out of, is connected with, or bears upon the law of works, either as a covenant or as a rule, either as justifying or as sanctifying, either as binding upon the conscience or as influencing the heart and life. Here we wish to stand particularly clear and decided, and to give place, no, not for an hour, to any men or measures, doctrine or experience, principle or practice, letter or spirit, word or work, which would bring us into bondage, or put a legal yoke on the neck of Christ's true disciples. No; let us be clear here; let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and not, in our zeal for the precept, put ourselves under the curse of the law, or mingle the smoke and flame of Mount Sinai with the bright and glorious light of Mount Zion. Let us keep a clear distinction between "Do and live" and "Live and do;" between the spirit of bondage and the spirit of adoption; between the forced task of a convict in chains and the willing obedience of a loving son; between the thief skulking in the pantry and the child sitting at the table; between the grudging eye-service of a slave under the fear of the lash and the affectionate offices of a wife whose best reward is a smile and a kiss. If we cannot keep these things distinct, we had better put our fingers into the fire than handle with them the precepts of the New Testament. O, in considering this weighty subject, for some small measure of the grace and wisdom which so shine forth in the epistles of blessed Paul, in keeping distinct the law and the gospel, in separating between the ministration of condemnation, bondage, and death, and the ministration of righteousness, liberty, and life. Who so fervid as he against binding the legal yoke upon the neck of those whom the truth has made free, and confounding the children of promise with the children of the bond-woman? Hear his thunders, which, as armed with all the authority and power of an apostle of God, he launches against the Galatian teachers who, by their legal doctrines, would trouble the believing disciples of Jesus, and pervert the gospel of Christ. (Gal. i. 7-9.) And yet mark how the same

man of God could, with the grace of the gospel in his heart and the precepts of the gospel in his hand, be as gentle as a nurse and as loving as a father: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children;" "As ye know how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." (1 Thess. ii. 7, 11, 12.)

2. But, having defined what we do *not* mean by the precept, in other words, having viewed it negatively, let us now define what we *do* mean by it, in other words, let us view it *positively*. We mean, then, by "the precept," or the "preceptive part of the word of God," those exhortations, injunctions, commands, entreaties, admonitions, —call them by what name you will, so long as you attach to the word which you use a definite meaning, which the Holy Ghost has revealed in the New Covenant as claiming our attention and our obedience, and as thus addressed to our heart, and intended to be influential upon our life. The precept is not doctrine, though founded upon it, nor experience, though connected with it, but stands apart from each, as possessing a peculiar, distinctive character of its own. All the three are equally a part of the same gospel, have the same Author, the same sanction, the same authority; and therefore are all three to be received by the same faith, with the same reverence, and in the same love. He that rejects or despises the one rejects or despises the other; and he who by divine power and influence truly believes the doctrine, will spiritually feel the experience, and graciously perform the precept.

Why, then, has the precept been so neglected among the churches of truth? Friends and brethren, is it so, or is it not so? Guilty or not guilty, servants of the living God, members of churches founded upon the love of truth in its purity and power? We are not speaking here, mind you, of a man tying at the end of a sermon the precepts together into a bundle of rods and flogging with them Christ's sheep and lambs. That is legality. That is not preaching the precept as Paul preached it, and as the Holy Ghost has revealed it. To handle the precept properly, is to handle it spiritually, in the love and spirit of the gospel, with a broken heart and a melted soul—broken by a sense of sin, and melted by a sense of mercy. This, not to anticipate future explanation, this is what we mean by preaching the precept. But are there no reasons for this omission? Surely there are, or it would not be so general. Have we not ourselves been guilty here? We freely confess our fault this day, and perhaps we have but to look into our own breast to find why others have been faulty too.

Now we confess that for some years after we had received the love of truth we did not clearly or fully see the connection of the precept with the doctrines of grace and the experience of the saints. We saw, what was obvious enough, that the precept occupied a large and prominent place in the New Testament, and as such we received it. But two difficulties seemed to stand in the way of its cordial and hearty reception, and a right view of its beauty and blessedness as

a part of divine revelation. These were, 1. the sinfulness; 2, the inability of the creature, and of ourselves in particular. The consciousness of utter inability to perform the precept made it as if too inaccessible to the hand to reach it; the holiness of the precept made it as if too pure for the hand to touch it. Thus, if passed by, it was not from contempt, but reverence; if not handled, it was not from wilful neglect, but from not properly seeing its place in the gospel of the grace of God. Allow us a few words on this point. All truth, especially revealed truth, must be consistent with itself—harmonious in every part. But to see this consistency and harmony, not only must the eye be duly instructed, but must look at it from the right point of view. Will our readers permit us to use a figure or two to illustrate our meaning? In some gallery of art* take your stand before a beautiful picture, say one of Turner's grand sea-views. Look at it near at hand; what is it? A mass of blotches and smears, with dabs of white paint here and there. Go back a few steps, and view it from the right point. What a change! What beauty, what harmony, what colouring! The blotches and smears resolve themselves into a sea heaving with life and motion, and the dabs of paint are waves, curling with foam as if they would dash at your very feet. Take a more familiar figure. Look through a stereoscope at a photograph. What do you see? Something like a building, but all confusion. Wait a moment. Now you have got the focus. What do you see now? The front of a palace or a cathedral, with every architectural detail so clear and distinct that you might fancy yourself looking upon the very building itself. So in divine truth. Let the eye be spiritually opened, let the right point of view be gained, and then every part falls into its right place, full of beauty and harmony. Whilst then we view the precept from a legal standing, we must see it distorted and out of place. It is what we may call out of perspective; we do not see it from the same point of view as the Holy Ghost has drawn it in the word, and as he intended it to be looked at with a believing eye. But when we see, as represented in the gospel, doctrine and experience, promise and precept, love and obedience, motive and action, receiving Christ and walking in him, the grace which saves and the grace which sanctifies, the blood that cleanses and the water that washes, Christ as Priest to atone, Christ as Prophet to teach, Christ as King to rule, all forming one harmonious whole, all combining in one glorious plan for the glory of God and the present and future blessedness of his people, then we view "the truth as it is in Jesus" almost as Moses gazed on the land of promise from Pisgah's height, or as John "saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." (Rev. xxi. 2.)

But there was another reason, perhaps, why we did not see the beauty and harmony of the precept. Having had our fleshly

* It will be observed that this is merely an illustration, and does not imply that we sanction Christians visiting the exhibition or public picture-galleries.

holiness and creature piety knocked to pieces, having passed for several years through much inward exercise and temptation, and having learnt in that school the thorough helplessness of the creature; then being delivered from the galling yoke of legality and self-righteousness, and having tasted the sweetness and the freeness of gospel grace, our mind revolted from everything which seemed legal, Pharisaical, or self-righteous. Thus there was a going to the opposite extreme; and, to avoid one evil, there was not a falling into, but too near an approach to the other. Repelled and almost disgusted by the way in which Arminians, moderate Calvinists, and the whole race of man-made preachers handled the invitations and precepts of the gospel, holding them out to dead men to act upon and perform, there was a shrinking from any confederacy with such doings and dealings, such teachings and preachings, such a turning of things upside down, such a fouling of the waters, such a treading down of the pastures of the flock of slaughter. Besides which we saw in even some good men (men of whom we had hoped better things) a legal bias, which led them to use the precept more as a rod for others than as a rule for themselves, and rather to feed a spirit of bitterness in their own minds and of those whom they influenced than as the pure milk of the word that they might grow thereby, the result being rather spiritual pride and self-exaltation among many of the real people of God than humility, brokenness, brotherly kindness, and love. Hence separation between ministers of truth and divisions in churches, being just the contrary effect to the real spirit and intention of the precept.

These things all combined to produce an injurious effect; and thus the precept, being thrust out of its place, lost a good measure of its comeliness, and seemed rather beside the building than a glorious part of it. "As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man." Thus it may be that some of our experience on this point may have been the experience of others; and if so, it may explain why the precept has been too much neglected by them as well as by us.

But for the last few years we have been called to walk in a somewhat different path. We have had much affliction of body, and with it much exercise of mind upon the things of God, with many searchings of heart. We wish to speak upon this point very cautiously, knowing the hypocrisy and deceitfulness of our wretched nature; but we trust that through these afflictions and accompanying exercises there has been wrought in our heart a greater, as well as a more earnest and abiding desire to walk more closely with the Lord, to live more in his fear, and to know more of his Person and work, mind and will in the revelations of himself through the word of his grace. Not that we are one whit better; not that we find our nature less corrupt, or our heart less deceitful above all things, or less desperately wicked. Not that we can move forward a single step with any more life or power; not that our barren seasons are not many and long, and our fruitful seasons few and short. Nay, all this we may but more increasingly feel, and yet not be wholly given up to carelessness and carnality,

but only all the more bend our back to the word which smites it, or our neck to the word which yokes it. And yet we cannot but acknowledge that light upon the precept seems to have come gradually into our mind, and its place in the word of truth to have been more clearly opened to our understanding, and larger room made for it in our heart and conscience. How far this light is from above let our gracious readers judge, when we shall have accomplished our task, from the truth and savour of our communication, and the weight and power with which it may be commended to their conscience as harmonizing with the word of God and their personal experience.

But as we have confessed our fault in not at one time clearly seeing the place of the precept in the gospel of the grace of God, so we have thought it best to state as simply as we could the way in which we have been led to our present views and feelings on this important part of divine truth. In thus speaking, we have not, through rich mercy, any past error to acknowledge, any wrong or perverted view, any wilful or unseemly neglect, any delusive experience as a Christian man, any false teaching as a Christian minister to confess, but we have rather thankfully to record a greater enlargement of desire at least after, if not of fuller attainment unto, "the knowledge of God's will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." (Col. i. 9.) And as we are bidden to "grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," we should certainly desire and aim both for ourselves and others not to be ever fixed as a post at one and the same spot, or lie like a dead man at the same point of knowledge and experience, as if we already knew all that was to be known, and having reached the goal, were only waiting for the conqueror's crown, but rather with blessed Paul, forgetting the things which are behind, should reach forth unto those things which are before, and thus press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let, then, this suffice for an introduction to our subject, as to commence it in our present paper would either require more space than we can well afford, or compel us to break off abruptly soon after we had made a beginning.

TRUE LIFE.

HE lives who lives to God alone,
 And all are dead beside;
 For other source than God is none,
 Whence life can be supplied.
 To live to God is to requite
 His love as best we may;
 To make his precepts our delight,
 His promises our stay.
 But life, within a narrow ring,
 Of giddy joys comprised,
 Is falsely named, and no such thing,
 But rather death disguised.

Can life in them deserve the name,
 Who only live to prove
 For what poor toys they can dis-
 claim
 An endless life above?
 Who, much diseased, yet nothing feel,
 Much menaced, nothing dread,
 Have wounds, which only God can
 heal,
 Yet never ask his aid?

COWPER.

[MARCH 1, 1865.]

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

MARCH, 1865.

MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

WE have been favoured with the loan of an old MS. book, containing the experience, and subjoined to it a kind of diary, of a Mr. Avril, the descendant of a French refugee, who fled his native land at the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, (A.D. 1685,) when thousands of Protestants came over to this country, (the Editor's maternal ancestors amongst them,) to escape the dreadful persecutions in France, urged on by Louis XIV.* It will, we think, be found very interesting, not only from the account which the writer gives of the dealings of God with his soul, but from his account of sermons which he heard preached by those eminent servants of God, Toplady, Huntington, Romaine, &c., carrying us back, as it were, to those days with the vividness of a hearer.—ED.

FROM my childhood I was taught, or had from my parents, what is commonly called a Christian education. But the form of religion without a changed and renewed heart is of no account in the sight of God. My religion being only that of a strict Pharisee, I trusted more to my own righteousness than to Christ, notwithstanding which I indulged myself in many things which I shall not here mention, sins and follies for which I had, even in this unconverted state, many a gripe of conscience. My corruptions often got the better of my resolutions; so I went on, sinning and reforming, (I then thought it was repenting,) till I was above 23 years of age, when I was brought under the sound of the gospel. A few months before that the Lord, in the course of his providence, brought an old acquaintance of my father's, though he had not seen him for many years, to our house. His name was Donac, a French descendant, but a man

* The edict of Nantes, so called because issued by Henri IV., at Nantes, a large town in the west of France, (A.D. 1598,) allowed the Protestants, then called "Huguenots," the free exercise of their religion. But Louis XIV., for political purposes, revoked this edict; (A.D. 1685;) in other words, deprived the Protestants of all their religious privileges, even of the protection of the law, and by the most cruel persecutions, carried on chiefly by soldiers, attempted to force upon them the Catholic religion. Sooner than renounce their religion, thousands of these persecuted Protestants fled to this country, escaping chiefly by night, for the roads and harbours were carefully watched by soldiers by day. Being very skilful and industrious, they introduced into this country many of its important manufactures, and amongst them the weaving of silk, a little colony of silk-weavers settling in Spitalfields, London, where their descendants live to this day.

well acquainted with vital religion. He had sat under Mr. Whitefield many years. His spiritual conversation seemed very strange to me, and to us all, especially about knowing one's sins forgiven and enjoying the assurance of one's salvation. This man brought strange things to my ears. Amongst other scriptures, I remember he brought Gal. ii. 20. "Alas!" said he, "the reformed churches know nothing now of this experimental religion I have been talking to you about. The doctrines of the Scripture and of the Reformation are looked upon as enthusiasm now. Our French churches are now fallen into as blind a formality and lukewarmness as the English ones. They have got worse now than they were 40 years ago."

I was as much surprised at this man's conversation as those we read of in Acts xvii. 19, 20: "What new doctrine is this whereof thou speakest? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears."

A few weeks after this, Mr. D., of Leadenhall Street, a distant cousin of my mother's, called on us, as he now and then did. Knowing that he went to the Lock Chapel, my mother said to him, "What are they?—the Methodists who preach there?" "Yes," said he. "If you have a mind to go, I can lend you two gallery tickets." He accordingly did so, and my mother and I went the next Sunday evening. This was in September, 1769. It was Mr. Toplady who preached. His text was from Ps. xxiii. 4. We went several times with these borrowed tickets. Mr. T. continued preaching there once on Sundays, and once on week nights, and Mr. Madan preached at other times there. During Mr. T.'s stay in town for that season, I thought nothing could be more scriptural than his preaching, and that it was quite agreeing and agreeable with the good man's conversation, above mentioned, which had so struck me. Looking upon Scripture as our guide, I thought that must be the truest preaching that is most agreeable to it; therefore I took a ticket for myself. My mother was rather prejudiced against what is called Methodism, but yet would sometimes go there.

About this time I saw on a bookstall, Joseph Allen's "Alarm to the Unconverted," which I bought, and read the chapter that treats of the the miseries of the unconverted; and as I read it, every line, as it were, pointed at me: "Thou art the man! Thou art this unconverted, miserable creature." This book, and Boston's "Fourfold State," which I read over once and again, were the means, with the preaching I sat under, and the reading of God's word, of awakening me from my dead formality and false confidence in my own self-righteousness or Pharisaic blindness, being till then ignorant of my depraved, fallen state by nature, and of the necessity of a new birth. Some of the scriptures that fastened on my conscience in reading God's word, I mean in a way of conviction, were John iii. 7: "Ye must be born again;" John xvi. 8-11; Rom. i. 18-23, 29; Gen. vi. 5, 6; Gen. viii. 21; Matt. xv. 19, 20; Rom. v. 12-17; Rom. vi. 23; Deut. xxvii. 26; Gal. iii. 10; Prov. xv. 8; 1 Cor. xiii. 3; the whole of first chapter of Isaiah. Also, Isa. lxvi. 3; Rom. viii. 7, 8; Prov. xxi. 4; Ps. li. 5; Job xiv. 4; Gen. viii. 21; Eph. ii. 3; Rom. xiv. 23; Rom. vi. 23; Deut. xxvii. 26, with Gal. iii.

10; Isa. lxiv. 6; Ps. xiv. 2, 3; Jer. xvii. 9, 10, with Mark vii. 21-24; Hos. xiii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 7-11; John iii. 18, 19; 1 Cor. xiii. 3; Heb. ix. 22, with Ezek. xviii. 4. "The soul that sinneth it shall die," says the unchangeable justice of God, for I had a strong faith in those two attributes of God, his justice and immutability. I knew that the Lord would be just, though in my destruction; yet the language of my soul was with Job: "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." "If I perish," said I, "I will perish at the foot of the cross, crying for mercy."

I should have noticed before that the growing and increasing soul-concern contributed greatly to the drawing-off of my mind from one on whom my affection had been set for some considerable time before this,—happy escape, for she knew not God, and was indeed a Roman Catholic. I recollect it drew my mind from another thing of a different kind and nature also.

The word of God proved quick and powerful to me, and sharper than any two-edged sword. (Heb. iv. 12.) As an arrow, it pierced between the joints of the harness. (1 Kings xxii. 34, with Ps. xlv. 5.) Then I found sin to be an infinite evil, committed against an infinite God, and that it absolutely required an atonement by one who was infinite, even no less than God's co-equal and co-eternal Son. I say I then saw sin in its true colours, even as an infinite evil.

Having now quite other apprehensions of sin than I had before, I saw how short I had come in all my performances, how guilty while depending in, or on my own righteousness for acceptance with God. The concern of my mind was very great that I had lived so long ignorant of those things which relate to my eternal welfare. This made me cry in prayer to Christ as God, therefore able to save to the uttermost. I found much encouragement to pray from Jer. xxxi. 31-35; Heb. viii. 8-13; Ezek. xxxvi. 25-28; Heb. x. 16, 17; Ps. cxlv. 18, 19. I had a strong confidence given me that God's word of promise cannot be broken. The difficulty was if the promises could belong to me.

By this time I had left off my book prayers, as I found them now useless to me; glad was I to sigh and groan out my words in secret before the Lord, begging and praying for mercy.

The law, working on my conscience more and more, constrained me to cry louder and louder, as it were, for a happy discovery of Jesus as the law-fulfiller for me. The more I read the Scriptures, so much the more the language of my heart was, "Woe is me, for I am undone." "For by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh living be justified in the sight of God; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Rom. iii. 20.)

"How heavy is the night
That hangs upon our eyes,
Till Christ with his reviving light,
Over our souls arise!

"Our guilty spirits dread
'To meet with wrath from heaven;
But in his righteousness array'd,
We see our sins forgiven."

I looked and prayed to Christ as a God and Saviour. (Isa. xlv. 22.) Also in the words of the Psalmist: "Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people," &c. (Ps. cvi. 4, 5.)

From about the beginning of 1771 till his death, I often heard Mr. Messer, of Grafton Street meeting, with much of the power of God convincing me of my lost state as standing in the first Adam. The word comes with power when it points to the sinner as it did to me, "Thou art the man."

About this time Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" came to my hands. I here could see whereabouts I was; and I can truly say this book has been a blessing, under God, to me ever since. It is, as it were, a looking-glass to my soul, and a map to my road heavenward, next to the word of God.

The powerful preaching of Mr. Piercy, who very often preached at the Lock, was much blessed to my soul in a way of conviction, particularly his sermon on the convicted, (or converted,) gaoler, from Acts xvi. 30, 31: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" &c. He was very awful upon the whole of the history, especially from verse 25. In another sermon, how I have heard him set forth the miserable state of sinners not in Christ, how miserable under the curse of a broken law, and of God's wrath. I forget the text of this sermon; but I know he quoted James ii. 10. I trembled at the danger of my state, being well convinced that a sinful thought was as bad before a holy God as the action really committed, especially when I read Matt. v. 21-29, where our Lord expounds the law in its spirituality. This first brought on my nervous disorder; for all my sins were brought to my mind, appearing in a dreadful array against me. The black catalogue made me exceedingly to fear, and tremble, and weep plentifully, under sermons as well as in private. I no longer wonder at the woman of Samaria saying, "He told me all things that ever I did." (John iv. 29, 39.) It was the light of the Spirit that discovered these things on what our Lord said.

The following scriptural saying of Mr. Piercy's came with much power to my heart: "Ye self-righteous legalists, who fain would be saved by your own works, at least in part, all your righteousnesses are but 'filthy rags' before God. The word of God warrants me to declare it."

Mr. Huntington's sermon on Isa. xxx. 28, preached and printed in 1797, entitled, "The Breath of the Lord, and the Sieve of Vanity," I bought some years after this; and in reading it, it brought to my mind very clearly what I had felt in my soul at this time, "remembering mine affliction and misery, the wormwood and the gall," although it was so many years before I ever read the above sermon of Mr. Huntington's.

My distress of soul, as I said before, first taught me to pray in private without a book but the Bible only; for no form could suit all my inmost distresses and desires. I was glad to pour out my soul before the Lord in the best manner I was able, fixing my mind on and pleading God's promises in his word, for Christ's sake. I

ound many sweet visits from the Lord, which, though but short, were at times a great support to my weary and sin-burdened soul.

Thus I went on praying for faith, to be guided into all truth as it is in Jesus, and to be led by the unerring Spirit from all delusions and errors in reading the Scriptures; not that I suppose any to be in the Scriptures, but our wicked hearts may and ought to be suspected.

About this time I bought a little tract written by Mr. Romaine, I believe, entitled, "A Dialogue between a Believer and an Awakened Soul." This proved very seasonable to me.

I forgot to mention that, before this, I burnt my bad books, for my conscience and shame would not suffer me to sell them, that I had procured when I was an apprentice; for I had been in a wretched school for wickedness.

But to proceed. I still kept on by the wayside, begging and crying, like blind Bartimeus, to Jesus to have mercy on me; and though many things rebuked me—the devil, unbelief, and my unworthiness, a wicked and deceitful heart, yet, like him, I cried so much the more, "Thou son of David, have mercy upon me." The language of my heart was according to hymn 10 and hymn 15 in Mr. Madan's collection. The following lines also well expressed my soul's language:

"Mercy, good Lord, mercy I crave;
This is the total sum:
For mercy, Lord, is all my suit;
O let thy mercy come."

Great support I found from Ps. cxxx., also from Micah vii. 7, with Zech. xiii. 10. As mourning over the suffering Saviour increases, so self-pity will decrease. The last passage was fulfilled to me about this period in some degree, but stronger afterwards.

I found many hymns in Mr. Hart's very applicable to my state and refreshing to my soul in its trouble for sin; and also in Bunyan's "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners."

On Friday morning, Nov. 24, 1775, as I was reading in my bedroom, and praying over the Bible as usual, as I was reading and pondering over Rev. xxi., I had an amazing sight of the freeness of the grace of Christ from the verses 5, 6, 7; also from xxii. 16, 17. I said, "Lord Jesus, I have long thirsted for this water of life, for thy mercy manifested to me in the pardon of my sins; but my unbelief keeps me from this precious blessing. O, put forth thine almighty power to save me from it, or I must perish." Soon after this, this description came across my mind: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions, for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." (Isa. xliii. 25.) Some time afterwards the following Scripture: "I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins," (xliv. 22,) with 2 Cor. v. 21: "For God hath made him to be sin for us," &c. For this water of life to be had freely, I understood to be my free and full pardon, through the blood of Jesus Christ, "which cleanseth from all sin," (1 Jno. i. 7,) by which I now received the atonement and pardon.

The language of my soul was, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, transgression, and sin?" (Mic. vii. 18.) I was frequently visited with the above passages for many days before, and others like them. They were as honey to my palate. Such were sweet portions of Scripture to my soul, and this one among many more: "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life." (Jno. vi. 47.)

But after two or three weeks I began to have some fears that it was perhaps a delusion, that it might be the effects of imagination. These suspicions gave me much uneasiness, trouble, and anguish of soul; but I was enabled to pray so much the more, and to cry louder and louder, as it were, that I might know if it were real or not.

In 1797 I met with Bunyan's "Water of Life," on Rev. xxii. 1. In his title-page he has Rev. xxii. 17: "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." The reading of this little book greatly confirmed me in my experience, as above written. The preface to the reader I found also very suitable to my case at that time, I mean in November, 1775. Likewise, at page 8, he says: "By the term 'water of life,' is meant the spirit of grace, or the spirit and grace of the gospel. Grace and the spirit of grace is compared to water, to show what an antidote grace is against sin; it is, as I may call it, counterpoison to it. It is the only thing by the virtue of which sin can be forgiven, vanquished, and overcome." He goes on, pp. 10, 11: "This grace of God is here presented to us under the terms 'water of life.' It is to show that some are sick of that disease, that nothing can cure but that," &c. &c.

(To be continued.)

SUBSTANCE OF A SERMON,

PREACHED BY MR. TIPTAFT, AT ZOAR CHAPEL, GREAT ALIE STREET, LONDON.

"Who comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."—2 Cor. i. 4, 5.

CAN any here present appeal to God, and say that they have been pouring out their souls in prayer for me to be blessed in speaking? Because if you have not, how do you expect a blessing? Do you think that the minister can preach in and of himself? Do you view the minister only as the silver pipe through which the oil ran? Or if you have not for me, have you been praying for yourselves, or for the Lord's children? Have you any motive in coming to chapel? Do you come for a blessing, or do you come merely to perform a duty? Or do you come because you have had a blessing before?

This epistle Paul writes unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia. He writes this to special and particular persons. This will not apply to a general congregation, or even to this congregation; for if there are here one-tenth part who are children of God, it would be a great

number. There would be more than there were when the world was drowned. Can you style yourselves saints? Can you take that to yourselves morning, noon, and night? There are some who call themselves saints, and will talk of what great things they have done, their good works, how they have distributed tracts, and how zealous they have been for God; but these are not the true saints.

A child of God would not be without his trials for ever so much. He esteems the preciousness of the trial of faith above gold or silver. Some may say, "We have a religion that is all smooth—no tribulation." Well, they are in carnal security, and a very dangerous spot of ground it is too. But that soul is more safe that is bowed down with trouble, affliction, and sorrow, fearing lest God should damn him, and feeling that God would be just in sending him to hell, than he who can always sing on the heights. But a child of God is much exercised about his state. He is often questioning whether his will turn out real after all. He sees how far others have gone, and proved wrong at last, and he begins to question whether he is so or not. When Jesus said unto the disciples, "One of you shall betray me," they all began to say, "Lord, is it I?"

There are some who can talk very highly; can call Christ their Elder Brother, and God their Father; there are many that say, "Our Father which art in heaven." I know I have felt condemned in doing it, although I stood in a pulpit. It seemed too high for me; and the Lord will cut you down at one time or another for this. But I know there are times when you can see your title as clear as possible. I know I have myself. I have seen it as clear as the sun at noon. I could then say, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Suppose a man were to have a thousand pounds, and persecution were to arise, his things be seized, himself cast into prison, and his wife and children sent to the workhouse! "Well," he would say, if I did but know that I was right, that I was doing Christ service, I should not mind. But here is my property scattered among the enemies of Christ, and my wife and children destitute." This is the time to try him. All may be very well when things go smoothly; but when these things arise, it is made manifest who are the Lord's. A man may say he would not tell a lie for a shilling, or a sovereign; but let him have a good opportunity by which he may gain anything; and from little things they go gradually on to greater things. We need the Lord's daily keeping. The Lord knows what weights we require.

The soul that is bowed down with affliction is better than he that can split hairs in divinity, and is as light as a feather about his state. It is not all wounds that want instant healing; some want probing. If you were to take some silver to a refiner to be refined, and you wanted him to take it out as soon as he put it in the fining vessel, "Why," he would say, "you want this to look beautiful, and you tell the refiner his business." So it is with us. We do not want this furnace; we do not want that trial; and we would tell the Lord what is best for us. You may now be groaning under

heavy trials, but the time may come when you will bless God for sending you those very trials. You may say, perhaps, "O! I could not part with this or that object;" but the Lord knows; he sees; he may take away a dear husband, or a wife, or a child.

"Gold in the furnace tried,
Ne'er loses aught but dross;
So is the Christian purified,
And better'd by the cross."

HAVE I BEEN A WILDERNESS UNTO ISRAEL? A LAND OF DARKNESS?

As Mr. Knill has accepted the invitation of the friends at Oakham and Stamford to be over them provisionally for a year, it is thought that the following letter, containing an account of some of the exercises and blessings of one of the Oakham friends on the subject, would be read with pleasure and profit by many who know him, and the circumstances by which he has been led to move there.—J. C. P.

My dear Friend,—Having been favoured again to-day with a renewal of the Lord's goodness in our little meeting, I feel a desire to give you a short sketch of the exercises I have had, as well as some account of what has been manifested to me with respect to our present trial.

When our dearly-beloved pastor's decision to resign his charge over us was announced, although I felt satisfied that the Lord's hand was in it, I had some difficulty to reconcile myself to the separation, and had many fears as to what would be the result. These words, however, much settled my mind: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us;" and, "He who hath begun the good work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." This brought me to fall in with that prayer which our gracious Lord taught his disciples: "Thy will be done," &c.; yet I felt we were exposed to much danger, and was filled with fears lest we should take any steps without the Lord's guidance. This stirred up my spirit in wrestling prayer with him not to suffer us to lean to our own understanding. I saw and felt that if we were all of one mind, we should, with our dear pastor's advice, act with the most prudent consideration possible, for I knew that without the Lord's direction it would all prove nothing but foolishness with him, whose ways are so far higher than ours. This brought a godly jealousy into my heart over us and for the Lord, and made me beg that he would condescend to lead the way, and incline our hearts to follow whatever that way might be.

After our church meeting, I was much exercised whether it was right in the sight of God that Mr. Knill should be over the two churches, Oakham and Stamford, as was there proposed, or only over us. The more I weighed over both sides, the more difficult I saw and felt it to come to any right decision, and became more and more afraid to move without the Lord's direction. Indeed, I felt I could not give my voice to move without it, lest his jealousy should rise up against us. This stirred up my heart to pray most earnestly that he would give me some guiding light; but at the same time

my conscience began to be filled with reproach, which made my heart sink within me; for I felt I could scarcely expect the Lord to have any regard to my prayer, and yet to have to move without it I felt would be a most fearful step.

While this was going on for some hours on the Monday morning before I was up, these words began to revolve in my mind: "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" Although I could not see for some time how they had any bearing upon the subject, yet I knew it was the voice of my Beloved, and I felt my heart incline to the words of his mouth, and found myself possessed more than usually with solemnity and softness of spirit. So I rose about six o'clock, and went right off into the fields to avoid any interruption, when these words began to revolve in my heart: "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, lacked ye anything?" "Lacked ye anything?" This took me at once back to childhood. My dear mother having died when I was about six years old, and my father when about 14, my eyes were at once open to see the kind providence of God over me. A few of these I must just briefly name as they then came to my mind. I once fell off a waggon load of stubble with a cutting knife in my hands, which is used for cutting hay stacks with, but took no harm. At another time, the first horse at plough set his foot upon mine as I was walking backwards leading it out at the end, and I could not recover myself when the three horses and plough all went over me, my father, who was holding the plough, not seeing me till I was against his feet. Again, going down the paddock where one of my master's large mares was grazing close to the path, blind of one eye, when I got close, I thoughtlessly shouted as sharply and loudly as I could, to frighten it away by surprise. As it did not see me, instead of jumping from me, as I expected, it jumped towards me, smashing me down with its breast and legs, and went right over me without doing me the least injury, excepting a terrible shake.

As these and other incidents of youth came over my heart, I was filled with a sense of the miraculous providence of the God of all my mercies toward me, and the words still kept revolving in my mind: "When I sent you without purse," &c. This kept leading me on, step by step, and opening up the most minute circumstances of my life from then to the present day, with the words still revolving in my heart: "Lacked ye anything," &c. By this time my heart was filled with such a sense of his long-suffering kindness towards me, and my own unworthiness, that I could do little else but stand and sob and cry, like a little broken-hearted child, before him. I was then led back to the state of infidelity I was in at the time when the Lord arrested my conscience under Mr. P.'s sermon, where the Lord told Moses he would hide him in a cleft of the rock while the glory of the Lord passed by; how I laboured under a deepening sense of my sinnership with eternity before me, with condemnation and wrath in my soul, and especially with the most holy and righteous law of God raging in my conscience; how I was helped and preserved through these years when I was thoroughly

shut up unto the hope which should afterwards be revealed; how my soul was almost overwhelmed in despair; and how my heart sprung forth on that blessed day when those words dropped into my soul: "Christ came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance;" how he was revealed in the Gospels as the only one that could heal all my diseases; how my poor sin-condemned heart yearned after him; how I admired him and loved him; and how I lay down in the field, saying, "O Lord, have compassion on me; spread the skirt of thy mantle over me," &c.

I remember also how I went on for about six months, sometimes hoping and then again sinking. Sometimes I thought the Lord seemed to smile upon me, and then again I felt such a wretch that he never could, and how I would reprove myself for thinking he ever would. Still my heart would go out after him, as it were, insensibly, and I would find myself pining and longing after him, loving his Person and adoring him. I learnt here what the poor woman's feeling was who pressed after him, if haply she might but touch the hem of his garment; and what it was that kept the impotent man at Bethesda's pool—his incurable disease; and O how I longed after the blood of sprinkling, and for the Lord to say to me himself, "Thy sins are forgiven thee;" and then that blessed night when the dear Lord overcame my heart, with a sense of his loving-kindness, with those words: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee."

I remembered also how that blessed Epistle to the Hebrews was sweetly opened up to me, to the joy and consolation of my heart; how, while beholding the one offering for sin, a blessed sense and power of justification flowed into my heart through the Saviour's blood and righteousness. While this was going on, the words still kept revolving in my mind: "Lacked ye anything?" as though the Lord was determined to break my heart with a sense of his goodness. I could only sob and cry before him, as I said before, like a broken-hearted child, and say, "No, Lord; nothing. Thou hast indeed been infinitely better to me than all my deserts."

I was then led on to see, the Lord bringing before me, the various subtle and crafty temptations which the enemy of my soul's peace had spread for my feet; how I was indeed ignorant of his devices; how I have been completely entangled and overcome by them; and how, had it not been for the Lord's all-seeing eye and unseen hand, they would certainly have proved my eternal ruin; once especially, under which I was brought under the greatest distress through putting away conscience and not being willing to be guided by the dictates of the Spirit of God in my own heart, which I can only hint at to my dearest Christian friends. I learnt here to know that the apostle had a meaning when he said, "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;" and that the psalmist knew what he was asking for when he said, "And take not thy Holy Spirit from me." O how dear Mr. Marshall met with me from those words: "If any man come after me, and hate not his father and mother, &c., he cannot be my disciple;"

and how for weeks afterwards I had to tear the idols out of my own heart, and slay them before the Lord in Gilgal. I never knew the meaning before of those words: "If thine eye offend thee," &c. I learnt here to feel it is a fearful thing to be afraid of coming to the light, lest my deeds should be reproved. O how I was obliged to make a bare breast of it all before the Lord, and instead of shunning I was obliged to lay open my conscience to the most searching parts of his sacred word, under a sense of the bitterest repentance and most poignant grief. O wretch that I was, ever to presume upon this eternal love and faithfulness! O had he not been what he is, "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth," should I not long ago have dwelt in silence? O those blessed words: "I have blotted out thy sins as a cloud, and thy transgressions as a thick cloud," did indeed do my heart good. Then I said, "I will walk softly before the Lord all the days of my life."

Here, for brevity's sake, I must pass by many things which were all brought vividly before my mind, and how the dear Lord had met me in our dear pastor's ministry, with the helps and encouragements I have received, and in times of need; the words still revolving in my heart: "Have I been a wilderness?" &c., and also: "Lacked ye anything?"

This brought me to that most trying step, to fill a place in our Sabbath meetings, when we were without preaching; and how I was enabled to fall into the Lord's hands, and how he hath hitherto been my helper. How often have I been like a man that got his feet in a bog on a Monday morning, and have kept sinking and struggling through the week; by the time I got to Oakham, up to the chin, and all but overwhelmed altogether; how I have trembled like a leaf with fear, and the enemy has worked upon my constitutional weakness until I have felt it impossible to stand up and read a hymn, much less do anything more. But how I have been helped in such times of need, as once, when I went and sat in my place, I opened my hymn-book upon that solemn hymn:

"Redeemer! Whither should I flee?"

and then upon that:

"Behold, from the desert of sin."

Both of which I gave out. The enemy was put to flight, my weakness was all gone, and I had a most blessed time. Many such seasons all presented themselves before me, and how I have felt the change as much as the man in the bog would if two strong men took fast hold of his arms, lifted him right out, and set him on solid ground; took off his filthy clothes, washed him thoroughly in two or three waters, clothed him in nice clean clothes, gave him a good draught of wine, and sent him home as clean as possible.

Such has been the effect, through the washing and renewing of the Holy Ghost in my conscience, through the word when we have been without preaching.

O how it has rejoiced my soul to see the countenance of the friends lighted up with the inward emotions of their minds! How my heart has been opened to speak of the things of God, at times, to the friends, and they to me, knitting our soul in private together in the bonds of love; and how I, for one, can testify that the communion of saints is no dry doctrine, nor is it quite gone out of the world.

Now when I got here, I came to a solemn pause about having Mr. Knill every Sabbath; because, if the Lord favours us with his gracious presence and blessing, what can we have more? And indeed I began to be afraid, however much I have reason to love the preached word, whether, if we had it every Sabbath, it might not be rather an injury to us than not; as indeed I felt it would probably be, unless we were satisfied it was the Lord's will it should be so. This, indeed, made me sigh deeply to know his will, and I said, "Now, Lord, how about preaching at Oakham every Sabbath?" My attention was at once drawn towards the Acts of the Apostles and the primitive churches, when I was struck with their disinterestedness and unremitted labours and anxiety for the care and benefit of the various churches, as we see in the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians, and also to the Corinthians, and the state they were brought into by false teachers, &c.; and how the different churches were all so interested and anxious for each other as one common cause, even making collections, and sending to help the apostles and other churches, as instanced in the Thessalonians, to all the brethren which were in all Macedonia. Indeed I found my heart had caught the sacred flame towards our sister church at Stamford. I began to enter into their difficulties, and see the dangers they would be exposed to, if dependent on supplies; and I found not only a willingness that Mr. Knill should be over them with us, but also a desire it should be so, when my heart became filled with the whole spirit of the gospel and the law of love: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself;" and, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them." Now when I got here, these words began to revolve in my heart: "This is the way; walk ye in it," &c. I said, "Yes, Lord; yes, Lord. I see it. Help us to walk in it," and so on. One petition which went up out of the depth of my heart recurred to me, that the Lord would make us willing to listen to and be guided by the least and most secret intimation of his sacred Spirit in our own consciences, which filled my heart with a sense of his wondrous condescension; all which I received in answer to that prayer which went up out of the depth of my heart.

I was then led to see how kindly the Lord has dealt with us in removing Mr. P. from us in the gentle way he has done, as I really do not know how we could have borne it in any other way. Then for Mr. Knill to be here just at the time, with some prospect of his settling with us, all added to our mercy; and then, as though the dear Lord was determined to overcome all scruples for the future, my mind was drawn towards the prophet Isaiah. I opened on chapter xxx., and received from the 18th verse to the 27th verse for our encouragement for the future.

Now, if you have caught my feelings at all in these short hints, you will be able to judge why I spoke as I did in our church meeting. My dear friend, you must excuse more for the present. These words warn me to forbear saying more: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient."

From the most worthless one in the Kingdom
and Grace of Christ.

Whissendine, near Oakham, Oct. 12th, 1864.

W. F.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. WARBURTON.

Dear Brother,—May the Father of all mercy, and the God of all consolation ever be with you.

Your kind and savoury letter came safely to hand, and I found it very refreshing to read it. It kindled fresh sparks of love and union towards you, and led my soul to the Fountain of all supplies, that he would be with you, stand by you, comfort, refresh, bless, and ever preserve you.

I am sorry to hear that you are not so well in bodily health, but I hope the dear Lord has restored you again. Bless his dear name, he cannot do wrong. What a mercy it is to see it with a feeling sense of it in our hearts. It is a very easy thing to repeat with our lips, "He is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind;" but it is quite another thing to feel the savoury unction of it in our souls. Blessed be his holy name, I have had some blessed humbling visits from his dear Majesty of late, both in providence and in grace, that have quite humbled and melted me, and so moulded my soul into his very image that I had no will but his. My very soul could say, "Not my will, but thine be done." My dear friend, I do think these are drops of heaven; and if drops are so sweet, what must the fountain be? Unspeakable indeed! I have had a few moments of late that I could sit at his feet with tears of joy, wondering at his goodness, mercy, and kindness to such a poor helpless worm, so ignorant, so foolish, so wretched and bare in every sense of the word. O the heights, the depths, the lengths, and the breadths of the love of God! It beggars tongue or pen to describe it. It is such a large room that one can look both backwards and forwards, and not see one thing out of place. It is all well when my soul is here.

What a soul-humblng pleasure it is, at times, to look back upon 45 years of ins and outs, ups and downs, emptyings and fillings, strippings and clothings, fallings and raisings up, woundings and healings. Not one thing out of place. All has come right, worked right, and ended right. O what sweetness to feel the truth of what the apostle says: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose;" and when my soul is here, I do know it, I do feel it, and I can say,

"My Jesus has done all things well."

Nay, I do think, at these times, that the dear Lord has been more kind to me than to anyone else.

O what glory and majesty can I see at these times in the sovereignty of God, in picking me up out of the ruins of the fall, and his wonderful mercy towards me for these forty-five years, in helping, supporting, providing, and delivering. It is marvellous in my eyes and heart too, though many enemies I have had, anxiously watching for my halting, both in public and private. I do believe in my very heart and soul that I have had a little taste of what David meant when he exclaimed, "If it had not been the Lord who was on our side when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us; then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul; then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." O how sweetly has my poor soul, times and times, sung this psalm. It has been melody in my heart scores of times; and when my soul is here, I can as easily trample unbelief, doubts, and fears under my feet as many can batter them down with their tongues. It is easy enough, when the Lord is with us, with his countenance smiling, as our God and Father, and his strength perfected in our weakness. There is no stammering then, but we can speak plainly, through Christ who strengthens us, and can do all things.

But I have found it, my friend, cutting work to flesh and blood to be stripped from all arms of flesh whatever, professors or possessors. God has fixed and settled it that his children shall not shelter in any refuge but himself: "From all your idols will I cleanse you;" "Trust not in man, whose breath is in his nostrils;" "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man," let him be who he may, friend or foe. Yea, my friend, "it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." I have found it so for many years, but particularly for two or three years past; for depend upon it, if the dear children of God are left to idolize one another, (and they are sure to do it if left to the devil and old nature,) God will suffer something or another to take place that they will wound each other in such a way as will cure them of idolizing each other again.

What poor worms we are when left of God! Truly I am astonished at what there is in my heart; for let his love be withdrawn, his presence hidden, and my soul left to flesh and blood and the devil, my dear friend, I am shocked at the sight, and wonder where the scene will end. All my songs are turned to groans, with my harp upon the willows, my head hanging down like a bulrush, and the workings of ungodly nature as if the old man reigned and ruled in my heart. There I am sometimes for a long time, with no more possibility of getting out and coming to God with joy and peace than of emptying the sea with a bucket, till God comes to me and brings joy and peace. I know my standing is in him. While he holds up, I stand, and no longer. I am as confident that all is

mercy and free gift as ever I am born; and, bless his dear name, he has never failed me in any time of need. When all other refuges have failed, he has been the strength of my heart and my portion, though I am sunk so low, at times, that I am afraid he will never come again.

We are still moving on in the church and congregation, and I, on the whole, have cause for thankfulness. I do indeed wonder how the Lord can be so kind as to come and bless such a worthless worm in attempting to speak in his name. But so it is.

"He calls the fool and makes him know
The mysteries of his grace,
To lay aspiring wisdom low,
And all its pride abase."

I can assure you I have at times some sad mortification to endure at looking over my poor preaching. Nay, I sometimes feel a hatred to my own voice. But you will be quite tired with reading all these ins and outs.

I have received two or three letters from A. T.; but especially the last letter he has sent me, which is eight pages of foolscap closely written, in which he has given me such a sickening that I have sent him a note back of six lines, telling him that I desire no more correspondence with him, for I am quite satisfied that his religion and mine are as opposite as light and darkness. He tells me he can call God his Father as well in the darkness as in the light, and many other things he asserts that I feel quite satisfied to have nothing to do with him. He tells me also that he means to publish our correspondence; and I suppose he will paint me out in a strange light, for he says my letter appears to him that I believe I am in and out of Christ,—in when I am comfortable, and out of Christ when I am uncomfortable; and he considers it is doing despite unto the Spirit. But I am very glad he has opened up the budget as he has, for it has quite satisfied me that he and I have no business to correspond. Indeed, I have for a long time intimated this to him, but he would not pay any regard to it.

My kind love to Mrs. P. and all friends.

From your unworthy but affectionate Brother in the Lord for the truth's sake,

Trowbridge, Feb. 16, 1842.

JOHN WARBURTON.

ABIDE IN ME.

My dear Friend in the Bonds of the Gospel,—I thank you for your letter, which was a refreshment to my soul. How kind is our heavenly Father in affording us, through this medium of correspondence by letter, so many helps and encouragements by the way; for it is encouraging to find we live in the hearts of God's people, and to see, from what they relate to us, that our case is not singular, when we feel so dull, dead, and barren, or so sorely tempted, that we are ready to doubt whether we can have any part or lot in the

matter. This morning, being in a very lifeless frame, and ready to call all my experience into question, these words came to my mind: "Fight the good fight of faith." It struck me this is the very time for the inward fight, when called to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, and that more glory might redound to God, at such a season, by the soul simply cleaving to his word, than when praising him in the enjoyment of sensible refreshings. The thought did me good, and I was thus upheld from giving place to unbelief.

O how deceitful are our hearts; for though the new man of grace must ever long after and seek communion and fellowship with the Lord, yet I do believe that to find something in myself is often at the bottom of my desires after better frames. I forget that my evidences may well grow dull when I am poring upon them. It is, "Look unto me, and be ye saved;" and this look it is, and this alone, that can brighten my evidences, and call every grace into lively exercise. True it is, all our fresh springs are in him.

"Abide in me," says Jesus. O for power to abide more entirely in him; for so should we bring forth much fruit.

I was thinking this morning of the "good ground" in the parable of the sower, which I suppose must be the hearts of the elect when quickened by the blessed Spirit. I considered also the great difference between the thirty and a hundred fold, and prayed I might never despise the day of small things in any of God's dear family. I am often much troubled on this point, coming in contact with some towards whom I cannot feel any union, and yet, perhaps, there are more advanced and spiritual Christians than myself, who consider such persons to be subjects of grace. It is not the quantity of dross that cleaves to them that forms the barrier. That I might well bear with, who have such an abundance myself; but the not being able clearly to discern any gold. That is it which is so painful; and often it drives me earnestly to beg of the Lord that he would not suffer me to despise the weakest of his little ones on the one hand, or be instrumental in establishing a hypocrite on the other. A writer observes, and I am sure it is true, that "some of the children of the kingdom are so defective, and some of the children of the wicked one are so plausible, that it is very difficult to distinguish the precious from the vile." There is an evidence of discipleship given us in the Scriptures, which is very decisive, viz., "love to the brethren." I quite admit that a very great deal of party spirit and self-establishing goes under this name in the present day, yet I think I can discern the genuine evidence even amongst those Christians who are often very contentious with each other. There is a feeling of regard at the bottom. And I can as clearly discern its absence amongst some professors who make the greatest outward show of love. Still it is a blessed thing to dwell together in unity. May we continually pray for the peace of Jerusalem, that the Lord would "build her walls, and make her a praise in the earth."

Dear friend, believe me very truly

Yours, for Christ's sake,

F. A. ORD.

AN ENCOUNTER.

Dear John,—Amos has sent some nuts, but I have nothing to send but a sincere desire that your soul may prosper, that you may be favoured with bodily health, that the blessing of the Almighty may be on all your handiwork, and that you and yours may be favoured with every new covenant blessing, that the Lord's name may be glorified thereby. Amen.

I cannot attempt to go to Hawkhurst at Christmas, as I am very uncomfortable from home. I am afraid I shall be obliged to go to London, and I dread the journey.

I have much to say, but cannot enter on the subject at present, as I do not see my way clear, so as to enlarge; but I have great reason to be thankful that the Lord has helped me thus far, and given me strength equal to my day; and I believe he ever will, because he has promised it.

And now I will tell you of a scene which has engaged my attention. William's youngest daughter has been very ill for some time past, and lately so much so that her life was despaired of. They sent for me, expecting she could not be here long, at which I was much alarmed, being anxious to know if she had any hope beyond the grave. When I got to her bedside, she looked up at me, but did not speak, and appeared to be unable to do so, though I much wished to speak to her. After a considerable time she seemed to revive a little, and I asked her if she thought she should get up again. Her answer was, "I don't think I shall." Then I asked her if she was afraid to die. Her answer was, "I should not be afraid to die if I were prepared for it." Then I asked her how she knew she was not prepared to die. Her answer was, "I have sinned every day of my life." My heart seemed enlarged, and my mouth opened to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ as the salvation of sensible sinners, which she seemed to receive with comfort, and her mouth was opened to tell me all her feelings; and she said if she could but know her interest in Him, it was all she wanted. From what she told me, I really believe there is spiritual life, of which I could tell you more, but I shall not have room; so that I must proceed to tell you that immediately I was informed that the church minister had come unsent for, and desired to see her, to comfort her, I remained by her bedside, hearing his admonition, and I could not refrain from speaking. He soon drew a book from his pocket, and I cannot tell you my feelings, but perhaps you can guess what they were, when, after he had turned down two or three leaves, he asked her if he should read some prayers by her, which she could not but consent to, yet very reluctantly; but as soon as he was about to fall on his knees, I was obliged to speak to him in this way: "But, Sir, you are going to read prayers out of a book. I have done so on my knees a hundred times, and never prayed at all, and I cannot join you so; but if you will join with me, I will pray without a book." He did not refuse. Then the parson, myself, William, and the nurse all knelt down by the bedside, and as soon as I fell

on my knees, timidity and the fear of man all fled, and I was enabled to pray for everything I could think of, for the recovery of her body, and the salvation of her soul. As soon as the parson arose from his knees, he admonished her thus: "Do not give way to doubts and fears, but have strong confidence in your heart." To which I answered, "Solomon says, he that trusts his own heart is a fool." He made no reply, but left the room, and I have not seen him since; but thanks be to the Lord, from that day Susan has been getting better, and is now able to walk up and down stairs, &c.*

Your mother unites with me in kind love to you, Susan, and family; and I remain,

Your Father in the Best of Bonds,

JOHN BRYANT.

Rotherfield, December 13th, 1832.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON MY FATHER'S LETTER.

BEHOLD the priest, with hasty zeal,
His round of duty tread,
With book in hand prepared to kneel
Beside the dying bed.

"Come, join with me while I invoke
A blessing from on high.
These prayers, I've got them all by
rote;
They're ready 'cut and dry.'

"Quite all in order, well arranged,
And suited to each case;
If you want health, or strength, or
wealth,
You'll find them in their place.

"Here are different sizes, great and
small,
Made ready to your hand,
And why they're not approved by all
I cannot understand."

It happen'd that a visitor
Was present in the room,
Who thus the minister address'd:
"Sir, I to speak presume.

"I've tried these prayers of which you
boast,
And proved them all in vain;
Found to my cost, 'twas labour lost,
And cannot try again.

Hawkhurst, Dec., 1832.

"But if the Holy Ghost in truth
Has moved thy soul to pray,
He'll make thy heart instruct thy
mouth,
And teach thee what to say.

"If not, if thou wilt join with me
To supplicate the throne,
I'll try to speak the words he gives,
Renouncing all my own."

The last the priest prefer'd to do;
They bow'd the knee in prayer;
The prayer was heard, and answer'd
too,
For Israel's God was there.

The priest arose, address'd the sick,
And said, "Have confidence
Within your heart, keep up your
hope
When I am gone from hence."

The visitor again replied,
"If Scripture be a rule,
The man that trusts his heart, 'tis
said,
Is but a very fool."

No answer's made to words so keen,
For lo! the priest is gone,
To contemplate how much he'd seen,
How little he had done.

J. B.

LUTHER says of a dejected soul, that it is as easy to raise the dead as to comfort such a one.

THE love of Christ is so great towards the church that though he do fully satisfy all with all things, yet he esteemeth himself as a maimed and imperfect Head, unless he have the church joined to him as his body.—*Old Bible.*

* She ultimately recovered, and became the mother of a family.

IN YOUR PATIENCE POSSESS YE YOUR SOULS.

Dear Friend,—Grace, mercy, and peace be with you.

In grateful remembrance of you all, I take up my pen to express my feelings on the receiving of your very acceptable letter, as well as my dear wife, for the kind present you sent. I truly looked at it as coming from the Lord, while tears of joy were almost ready to come forth; for all spiritual friends, as well as their gifts, are from him. O how it sweeteneth the gift when looked at as coming from the Lord.

I feel happy to hear that you are still in unity with each other, and at peace amongst yourselves. This is a great mercy and a great blessing, and I trust comes in answer to prayer. It would grieve my mind to hear to the contrary. The devil's motto is to divide and to destroy. First, to divide. This was the trick he first began with in the apostles' days, and thus our blessed Lord often reminded his dear people to love one another. Love is of God; hatred of the devil. O my dear friend, that we may be holy, harmless, the sons of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. What need of patience, I say, what need of patience, to endure the fire of afflictions and trials all the day long; not only every morning, as Asaph said in Psalm lxxiii., but, at times, all the day long.

O how is a Christian compelled to prove the Scriptures true in his own experience in all their bearings on the dark side; for there is the dark side of unbelief, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. He maketh it night, and it is dark; but, as you observed, none know the sweetness of the blessing like those who have been here. And why? Because they cannot be explained to any other in their sweet unction. None know the excellence of the light like those who, being born blind, have had their eyes opened.

But what torments Satan most is, that we are predestinated, not only to be conformed to the image of God's dear Son, but to inhabit those realms of glory in which he once was. He is lost, and therefore has done his best to bring all to hell with him; but he knew not the mind of God, who gave us grace in Christ before the world began. His spite and malice not only ruined the world, but was the very means whereby we came at those high, dignified glories in Christ; for had not sin entered, there would have needed no Saviour; but now has Christ died and become the first-fruits of them that slept.

Now we have to look at our redemption; first, as it centred in God himself in his choice, and then the way it is brought about. The first is awfully solemn and grand, seeing that had we not been saved here, we should have been lost with the world; we should never have believed; the gospel would have been hidden, as says the apostle, and we should have remained in darkness.

Then how this gives vent for the second thought, that if saved it must be at such a cost; nothing less than the blood of Christ would do. O what a field is here! If we just look back at our own blindness and darkness by nature, and how we were true servants to

Satan and liked his ways well; yea, even if we were any way moral, it was that God might love us. Self was first here. And if wicked, it was to gratify self. Self is God itself in its own feelings. In addition to this, to think of as well as feel the dreadful malady we have received from that sting of the old serpent. He spoiled our nature. We were created upright and pure; now we are nothing but pride and rebellion; so that figure stands good: "From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head we are nothing but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores."

And now what may we expect? Blessed be God, it makes me think of your observation, "The matchless grace of a covenant-keeping God." O what need we to fear? We have all power in heaven and earth given to us in our Head. Can the body, then, lack? We are assured of victory in the promise. Cannot we wait? "But," say you, "I want faith. Lord, increase our faith." This is the gift of God. He is the author of it.

My dear friend, I am more and more convinced that "all shall be well with the righteous;" and I trust you are one of that character; and I may say so of myself. If so, how it sinks all nature and this world into nothing. O how ought we to rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

I anticipate the time when I shall see those whom I dearly love, as I intend visiting you, if the Lord will, on Christmas eve, if you will have the goodness to send for me to Stapleton.

My dear wife is very unwell indeed. Were it not out of pure love to me and my friends, she would not give consent for me to go, for she is hardly fit to be left; and I sometimes think it perhaps may be the last visit I may have to Dadlington. I have sent you a book containing the "Union and Oneness between Christ and his Church." I thought you might look it over before I came, and I could take it back with me.

"Tis love that makes our cheerful feet
In swift obedience move."

And everything belonging to salvation is all of love. It is good to be afflicted, and it is good for a man to both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of God. There is nothing goes wrong to faith. It is all for the best. But, as my inmost spirit says:

"Still bind me to thy sway,
Else the next cloud that veils my sky
Drives all these thoughts away."

By what has been said it is evident we stand by faith, we walk by faith, we live by faith, we overcome by faith, we glorify God by faith; and, "without faith it is impossible to please God." Then may we say, "Lord, increase our faith." In such a tempestuous world as this, what can we do without faith? Trials within and trials without; the hatred of men against God and his dear people; their hard speeches and mock expressions are hard to bear. To have to do with unreasonable men calls much for that blessed exhortation, "In your patience possess ye your souls." But, alas!

I am entrapped before I am aware. If I set a guard against one besetting sin, Satan comes in another way, which I little thought of; so that my life is one continual scene of joy and sorrow, bonds and afflictions.

“Abide in me.” O how happy should I be if the dear Lord would draw me nearer and nearer to himself, and break into my soul with peace and joy in believing. I feel but little desire to live here, seeing nothing but trouble, only what I find in my dear Jesus. O my dear Jesus! How I love him! He knows my heart. How sweet his name. When shall I see thee as thou art? Yet, though I see him not, yet believing, at times I rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

My dear friend, I must say for the present, Farewell! Remember me with best love to father, mother, brothers, and to my dear B. Tell them I often think on them and pray for them. O that we may all be found in the bundle of life when this vain world is no more. This is the prayer of a poor, sinful, unworthy worm.

I remain,

Yours, in the Bonds of the Everlasting Gospel,
Desford, December 4th, 1842.

EDWARD MOSS.

Edward Moss was a good old man, a warm friend of the late G. T. Congreve, of Bedworth.—ED.

Obituary.

CATHERINE PERRY, OF WIGAN.

ON September 30th, 1864, Catherine, the beloved wife of Thomas Perry, aged 48 years. “Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.”

Since the death of my dear mother, it has been impressed upon my mind to write a short account of a few years of her life, so far as the Lord shall enable me; but, feeling an unwillingness to undertake the task, it became a matter of much prayer for the Lord to decide the case, when that scripture came with much weight upon my mind: “Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

It pleased the Lord to arrest my dear mother in her course of sin and rebellion about 15 or 16 years ago. I am not acquainted in what manner, but I remember that I noticed she had given over cursing, which she had formerly done many times, and she was now nearly always crying, and, when alone, down on her knees begging for mercy. I have caught her in that position many times, and I used to think she was a very strange woman. Soon after this, the Lord in his providence removed my parents from Wigan to Blackburn, where they became hearers of that dear man of God, the late Mr. Horbury, and under his ministry my mother’s experience was traced out in a wonderful manner; yet she did not feel that pardon revealed to her soul and deliverance from under the law which she so

much longed for; but it came in the Lord's time, and that is the best time.

Soon after our removal to Blackburn, my dear mother had a dream, and she thought that the devil had come to fetch her. He got hold of her to drag her away, but she resisted him very much, and they had a very great struggle; nevertheless, he succeeded in dragging her out of bed and to the top of the stairs, and was about to hurl her headlong down into the pit that she saw, when a hand was stretched out and took her out of the grasp of the devil; and at the same time she distinctly heard the words, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" Upon this she awoke, and she both trembled and wept,—trembled for fear, and wept for joy. Soon after this, it pleased the Lord to enable Mr. Horbury to preach from that text: "My horn is exalted;" and under that sermon my mother's soul was set at happy liberty. She felt that her sins were washed away in the blood of the Lamb, and that she was free. She was led to see into the glorious ordinance of baptism, and after a time went before the church, and was joyfully received, and baptized by Mr. Horbury, at Islington Baptist Chapel, Blackburn.

About twelve months after this, it pleased the Lord to bring my parents back again to Wigan, which grieved my dear mother very much, for she could not see the way she had to go; but the Lord settled the point in her mind by these words: "I have brought thee unto the land of Goshen; thou shalt serve me in this place." She received her dismissal from the church at Blackburn, and became a member at Wigan, and remained one until her death.

But I now pass on; for to speak of all my dear mother's trials in spiritual things as well as temporals would take up too much time as well as room, and would require a person more fitted for the task than I am; but suffice it to say, she was a woman deeply tried in many points, and mostly of a sorrowful spirit. The Lord appeared to be preparing her for the great change a few months before her death. Her naturally hasty temper became quite changed, and she was as humble as a child. Once, when speaking to her of it, she said, "Yes, my child, the Lord has humbled me very much, and I hope he will keep me in the mind I am in at present;" then, bursting into tears, she said, "O, Mary, I feel so happy! The Lord died to save sinners, and he died to save me." A short time before her illness, our pastor, Mr. Warburton, was led to speak of good old Simeon and the child Jesus, and it was truly a feast-day to my mother's soul. When speaking of it afterwards, she said she felt she could say with the good old man, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." On another occasion, speaking to another friend, she said:

"Could I but climb where Moses stood,
And view the landscape o'er,
Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,
Should fright me from the shore."

The day she was taken ill, a strong desire came over my mind to go and see her; yet I did not know that she was ill. When I got

to the house, I found her in bed, and on looking at her I felt that I was going to lose my dear mother. My heart filled, and I sat down; when my mother said, "How are you?" I replied, "I don't know. I feel as though the Lord's hand is against me; all is so very dark." She replied, "The Lord will appear, and,

"On the mount it shall be seen
How kind and gracious he has been."

Put thy trust in him, and he will lead thee right. He has always been with me, and will be until the end, which I think will not be long."

My father being out of Wigan, it was impressed upon his mind that something was wrong; so he came home, and when he entered her room, and asked her how she was, she fixed her eyes upon him, and said, "'The Lord said unto Hezekiah, Thou shalt die, and not live.'" A short time afterwards, I entered her room, and said, "Now, mother, how are you?" to which she replied, "I shall soon be in heaven;" and then, looking at me very earnestly, added, "And, Mary, you must beg of the Lord to take your father too, and then we shall both be happy." After this she could scarcely speak, the nature of her disease (inflammation of the chest and lungs) taking speech from her.

The night after, as I entered her room, she said, "Mary, is that you?" I answered, "Yes, mother. How are you?" She said, "Come here, I have something to tell you. You remember the last time I was at your house?" I said, "Yes." She said, "Well, as I was coming, I was very unhappy, and I went into a field, behind a hedge, and begged of the Lord to appear for me, and shed his love abroad into my soul. I waited more than an hour, but he did not appear; but last night I had been slumbering, and when I awoke this scripture was impressed upon my mind: 'I am with thee to save thee and deliver thee, saith the Lord;' and O, my child, I am so happy, so very happy! Bless thee; the Lord bless thee!" These were the last words my dear mother spoke that I could understand. Her speech was entirely gone three days before she died. Her lips were constantly moving, as though she was in prayer, but we could not tell what she said.

The day she died, my aunt arrived just as she was in the agony of death, and fell down upon her knees in prayer. She said, "O Lord, she is dipping her foot in the river. Do thou take her over dry shod;" when my dear mother slightly turned her head on one side, a sweet smile spread over her face, and her spirit returned unto God, who gave it; and I firmly believe that she is "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Newtown, Pemberton, near Wigan.

MARY PERRY.

WE never know so much of heaven in our own souls, nor stand so high upon the mount of communion with God, as when his Spirit, breathing on our hearts, makes us lie low at the footstool of sovereign grace, and inspires us with this cry: "O God, be mine the comfort of salvation, but thine the entire praise of it."—*Toplady*.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

As we advance onward in the divine life, we usually see and feel more and more of the thick darkness and gross ignorance which brood by nature over our mind, and we become more fully convinced of our utter inability to understand or realise the certainty and power of spiritual things, except by a gracious revelation of them to our soul. "The things of the Spirit of God" we feel can only be, as the apostle says, "spiritually discerned;" (1 Cor. ii. 14;) for being high, heavenly, and holy, they are, from their very nature, far beyond the sight, far out of the reach of our natural understanding, strain itself as much as it may, let it be cultivated to the utmost of its powers. As it is only in God's light that we see light, (Ps. xxxvi. 9,) and as whatsoever doth make manifest is light, (Eph. v. 13,) the very sight and sense that we have of our darkness springs from the light of life in our soul. As, then, we grow in light and life, for there is or should be a growth in grace, (2 Pet. iii. 18,) there is a growing discovery and a deeper feeling of the darkness of our mind in the things of God. But all is not darkness with those who have been "delivered from the power of darkness"—for darkness is one thing and the power of darkness another—and been "translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son." (Col. i. 13.) Every now and then there are favoured moments when glimpses and glances of heavenly realities, in their brightness and glory, break in upon their soul; and then, perhaps, they are as suddenly withdrawn, much almost, if we may use such comparisons, as the sheet which Peter saw in vision was received up again into heaven, or as the cloud received the ascending Lord out of the sight of his gazing disciples. (Acts i. 9; x. 16.) But from these breakings in of divine light we obtain those spiritual views of heavenly realities which not only reveal their nature to the enlightened understanding, and seal their blessedness on the heart, but deeply convince us also what a veil there is over our mind when it is not thus graciously lifted up. Will our readers permit us to use a figure* to illustrate this? On a misty day, when thick fog

* We crave this indulgence, because some, whose judgment in divine things we much respect, object to the use of figures for the purpose of illustrating scriptural truth, on the ground that spiritual things cannot be explained by natural comparisons. Admitting to some degree the force of this objection, we still find, as a matter of continual experience, that an appropriate figure, cautiously and temperately used, and not pressed beyond its legitimate bearing, will often convey an explanation of a truth where reasoning seems to fail; for many can understand a comparison who cannot comprehend an argument. Argument is much more forcible and much less fallacious than figure, but demands a more trained mind. We, therefore, to meet different readers, seek to blend both; and whilst we base our views and our explanation of them upon scriptural argument, we intersperse, as occasion serves, illustrations and comparisons, not only to enliven, but to throw light upon our subject.

hides from view the surrounding landscape, the sun will sometimes suddenly burst forth; in a moment the veil is lifted up, and the whole prospect shines out bright and clear. The lofty mountain chain, or the smiling valley, or the long, winding sea coast, with all its rocky headlands, which had been shrouded in mist, stands out at once to view like a sudden apparition of beauty, and the whole landscape presents itself fully and clearly to the eye as a lovely, harmonious whole. But the mist returns almost as suddenly as it was drawn up; one object after another becomes wrapped up in cloud, until the whole view is again buried out of sight. And yet all is not gone. We can remember what we have seen. An impression has been made on the mind, which remains fixed as a durable recollection, though the vivid clearness is vanished and gone, and what we see now is but mist and fog. May we not apply this illustration to our views of spiritual things, both as regards light and darkness? For the most part we groan and sigh under a sense of the thick darkness of our mind, for though the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun, yet the days of darkness are many. (Eccles. xi. 7, 8.) This is the dense mist and fog. But there are times and seasons when the Sun of righteousness suddenly arises upon the soul, with healing in his wings. (Mal. iv. 2.) Then the mist and fog are immediately dispersed. Light beams into the heart; and at once the whole plan and scheme of salvation from grace to glory, from before the foundation of the world to the ages to come, from the original purposes of God to their full and final accomplishment in a blissful eternity, shines forth. This is produced sometimes by reading the word, sometimes by the power of a passage of Scripture applied to the heart, sometimes in secret meditation, sometimes when on one's knees before the Lord seeking his gracious face. At these favoured moments there is an entrance of divine light into the soul, for "the entrance of thy words giveth light;" (Ps. cxix. 130;) and this light spreads itself, as it were, over the word of truth, lighting up every part on which it shines with an indescribable beauty and glory. Let us read, for instance, under such a divine power and influence, Ephesians i., or Rom. viii., or the discourses of our blessed Lord with his disciples before his sufferings and death, or that wondrous prayer, (John xvii.,) in which he interceded for them, and for us too who believe in his name, (ver. 20,) as the great High Priest over the house of God. As we read these heavenly truths, and faith is drawn out upon and mixed with what we read, what beauty and blessedness shine through every sentence; and how the glorious gospel of the grace of God beams forth, as with light from heaven, to connect every part into one grand harmonious whole. As the soul becomes softened and melted under the power and influence of the word thus made to it spirit and life, all seeming difficulties vanish; and not a jarring note interrupts the harmony of the heavenly choir of gospel truths, making sweet melody in the heart. At such moments and in such a frame what we cannot fully understand we are content to leave; cavilling and contention with either God or man, with both

ourselves and others, die away, for they cannot live in this heavenly atmosphere; and the majesty and power of the word of the living God both awe the mind with reverence, and draw forth the affections into love. All doctrine, all experience, all precept are then seen to centre, as one grand harmonious whole, in the glorious Person of the Son of God. From him they all come; to him they all flow. Severed from him, doctrine is seen to be but a withered branch, experience but a delusive dream, precept but a legal service. But his light enlightening, his life quickening, his power attending the word of his grace, doctrine is seen to be no longer doctrine dry and dead, but glorious truth; experience to be not a mere matter of fluctuating feeling, but a blessed reality, as the very kingdom of God set up with a divine power in the heart; and obedience not a legal duty, but a high, holy, and acceptable service.

But we must not anticipate our subject, for it will be found that in the channel thus briefly sketched our views and thoughts will chiefly run. And yet we have ventured to give this preliminary sketch, as feeling desirous, on the one hand, to disarm at the very outset all suspicions which might arise in the mind of friend or foe, that by taking up the precept we were swerving from the truth into legality, and, on the other, to prepare the way for a fuller consideration of the point which we have undertaken to elucidate. Without further preface, then, we purpose, in handling the subject before us to consider the precept mainly under these four heads:

- I. Its *importance*.
- II. Its *nature*.
- III. Its place in the *word*.
- IV. Its place in the *heart and life*.

I. Let us first, then, consider its *importance*.

1. One very simple proof of the importance of the precept is what we may call its *bulk*. Let us examine this point by looking at several of the Epistles of the New Testament. We particularly mention these, because as being addressed to Christian churches, the precept occupies in the epistles its distinctive and peculiar place as a harmonious part of the revelation of grace and truth in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Take, then, as our first instance, the Epistle to the Ephesians—the fullest and richest, and what we may perhaps call the highest in doctrine, of all that Paul, under divine inspiration, wrote to the churches. Out of six chapters in this epistle three are preceptive, mingled indeed with and based upon doctrinal and experimental truth, for in this channel the precept always runs; but assuming the form of clear, positive exhortation, admonition, warning, and direction. Consider this point, ye ministers, who Lord's day after Lord's day preach nothing but doctrine, doctrine, doctrine; and ask yourselves whether the same Holy Ghost who revealed the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Ephesians did not also reveal the last three? Is not the whole Epistle equally inspired, a blessed part of that scripture of which we read: "All Scripture is given by in-

aspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works?" (2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.) How, then, can you be "a man of God perfect," (that is, complete as a minister,) and "thoroughly furnished unto all good works," if you wilfully neglect any part of that Scripture which God has given to be profitable to you, and to others by you?

But let us examine this point a little more closely. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. iv. 1-3.) In the preceding chapters the apostle had set before the believing Ephesians their eternal election in Christ, their predestination unto the adoption of children, their redemption through the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of their sins, their sealing by the Holy Spirit of promise as an earnest of their inheritance, their being built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that for a habitation of God through the Spirit. What a cluster of heavenly blessings, and all theirs as saints and believers in Christ Jesus! What then? "*I therefore.*" What a "therefore!" How it throws us back upon those spiritual blessings wherewith God has blessed us in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (Eph. i. 3,) and brings them all to bear upon our walk and conduct! "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," &c. But not content with this general exhortation, the apostle follows up the precept for three successive chapters, pressing upon their heart and conscience every godly fruit, such as lowliness, meekness, longsuffering, forbearance, love and union, mutual forgiveness; and mingles his exhortations with solemn warnings against every sin, such as uncleanness, lying, anger, theft, bitterness, wrath, evil speaking, &c. Observe, too, how special and practical he is, taking up not only our individual walk and conduct, but enters also into all our family relationships, urging on husbands, wives, children, servants, masters, every relative duty, and the whole grounded on the highest motives, and based on heavenly and spiritual principles. Thus, in this epistle we have the highest doctrine and the highest practice, the most exalted views of the sovereign, eternal grace of God the Father, (i. 3-12, 19-23,) of the unspeakable love of God the Son, (iii. 17-19,) and of the quickening, sealing, strengthening work of God the Holy Ghost, (i. 13, 17; ii. 1, 18, 22; iii. 16;) and following up this full and glorious exposition of the deepest doctrinal truth we find the closest precept, bringing before our eyes, as the fruit of all this sovereign grace, the most active obedience of heart, lip, and life, with every inward grace and every outward fruit. Look at this point, dear readers. Examine it for yourselves. You have your Bibles before you. You want no learning, no great education to understand this. You only want two eyes—the natural eye, the eye of the body, to read the letter, and the spiritual eye, the eye of the soul, to read the spirit of your

Bible. When, then, you are a little favoured in your soul; when you feel your heart softened and melted by a sense of God's goodness and mercy, get alone for a little while, enter your closet and shut your door—the outward and the inward door, (Matt. vi. 6,) and prayerfully read the Epistle to the Ephesians; and as your faith embraces, with a holy joy and heavenly sweetness, the glorious truths of the first three chapters, read on, and by the same faith embrace the wise and holy precepts in the last three, which flowed from the same Holy Spirit who inspired and indited the first. As there is but “one Spirit” and “one faith,” (Eph. iv. 4, 5,) depend upon it, if the blessed Spirit enlighten the eyes of your understanding to see the doctrine, and anoint your heart to feel the power of sovereign grace, the same blessed Spirit will anoint your eyes and heart to see and feel the power of effectual grace; and will shine upon the inspired precept as well as upon the inspired promise. Nor will your faith which embraces salvation be less willing to embrace the things which accompany salvation. (Heb. vi. 9.) We know, indeed, that to do this requires a spiritual mind; but we write for spiritual readers—for those who know something of the power of the word upon the heart, as well as the meaning of the letter of the word in their understanding.

Take next the Epistle to the Colossians, which we may call a sister Epistle of that to the Ephesians, as written about the same time, (A.D. 61, when Paul was a prisoner at Rome,) and dwelling chiefly on the same glorious truths. This epistle contains four chapters. Of these, two are preceptive, that is, half of the epistle. Is not this a significant fact? and can it be safe or consistent with becoming reverence to the word of God's grace tacitly to set aside half an epistle as of little or no moment? Next look at 1 Thess. This contains five chapters, of which the last two are wholly preceptive; and if, instead of reckoning by the chapters, we count the verses, we shall find that somewhat more than half (46 to 43) are devoted to the subject of practice and the claims of Christian obedience.

But an objection may be here started, that we have *picked* the epistles, and have omitted two of the longest and most important, that, namely, to the Romans, and that to the Hebrews, to neither of which our test of bulk will apply. It is perfectly true that in neither of these epistles is the proportion of precept to doctrine, measured by bulk, so great as in those which we have examined. But there is a sound and valid reason for this apparent disproportion in both cases. In setting forth, for instance, the grand doctrine of justification by faith in the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, which forms the chief subject of the Epistle to the Romans, it was necessary to be full and ample, that so important a truth might be placed upon a broad and permanent basis. A short epistle, like that to the Philippians, could not have adequately set forth, in all its various bearings, that foundation doctrine which Luther calls “the article whereby the church stands or falls.*” A certain degree,

* “Articulus stantis aut cadentis ecclesie;” literally, “The article of a standing or a falling church.”

therefore, of drawn out, argumentative proof (for the doctrinal part of the Epistle to the Romans is a most masterly and logical piece of sustained reasoning) was necessary to place upon an unshaken foundation the church's grand bulwark against error for all time. Similarly the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, which forms the subject of the Epistle to the Hebrews, could not be treated in all its fulness and bearings except at considerable length; for it was necessary to trace in it the fulfilment of the Levitical dispensation, with its types and sacrifices, in the Person and work of the God-man Mediator. We see, therefore, at once, from these considerations, sufficient reasons why these two epistles form an apparent exception to our test of bulk. And yet in both of them the precept, if measured, not by actual bulk but by weight, by quality not by quantity, which surely is an admirable test, is not less strong and powerful. Read, for instance, Rom. xii., xiii., xiv. What a weight of precept; how condensed, and yet how comprehensive. What firm and strong gospel principles are laid down. The mercies of God; (xii. 1;) the property which Christ has in us; (xiv. 7-9;) our membership with him and with one another; (xii. 4, 5;) the spiritual nature of the kingdom of God; (xiv. 17, 18;) the example of Christ; (xv. 3-6;) the claims of brotherly love; (xiii. 8-10;) the near approach of full and final salvation; (xiii. 11;) and our accountability to God; (xiv. 12;) what a foundation is thus laid. And upon this broad basis of Christian privilege what a godly superstructure of Christian precept. Read from Rom. xii. 1 to xv. 7. What a weight of precept. How close and condensed, and yet how full is chap. xii.; and with what a weighty, influential principle it begins: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." The body to be presented a living sacrifice unto God; non-conformity to the world; but a transformation of the renewed mind into the image of Christ, with a sensible experience and proof thereby of the perfect will of God. What a foundation for all vital, practical godliness. But we must not forestall our subject, as these things will have to be considered at length as we proceed. Let it suffice for the present to ask ourselves this simple question, "Can it be right, can it be safe, can it be scriptural, to treat all this fulness and weight of precept with no more attention than an obsolete Act of Parliament? or, to speak less harshly, to receive it as the word of God much as we might do the last chapters of Ezekiel, which we little read and less understand, though we have no doubt of its being a part of the inspired Scriptures?"

The same observations will apply to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Measured by bulk, the amount of the preceptive part of the epistle falls short of the doctrinal; but who that reads the two last chapters can deny the weight of exhortation, admonition, warning, and direction with which these are filled, but which our limits will not allow us to do more than point out?

But it will be observed that we have merely indicated *bulk* as one proof of the importance of the precept. If our readers feel disposed to follow up our argument, let them examine in this point of view the Epistle to the Galatians, of which two chapters out of six (v., vi.) are preceptive; the Epistle to the Philippians, in which precept is so prominent a feature, and so blended with doctrine, (i. 6; ii. 5-11; iii. 20, 21.) and with experience (i. 21-23; iii. 7-14,) that it may be called a model of preceptive writing; the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, which are nearly all precept; and the Epistles of Peter and James, which are filled with precept from first to last. The amount of precept in the epistles, measured only by the simple test of *quantity*, would surprise a person whose attention had not been directed to that point, if he would but carefully examine it. But it is sad to say how little the Scriptures are read amongst us with that intelligent attention, that careful and prayerful studiousness, that earnest desire to understand, believe, and experimentally realise their divine meaning, which they demand and deserve, and which the word of God compares to seeking as for silver, and searching as for hid treasure. (Prov. ii. 4.)

2. But the importance of the precept will be evident from another consideration. Were there no precepts in the New Testament, we should be without *an inspired rule of life*, without an authoritative guide for our walk and conduct before the Church and the world. We rightly discard and reject the law as a rule of life to a believer. What, then, is our rule? Are we a set of lawless wretches who may live as we list, according to the libellous charge of the enemies of truth? God forbid. We have a divine, authoritative rule of life, a code of directions of the amplest, fullest, minutest character, intended and sufficient to regulate and control every thought, word, and action of our lives; and all flowing from the eternal wisdom and will of the Father, sealed and ratified by the blood of the Son, and inspired and revealed by the Holy Ghost. When, then, it is thrown in our teeth that, by discarding the law as our rule of life, we prove ourselves licentious, lawless Antinomians, this is our answer, and let God and his word decide whether it be not a sufficient one. Not so. We have a rule of life as far exceeding the law as the new covenant of grace and truth in the glorious Person of the Son of God exceeds and outshines the old covenant of works; and as much as the ministration of the Spirit, of life, and of righteousness excels in glory the ministration of the letter, of death, and of condemnation. (2 Cor. iii. 6-11.) In a word, the precepts of the New Testament, in all their fulness, minuteness, and comprehensiveness, are our rule of life.

But mark what would be the consequence if the preceptive part of the New Testament were taken out of its pages as so much useless matter. It would be like going on board of a ship bound on a long and perilous voyage, and taking out of her just before she sailed, all her charts, her compass, her sextants, her sounding-line, her chronometer; in a word, all the instruments of navigation needful for her safely crossing the sea, or even leaving her port. But

you may say, "If there were no precept, the Church would still have the Holy Ghost to guide her safely over the sea of life to her heavenly haven." It is true; and so the first Christians, as Stephen the martyr, who lived before the epistles were written, had the Holy Ghost to guide them, in the absence of the precept. But in those early days, first, the Holy Ghost was poured out in large measure, and, secondly, they had in their midst apostles and prophets, (1 Cor. xii. 4-11; xiv.; Eph. ii. 20; iv. 11, 12,) directly and immediately inspired to guide and direct them, which gifts have been withdrawn since the canon of Scripture was closed. Besides which, as the Holy Ghost, who then wrought immediately by the lips of inspired men, (1 Cor. xiv. 21,) now works mediately by the inspired page, the argument is neither sound nor safe that we could do very well without the letter of the precept as still having the Spirit. The question is not what God *might* do, but what God *does*; not what *we* think, but what *God* says. If God has mercifully and graciously given us rules and directions whereby to walk, let us thankfully accept them, not question and cavil how far we could have done without them.

See, too, what a wide field would be laid open for wild enthusiasm to range in, were there no direct and positive lines laid down, as we now have them in the precept. How every deluded fanatic might come forward as inspired by the Holy Ghost to instruct us how to act, and what to do, and how to live, how many wives he might have, and how much money we must give to keep him and them in luxury and ease. What a mercy for us that we have God's precepts and not man's; God's holy, wise, and gracious directions how to glorify him in heart and life, how to walk in love and union with his dear people, how to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, how to know his will and do it, with his own blessed approbation in our conscience; and thus, by taking heed to our way according to God's word, (Ps. cxix. 9,) not become the prey of every vile Mormonite, every sleek impostor, every wily monk or crafty nun, every Papist, Puseyite, or sister of mercy who might seek to impose upon us with their pretended revelations, or bind us hard and fast with their stern, austere rules of fleshly holiness. What heavy burdens would they fasten on our shoulders, as we see in the case of the Pharisees of old, who made the word of God of none effect by their traditions, and in the self-imposed austerities of the Trappist and Carthusian orders among the Papists, and the Fathers and the Brothers Ignatius now amongst us, with their sandals and Benedictine dress, like "a rough garment to deceive."

Left to such blind or wilfully-deceiving guides, we should, but for the precept as the rule of our lives, as the inspired guide of our steps, have no word of the Lord to set against their delusions or their hypocrisies, and should pass our lives in continual bondage and fear, awed by their pretended revelations, or bowed down by their austere regulations. We have enough, God knows, of these would-be teachers and directors of conscience; some coming with their crafty impostures to deceive, others with their forms and ceremonies, preparations

for the sacrament, manuals of religious instruction, practices of piety, aids to devotion, all drawn out to rule and pattern, to teach us how to live and how to die; and all as full of error as a blind understanding can devise, and as full of legality and lip-service as a superstitious, self-righteous, Pharisaical heart can make them. What a torrent of Popery seems fast coming in under what is now called "ritualism;" that is, a setting up of rites and ceremonies, mediæval observances, and traditional rules, instead of the doctrines of grace and the precepts of the gospel. What a mercy, then, for the living church of God that we have not only the Holy Ghost as our inward Teacher, to show us by his divine light these errors and delusions, but that the same blessed Spirit has given us in the word of truth the sweetest, soundest, safest directions to lead us into, and keep us in the way of eternal life; and that he from time to time sheds upon them his own benign unction, grace, and savour to make them spirit and life to our soul, and thus become a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. What a holy, happy liberty; what a free service; what a tender, affectionate, filial obedience do the precepts of the gospel set before us, as far removed from legal exactions and Pharisaic righteousness as from Antinomian licentiousness and loose, careless nngodliness. O you, who see and feel these things, and have tasted the blessedness of serving God in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter, (Rom. vii. 6,) lift up your heart and hands with the writer of these lines, and say with him, "Bless God for the precept." May grace be given us more clearly to understand it, more carefully to heed it, more closely to obey it.

But here for the present we pause, lest we should not only engross too much space for our own pen, but, by dwelling upon one subject at too great length, rather weary than edify our readers.

TRUE RELIGION.

My soul that sweet religion wants,
Which Satan cannot bear,
Which God the Saviour freely grants
The objects of his care.

That sweet religion I desire,
Which carnal hearts despise;
Which will exist in flames of fire,
And leads behind the skies.

That sweet religion, Lord, I crave,
Which dead professors hate;
Which reprobates can never have,
Whatever be their state.

Nov. 4, 1845.

That sweet religion, undefiled,
And pure as God is pure;
Which will unto a poor, weak child
Christ as its strength insure.

That sweet religion from above,
Which God alone will give
The objects of eternal love,
Who by and in him live.

For that religion, Lord, I pant,
Which stands in power divine;
To me this special blessing grant,
And cause my face to shine.

A. H.

God has recorded these things in this manner in the word that all the people of God may read the whole of their present state and work acted in the Scriptures, by the inspiration of the Spirit, which now breathes workings of a like nature in their hearts. The least groan cannot be lost. It is part of the Lamb's war; and therefore there is a blessing in it.—*Dorney.*

APRIL 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

APRIL, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from p. 74.)

On Dec. 27th, 1775, on a Tuesday morning, I heard Mr. Romaine at the Lock Chapel, from Isa. xix. 20: "They shall cry unto the Lord, because of the oppressors, and he shall send them a Saviour and a great one, and he shall deliver them." The greatness of this Saviour shined amazingly into my understanding, particularly when he quoted in his sermon Rom. ix. 5: "Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen." "This passage," said he, "is the overthrow of all Arianism and Socinianism whatever." He also quoted two sayings of him who is faithful and unchangeable, of him that cannot lie nor repent, but fulfils with the arm of his power what his mouth hath spoken: "Come unto me," &c.; "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." Said he, "Jesus calls, bids, invites, yea, commands thee to come, poor doubting soul, and declares he will not cast out any poor sinner who is enabled to come."

I was here again most sweetly enabled to cast my soul into the arms of Christ and to find his promised rest, in the pardoning love of God, through atoning blood. (Heb. ix. 14, 15, with I John i. 7.

These words Mr. R. spake from the word of God, and others I do not now recollect. O how did my heart burn within me while Christ, by the mouth of his minister, talked with me and opened to me the Scriptures. (See Luke xxiv. 32.) I was set more at liberty, I think, now than before, into the glorious liberty of the children of God; or, rather, I had a stronger manifestation. This is a sermon much to be remembered by me.

Christ's promise is, "Come unto me," &c.; and, therefore, Paul says, "We which have believed do enter into rest;" "There remaineth, therefore, a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from is."

What a blessed season did I here enjoy. Precious opportunity! My former manifestations came fresh into my mind, the Lord again indulging me with a fresh sense of pardon, and sealing again his forgiving love home upon my conscience: "Son, be of good cheer,

Thy sins be forgiven thee." What love and zeal glowed in my bosom! (Isa. xxxv. 4-8.) I hitherto had never enjoyed such a comfortable view of Christ, of the removal of the burden of my sins, of the pardon of them, my reconciliation and completeness in Christ's imputed righteousness, as now. I returned home full of praises and thanksgiving. The language of my heart was with the psalmist as in ciii. 1-6. The burden of sin I had groaned under so long was removed; I never had experienced such a strong manifestation of the Lord's love and mercy before. Things seemed to me quite altered now. Having a heaven in my soul, and righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, my mouth was filled with thanksgivings. I was all love and gratitude to this great Saviour Jesus, to this dear Saviour and Deliverer. (Isa. xlv. 22; Zech. xii. 10; Heb. xii. 2; John viii. 36.) This was a reflection of what I enjoyed on the 24th of Nov. aforesaid, by which I was satisfied it was not a delusion; for I was made willing to take of the water of life freely. Then was fulfilled to me the promise in Rev. xxi. 6, applied to me on the memorable 24th of Nov., 1775; and others also. I had been for many years crying to the Lord because of the oppressors, sin, Satan, unbelief, &c., till now (or within a month and three days) I had been a seeker of Jesus. I had now found redemption. Solomon says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick, but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life." Mr. Huntington says, "Christ is that tree of life." Solomon also says, "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it to stoop, but a good word maketh it glad." This good word God sent, and healed me and delivered me from deserved destruction. I then received needful and seasonable relief in my unspeakable trouble and distress of soul, I exchanged the spirit of heaviness for the garment of praise, and I was filled with joy and peace in believing. The gospel came to me, not in word only, but also in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance. That day did the Lord manifest himself to me in a very conspicuous manner. Then were fulfilled to me those promises I had long pleaded and waited for, viz., Isa. xxxv. 4-8, also to the end of the chapter; the whole of Isa. xii.; John xvi. 24; Rom. v. 1-6; Isa. xlv. 22; and many more promises which I omit writing down here. The water that Christ then gave me I trust shall be in me a well (or fountain) of water, springing up unto everlasting life.

O how sweetly did I enjoy a pardon manifested to my conscience. "I am the Lord that healeth thee." "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." I know that he healeth the broken in heart, because he healed me; a good reason. "Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee." These words of Christ were sweetly brought to my mind: "Son, be of good cheer. Thy sins be forgiven thee." Therefore, says John, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself. And this is the record, that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life," &c. Trusting the word of truth, which says, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin," I triumphed in the pardoning love of God, a sense of

pardon being strongly manifested to my conscience, and sealed upon my soul by the Holy Spirit of promise.

O how true under this experience are those lines of Hart's:

"Law and terrors do but harden
All the while they work alone;
But a sense of blood-bought pardon
Soon dissolves a heart of stone."

It is blessed mourning after sins are pardoned, looking to Jesus; (Zech. xii. 10;) mourning mixed with rejoicing over the suffering Saviour. Then follows true and genuine gospel repentance. (Jer. xxxi. 18-21; Rom. xii. 1, 2.)

Mr. Brown says, "Guilty sinners come to Christ when they believe on the name of the Son of God, finding rest to their souls in his finished work; 'He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.'"

This was the appointed time, the day of God's love to my soul, the day of my espousals. The state I found myself in is well expressed by Watts:

"O what immortal joys I felt,
And raptures all divine,
When Jesus told me I was his,
And my Beloved mine."

One of the precious Scriptures quoted and applied to and sealed unto me under this sermon was Isa. xlv. 21, 22: "Return unto me, for I have redeemed thee." "Return unto me upon this motive, with all thy whole heart. Give thyself up unto me, soul, body, and spirit. 'My son, give me thine heart.'" "For no weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Precious, very precious is the whole of this chapter to my soul. O! The Lord has brought me into glorious liberty. I, therefore, cannot but rejoice in my redeeming God, and triumph gloriously in his blood and righteousness. "I will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God." What are all the baubles of this world of sin, when compared to this joy of the Holy Ghost? The kingdom of God is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. I am now happier than any king all over the universe. What can I return unto the Lord for all his benefits unto unworthy me? Surely I can say, "In the Lord Jesus I have righteousness and strength."

Alas! What is my poor, cold love to my Saviour, when compared to his? "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth." For I have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but a sense of a pardon sealed home upon my conscience, experiencing the truth of what is expressed by Hart:

"The sinner that, by precious faith,
Has felt his sins forgiven,
Is from that moment pass'd from death,
And seal'd an heir of heaven."

O how comfortable is this precious hymn (throughout) to my soul! It ought to be written in letters of gold, as well as Hart's hymn:

"The fountain of Christ," &c.

I went on my way rejoicing, for Christ said to me, "Son, be of good cheer. Thy sins be forgiven thee. Thine iniquity is taken

away, and thy sin is purged. For I am the Lord that healeth thee." Very comfortable was 1 Pet. ii. 24 unto me. I know that he healeth the broken in heart, because he healed me. I fear not, for it is the Father's good pleasure to give me the kingdom. He has laid on Christ, or made to meet on him, my iniquities. I behold the Lamb of God which taketh away my iniquities.

From the beginning of my convictions, I prayed to the Lord Jesus, encouraged from Matt. xi. 28; Isa. xlv. 22, with Heb. vii. 25. My language was, "Lord Jesus, save me! I perish! Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy upon me." Thus for many years I sought the Lord, and he now has heard me and delivered me from all my fears. The Holy Spirit having revealed salvation to my soul by himself, as promised in John xvi. 14, 15, I know the truth, and the truth has made me free. "One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see." (John ix. 25.) Thus I trust I have an experimental knowledge of the Triune God.

I again say that I triumph and rejoice in this, that Christ is made the end of the law for righteousness, &c. This scripture several times has been applied to my soul, both before and a few days following the 1st Jan., 1781, particularly since it has been sealed unto me. I truly and sincerely was willing to give up my whole heart to the Lord, without reserve. My God and Father, speaking to me as his son: "My son, give me thy heart" and affections, the answer of my soul is well expressed in the 73rd of Whitefield's hymns:

"Take my poor heart, Lord, just as it is;
Set up therein thy throne;
So shall I love thee above all,
And live to thee alone.

"Complete thy work, and crown thy grace,
That I may loving prove,
And listen to that still, small voice,
Which manifests thy love;

"Which teaches me what is thy will,
And tells me what to do;
Which covers me with shame, when I
Do not thy will pursue.

"This unction may I ever feel,
This teaching from my Lord,
And learn obedience to thy voice,
Thy soul-reviving word!"

Ever since I have been called, the Lord has bestowed upon me a remarkably tender conscience, with regard to strict justice and honesty, even to a very high degree. The people to whom our house in Heddon Court fell, after our lease was run out, were astonished at it, and I can recollect it in matters of much less consequence, even as to a farthing.

O how precious! delightful to hear the sweet whispers of the Spirit testifying to the conscience: "Thine iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged." "Sick of Love." This scripture was felt and evidently fulfilled to me at this time: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body," &c., with Isa. liii. 6: "The Lord hath laid on him," &c. What a soul-comforting hymn is that in Lock's collection:

“ 'Tis finish'd, the Redeemer said,
And humbly bow'd his dying head,” &c.

“ Christ loved me and gave himself for me!” “ My Beloved (Jesus) is mine, and I am his.” What a clear view of my personal interest in Christ by the witness of the Holy Ghost. By the Spirit of adoption I could feelingly call God the Father, *my* Father, by personal and vital union to Jesus Christ. By grace and mercy, my sonship was made clear unto me, the chief of sinners,—a sinner saved.

A little after this I was sweetly led to those passages of Scripture that particularly hold forth Christ's imputed righteousness, as Rom. x. 4; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31; Jer. xxiii. 5, 6; Isa. lxi. 10. These were sweetly applied to my soul, and the glory I now beheld in them is greater than I can express. O what beauty I beheld in Rom. iv. and other scriptures also. That passage in John xvi. 14, 15 was fulfilled to me now, as well as John viii. 32. The Holy Spirit revealed to me an experimental knowledge of the Triune God. What glorious manifestations of the love of God, rejoicing under the full gale of the Spirit of God, I had, which raised me to joy unspeakable and full of glory. Peace flowed into my soul like a river,—peace and an abundance of peace. I am at a loss for words to express what I felt. I found a growing deadness to the world. How applicable were the words of the apostle to me now: “ If ye, then, be risen with Christ,” &c. (Col. iii. 1–6.) How dearly did I love to lead a life of meditation and contemplation, a life devoted to religion, or rather to Christ. David's experience in Ps. xxxiv. 1–5, and 15, 17–19, 22 was now mine also. O that I may so abidingly behold the glory of the Lord, and the glory of the Redeemer's work, that I may be changed by his sanctifying Spirit.

“ Is there a thing beneath the sun,
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it hence, and reign alone;
The Lord of every motion there.
Then shall my heart from earth be free,
When it has found repose in thee.

“ O hide this self from me, that I
No more, but Christ, in me may live!
My vile affections crucify,
Nor let one darling lust survive;
In all things nothing may I see,
Nothing desire or seek, but Thee!” &c.

From the time the Lord effectually wrought upon my heart by his saving grace, I could no longer go out walking on a Sunday afternoon with my father (and often my mother was with us) to Chelsea, Newington, Paddington, Kensington Gardens, &c. Sometimes in the summer time we were the whole day out, and took longer walks, such as to Finchley Common, Acton, Ealing, Dulwich, Islington, Hampstead, Highgate, &c. My father much delighted in these walks with me; he used to say it reminded him of his travelling when in France. But my refusing thus to profane the Sabbath, and persisting in it, angered him against me to a very great degree, as well as my absenting myself from the French church, except when Mr. Gilbert preached. I was reproached by many for not attending the

French church as formerly. One said to me, "As you go to the Methodists, take care of your head, for they turn people mad." I used to go to Mr. Romaine's church, Blackfriars. Much scorn and contempt had I to endure from my father, on account of my love to the gospel of Christ, for a long time; but at length, after he saw I was not to be drawn aside or away, he grew much more peaceable towards me. "When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him."

I suppose one reason why I was so long uncomfortable, from the time I was first convinced of sin, was my *legality*, looking at and in myself to find something to recommend me to God, some good or other in myself, instead of looking to Jesus, as the word of God directs poor self-condemned, lost, guilty sinners to do. (Isa. xlv. 22; Heb. xii. 2.) At times, also, during my soul travail, I was under a temptation (with which Satan harasses many of God's people) to think I had sinned against the Holy Ghost; but out of this snare the Lord delivered me.

At Lady-day, 1776, I left Lock Chapel to go to Orange Street Chapel, to sit constantly under the ministry of Mr. Toplady, whose preaching had been much blessed to me, when I heard him at different times at the Lock Chapel, particularly the sermon I heard him preach there June 19th, 1774, upon Ps. lxxxix. 15, 16; which sermon he afterwards published. When he occasionally came to town, he preached at the Lock, but now he came to live in London, the place where his living was not agreeing with his health; therefore, I had an opportunity of hearing him every Lord's day evening at Orange Street; and Wednesday evenings. At other times I went to Blackfriars, St. Dunstan's, Tottenham Court, &c., particularly to hear Mr. Romaine, Lord's day mornings, at Blackfriars. For I could run about then, being not afflicted, as since, with bad health. I had no asthma then.

Of all the ministers I heard, I was particularly attached to Mr. Romaine and Mr. Toplady, and omitted not an opportunity, if possible, of hearing them. I missed not once if I could help it.

The Lord often shined over all my former experience. I was frequently visited with this scripture: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c. Then a thought would spring up: "But cannot I one time or other fall away and perish?" Afterwards these scriptures particularly struck me: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." These were sweet, precious words to me, and also these: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me," &c. Also these words were more than once applied to me: "Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it;" "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee;" "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." These precious promises that I should persevere unto the end were given to me.

About this time I bought Erskine's "Gospel Sonnets." They were much blessed to me. I might have had this book for nothing many years ago, when I knew not the Lord, but I refused. The reason of my refusing it when offered I now plainly see.

Although I have been favoured with strong and frequent manifestations of the Redeemer's love to my soul, yet Satan would so harass and buffet me, at times, as to attempt to persuade me it was delusion, nothing but all delusion and self-deception. This brought me on my knees oftener than I should have gone otherwise, I suppose. I read often and prayed over Matt. xiii., concerning the parable of the sower and the seed, praying earnestly that all delusions whatever might be discovered to me, and kept far from me, seeing that from this parable we may conclude that not more than one-fourth of the hearers of the gospel so hear as to understand it, and bear fruit in their measure according to the grace received. I was greatly afraid and very jealous over myself, for fear of deceiving myself in this important matter of salvation. I bless God for this fear. It proved very salutary to my soul's good. It made me pray to Jesus as God, able to save.

Among many other sweet portions of the good word of God, the following I found very precious and comfortable: Isa. xliii. 45; Isa. xlv. 21-24; Rom. iii. 24-27; Acts xiii. 38, 39; John i. 12, 13; iii. 14-18, 36; vi. 47, 48; Jas. i. 17, 18; 1 John iii. 16; iv. 9, 10-20; Isa. liii. 4-7; 2 Cor. v. 21; 1 Pet. ii. 24; Rom. x. 4; 1 John v. 10-12. O how my soul was ravished with the love of my redeeming God! (John. x. 26-31.) Christ's sheep not only hear his voice, but believe. They are enabled, through divine grace and power, to come to Christ, to look to him, to believe in him, to receive him; which are all synonymous terms and expressions, and all mean one and the same thing. I have been enabled, through grace, to obey Christ's call, by the call of his word, of his ministers as means and instruments of his Spirit's sealing the word home with power. O how exceedingly great and precious are the promises to my soul when I am enabled, through divine power, to apply them; to appropriate them, through divine grace, to myself, and to look and pray to Christ as an able Saviour.

(To be continued.)

JEHOVAH JIREH.

"The Lord will provide."—GEN. xxii. 14.

THE following circumstances will demonstrate this fact.

Many years ago, being engaged to supply at Zoar Chapel, Great Alie Street, London, when I arrived at my lodgings I found a letter waiting for me, requesting me to go down to Chatham to preach the word of life, giving me directions to go by the steamer to Gravesend, and from thence to Rochester by an omnibus; and that when I arrived at the inn where it stopped, I was to inquire for old Mr. Taylor, the barber, in College Yard. From these directions I found the old man's house, it being near at hand. He gave me instructions where I was to make my home during my stay amongst them. From several years' acquaintance with him I found him to be a humble, God-

fearing person, well known to the late William Huntington, who would always have him to shave him when he visited Chatham, and each time gave him half-a-crown. The good old man related to me, at different times, several of the Lord's gracious and providential dealings with him, which greatly interested me, proving that "Jehovah Jireh will provide." The following is an instance: That dear and esteemed man of God, the late William Tiptaft, like myself, was for several years one of the regular supplies at Zoar Chapel. He also received an invitation to preach the gospel at Chatham, to go by the packet and omnibus, and call at Mr. Taylor's, College Yard. When it was made known at Chatham that he was coming, a friend of Mr. Tiptaft's, who had lived in Berkshire, but was then residing at Chatham, wrote to invite him to make his house his home when he came. With this request he complied. He left London by the steamer. As they went down the river, the question arose in his mind, "Shall I first go to my friend, with whom I am to stay, and after dinner go to Mr. Taylor's, or shall I go to the latter first?" The conflict and exercise of his mind for some time was so great that he felt certain something of importance would be the result, and he besought the Lord to decide the matter for him. Before he left the steamer he felt his mind settled to call at Mr. Taylor's before proceeding to his friend's. When he entered the house, he made himself known, and the dear old man, much agitated, said, "I am glad to see you; but sorry you have called at this time. I have been fearing the arrival of the omnibus, as I did not wish you to witness my present distress. These two men you see here are bailiffs, whom my landlord has put into the house for rent. I have lived in the house more than twenty years, and have always been enabled to pay my rent until this year, and what I owe is ten pounds, due six weeks since." Mr. Tiptaft at once saw the reason he was to call at College Yard first, and that the Lord meant him to pay the rent. He inquired if the landlord lived near, and, being informed he lived in the town, he sent one of the bailiffs for him. When he came, Mr. Tiptaft said to him, "You are distressing these old people for rent who have lived in the house more than twenty years, and have paid their rent up until the last year; and as it has only been due six weeks, it appears to me harsh and unfeeling to come upon them so hastily." He replied, "Sir, it may appear so to you; but I have my family to maintain out of my rents, and if my tenants cannot pay me, I must have them out, and get others who can." Mr. Tiptaft requested him to remove the men, promising, on his return to Abingdon, to remit the ten pounds. The landlord replied, "I cannot remove them on the word of a stranger. You may, or you may not send me the money." Mr. Tiptaft then asked him if he knew Mr. —, mentioning his friend from Berkshire. He replied, he did, and considered him highly respectable. He was requested to see him, and state to him the circumstance, and Mr. Tiptaft's promise to remit the money. He did so, and shortly returned, telling Mr. Tiptaft he had seen his friend, who said, "If Mr. Tiptaft fails, you may look to me for the money." "That is enough for me, and I will

dismiss the men.* The dear old couple, like Manoah and his wife, looked on with wonder, that the very man whom he was afraid of seeing should be the honoured instrument of his deliverance, and could joyfully sing with the poet:

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

The first time I went to London after these things had taken place, I received another letter to go to Chatham, and to call at Taylor's in such a street. I was surprised to find he had left the house where he had followed his calling for so long a time, and when I arrived, inquired the reason, and received from him the information above stated. He also told me that before Mr. Tiptaft left Chatham, he had consulted with some of the friends, and they came to the conclusion that Taylor had better leave the house, as, through advanced age, he would be unable to meet the rent, and would be again in the same difficulty; and it would be better to have a smaller place, with less rent; so he removed.

Another year rolled round, when I had to pay my annual visit to the metropolis, and received my usual letter to go to Chatham, requesting me to call at old Taylor's, College Yard. At this I was greatly surprised, wondering how it could be that he was again in the old house. When I got there, I inquired the cause from my poor brother. He replied, “You know all about my having to leave.” I replied, “I do.” “Well,” said he, “the Lord is very good to us. Before we left this place it had got into a very dilapidated state, and you know we could not pay the rent, much more repair it, and the Lord very kindly removed us out of the way to the house you saw us in last year. When we were gone, the landlord gave it a thorough repair, making it as you now see it, which, had it been done while we were in, would have much inconvenienced us with work-people and other things. Several months after it was completed, my late landlord called upon me quite unexpectedly, and inquired if my present house or the house in College Yard was the better for my business. I replied, ‘The house in College Yard by far is the better.’ He then told me that after I left his house he had it put into good repair, and put a notice in the window, ‘This house to be let,’ but never had a person to inquire the rent; so I am come to tell you that if you will go back you shall have it for the same rent as you pay for this; and if you are never able to pay me any rent, I will never send any more bailiffs to trouble you.”

As the dear man related these things to me, his countenance shone, while he blessed and praised the Lord for his great goodness to such poor unworthy creatures.

How true it is,

“The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower.”

Rochdale.

JOHN KERSHAW.

* We need not say that the money was sent from Abingdon; but if we remember right, the dear man had to borrow it, for he never could keep such a sum in his pocket.—ED.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from p. 100.)

IN our last No. we attempted to direct the attention of our readers to the *importance* of the preceptive portion of the word of truth, as being well convinced that if we could but once establish that point firmly in their hearts, it would, with God's help and blessing, much prepare the way for a close and careful consideration of the whole subject, both on their part and our own. A moment's thought will make this sufficiently obvious. If any part of God's truth be viewed as of little importance by writer or reader, by minister or hearer, the almost necessary consequence is that it becomes either wholly neglected, or is loosely and carelessly slurred over by both. Why need we devote time or thought to a matter of little moment? Why carefully and prayerfully examine a subject which will scarcely repay us for the trouble of our attention? We might, from a reverence to the word of God, forbear such thoughts or such expressions, and yet the practical effect might be what we have pointed out. But, on the other hand, if, through the teaching and testimony of the blessed Spirit, any portion of the word of truth is opened with divine light to our understanding, or laid with peculiar weight and power upon our heart, its solemn importance is at once seen and felt; it engages the whole of our attention, and we wonder how we could have been so blind to what is now so clear, or treated with neglect what is now so weighty.

But as snares await us on every hand, a temptation here presents itself, from falling into which we much desire to be kept. As all true wisdom is from above, the free gift of God, who giveth to all who ask him liberally, and upbraideth not; (James i. 5; iii. 17;) and as the very reason why the Lord grants to any "a knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" is that they "might walk worthy of him unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God," (Col. i. 10, 11,) we must watch against being betrayed into a censorious spirit, lest, in our zeal for the precept, we ourselves be the very first to break it. Thus, whilst we may accept with thankfulness any communication of light, any opening of the word of truth for our comfort or edification, we must carefully guard against making a rod for others out of any grace to ourselves. That were not to use, but to abuse the goodness* of God, and to turn the grand precept of the gospel, the new commandment of the Lord, that we love one another as he has loved us, (John xv. 12,) into a matter of strife and division. It is, in fact, the working of this censorious spirit in the minds of most who have attempted to handle the precept, which

* John Newton has a striking idea on this point. He asks what we should think of blind Bartimeus, if, as soon as he had obtained sight, he should take his stick and beat the other blind men because they could not see.

has made the whole subject distasteful to many of the real children of God, they not being able clearly to distinguish between the precept itself, and the carnal, legal way in which it has been thrust upon them. But if preserved from this snare, if in the spirit and love of the gospel we can point out to our believing brethren from the word of truth the importance of the preceptive part of the New Testament, and the Lord shall be pleased to commend it to their conscience, we shall hope thereby to approve ourselves to them, as not seeking to have dominion over their faith, but as helpers of their joy. (2 Cor. i. 24.)

Our readers will remember that in our last No. we pointed out to their notice two considerations, which seemed to us much to establish the importance of the precept. One of these was drawn from the large amount which it occupies in the Epistles of the New Testament, or, to use our own words, its *bulk and quantity*. The second consideration derived its weight from the fact that, in the absence of the precept, we should have *no authoritative rule of life*.

3. Closely connected with the last point is another consideration, to us of no less weight in establishing the importance of the precept, to which we shall now call the observation of our readers. It is this; that, as without a special revelation of the precept in the word of truth we should not know what was the will of God as regards all spiritual and practical obedience, so, without it as our guide and rule, we *should not be able to live to his glory*. As this consideration must be, to all who fear God, a matter of deep importance, we shall endeavour to unfold it somewhat fully, and especially to point out its connection with the preceptive part of the word of truth.

As the glory of God is the grand end and object of all the manifestations of himself in creation, in providence, and in grace, so should it be the end and object of all our knowledge of him, of all our faith in him, of all our obedience to him. Such was the end and aim of our blessed Lord, the object for which he came, for which he lived, for which he died, for which he rose again, and for which he now lives at the right hand of the Father. He therefore could say, in his intercessory prayer before he offered himself up: "I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." (John xvii. 4.) And having thus glorified his heavenly Father on earth by doing his will, (Heb. x. 7,) not seeking his own glory, but the glory of him that sent him, (John vii. 18; viii. 50,) he is himself now glorified in heaven, for he is "entered into his glory," (Luke xxiv. 26,) being glorified with the glory which he had with the Father before the world was. If, then, he has left us an example that we should follow his steps; (1 Pet. ii. 21;) if we are to glorify him here that we may be glorified with him hereafter, it must be by our faith and obedience. How plain is this from the word. But let us trace out its successive steps.

First, then, we "glorify God for his mercy;" (Rom. xv. 9;) that is, when we receive salvation as flowing to our guilty souls from

his pure mercy, we praise and bless his holy name, as sinners saved by grace. We therefore read: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." (Ps. l. 23.) This is the first step, as salvation by grace is the grand foundation of our living to his praise. But as this mercy and grace are only manifested in his dear Son, it may be said that the first step which we take in glorifying God is when we believe in Jesus. By raising him from the dead, and setting him at his own right hand, God has glorified him; (Acts iii. 13;) for he has highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. (Phil. ii. 9, 10; Eph. i. 20, 21; 1 Peter i. 21.) When, then, we believe in Jesus by that faith which is of the operation of God, (Col. ii. 12,) we glorify the Father. We read of Abraham: "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God." (Rom. iv. 20.) As, then, we walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, (Rom. iv. 12,) we in our measure glorify God as he did. But this work of faith is internal,—seen of God, but not seen of men; and, therefore, though glorifying God, yet not giving him that glory outwardly before the world which he deserves and demands. Here, then, comes in the next step, which is Christian obedience, or that living to his honour and praise whereby God is glorified in the world. The world cannot see our faith, but it can see what that faith does. It cannot understand the union between Christ and his people, but it can understand good fruit when it grows on the vine. The Lord, therefore, said to his disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matt. v. 16.) And again more particularly, in his parting discourse: "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John xv. 8.) Thus also speaks the apostle: "Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." (Phil i. 11.)

But now comes the connection between the precept, and living to the praise and glory of God; and as this point is not often explained, or at least not often insisted upon, we shall endeavour to set it in its true and scriptural light. Be it, then, observed, and ever borne in mind that, as the glory of God is the end of all our obedience, it must be an obedience according to his own prescribed rule and pattern. In this point lies all the distinction between the obedience of a Christian to the glory of God and the self-imposed obedience of a Pharisee to the glory of self. Take a survey of the wide field of what are called religious duties, religious observances, decided piety, active exertions, and the whole movements of the religious world. What are they as weighed in the balances of the sanctuary? What is there of God or of his word in them? When God gave directions to Moses about the tabernacle and all its vessels, he said unto him: "And look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount." (Exod. xxv. 40.) According to this pattern were all the vessels made, and as such, and as such only, were they accepted and approved. "According to all that the Lord commanded Moses, so the children of Israel made all

the work. And Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; and Moses blessed them." (Exod. xxxix. 42, 43.) So in a spiritual sense it is now. The pattern for our guidance in doing the will of God and living to the glory of God is laid down for us, not only in the example of Christ, but in the *rule of the precepts*.

Thus we see that if there were no precept as our guiding rule, we could not live to the glory of God, or yield to him an acceptable obedience; and for this simple reason, that we should not know how to do so. We might wish to do so; we might attempt to do so; but we should and must fail, as Moses must have failed in building the tabernacle, for want of a guiding pattern. As, then, without a revelation of the doctrine of salvation we should not know how a sinner could be saved, and thus could not glorify God by our faith; so without a revelation of the precept we should not know how to serve God, and thus could not glorify him by our obedience. Look at this point, believing child of God. You long to glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are his. (1 Cor. vi. 20.) You desire, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever you do, to do all to the glory of God. (1 Cor. x. 31.) There are times and seasons with you when you sigh and mourn over your barren, unprofitable heart and life, and earnestly long to think, and speak, and act to his honour and glory who has done so much for you in providence and grace. At least, if you have no such desires you are no Christian, and are at the best but a poor, worldly, dead professor. When, then, and how far do you live to God's glory? Only then, and only so far as your life, and walk, and conduct harmonise with, and are guided by the precepts of the word. For see the connection. We can only glorify God outwardly by doing his will; we can only know that will, as regards our practical obedience to it, by the express revelation which he has given of it. Where is that revelation? In his word, and chiefly in the preceptive part of it. It is this which makes it "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." (Ps. cxix. 105.) David therefore cried: "Order my steps in thy word;" "Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;" "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes;" as feeling that it was only by walking *in* the word and *by* the word that he could please God and live to his praise. We find thousands in this land who, as they think, are doing God service by plans and schemes of their own devising, priding themselves on their good works. But we may say of all these their duties and doings what Augustine said of the ancient Roman virtues, that they are but "*splendida peccata*," (splendid sins;) or, to use the language of the 23rd Article of the Church of England, entitled, "Works before Justification," "for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

4. We are unwilling to weary our readers by dwelling too long on one point, and yet we cannot forbear adding another reason to show the *importance* of the precept. On its fulfilment turns the *main test of distinction between the believer and the unbeliever*, be-

tween the manifested vessel of mercy and the vessel of wrath fitted to destruction. To show this point a little more clearly, let us examine the test which our Lord in various places has given us between those who are really and truly his by vital union and regenerating grace, and those who have a name to live and are dead. First look at the parable of the sower. Out of four kinds of hearers of the word, one only is saved and sanctified thereby. Now, what is the test given of this saved hearer? Is it not that he brings forth fruit? "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty." (Matt. xiii. 23.) Can any one deny, in the face of these words, that the grand distinguishing test of the good-ground hearer is, that he bears fruit, and that none of the others bear it? But now comes the question, What is fruit? Is it not inward and outward—the inward fruits of the Spirit in the heart, and the outward fruits of godliness in the life? But what rule guides and regulates these fruits, so as to distinguish them from the "splendid sins" of which we have been speaking? Evidently the precept, for by that, and in harmony with that, the Spirit works. Is there, then, heart fruit, such as "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance?" (Gal. v. 22, 23.) It is wrought by the blessed Spirit, according to the precepts: "Walk in love, as Christ hath also loved us;" (Eph. v. 2;) "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice;" (Phil. iv. 4;) "Live in peace;" (2 Cor. xiii. 11;) "Be at peace among yourselves;" (1 Thess. v. 13;) "With long-suffering, forbearing one another in love," (Eph. iv. 2,) &c. Is there not here a blessed harmony between the inward work of the Spirit and the outward word of the precept? Again, is there outward fruit? It is needless to show that this too is in harmony with the precept; for all will acknowledge the practical character of the precepts of the New Testament.

But now take another test of a similar character from the Lord's own lips, as brought before us in the parable of the Vine and the branches. What distinguishes the branches in Christ by living union from the branches in him by nominal profession? Fruit. "I am the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." (John xv. 1, 2.) The sentence against "every branch that beareth not fruit" is that the Father "taketh it away"—casts it forth as a barren branch. And how deals he with the branch that beareth fruit? "He purgeth," or cleanseth, "it." Why? "That it may bring forth more fruit." Who, with these words of the Lord before his eyes, can deny that fruit is the distinguishing test of life, of grace, of salvation? But this fruit must and will be in harmony with the precept; for in the bosom of that is lodged all inward and outward godliness, all spiritual and practical obedience.

Take one more test from the Lord's own lips. Read the solemn conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount—that grand code of Chris-

tian precept: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it." (Matt. vii. 24-27.) What is the Lord's own test of distinction between the wise man who builds on the rock, and the foolish man who builds on the sand? The rock, of course, is Christ, as the sand is self. But the test, the mark, the evidence, the proof of the two builders and the two buildings is the hearing of Christ's sayings and doing them, or the hearing of Christ's sayings and doing them not. We may twist and wriggle under such a text, and try all manner of explanations to parry off its keen, cutting edge; we may fly to arguments and deductions drawn from the doctrines of grace to shelter ourselves from its heavy stroke, and seek to prove that the Lord was there preaching the law and not the gospel, and that as we are saved by Christ's blood and righteousness, and not by our own obedience or our good works, either before or after calling, all such tests and all such texts are inapplicable to our state as believers. But after all our questionings and cavillings, our nice and subtle arguments to quiet conscience and patch up a false peace, there the words of the Lord stand, and, what is more, will stand for ever, backed as they are by that solemn declaration from the same lips of eternal truth: "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii. 19-21.)

To draw, then, our argument into a short compass; if gospel fruit be the test of gospel grace; if, as God's workmanship, we are as much "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," as we are made new creatures in Christ by spiritual regeneration, and are foreordained unto eternal life; (Eph. ii. 10;) if we are as much elected unto obedience as unto the blood of sprinkling; (1 Pet. i. 2;) and if these good works and this obedience are all in the closest harmony with, and regulated by the precept, nothing can be more obvious than its great importance. And if it be thus important, it certainly has the strongest claim upon our attention and obedience.

II. But we now pass on to consider, as we proposed, in the second place, the *nature* of the precept.

This is the most important part of our whole subject, and will therefore require the most careful handling on our side, and corresponding attention, and we may add, kind consideration, on the side of our spiritual readers. We would, therefore, say to them in all

friendliness, Deal fairly by us; judge of our views as a whole. Do not cavil at little points, or quarrel with isolated expressions; but compare our views and statements with the Scripture and the experience of the saints, and receive or reject them as they are or are not in harmony with both these tests of truth. If they do not agree with them both, they cannot stand; nor would we wish them to stand, as our only object is truth,—truth in its purity, truth in its power.

We lay this down, then, as a broad foundation principle, that the precept, being an integral part of the gospel, must thoroughly harmonise with it. If it clash, or rather, if our views of it clash with salvation by grace, personal election and predestination unto eternal life, particular redemption by the blood and righteousness of the Son of God, and the final perseverance of the saints, there must be something wrong somewhere. Again, if the precept, or our views of the precept, clash with the work of grace on the heart, the teachings and witness of the Holy Ghost, and the inward kingdom of God, as set up by a divine power in the soul, there must be something wrong somewhere. We hope, indeed, clearly and fully to show that there is the sweetest harmony between the doctrines of the gospel, the experience of the gospel, and the precepts of the gospel; but for the present we wish to lay it down as a broad, fundamental principle that only those views of the precept can be right which make it thoroughly harmonise with the gospel of the grace of God in all its fulness, in all its freeness, in all whereby it brings glory to God, in all whereby it brings salvation to man.

In considering the *nature* of the precept, we shall examine,

i. First, the *letter* of the precept.

ii. Secondly, the *spirit* of the precept.

i. Our readers will easily understand the distinction thus drawn between the *letter* and the *spirit*, if they will view the former as the *body* and the latter as the *soul* of the precept; for it is with the precept as with ourselves; the body cannot act without the soul, nor the soul usually without the body. Without the soul the body is dead. So the letter of the precept is dead without the spirit of the precept, and the spirit of the precept usually acts by the letter of the precept. We say “usually,” because there was the spirit of the precept acting, beautifully acting, as in the case of those who “were of one heart and one soul” (Acts iv. 32) before any part of the New Testament was written, and, consequently, before the precept was given in its present form; and even now the Holy Spirit may move unto love and good works, and often does so without any special use of the letter of the precept. But his movements will always be in harmony with the letter of the precept, even where he does not particularly employ it for that purpose.

We shall first, then, examine the *letter* of the precept, and in so doing shall consider it under five distinct heads:

1. The *persons* to whom the precept is addressed.
2. The *connection* of the precept with the *doctrines of the gospel*.
3. The *things* which the precept specially inculcates.
4. The *motives* by which the precept is enforced.

5. The *form* under which the precept is revealed.

The Lord the Spirit enable us rightly to divide the word of truth.

1. The *persons* to whom the precept is addressed.

These are believers, and believers only. The world has nothing to do with the precepts of the gospel. They are not addressed to it or meant for it. This will be evident from a moment's consideration. Where do we chiefly find the precepts of the New Testament? In the Epistles. What are the Epistles? Inspired letters written to Christian churches or Christian individuals. Take any of the Epistles, examine how they begin and to whom they are written. Is it not to "the beloved of God, called to be saints?" (Rom. i. 7,) or "to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus?" (1 Cor. i. 2,) or "to the saints and to the faithful in Christ Jesus?" (Eph. i. 1,) &c. &c. It is not worth while to prove a point so plain,—a point which any one can ascertain for himself by merely looking at the beginning of each Epistle.

But what an important consequence flows from this simple fact, viz., that spiritual precepts are only for spiritual men; and, therefore, that to take the precepts and force them upon carnal men is to abuse them. You write a letter to your wife in all the confidence of mutual love, and you tell her you wish her to do this and that,—that you are coming home on a certain day, and want her to get this and that thing ready. Is that letter for all the women of the parish to read? And do you send directions in it to all the busy-bodies of the town, who might think themselves quite as well qualified as she is to do for you what you want done? Do you even write to your servant as you write to your wife? You ask the one; you bid the other. The one works for love; the other works for wages. And yet for want of seeing this simple fact, which stares us in the face every time we open the New Testament, the precepts and directions addressed by Christ to his bride and spouse have been laid hold of by any and all of the professing women who would fain say to him, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel; only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." (Isa. iv. 1.)

We all know that the only right key to a letter, especially if it be a long one, and dealing with many minute circumstances, is a knowledge of the person who wrote it, and of the person to whom it was written. When we receive a letter from a wife, a relation, a friend, however long or minute it may be, we understand every word of it. But if a letter be given us to read, written by a stranger to a stranger, especially if it embrace many minute circumstances, all is dark, mysterious, enigmatical. So the only true key to the Epistles of the New Testament is a knowledge of him who wrote it, and of him to whom it was written. He who wrote it is the blessed Lord, the Head and Husband of the church; for, though indited by the pen of the Holy Ghost, it is really Jesus who sent it, and who now speaks to his people in and by it. He to whom it is written is the believer in Jesus, espoused to him by covenant ties and spiritual betrothal. What, then, has the profane worldling, the proud Pharisee, the loose, licentious Antinomian, to do with the letters—the pure, chaste, holy

love-letters of Jesus to his bride? No more than a stranger has to do with your letters to your wife, or to her whom you hope one day to make your wife. Put this key into the Epistles, the preceptive part of them as well as the doctrinal, (for they are both one, both of them parts of the same love-letter, and therefore each breathe the same sweet spirit of love,) and you will easily open the lock; though we must add that so many a bungler, not to say so many a burglar, has thrust wrong keys into it, or tried to pick it, that if the wards had not been made by him "who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working," they must have been hampered long ago.

2. Our second point in examining the *letter* of the precept is its *connection with the doctrines of the gospel*. This, above all others, is the point in which the peculiar character of the precept lies, and from which it derives its chief force and efficacy. A few examples, however, of this connection, will make this point more clear than a long explanation. "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. v. 1, 2.) We find here a precept bidding us to be "followers of God," that is, followers of the example of God, the exhortation being closely connected with the preceding verse, (Eph. iv. 32,) from which, indeed, it should not have been separated; and to "walk in love" with the dear family of God. Now, see the connection of this precept with the doctrines of the gospel. There is no doctrine of the gospel more blessed than the forgiveness of sins, and no sweeter experience than a personal knowledge of it. Indeed, we may call it the grand doctrine of the gospel. But sin is forgiven only through the blood-shedding and sacrifice of Christ. See, then, the foundation of the precept, that we should walk in love with the people of God, and its connection with gospel doctrine. Observe the following points of connection: 1. That we are addressed as "dear children," that is, dear to God. This connects the precept with our election and eternal predestination unto the adoption of children. (Eph. i. 5.) 2. Mark "the love of Christ in giving himself for us." This connects the precept with the love of Christ in dying for our sins. 3. Observe next, "the sweet-smelling savour" unto God when Christ offered himself as a sacrifice. This connects the precept with the fragrance of Christ's offering and sacrifice on the cross, and the Father's acceptance of it with infinite approbation and complacency. 4. Observe, lastly, the complete forgiveness of all our sins by God, for Christ's sake, and through this sweet-smelling sacrifice. What a cluster of gospel doctrines—election, adoption, redemption, forgiveness; and all of them animated with life and spirit, and brought down into the heart by a personal experience of their blessedness. Now, then, what follows? If God has so chosen us, if Christ has so loved us, if he has so bled and died for us, if the Father has so freely forgiven us for Christ's sake, let us walk in love with those who are alike chosen, alike loved, alike redeemed, alike forgiven. Is there anything legal here? Is it not all pure gospel, in the fullest harmony with every gracious doctrine, and

In the fullest harmony, too, with a sweet inward experience of the love of God, of the Spirit of adoption, of the blood of Christ, of the forgiveness of sin? The fact is this, that instead of the precept being, as many think, low and legal, it is just the contrary. It is too high; has too much of the pure gospel in it to suit and please most even of those who truly fear God. It assumes what many do not enjoy—such as the liberty of the gospel, a blessed assurance of interest in the blood of Christ, a sense of the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins. The precept, in fact, would suit our legal, working spirit better if there were not so much gospel in it; if it would but tell us how many chapters we ought to read a day; how often and how long to pray; how much we should give away out of our income; how many times we should forgive our brother, and whether seven would not be enough? How it would suit our pharisaical spirit to have a few such nice legal tasks set us, that we might please ourselves with performing them, and enjoy the greater pleasure still of well flogging our brother, who was not quite so exact as we in bringing up the full weight and measure of his religious duties. But the precept will have none of all this. It stands upon high and heavenly ground, and yet comes down to us in our lowest estate. Thus it stands upon the ground of free grace to the vilest of sinners, for such were the Ephesians, (Eph. ii. 1-3,) and yet chosen in Christ; blessed in him with all spiritual blessings; (i. 3-4;) sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise; (i. 13;) raised up together and sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; (ii. 6;) made nigh by the blood of Christ; (ii. 13;) and builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. (ii. 22.) The precept knows nothing of tasks or conditions, nothing of legal duties and doings; but addresses itself in the purest and highest gospel language to the sons of God, as led by the Spirit of God. It says to them, as if with a voice from heaven: "Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, as being thus loved, thus blessed, thus saved, thus sealed, thus forgiven, walk in love with the dear children of God, forgiving them all their unkindness, hard speeches, cold looks, cutting remarks, or even more personal and painful injuries." Is this a hard precept? Yes, very hard when we have no experience of gospel blessings. No wonder, then, that you are shy of this precept when you are nursing a revengeful, unforgiving spirit against a brother. But what does this unforgiving spirit of yours show? That you yourself know nothing experimentally of the love of God in forgiving you your sins; or at least are not now walking in the experience and enjoyment of it. But is it so hard a precept? You get the pardoning love of God into your soul, and you will find it as easy as it is sweet to perform it. Nay, you cannot but perform it; for if you walk in love with God, you will walk in love with your brother also.

This one example might suffice as a general key to all the other precepts, for they are all, so to speak, constructed after the same pattern; they all breathe the same pure gospel. But we will now take an example or two of what we may call relative duties, or, to

speak more correctly, social relationships, and see how gospel precepts are in their case also similarly based upon, similarly connected with, gospel doctrines.

Christian husbands are bidden (Eph. v. 25-32) to love their wives. The whole of the exhortation is somewhat too long to quote fully, but we will give one verse: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. v. 25.)

Now look at the foundation of this exhortation. Why should a Christian husband, according to this precept, love his wife? Because it is his duty, or because conducive to his happiness, or because it is what she has a right to as his partner in life? None of these grounds are named, or even alluded to. But this is the foundation of the precept. Christ loved the church as his mystical body, and gave himself for it; therefore as the believing husband holds to the believing wife as her natural head the same relative position which Christ holds to the church as her spiritual head, he is bound to love her for Christ's sake and after Christ's example. Christ and his church are one; she is his own flesh which he nourisheth and cherisheth. So a man and his wife are one flesh. When, then, he loves her he loves himself; and to nourish and cherish her is to nourish and cherish his own body, as Christ does the church. Is not this noble gospel ground,—full of the sublimest and deepest truth? Is it not a spiritual, heavenly, and holy view of Christian marriage, and does it not baptize that social tie as with the very spirit and love of Christ? What a sanctity it throws round the marriage of Christians; how it elevates it above all worldliness and carnality, and brings down upon conjugal love the pure breath of heaven, more than reinstating to what it was in Paradise in the days of man's primeval innocence.

Now take, as a counterpart, the precept to Christian wives: "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." (Eph. v. 22-24.) This precept, perhaps, may be less palatable to those to whom it is addressed, for no wife minds how much her husband gives her of his love, but she has not always the same pleasure in giving him her obedience. But let her like it or not, the submission and subjection of a wife to her husband are here inculcated as one of the precepts of the gospel. But on what high, holy, and spiritual ground it is placed. How the precept is based upon and connected with the glorious gospel doctrine of the headship of Christ and the church's subjection and submission to him as such. When, then, a Christian wife seeks not her own will but her husband's, when she submits to his desires and wishes, (and of course the apostle assumes that as a Christian man these would be in harmony with the gospel,) her very submission is her glory as well as her happiness. Is it not so in our submission to Christ? Is it not our glory and happiness to know no will but his, and to yield to him the obedience of love? Thus ye Christian

wives, when you submit yourselves to your husbands in love and affection, you do so after the example of the church. There is no loss of dignity or position in this, no giving up of your rights. When you can respect and love your husband as a Christian man as well as a Christian partner, and you can walk together not only in conjugal but spiritual love, as he will require nothing from you which you may not safely and scripturally yield to him, so will it be your pleasure as well as your privilege to walk with him as his equal in Christ, but now subordinate in present position.

Here, however, we must for the present pause, not from exhaustion of our subject, but for fear of exhausting the patience of our readers.

ANSWERS TO INQUIRIES.

"A Constant Reader."—The word rendered "beasts" (Rev. iv. 6, 7, 8,) should have been translated "living creatures;" for it is quite a distinct term from that which is translated "beast" (Rev. xvii. 3, 16, 17; xix. 20.) In fact, they are two distinct symbols, and are both equally taken from the Old Testament. The "living creatures" (Rev. iv.) correspond to the "living creatures" spoken of in Ezekiel i. 5, and represent the ministers of the gospel. In fact, the Hebrew word, which is there translated "living creatures," is rendered in the Septuagint, that is, the ancient Greek translation, which was in general use for many years before Christ, by exactly the same word which John makes use of, Rev. iv. 6. On the other hand, "the beasts," properly so called, which John saw in vision, (Rev. xiii. 1 and 11,) harmonise with "the beasts" seen by Daniel, (vii.), and represent anti-Christian powers. The one are "living creatures," or animated beings, moved by the Spirit, (Ezek. i. 20,) and full of love and adoration; (Rev. iv. 8;) the others are wild, ferocious beasts, influenced by Satan, and whose end is destruction. (Rev. xix. 20.) It seems a pity, therefore, that these two distinct prophetic symbols, the one representing the church, the other the world, the one prefiguring Christ's friends, the other his enemies, should not have been kept separate by our translators, by using two distinct words, as they are in the original Greek; for, though the context sufficiently distinguishes their nature, employment, and end, yet an additional clearness would have been thus secured.

"E. B., Junction Grove, Illinois."—The term, "bought them," (2 Pet. ii. 1,) has no reference to redemption; for the word, "Lord," there is not the same as is almost always used of the Lord Jesus Christ, but signifies "despot," or "master." In a sense, Christ has bought all men, though he has not redeemed all men. And for this reason: "As power is given him over all flesh;" (John xvii. 2;) as "God has given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and things under the earth;" (Phil. ii. 9, 10;) and as all this power is given unto him as the fruit and consequence of his incarnation and death, he may be said to have bought all men, as their Master, though he has redeemed only

the elect as their Lord. It is for this reason that he exercises judgment upon the world; as he himself declared: "And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." (John v. 27.) We see the same truth shadowed forth in Psalm viii., as explained by the apostle, Hebrews ii.: "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet?" And why? Because "he was made a little lower than the angels." The same truth is intimated in Psalm ii. 8, 9, and cx. 1, 2, and indeed shines all through the Scripture. In this sense all men and things belong to Christ as raised from the dead, and seated at God's right hand. Thus, when "kings and judges" of the earth, or any others, rebel against the supreme authority of Christ, they may be said, like those in Peter, "to deny," that is, deny the authority of "the Lord that bought them;" for they are his rightful servants; and those who will not serve him will "bring upon themselves swift destruction."

We have no opinion of any fresh translation of the Scriptures; for though, no doubt, there are little blots in our present version, which might be removed, as in the instance pointed out above, yet, if once men were allowed to translate the Scriptures according to their views of doctrine, where would be the security for the truth of God as we have it now?

The word rendered "many," in the expression, "ransom for many," (Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45,) is not in the original, "the many," but is exactly as it is translated in our version, "many." In fact, the expression, "the many," in Greek has a peculiar signification, and always means "the majority;" so that if that had been the word employed, our translators must have rendered it not "the many," but, "the most."

"I have set my affection to the house of my God, for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord God."—1 CHRON. xxix. 1-3.

O ZION, palace of my God,
Prepared for his divine abode;
Of precious stones thy walls are built,
(Poor sinners freed from sin and guilt.)

On thee thy King's affection's set;
In thee are his perfections met;
His grace and glory all combine
To make thee all things else outshine.

What glorious things of thee are told;
Thy stones are all in heaven enroll'd;
Not one will ever missing be
When number'd in eternity.

Purged by blood, refined with fire,
Thou art thy God's supreme desire.
"Here will I ever dwell," saith he,
"For thou hast been prepared for me."

Ere long, the last redeemed one
Free grace will make a living stone;
The palace will completed be,
And stand to all eternity.

SUPPLEMENT.

Obituaries and Recent Deaths.

The Publisher solicits information respecting the death of gracious persons. Room must be left between the lines for grammatical corrections. Where no other information can be given, the name and date of death will be sufficient. All accounts must be authenticated by the writer sending his name and address. We do not undertake to insert all accounts sent to us, neither do we wish it to be thought we fully approve of all we do insert; but some which may appear to us to be somewhat deficient, may to others appear to be edifying.

“Friend after friend departs!
 Who has not lost a friend?
 There is no union here of hearts,
 But here must have an end.”

HENRY KILSHAW.—At Haslingden, Sept. 24th, 1864, aged 69, Henry Kilshaw, a member of the church at Bury.

Having lived some time in Belgium, he came to reside in Bury in the latter part of 1846, and at that time was what is commonly called a man of the world. Being manager of a large cotton mill, he had his companions who used to meet at the public-house to take their glasses and talk over the news of the day. In the beginning of the following year, 1847, the Lord took him in hand, and made him one of those persons of whom Paul speaks: “And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins;” for he made him to feel that he was in the broad way to destruction. A guilty conscience in the day, and the public-house at night, could not stand long together; so he began to make vows in the day-time only to be broken at night, (for a time,) that he would go no more to those places. But here it was that he began to learn his own weakness, for I have heard him say that the more determined he felt in the day-time that he would go no more to those places, the more certain he was to go that very night; and this continued for some time, when he began to think that God had given him over to a reprobate mind, and that hell would certainly be his portion. Here we see what the strength of free will can do. Let the strictest free-willer upon earth be brought into a state like this, with the wrath of God against sin burning in his conscience, it will make his beauty to consume away like the moth.

But to proceed. In the spring of this year, a sister-in-law, a God-fearing woman, came to pay him a visit for a few days, when, in the course of conversation, Henry asked her if Mr. Gadsby were still living in Manchester, as he had heard him preach two or three times between thirty and forty years ago, at old John Shaw’s place, near Garstang, and he had often thought lately he should like to hear him again, as from what he could recollect there seemed to be a vastly wide difference between what he used to preach, and anything that he could hear in Bury. (He attended one of the Independent

chapels at this time.) She replied that Mr. Gadsby had been dead more than three years, but the truths which he preached were not dead, but were preached every Lord's day in Bury by a man named Collinge, not, perhaps, with the same ability, but still the truths were the same; and if she stopped Sunday over she would go and hear him; when he said he would go with her. This he did, and as he continued to attend we soon formed an acquaintance which continued until the time of his death. We began to go and sit with him in an evening, and, finding him in such deep soul-trouble, tried to comfort him by telling him this was the way which the Lord led all his people, in a greater or less degree, to know themselves and him, and to flee for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them; but we seemed to be like Job's comforters. All that he could believe at this time was that he was a sinner, a lost sinner.

Having now got rid of his old companions, he used to get his wife off to bed, and sit for hours mourning over his sad state, and begging of the Lord to have mercy on his poor soul. This went on for some time, until one night, I think it was in bed, having, as he said, given all up for lost, those words flowed into his soul with such power as made him wonder whatever was coming: "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee." All his burden fled, and such life, light, and joy flowed into his soul that he said he never could describe. He saw that Christ was the speaker, and felt his power and ability to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him. The sweetness of this blessed deliverance lasted for some time.

In the latter end of 1848 he left his situation, and took another of the same sort about four miles from Bury, but attended the chapel regularly, was baptized on the 5th of Jan., 1850, and continued an honourable member until his death.

In 1858 he went into partnership with several others, and took a mill at Haslingden. Of this he had the management, but was compelled to relinquish it in 1863 on account of his health failing.

He was a man of very few words, and had often to complain of much darkness of soul. Often, very often, has he said to me, "Do you think it is possible for any one that has the life of God in his soul to be in this dark, dead, hard, and lifeless state? O what is religion without power?" No one ever contended more for power than he did. For some years he read little else but his Bible, the "Gospel Standard," and Mr. P.'s sermons, which were a great support to him. He prized them very highly; and I may here say that, from the first of my acquaintance with him, his house and table were always open to all lovers of the truth as it is in Jesus, as many can testify.

His last illness set in in March, 1863, from which he never finally recovered. The last time I saw him was about six weeks before his death. He was then very weak, but quite resigned, and spoke of the many sweet seasons he had enjoyed in our chapel and amongst the friends. His widow, a gracious woman, says: "He requested me, about five weeks previously to his death, to read the second

chapter of Luke. He was very much affected. He told me he saw as he never did before such glory in Christ as God and man.

"During his first week in bed I sometimes asked him how he was in his mind. His answers generally were, 'Satan is not allowed to harass me.' After this, on entering the room one morning, he called me to his bedside, and told me how happy he was and had been all night, and burst into tears. He was then too weak to talk much. I asked him if he could say he was one of God's children. He answered, 'Yes.' I said, 'Then you feel that underneath are his everlasting arms?' He answered most emphatically, 'Yes; O yes!' I asked if he could give his children and myself up. 'O yes,' he said; 'you are in the Lord's hands.'

"A few days previously to his death, and when, to all human appearance, too weak to move himself, I was astonished to see him half rise up in bed, put out his hands, (he seemed quite unconscious of my presence,) and begin to pray aloud that the Lord would take him, and that he would be a Husband to his widow, and a Father to his children; and much more that I could not make out.

"A few hours before he became unconscious, a smile passed over his countenance, and he uttered distinctly, 'Glory! glory! glory!' three times. After this, he seemed to fall asleep, and died without the slightest struggle, and entered into the joy of his Lord. 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.'"

The following is an extract from a letter which he wrote to a friend in Jan., 1864: "Now, respecting soul matters, you truly say we are both going down the hill of life; and, if I must speak for myself, I may say rapidly; but this we know, our times are in the hands of Him who doeth all things well, and according to his purpose. It now becomes a matter of serious examination to know if we have an inheritance eternal in the heavens; and to test if we have the word of God as a standard, along with our own experience of the work of the Spirit with our souls; and if our conduct, words, and actions will not stand this examination, I fear we have no right to hope for that inheritance eternal in the heavens. It is only by the gracious manifestation of the Lord to our souls that we have any knowledge of the Lord, which is life eternal. You may ask, what hope have I? At times very little, if any; but God's faithfulness is such, if we have a knowledge of it, we can hope against hope, believing in hope of its fulfilment, if we have once tasted that the Lord is gracious. I have often to say to myself, 'O that it was with me now as it was in days gone by, when I had such sweet visits, which I then trusted were from the Lord, when the love of a dear Redeemer flowed into my soul beyond description. I felt the blood of sprinkling on my conscience, which removed the burden of sin; but now, alas! there is a great change. The evil depravity of my wicked heart I feel to such an extent that I once could not have thought of, and my daily prayer is that the Lord would deliver me from the evils thereof, and make me meet for his eternal kingdom and glory.—H. K."

Bury.

J. KAY.

Some account of Mr. John Shaw, mentioned above, will be found in the "Gospel Standard" for March, 1840. He was better known in the North by the familiar name of Johnnie Shaw. The late Mr. Gadsby and Mr. M'Kenzie both esteemed him highly for his work's sake. As stated in the Obituary, he was a plain country farmer, altogether unlettered, but well taught by the Spirit.

In the beginning of his religious life he was a strenuous advocate for Arminianism, though at the same time his experience bore direct testimony against it, he having been deeply ploughed up in his conscience by the force and spirituality of God's most holy law. He was promised considerable property if he would become a Churchman; but, to use his own expression, "The Lord drove me away in spite of my teeth." After this he joined the Independents, till he was forced out of their assembly. Still he held the invitations of the gospel as indiscriminate until Mr. Gadsby's work, "Gawthorn brought to the Test," fell into his hands, and that work opened up his understanding, and he soon afterwards became a decided advocate for the truth.

For some time he preached in his own house at Nateby, near Garstang, Lancashire, until the place became too strait for the people, and all were anxious to have a chapel. But how was one to be built? All the land around, except one field, belonged to "the squire," Mr. S.'s landlord, and of course he would not part with any for a chapel. It occurred, however, in the providence of God, that the said field was to be sold, in consequence of the death of the owner. John asked the steward if the squire meant to buy it, and was answered in the negative, or at least the steward said he had not heard anything about it. The day of sale came, and John saw no one bidding but a stranger; so John bid, and bid, and bid again, until at last the hammer fell. The field was John's. The next day the steward called upon him, and asked him how he dared to bid against the squire. "Why," said John, "I did not know that the squire wanted it. I asked you, and you said you had heard nothing about it, and there was nobody bidding but that stranger and me." "Well," said the steward, "he was bidding for the squire, and you must give the field up to him." "Nay," replied John, "I dare not do that. God has given it to me for a chapel, and I dare not part with it." The steward was very angry, and threatened to turn him out of his farm, but John was firm as a rock. At last it was arranged between John and the squire that the land should be given up, and that the squire should give John a piece of land for a chapel nearer to the farm, and give also £100 towards the building of the chapel. Everything being thus arranged and legally settled, the people "helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage. So the carpenter encouraged the founder, (Isa. xli. 7, *margin*,) and he that smoothed with the hammer him that smote the anvil," &c. That is to say, all the people worked freely and voluntarily, without fee or reward. The carpenters attended to the woodwork, the masons to the stone, the brick-setters to the bricks, the plumbers and glaziers to the windows, &c. &c. The £100 given by the squire paid for the materials, or thereabouts, and so the little chapel was opened without having a debt upon it.

The following letter is from a friend who knew John well:

My dear Friend,—In answer to your request respecting the late John Shaw, I wish not only to bear testimony to what is contained in his Obituary, which appeared in the "Gospel Standard" for March, 1840, but also to make a few additional remarks.

His ministry, though plain, was, at times, solemn, pointed, and searching, and at others, shrewd and confounding. Indeed, he realised much of the fulfilment of that promise of his Lord and Master: "It shall be given you in that hour what ye shall say." The following circumstances may illustrate this. There was a number of professed singers in a neighbouring township, who made it up together to go one Lord's day to hear John preach, and to display their singing powers. The day came, and they made their appearance. After John had read over the first hymn, and before giving out the first two lines for singing, he raised his head, and, looking steadfastly on the people, addressed them thus: "Friends, I wish it to be clearly understood that no person has any right to sing this solemn hymn but those whom the Holy Ghost has quickened, and written God's law upon their hearts." The effect was that the singers were confounded, and prevented from their purpose, conscience bearing witness that they were not the characters.

The success that attended the word spoken by him caused the Arminians in the immediate neighbourhood to rage furiously against him and his people, calling them Antinomians, and endeavouring to undermine their private characters. Indeed, one of the Wesleyan preachers went so far as to say, "I'll physic these Antinomians, but you can do no good with them unless you take them to that important chapter of James: 'Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.' That's the physic for the Antinomians." Their enmity was also most furious against the ordinance of baptism.

At length John's spirit was stirred within him. He "put on zeal as a cloak, and determined to carry the gospel banner in doctrine, precept, and practice into the midst of the enemy's camp." For this purpose, a barn threw open its wide doors. The owner was not a Baptist, but favourable to the doctrines of grace. It being made known that John would draw the sword in defence of the ordinance of baptism, the barn was completely filled, even some of the beams being occupied by persons sitting upon them. A great number of the greatest opponents to baptism by immersion being there, John, in his plain and pointed style, ably set forth that believers, and they only, were the right scriptural subjects for gospel baptism, and that all other so-called baptisms were the offspring of Popery. Whilst earnestly contending that wherever baptism was named in the New Testament it invariably signified a being covered over, or, as his term was, "overhead," a deacon of an Independent church, a surgeon by profession, interrupted him thus: "John, you cannot prove that ever they were overhead in the Holy Ghost; and yet it is said they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost." This caused John to say: "I don't consider it good manners of you, doctor, to thus interrupt me while I am preaching; but be quiet a short time until I come to the point you speak of;" and then hastening on to Acts ii., he raised his voice, and exclaimed, "Now for the doctor!" He then read until he came to verse 2: "The rushing as of a mighty wind, and it filled the house where they were sitting." "Now, doctor," said John, "unless you can prove that their heads were out of the window, or up the chimney, or through the roof, they must have been overhead in the Holy Ghost, for 'it filled the whole house where they were sitting.'"

* Some may think that this language is too plain, and others that it is too light for so solemn a subject; but it must be remembered that the speaker was a plain man, and that he made replies to a doctrinal objector, and answered the man "according to his folly." The late Mr. McKenzie often approvingly related the circumstance.—J. G.

At the conclusion of the discourse, he announced that (D.V.) he would take up that important chapter in James, and take for his text: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works," on such an evening. At the time appointed the barn was again filled, and John at his post. Having read his text, he thus began: "Before I enter upon my text I deem it needful that I should give you a short sketch of my life, there having been so much said against me as an Antinomian; and in the first place I have to say, with humility, that before I became what is called an Antinomian, I was no better than other people, and hardly as good, as many of you know; but, in the second place, since I became what some of you call me, an Antinomian, if there is any one in this large assembly that ever knew or heard of a beggar coming to John Shaw's door, and going away without receiving an alms, let him now come forth and declare it." After a short pause, and no one answering, he said, "So it appears you are silent on that challenge. Now, thirdly. If I have not let the poor people have the produce of my farm in small quantities, at wholesale prices, and to pay for it when they were able,—now let any one declare to the contrary." No reply. "Further. There is another class, poor little farmers, who cannot raise money to pay their rents at the time. If ever any came to ask me for a few pounds, and went away without them, let them now declare it." Still there was silence, and he continued, "I have generally found such as I have mentioned pretty honest, and I never lost much; yea, to be sure, I did lose £20 by a blazing Arminian." This formed his introduction. He then dared any of those who contended so much for their good works to stand forth and give the same challenge and opportunity of reply as he had done. A voice was now heard from the multitude, "He's a Pharisee. He's telling all his good deeds." "I'll let you see soon whether I'm a Pharisee or not," said John. "Now, if I have nothing to stand before God in but these and such-like works I have mentioned, I shall be for ever damned for a real Antinomian."

And thus he swept away the refuges of lies, and knocked from under them the props of all their fleshly religion. Then reading his text, James ii. 18, he solemnly, powerfully, and sweetly entered into the difference of true and false faith, describing that precious faith which is alone of the operation of the mighty power of God; and then spoke of the blessed fruits of faith which gave evidence of its quality, demonstrating the truth declared by the apostle: "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them."

At the conclusion, the workmongers were ready to fall upon him, and it was clearly manifest that the old spirit was not dead which cried out, "Away with him; it is not fit that such a fellow should live." It was quite clear his soul was in its element, and the Holy Ghost blessed him with the spirit of martyrdom; for, with his countenance beaming with zeal, love, compassion, and resignation, he exclaimed in their midst: "If I have done anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die."

Here I stop, having written more than I intended. If there is anything you can glean out of this hasty scribble for your foot-note, well and good.

Yours affectionately,

Preston, Feb. 6th, 1865.

THOS. WALSH.

O HAPPY saints, who dwell in light,
And walk with Jesus, clothed in white,
Safe landed on that peaceful shore,
Where pilgrims meet to part no more.

Released from sin, and toil, and grief,
 Death was their gate to endless life;
 An open'd cage to let them fly,
 And build their happy nest on high.

And now they range the heavenly plains,
 And sing their hymns in melting strains;
 And now their souls begin to prove,
 The heights and depths of Jesus' love.

BERRIDGE.

JABEZ TOWNSHEND MOUNTFORT.—On February 28th, 1864, at Walsall, Jabez Townshend Mountfort, aged 19.

About two years before his death he was laid up with a rather severe cold and cough, and showed symptoms of consumption. During this illness his mind became much exercised. The fear of death took hold of him, and from that time he became the subject of much mental grief, at times. He strove much to conceal it, but it was observed by his parents, and we were more disposed to watch and pray for him than force him into a profession before there was some good ground for it.

He was naturally thoughtful and fond of reading, and had made considerable progress in learning. He had a retentive memory, which has often surprised me, was modest and retiring in his habits, and amiable and generous in his disposition.

He had always attended the means of grace with the family on Lord's days, and now began to feel much, at times, what he heard. Returning from chapel, he would retire to his room, where he could be alone and avoid observation. He also attended our prayer meetings and weekly services, Monday and Wednesday, and continued to do so as long as he was able.

It was observed that he began to confine his reading to the Bible, and was seldom seen with any other book. He would be in his bed-room with his Bible till past midnight before going to rest, which was a trouble to us, knowing the injurious effect it must have upon his delicate health. His one desire appeared to be what he believed his father was; and I believe the desire and prayer of his soul were expressed by Ruth: (i. 16:) "Entreat 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."

It was about six months before he made an effort to speak to me of his state. One night, before going to bed, he tried to tell me what a great sinner he was, as he was afraid I did not know the worst of him, fearing I might, from my judgment of him, without knowing the whole truth, be deceived, and confessed some things said and done by him; but his emotion was such he could hardly speak, and he wept much while attempting to relieve himself of utterance, nor could I refrain. The mercy of God appearing in him, much affected me. He wished me to know what he was made to feel as a sinner, and then tell him if I thought such were saved and went to heaven. I endeavoured to speak truthfully to him and encourage him by saying I hoped it

was of the Lord, who first makes us sensible sinners, then calls us to repentance, and gives us faith in Jesus Christ; and I trusted the Lord was making him meet for his salvation by grace.

Almost his whole concern was the salvation of his soul; for his body he had comparatively little thought.

Twelve months before he died, a vessel of the right lung gave way, and he brought up a quantity of blood. The night in which this occurred is a memorable one. I cannot forget his trembling and fear, nor my own pangs. I hope I knew what it was to wrestle, weep, and pray. O what hold I was helped to take of those words: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." The Lord graciously comforted and supported me with the promise, and I believed it would be well. Also the words, "Said I not unto thee, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?" with others, kept returning again and again. O how sweet is God's word in affliction!

The doctor said he might rally for a time, but he would not be a long liver. It pleased the Lord to bless the means used so far partially to restore him as to enable him to go out for a change of air.

In the summer he went to Dadlington, in Leicestershire, to some kind friends at a farm-house for a few weeks, where he seemed to improve a little, and much enjoyed the visit; at this time he seemed to have been favoured in his soul, and somewhat relieved from his slavish fears, as he afterwards said he had peace and love while there.

Although somewhat better when he came home, his weakness was great. He was anxious to be with us at our meetings, and he seemed to receive the word with power, at times. He had a great love to the Lord's people, and liked to be in their company and hear their conversation; and it gave him great pleasure to contribute, by any means, to the relief of the poor. I was once sending a small sum in aid of the Aged Pilgrims, and sent him for a post-office order, and he put what pocket-money he had to it, without naming it to me.

The latter end of the following winter his disease seemed to increase, though neither the doctor nor I thought his end was so near.

About a fortnight before his death, when his mother took up his breakfast, he said, "Mother, I have been thinking of the signification of my name. I think I was rightly named; for if you did not bear me with sorrow, (1 Chron. iv. 9,) you have had a great deal of sorrow and trouble with me." She said, "Ah! and your short life hitherto has been, for the most part, sorrow, trouble, and affliction." Looking earnestly, he replied, "But I am afraid I have never been afflicted enough, in a right way." She said, "It is better to have that fear than be without it." He quietly responded, "Perhaps so."

Some time afterwards he asked her to read part of Psalm cxix. "I will show you where to begin," said he, pointing to verse 33. When she had read a few verses, she said, "If you can feel your heart yearning in these desires and prayers, it is your mercy."

With much earnestness he replied, "I hope I can." She asked him if he could remember the time when he first began to feel that love to the word of God which he had manifested so much of late. He directly replied, "O yes, I can remember the time very well. I can't tell what made me, but it was about two years ago I felt a great desire to be like the Lord's people, and felt determined to read the Bible through, which I did, and then began it again; but I read it so differently all through the second time. I can't tell how it was, but I saw in it such glorious things, and felt such a love to it, I felt I could never read it enough, and wished I had never read any other book; and I felt great love to the Lord's people. When I was at Dadlington in the summer, I felt much peace and love in my heart, but since I came back I have not felt so much."

At another time he said, "Mother, if ever I get better again, I hope I shall do double for you." She being much affected, he said, "What is the matter?" She replied, "Why, I sometimes think it is not the Lord's will you should recover, you are so very weak." He seemed a little disturbed, and she said, "Now I hope I have not made you uncomfortable. There is nothing too hard for the Lord. He can raise you up if he sees fit." "O no; it is not that," he said. She asked if it was the exercises of his mind. "Yes," he replied; "but I fear you think I am more exercised than I am." She said, "But it was that which caused you to spend so much time in your room, I suppose?" "Yes," he replied; but he thought perhaps he had done wrong, staying so long in the cold, as he had sometimes done, and injured his body; but seemed to imply he felt his soul of more importance than his body.

He afterwards said to his mother he felt it hard to believe, but felt the truth of those lines:

"Myself I cannot save,
Myself I cannot keep;
But strength in thee I fain would have,
Whose eyelids never sleep."

But he wanted more feeling. He felt as though he had none. She said, "You would not feel tried about it if you had none, or feel those desires for more;" and she repeated to him Hart's hymn:

"Ye lambs of Christ's fold, ye weaklings in faith,
Who long to lay hold of life by his death,
Who fain would believe him, and in your best room
Would gladly receive him, but fear to presume," &c.;

with which he appeared to be encouraged.

Mr. Burns called to see him, and, finding him so much worse, spoke earnestly to him. When he left, Jabez appeared a good deal exercised, and said to his mother, "Mr. B. asked me some plain questions." "Yes," she replied; "he sees how precarious your health is, and he wanted to get more from you." "O yes," he said, "I know it was right enough;" and then, with much feeling, said, "But, mother, I can't speak of that which I don't feel." This was his continual fear, lest he should say more than he felt, which kept him from saying much which he really did feel.

About a week before his death, I went to sit with him a little after dinner. I saw he was anxious to say something to me. He appeared agitated, and evidently under the power of a strong temptation. He asked me if I thought unbelievers could feel any love to the Lord and his people. The Lord was pleased to help me to speak with much liberty and feeling on the subject, and I was struck with the change in his countenance, and the composure with which he responded. The snare was broken, and he appeared to feel the power and receive with love and delight the things spoken, and to be relieved of a great bondage. When reading Mr. P.'s "Meditations" in the "Gospel Standard" for February, 1864, he observed, "Mother, what an awful day seems approaching! I think them happy who are taken away first; but I feel to prize the Bible the more, as Mr. P. says, in proportion to the attacks made upon it."

The last few days before his death he became so weak he could not read much himself, but wanted the word read to him often, and spiritual conversation, but lamented he could not keep his mind more stayed, especially the day before; and in the night he became wandering at intervals. In the morning a friend said to him, "Why, Jabez, you appear a deal worse." He smiled, and, with much composure, said, "Yes, I suppose I am." This being Sabbath day, I could not be much with him. Before dinner I went to see him, and asked him if he felt a good hope through grace. He said, "Yes, or I don't know what I should do now."

But the adversary was permitted again to harass him. Towards evening he seemed much agitated and afflicted in his mind, until about twenty minutes before he died, when such a change appeared in him that it arrested the attention of those with him. As though suddenly awoke out of a dream, he looked around, with the sweetest smile upon his countenance, bespeaking much inward peace and joy; and at half-past seven, with a gentle sigh, his spirit fled.

E. MOUNTFORT.

JOHN BARRITT.—On Feb. 22nd, at Hebden Bridge, John Barritt, aged 64. He was buried on the 27th by Mr. Kershaw. More than 100 persons attended his funeral.

He was a man well known to many of the lovers of truth in the North, both ministers and people, having been one of the founders of the little cause of truth in the Dove Chapel, Foster Lane, Hebden Bridge. The chapel obtained its name on account of the house having been a place in which doves were previously kept. It has a gallery in it, and will hold in all about 100 persons; but the gallery is so near the pulpit that minister and people can shake hands with each other. This little place has been very highly favoured, inasmuch as some men of truth, now dead, have preached in it, such as Mr. Gadsby, Mr. Warburton, Mr. M'Kenzie, and others; besides many who are yet upon the walls of Zion, as Mr. Kershaw, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Godwin, and others.

John Barritt's hospitable house was always open to receive men of

God with a hearty welcome, though he was only a poor man as regards this world's good. He was baptized in April, 1827, at Birchcliff Chapel, by Mr. Hollingrake, the pastor of the church there at that time. John remained a member of that church until 1836. He then left Birchcliff Chapel, and united with the church over which Dr. Fawcett had been the pastor at Hebden Bridge. Mr. John Crook was the pastor of that church at that time. But Barritt could not see eye to eye with him in religious matters; neither could he travel long with him; so he left there in 1838. From both these places he withdrew. He then went to Rochdale, and joined Mr. Kershaw's church, with a few more hungry sheep, who were almost, if not altogether, starved out of house and harbour. There were eight or nine of them, and they were advised to join Mr. Kershaw's church, being of the same faith and order, with the understanding that they should be dismissed together, to be formed into a little church at Hebden Bridge; which was the case, on the 10th of Nov. in the year following. This church was formed by Mr. Kershaw in a club-room in Walkern Lane, near the old town. Ten men and one woman were dismissed from the church at Rochdale; 13 persons joined them from other churches in the neighbourhood, with seven others who were baptized on the same day by Mr. Kershaw at Hebden Bridge; in all making 31, 17 men and 14 women. John was one of them. He was chosen to be a deacon of the church in Dec., 1852, which office he held up to his death; and will now be much lamented by his brother deacons and the little church generally, having had a deal to do with the management of it. However, he has accomplished his days, the Lord determining the number of his days, and his months being with him, and having appointed the bounds of his habitation. He has finished his course, done his work, and is now gathered home as a vessel of mercy afore prepared to glory.

I have heard him say many times that when he first went to Hope Chapel, Rochdale, hymn 76, Gadsby's Selection, was sung. He said he never heard that hymn before, and was quite elated with it. He said he remained in the chapel, that he might be able to see in what hymn book it was, when the people were gone out. This hymn and others were often a comfort to his mind in the house of his pilgrimage.

John was a man well established in the doctrines of grace. He could soon discover error, and was ever ready to oppose it, both in public and private. He was a lover of the truth as it is in Jesus, and a lover of his church and people, as well as the Lord's sent servants, with whom he loved to commune. He was one of that sort of people who never thought he had done too much for God's cause and people; and grieved because he could do no more. His heart was warm in the cause of God and truth. He would often speak of it as being dear to him, and prayed that it might prosper amidst all the opposition it had to contend with, which was not a little, from various sources.

He was only confined to his bed for a few weeks before he died, and that not entirely, for he could bear up a little, until within a

few days of his death. His complaint was a sort of heart disease, attended with little pain, but much sickness. He was able to talk with his friends every day except one, up to his death; but that day he did not so much as know his own family who were about him. That was on Sunday, Feb. 19th. The minister who was supplying that day felt sorry that he could not have a word with him; but John did not know him. On the Monday morning he became quite sensible again, and could talk to his wife and children. He then desired the presence of them all, that he might see them once more in the flesh. It was convenient to assemble them together immediately. Then he seemed glad, and said to them, "O what a blessed sight!

"Thanks to thy name for meaner things,
But these are not my God."

His daughter Phebe said to me, that the last time she heard her father at the prayer meeting in the chapel, he begged in his prayer that he might have a religion that would stand when he came to turn his pale face to the wall, when his friends came to see him and could do him no good. This was a few weeks before he died. About 1 o'clock on the Sunday morning before he became insensible, she heard him say, "O Jesus! mighty Jesus!" She said to him, "Father, you will soon have done here, and see Jesus as he is." He said, "I shall, my child." After he had seen all his family, he sent for me to tell me to exalt a precious Christ, for he was worthy to be praised by all them that love him. I went to see him, spent the afternoon with him, and had some conversation with him, which was solemn to all of us there. By this time he was very weak and feeble. Most of what he dwelt upon was, "The Lord liveth," &c. Ps. xviii. 46. He did not say much after this time, except a little to the family, when he repeated:

"Firm as the earth thy gospel stands," &c.

On the Tuesday morning he seemed to awake out of a slumbering state, and repeated that verse:

"His love in times past forbids me to think," &c.

He often said, "My religion consists in this verse:

"O Jesus! Thy well-done work
I gladly make my boast;
The scenes of Calvary proclaim
What my salvation cost."

He entered into the haven of rest, for ever to remain with his Lord and Master, whom he had served on earth.

DAVID SMITH.

[Mr. Barritt had the principal management of the moneys sent to Hebden Bridge for the distressed operatives. There can be no doubt that he was a good and gracious man, for many can testify to the fact; but, as Mr. Smith says in a second letter, in answer to our asking for further information about him, the account does not profess to give his experience, as Mr. S. was not in a position to do so; but it is more a history of the church at Hebden Bridge, and will doubtless be appreciated by the friends there.—J. G.]

MR. GRACE.—On March 3rd, aged 65, Mr. Grace, minister of the gospel, Brighton.

ELIZABETH GREEN.—At Whissendine, on March 1st, 1865, Elizabeth, wife of Mr. Robt. Green.

She was for many years a constant hearer of Mr. Philpot, at Providence Chapel, Oakham, and she has left good reason to hope she has gone to that rest that is prepared for the people of God.

SPRING.

Ps. lxxv.

Good is the Lord, the heavenly King,
Who makes the earth his care,
Visits the pastures every Spring,
And bids the grass appear.

The clouds, like rivers raised on high,
Pour out at thy command
Their watery blessings from the sky,
To cheer the thirsty land.

The soften'd ridges of the field
Permit the corn to spring;
The valleys rich provision yield,
And the poor labourers sing.

The little hills on every side,
Rejoice at falling showers;
The meadows, dress'd in all their pride,
Perfume the air with flowers.

The barren clods, refresh'd with rain,
Promise a joyful crop;
The snow-clad ground looks green again,
To raise the reaper's hope.

The various months thy goodness crowns;
How bounteous are thy ways!
The bleating flocks spread o'er the downs,
And shepherds shout thy praise.

WATTS.

TIME AND ETERNITY.

NOTES OF A SERMON BY MR. FORSTER, PREACHED AT WITHAM, ON NEW YEAR'S DAY, 1865.

“For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off.”—Prov. xxiii. 18.

OUR text contains reproof and consolation to the living family of God. It stands in connection with a state of mind God's people often fall into; viz., to contrast their position and circumstances with the ungodly who prosper in the world, who seem to have all their hearts could wish, while their poor souls are tired and plagued, tempted and perplexed, their plans upset, their designs crossed, and

their attempts to accomplish what seems really to be necessary for their livelihood, their standing in society, their character as professors of truth, and their welfare in general rendered abortive. In consequence of which they fret, murmur, and repine; are vexed, and left often to wonder how it is the Lord should favour the mere worldling, and leave his own children to grieve, suffer great disappointments, and deny them so many things the others are favoured with.

In verses 4 and 5 of this chapter we have the following exhortations: "Labour not to be rich; cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? For riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away, as an eagle toward heaven." Again, in the verse preceding our text: "Let not thine heart envy sinners; but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long."

Now, covetousness is one of the greatest sins of our corrupt nature, "a sin that most easily besets us." How prone we are to desire to be rich, to be discontented with our present lot, and to wish to be in different circumstances—to be like so and so. Asaph trod this path, and speaks thus: "My steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish when I saw the prosperity of the wicked," &c. (Ps. lxxiii.) How perplexed and puzzled he was until he went into the sanctuary of God. Then understood he their end. God only knows how many of his dear children are struggling to get an honest and honourable livelihood, acting conscientiously in the fear of the Lord in their transactions with their fellow men, but cannot succeed. Others again are suffering from bodily infirmities and ailments, sickness and family expenses, and find it hard work to keep their heads above water or from sinking outright.

Our text declares two important facts.

- I. The certainty of some things *having an end*.
- II. The certainty of others being *lasting and abiding*.

I. Consider a few things which surely *have an end*. 1. There is an end of *time* and all *time things*. John declares "he saw an angel stand upon the sea and upon the earth, and lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that are therein, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things that therein are, that there shall be time no longer." (Rev. x. 5, 6.) Everything that hath its origin in time will perish with time. Only realities before time are lasting, durable, and eternal. There is surely an end of all the joy, peace, comfort, happiness, riches, honours, hope, confidence, and possessions of the wicked. "The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment." (Job viii. 19.) "The eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost" (or a puff of breath, *margin*.) (Job xi. 20.) "The hypocrite's hope shall perish." (Job viii. 14.) "There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. The rich man died and was buried;

and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." What an end was this! Ps. xxxvii. sets forth strikingly the end of the wicked and also of the righteous; how awful the one, however rich in this world, and how blessed the other, however poor, tried, afflicted, tempted, and plagued they may be here below. How great the contrast, both in this world and the next, of the rich glutton and the poor beggar; "the one had his good things in this world, and the other his evil things; but now the one is comforted, and the other tormented."

2. Surely there is an end of our *mortal existence*. We are fast hastening to the tomb. "Is there not an appointed time for man upon the earth? Are not his days like the days of a hireling?" "We all do fade as a leaf." "As for man, his days are as grass; as the flower of the field so he flourisheth; for the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God;" "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." How awful the end of the one; how blessed the end of the other!

3. Surely there is an end of *sin*. There was an end of sin to the people of God as to its penal award—eternal death—when it was placed to the account of their Surety in the everlasting covenant of Jehovah's love, grace, and mercy. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Salvation, or a deliverance from the dominion and curse of sin, is everlasting: "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; they shall never be ashamed or confounded, world without end." It is also written: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel."

Again. Surely there is an end of sin, by the sufferings, bloodshedding, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Sin being put away, there is an end of it (Rom. ix. 26) as to its curse: "To finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." (Dan. ix. 24.)

Again. Surely there is an end of sin in its curse and condemnation in the conscience of all God's elect before they leave this world for "the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world." God's people are like all the posterity of Adam—by nature sinners and enemies to God. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "Enemies (to God) by wicked works;" "Children of wrath, even as others." In their

nature-state they are not different to others, except it be that some are permitted to run to greater lengths of sin and excess of riot. They walk "according to the course of this world, according to the power of the prince of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience."

But there is a set time to favour Zion. (Ps. cii. 15.)

"There is a period known to God,
When all his sheep, redeem'd by blood,
Shall leave the hateful ways of sin,
Turn to the fold, and enter in."

God, the eternal Spirit, communicates divine and eternal life to the dead sinner: "And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." This is what the dear Lord called being "born again," and being "born of water and of the Spirit." (John iii. 3-5.) There must be spiritual life before there can be any evidence of any one grace. Feeling, sight, desire, knowledge, enjoyment, are all functions of life: "The dead know nothing at all." (Eccles. ix. 5.) The Spirit of truth "convinceth of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." Sin is charged home upon the conscience. "Thou art the man" strikes with terrible effect. "Pay me what thou owest" makes such a demand that the poor sinner vows and promises; but prayers, tears, resolutions, &c., will not satisfy. Sin now becomes exceeding sinful. "What shall I do," is the cry, "to escape eternal vengeance?" "Whither shall I flee?" The law condemns, justice demands; the weight, burden, and guilt of sin press the poor soul down to the gates of death, hell, and despair. Hope seems to have fled; and the blackness of darkness is felt. The poor sinner is now feelingly ruined, undone, lost! "Woe is me, I am undone!" "Lord, save, or I perish!" is forced out of his soul by the Holy Ghost. "God be merciful to me, a sinner!" bursts from his terror-stricken soul. But the same blessed Spirit leads the sinner onward to the cross, and faith is given to lay hold on the blood of Jesus Christ, God's dear, well-beloved, and eternal Son, "which taketh away the sin of the world," and which cleanseth us from all sin; revealing pardon, peace, and salvation, through streams of blood from Jesus' feet, and hands, and side, which flow into the sinner's wounds in all its sovereign freeness, richness, and fulness; so that sin, terror, bondage, darkness, and death, which made him groan, cry, and sigh, are removed; and peace, love, and joy are felt through believing. What a change! "Instead of hell, he brought me heaven;" instead of death, life; instead of damnation, salvation.

"How long beneath the law I lay,
In bondage and distress!
I toil'd the precept to obey,
But toil'd without success.

"'What shall I do?' was then the word,
'That I may worthier grow?'
'What shall I render to the Lord?'
Is my inquiry now.

"To see the law by Christ fulfill'd,
And hear his pardoning voice,

Will prove a slave to be a child,
Change duty into choice."

4. Again, Surely there is an end of *death*. In a penal sense, Jesus died the death and endured the curse for all who were given to him in the everlasting covenant to redeem. "He laid down his life for his sheep. "Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." God's tried and afflicted people are in "deaths often;" they "die daily," and have "the sentence of death in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God that raised the dead." Death is often felt by the living in Jerusalem, on account of sin dwelling in their mortal bodies, making them cry out with Paul, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (This body of death, *margin*.) But death, eternal death, as the award of the law for transgression, (Gen. ii. 17,) Jesus Christ, the Surety of a better covenant, hath for ever removed and destroyed; as saith God's word, "Death is swallowed up in victory." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law; but thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." The body dies when the spirit leaves it, and then all sin and death will for ever be done away, as respects the vessels of mercy.

"Now to the power of God supreme
Be everlasting honours given;
He saves from hell (we bless his name),
He calls our wandering feet to heaven.
"Jesus, the Lord, appears at last,
And makes his Father's counsels known;
Declares the great transactions past,
And brings immortal blessings down.
"He dies! And in that dreadful night
Did all the powers of hell destroy;
Rising, he brought our heaven to light,
And took possession of the joy."

5. Again. Surely there is an end of all the sorrows, conflicts, afflictions, trials, temptations, darkness, bondage, guilt, fear, persecutions, assaults from hell, or insults from man; yea, all the weighty cross the poor child of God has had to carry; no more to sigh and groan; no more to mourn and weep; no more to faint and sink. "The inhabitants shall not say I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity."

"I'll bear the unequal strife,
And wage the war within;
Since death, that puts an end to life,
Shall put an end to sin."

The wicked die the death, but the saints "fall asleep." (1 Cor. xv. 18.) It is said of David, "He fell on sleep." (Acts xiii. 36.) "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." (1 Thess. iv. 14, 15.)

"Thine was a bitter death, indeed,
Thou harmless, suffering Lamb of God!
Thou hast from hell thy people freed,
And drown'd destruction in thy blood."

"Now the grave's a downy bed,
Embroider'd round with blood;
Say not the believer's dead;
He only rests with God."

II. The certainty of those things that are *lasting and abiding*. "Thine expectation shall not be cut off." This is a confirming testimony and a blessed promise from the Lord, that whosoever hath trusted in him, or hoped in his mercy, shall never be confounded or perish.

The first breathing, panting, hungering, and thirsting of a regenerated soul for mercy and salvation, are in desires which are manifested or expressed in begging, praying, entreating, imploring, often mentally, by the soul going up to God when no words are spoken. "Now Hannah spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard;" yet it is said "she poured out her soul before the Lord." (1 Sam. i. 14, 15.) God declares, "The desire of the righteous shall be granted; but the desire of the wicked shall perish;" "He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him." The church of old declares, "With my soul have I desired thee in the night." "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth I desire besides thee." "Hope deferred maketh the heart faint; but when the desire cometh it is a tree of life." To the mere professor, Christ "is as a root out of a dry ground; he hath no form or comeliness; there is no beauty in him that they should desire him." But to the quickened, regenerated soul, Christ and he crucified becomes the all-absorbing object of desire, and nothing on earth or in heaven can supply his place. The sinner, with the poet, cries out:

"Give me Christ, or else I die."

When Christ is revealed in the heart the hope of glory, (and he will be thus revealed sooner or later to every soul that sincerely desires him,) he is felt and sweetly enjoyed as "the fairest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely."

Every grace of the Spirit in the heart of the child of grace is tried, more or less. "The Lord trieth the righteous." The devil tries him; sin, the world, flesh, unbelief, saint and sinner, try him. An untried religion, in any and all its parts, is not God's religion; an untried faith is not the faith of God's elect. "For thou, O God, hast tried us as silver is tried." "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried by fire."

I well remember being in earnest prayer, when the following scripture was applied with power to my soul: "The desire of the righteous shall be granted." I felt and enjoyed the sweetness, comfort, and peace such a promise is calculated to impart when the Holy Ghost is pleased to favour a soul with its application; but presently a suggestion darted through my mind, "That promise belongs only to the righteous character. Do you know you are one? Do you believe you are righteous? Are you one?" I sank in my feelings under the trial. I lost the sweet comfort I had, and unbelieving fears, gloom, and bondage succeeded. Indeed, I have found, more or less, every promise, sweet feeling, enjoyment, power under the word preached or read, or while preaching myself; and I can truly say that while preaching I often feel the power and sweetness of the truth in my own soul, thus rendering my preaching times my best times, though greatly tried before, as well as afterwards. Every step heavenward I have ever been led into has been tried, and I often question and fear my call by grace, my call to the ministry, and my religion generally, often wondering how the scene will end. How many fears I have lest after all I should prove wrong, not hold on to the end, be cast away, and sink into perdition at last, God only knows. Still, notwithstanding my many fears and suspicions lest I am deceived, shall be overcome by the power of sin and temptation, together with my coldness and deadness in divine things, wanderings and backslidings, sins and follies, the Lord has wonderfully kept me, and also kept my soul alive in the midst of famine, and caused his work to spring up again in my heart, reviving, strengthening, and comforting my mind. Hope has again reared its head, and expectation been very high, the Lord enabling me to remember the word on which he had caused me to hope, or given me another token for good, so that I have been helped on thus far. My only hope is in the Lord alone, to whose blood and righteousness my soul, my faith looks for pardon and justification, and every spiritual blessing. "My soul wait thou only on God, for my expectation is from him." "The expectation of the poor shall not perish for ever."

How sweetly the dear Lord speaks by Jeremiah: (xxix. 11:) "For I know my thoughts that I think towards you, saith the Lord; thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end." How blessedly and confidently Paul writes: "According to my expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, as always so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death. For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

Sure I am, whenever God the Spirit causes a hope to spring up in a poor sinner's heart, that hope shall never fail to realise its object, a precious Jesus and his great salvation. No, thine expectation, poor soul, shall not be cast off. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

"Those feeble desires, those wishes so weak,
'Tis Jesus inspires, and bids you still seek."

His Spirit will cherish the life he first gave;
You never shall perish, if Jesus can save.

"Blest soul that can say, 'Christ only I seek;
Wait for him alway; be constant, though weak;
The Lord whom thou seekest will not tarry long,
And to him the weakest is dear as the strong."

THE GOOD SHEPHERD AND HIS LEADINGS.

Dear Friend,—

THE thought has just struck me to send you a letter,
If Jesus would sweetly my spirit unfetter,
And burst all its bonds, that at large it may rove,
Till it basks in the beams of ineffable love.

I want the two wings* which you show'd us, that I
May far above earth and its vanities fly,
Get a fresh sight of Jesus as Zion's fair King;
Then, unfetter'd and free, I would cheerfully sing.

Yes, sing in my heart, though my tongue may be mute,
And my fingers ne'er handle the harp or the lute;
Such a song I may sing as no angel could learn,
For redemption poor sinners alone doth concern.

And my song should record all the love and the power,
Which led a poor sinner, in sorrow's dark hour,
To flee to the Saviour for refuge from ill,
And bow'd the proud heart to his sovereign will.

Twenty years are now past since the word came with power
To a sorrowful heart, in a sorrowful hour;
But the promise shone forth with a soul-cheering ray
As it whisper'd, "He led them forth by the right way."

And the right way I firmly believe it has been,
Though I am defiled all over with sin,
And my awful backslidings too plainly declare
Of my old carnal nature, no good can dwell there.

Another sweet promise soon after was given,
And truly it fell like a dew-drop from heaven;
With a love, everlasting, unchanging, and free,
My Jesus assured me had loved me.

O! I felt the sweet drawings of mercy and love,
As I fell at his feet, and did blessedly prove
That my soul was accepted in Jesus, my Head,
And I foolishly fancied my foes were all dead.

I joyously went on my way for a while,
For, O! It is heaven when Jesus doth smile;
Though my path was a rough one, and thorns strew'd the ground,
Yet the shoes both of brass and of iron I found.

Of sickness and sorrow I oft felt the smart;
But O! There was heavenly joy in my heart,
All around me was tumult, but peace was within,
For I knew that my Saviour had pardon'd my sin.

* Faith and love.

Two years in this manner pass'd swiftly away;
Then Satan most subtilly led me astray;
He told me in knowledge I now ought to grow,
And wonderful mysteries then I should know.

Ah! How shall I tell it? My vile, wicked heart
Did from my most gracious Redeemer depart.
O sad, wretched creature! I left his dear side,
And wander'd away on the mountains of pride.

Then error's dark shadows beclouded my sight,
And this *darkness* I sadly mistook for *new light*;
So I wander'd in mazes intricate and wild,
Till the features I lost of a heaven-born child.

But, O. My dear Shepherd! He watched o'er my path,*
And he knew the poor lost one in darkness and death,
He did from the mighty recover the prey,
And once more set my feet in his own narrow way.

Then he stripp'd me, and scourged me, and chasten'd me sore;
Till, heart-broken, and naked, and empty, and poor,
With soul-felt contrition I fell at his feet,
And with heart-felt submission did mercy entreat.

Dark, dark was the season, for sad was my fall;
My soul still remembers the wormwood and gall,
And is humbled within me whenever I think
How he rescued my soul from destruction's near brink.

'Twas then that he led me his gospel to hear,†
With judgment he fed me, and fill'd me with fear;
Shook my proud Babel-building quite down to the ground,
And utterly did my vile language confound.‡

When I had been humbled and chasten'd awhile,
He sweetly again on my spirit did smile;
More sweetly than ever, more precious the grace
Which could such a monster in evil embrace.

Then he tenderly led me, and fed me with care,
In pastures so pleasant 'twas good to be there;
Then I sung his sweet praises by night and by day,
And hoped that I should not again from him stray.

But, ah, my sad heart! I have proved since then
That still I can wander again and again,
Forget all his mercies, forget his sweet love,
And still from his pastures most foolishly rove.

Although I have tasted, and sweetly can prove,
The depths and the heights of unchangeable love,
Yet still I am but a poor wandering sheep,
And sadly I fail his sweet precepts to keep.

* Ezek. xxxiv.

† At Stow, in 1845.

‡ Gen. li. 9. See speech of Ashdod, Neb. xiii. 24.

O keep me, dear Shepherd, close, close to thy side,
 And graciously cause me in thee to abide.
 I fain would keep near thee, and never more stray;
 O lead me and guide me in wisdom's fair way.

That my heart is unfaithful thou knowest full well;
 My sins and my follies I need not to tell;
 But O thy rich mercy is sovereign and free;
 And wilt thou not still, Lord, extend it to me?

How great thy forbearance! I am not cut down
 And banish'd for ever from thee with a frown.
 O help me to praise thy unchangeable love,
 Which never can vary, nor ever remove.

And now, I suppose, I must finish my rhyme,
 And if it should please thee, whene'er thou hast time,
 Send me an account of God's dealings with thee
 Since first thou experienced his mercy so free.

Such way-marks are useful,—not that we should boast,
 But just to remind us how far we were lost,
 And how our dear Shepherd, who cares for his sheep,
 Doth find us, restore us, and graciously keep.

To trace his dear footsteps o'er mountain and plain,
 When he goes to recover his wanderers again,
 Has been a sweet subject, and precious to me,
 And, doubtless, it also has been so to thee.

May Jesus be with thee, and strengthen thy heart
 Until he shall call thee from earth to depart,
 May'st thou in the light of his countenance dwell;
 And now, my dear friend, I must bid thee farewell!

August 9th, 1860.

C. SPIRE.

"WE know that all things work together for good to them that love God." This promise is the compass which sets the course and directs the motions of all the afflictions of the people of God; and no ship at sea obeys the rudder so exactly as the troubles of the righteous do the direction of this promise. Possibly we cannot discern this at present, but rather prejudice the works of God, and say all these things are against us; but hereafter we shall see, and with joy acknowledge them to be the happy instruments of our salvation.—*Flavel*.

MY bosom, O Lord, is a Rebekah's womb. There are twins striving within it, a Jacob and an Esau, the old man and the new. While I was in the barren state of my unregeneration, all was quiet within me; now, this strife is both troublesome and painful, so as nature is ready to say, "If it be so, why am I thus?" But withal, O my God, I bless thee for this unhappy unquietness; for I know there is just cause of comfort in these inward strugglings. My soul is not now unfruitful, and is conceived of a holy seed which wrestles with my natural corruptions. And if my Esau have got the start in the priority of time, yet my Jacob shall follow him hard at the heel, and happily supplant him. And though I must nourish them both as mine, yet I can, through thy grace, imitate thy choice, and say with thee, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated." Blessed God! Make thou that word of thine good in me, that "the elder shall serve the younger."—*Bp. Hall*.

MAY 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

MAY, 1865.

MATT. v. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from p. 107.)

Mr. Toplady's preaching was remarkably blessed to me in a way of building me up, and establishing me in the whole truth of God. I now was fed with strong meat. I also enjoyed precious seasons under him at the sacrament* on Lord's day evenings. He was very spiritual in his exhortations at these opportunities.

But how hard did I find it, for many years after I was brought into liberty, to stand fast in this liberty. (Gal. v. 1.) O how hard! What proneness to legality, what leaning to the law, although the promise runs as in Isa. xlv. 22, &c.

On the 24th of October, a Sabbath morning, after I had been on my knees in prayer, this scripture was fastened and imprinted on my mind very strongly and comfortably: "Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." I had been, for many days before this, bowed down under a sense of my sins, my natural corruptions, and tormented at the thoughts of death, being oppressed with a legal spirit. I have been visited with the above scripture at different times and ways for some years past, and it has been blessed to my soul. In the evening I went as usual to Margaret Street Chapel. Mr. Huntington was on Rev. iv. 2: "Immediately I was in the Spirit." As he expounded the first verse, he said he believed the trumpet talking with John might signify the preaching of the gospel; and he proved it by numbers of scriptures. In the course of his sermon, as he repeated Isa. lx. 1: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee," great comfort flowed into my soul, the fear that has torment being

* We put this in just as it stands in the original MS. But we must observe that it is one thing to receive the sacrament as it is called as Avril did in simplicity, when the eyes are not opened to see the inconsistency of its general administration to all comers, and thus partake of other men's sins, and quite another thing to do so when the eyes have been opened, and the evil of such a profanation of the ordinance seen. With such as Avril the Lord tenderly bears, and can even bless them in their simplicity, for he reads their heart; but not so when a man acts deliberately against his enlightened conscience, and can discern that the Lord's body should not be given to unbelievers.—ED.

vanished away.* In a word, under this sermon my heart burnt within me while Christ talked to me by the trumpet of his gospel, and while he opened to me the Scriptures by his Spirit, through a weak and feeble instrument. Mr. Huntington observed: "All the time an awakened man labours under the burden of sin, he is in soul travail; but when Christ is revealed to him, and he is brought into liberty, he is then born again of the Spirit. We must be awakened and quickened before we can be born again. Coming to Christ by faith, believing in Christ, receiving Christ, looking to Christ, apprehending Christ, trusting to Christ, flying to Christ for refuge, and laying hold of Christ are all synonymous terms for acting faith on Christ. They mean the same thing, only differently expressed." I saw the necessity, excellence, and suitableness of Christ's righteousness, and that my only warrant to take hold of it was the word of God, by the effectual teaching of the Lord the Spirit. Having the mercy to be truly awakened and convinced, I found it not only very difficult, but I am sure impossible, to believe and receive the whole Saviour, (1 Cor. i. 30,) Christ and his righteousness; I say, I found it impossible to believe this with special application to myself, except by the power of the Holy Ghost. My only refuge was the sinner's last shift. The language of my heart and lips was well expressed in Whitefield's book, hymn 120, entitled, "A Sinner's Last Shift."

In October, on the first Sunday, I was greatly set at liberty from Mr. Forster's sermon, at Orange Street, from 1 Pet. i. 24, 25. This chapel, as well as others, I have often happily found a Bethel, that is, "the house of God." I have often happily met the Lord, or rather the Lord has graciously condescended to meet me, in his public ordinances, so that the place has often proved a Bethel to my soul.

About the middle of October, I experienced, in an unspeakable manner, a verse that Mr. Peckwell took for his text some weeks before: "Righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) Now, being at this time on the mount, what Mr. P. had said in his sermon came to my mind, about weak believers often cherishing their doubts and fears, and looking for something in themselves to recommend them to God. This I believe to have been in some measure my case,—something of legality hidden at the bottom, which caused me to have so much spiritual distress, a looking too much at self, too little to Christ, and trusting too much to frames and feelings.

On Whit Sunday, June 8th, at the table of the Lord, Blackfriars, the Lord of the table was with me of a truth. This was a blessed time to me. Glory to God, I received much spiritual consolation at this precious ordinance. My soul was highly feasted, and rejoiced amid all the weakness of my body, having been for many weeks more than ordinarily afflicted with my nervous complaint.

On the following Sunday, Mr. Romaine spoke from 1 John 5, 7: "There are Three that bear record," &c. He referred also to v. 4-16.

* I was visited by this scripture in September, 1775, also.

This was a precious "Trinity Sunday" to me. The Lord caused showers of blessings to come down upon me at this time, according to his promise in Ezekiel xxxiv. 26. As I was musing upon these things, still sitting in my pew, service being ended, that declaration in Matt. v. 3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of God," was wonderfully applied and brought to my mind by the Spirit. The Lord here blessing me in his sanctuary I now perceived was in answer to my mighty wrestlings in prayer. The desire of my soul was with the dying martyr: "None but Christ; none but Christ." I desired to rest in, or trust to, nothing else; so that I often prayed in the language of the psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me," &c.

Mr. Romaine's "Walk of Faith" I have found great help from, and his "Life of Faith" has been much use to me in my spiritual pilgrimage heavenwards.

On the Tuesday morning following, Mr. R. spoke from John i. 12, 13. He quoted James i. 18; 1 Pet. i. 18-22; John iii. 6; John xv. 7; Gal. ii. 19-21. He said, "Read the promises in the Scriptures for yourselves, as if there was no other person in the world but you. The believer's faith is the witness to himself, and its fruits are the witness to others."

As I was reading Isa. xliii. one evening in October, 1777, verse 25 fell with great weight upon my soul: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins;" and the same scripture most sweetly visited my soul the next morning when I awoke. This reviving word of Scripture often darts into my mind with great power; and, while the savour of it lasts, how wonderfully is my heart set at liberty. The writer of Ps. cxix. might well say indeed, "I will run the way of thy commandments when thou hast enlarged my heart." I think I could be willing to do and suffer anything for Christ and his cause. I am full of love toward my dear Saviour and Redeemer, beholding his matchless love to unworthy me. My inward desires are well expressed in hymn 188, Madan's:

"Arise, my soul, with wonder see
What love divine for thee hath done;
Behold, thy sorrows, sin, and grief
Are laid on God's eternal Son."

Also, hymn 176, "Thy word is truth:" (John xvii. 17:)

"My Hiding-place, my Refuge, Tower,
And Shield art thou, O Lord;
I firmly anchor all my hope
On thy unerring word."

On Monday, Nov. 3rd, in the afternoon, as I sat by the fire, very thoughtful concerning the state of my soul, the following words were brought with great power, suddenly darting into my mind: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." From this I was led to behold and admire the loving-kindness of the Lord in drawing me by his Spirit from the time I was first awakened, which was then almost seven years back, even to that hour; an evidence of his everlasting love, or he would

not have sweetly drawn me by his attracting Spirit earnestly to seek him, hating both sinful self and righteous self, and desiring to give my whole heart without reserve to the Lord, and to live to his glory alone. (Col. iii. 1-16; Rom. xii. 1, 2;) yea, earnestly desiring and breathing after holiness, out of love and gratitude to my dear Redeemer for his unspeakable love to my soul, he having freely manifested his pardoning love to me, a hell-deserving sinner, yea, the chief of sinners. Unworthy as I am, God the Father is my Father in Jesus Christ. He has given unto me the Spirit of adoption, and he has given to me to know my own personal interest in Christ by happy experience.

Thinking and musing on the long and great anguish of soul I passed through when I lay under soul concern and alarming and deep convictions of sin, together with my bodily affliction through a bad and infirm constitution; I say, while reflecting on these things, the following passage has been more than once applied with much power to my soul: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction;" and I have found my drooping spirit revived under my complicated branches of affliction, as the Lord had chosen me from all eternity, as an elect vessel, to pass through them. This has silenced murmurings, kindled love to God, and gratitude for his everlasting, unchangeable love to me, and excited sweet resignation to the will of God. The former manifestations of divine love to my soul have come fresh to my mind, and I have been again filled with joy and peace in believing. Then has my mouth been filled with laughter, and my tongue with joy. "Praise the Lord, O my soul, for he hath dealt bountifully with thee."

O how true in my experience do I find four lines of Dr. Watts's hymn, No. 148, second book:

"Till God in human flesh I see,
My thoughts no comfort find;
The holy, just, and sacred Three
Are terrors to my mind."

In December, 1777, I saw a young man admitted as a member in Archer Street Society, (that same society now meets in Castle Street, Leicester Fields). In giving in his experience, he said he had been a strict Pharisee before he knew Jesus; that he used to say prayers three times a day, and was afraid of being damned for sins he could not but commit for all his strong and repeated resolutions against them; that it threw him into strong tremblings all over him, and into a dreadful nervous disorder. He also grew so thin that everybody who saw him thought he was in a decline. These and many more circumstances in this young man's experience I found to be in my own experience.

(N.B.—I am very certain that such continual fears of being damned for sins which I could not but commit for all my strong resolutions, and the terror that I was under for years, first brought on my nervous disorder.)

Hearing the above young man relate his experience drew tears from my eyes, knowing that his once pitiful case had formerly been

my own, in the day of my ignorance. His deplorable condition for years I laboured under, slavishly reforming and sinning, fearing, reforming, repenting, (as I then thought it was,) and sinning, always breaking my good resolutions against sin. I may well say, in the words of the hymn:

"This is the way I long have sought," &c.

The heavenly time of my first love lasted about 16 or 17 months, from Dec. 27th, 1775, when I heard Mr. Romaine from Isa. xix. 20 to March or April, 1777; but the most bright part of it only lasted till about the latter part of 1776. The frame of my mind, in general, was all love, joy, and peace. Having my heart set at liberty, I could love God's commandments and word; I think I could do anything for Christ, or suffer anything for him. Christ was the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely to me. "Many waters cannot quench love." How precious to me was Solomon's Song and Ps. ciii. and lxxii.

But a few weeks after this sweet sunshine, this glorious first love dwindled away considerably, so that by degrees I grew very uncomfortable again.

On Whit Sunday, 1777, Mr. Romaine's sermon was on 1 Cor. ii. 11, 12: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man?" &c. This sermon was unspeakably blessed to my soul. He prayed much that the weak in faith might be built up and strengthened, that the mourners in Zion might be comforted; the answer of which fervent prayers of this good man I experienced at the Lord's table after sermon, and was much refreshed and strengthened.

I observe in my experience that the promises in God's book are of little use to me but as the Lord is pleased to apply them to my soul; for the very same promises which have comforted me at one time, perhaps at another time I draw no comfort from; so they are nothing unless that same faithful and unchangeable Jehovah who made them opens and applies them to my believing heart, made so by the Spirit of all grace and power.

I have often found Zech. xii. 10 very suitable to my state; also, John iii. 14-18, 36. These were comfortable passages to me. Also, 1 John i. 7, which is often deeply impressed upon my mind.

In March, 1778, Sabbath day morning, I heard Mr. Berridge, at Tottenham Court, from Isa. vi. 5-7. The last clause was applied to my soul; and on the Lord's day morning, Feb. 25th, 1781, I heard him preach from 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25: "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree," &c. He said, "Much depends on that little pronoun 'our,' in the text; but if you have been called out from the world, and are come to Christ for life and salvation, having felt the evil of sin, and desire holiness, and to live to the glory of God's grace, fear not to take the comfortable words of our text. Fear not to make those words your own, humbly appropriating them to your own souls. Silence all your doubts, assuredly believing that all your sins, past, present, and to come, were laid upon Christ; for the Lord has laid upon him the iniquity of all be-

lievers." With many other words did this dear man of God, as Peter of old, testify and exhort. In short, this was a soul-reviving feast to me.

For a very long time this promise has been one of the chief supports to my soul: "They shall praise the Lord that seek him. Your heart shall live for ever." I often pleaded this and such-like sweet promises in prayer at the throne of grace. I humbly trust I find at this time now my prayers in some measure answered. Also, I have had great support from Isa. xl. 28-31. Glory be to God, I now find many of my prayers turned into praises.

Once this scripture suddenly darted into my mind with great power: "Fear not thou, for I am with thee," &c.; with Jer. xxxi. 3: "I have loved thee," &c. Then was fulfilled to me (Isa. xxxiii. 17) a promise I have often pleaded before God in private. Poring still upon my sinfulness, vileness, and great unworthiness, and the desperate wickedness of my heart, this scripture soon after broke in upon my soul: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee;" "and yet," thought I, "I am full of spots of sin. O my Jesus, how is it that I am not now in hell, crying out for a drop of water to cool my parched tongue? It is because thy compassions fail not; therefore I am not consumed." Inexpressible and unspeakable was the joy which now flowed into my mind. I found myself all love and gratitude to my dear Saviour. In the course of the day, reading Isa. liv. 4, to the end of chapter, it was wonderfully applied to me. I found it very suitable to my case.

On Dec. 7th, 1777, Lord's day morning, after hearing Dr. Peckwell, at Tottenham Court, from Job xxxiii. 29, 30, I received the tokens of Christ's dying love at his table. In my way home, deeply meditating on what my soul had been engaged in, even looking to Jesus through the lattice of this comfortable ordinance, he condescended again to look upon me, and applied with power to my mind: "I have loved thee," &c. Then a thought sprang up: "But cannot I fall away, and perish?" "No," says God's word. (Heb. xiii. 5.) Christ satisfied the law for me. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. O what love to God will then spring up in the soul; what obedience of faith and love will follow. Thus the humbled sinner may go on repenting, believing, and rejoicing till death.

On the 11th, in the evening, as I was communing with my own heart in self-examination, these words of Christ came with sweet comfort to my mind: "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me, and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish." Sweet, precious, heart-cheering promises.

On Whit Sunday, May 14th, 1780, in the evening, I drew near to the Lord's table, at Orange Street Chapel. I bless God I here enjoyed a glimpse of glory, and sweet serenity of soul afterwards.

On Tuesday morning, July 18th, 1780, I heard Mr. Romaine, at Blackfriars, from Ps. cxxx. 5, 6. He spoke much of a waiting faith. Said he, "Wait for the Lord, trusting in his word, if it is 40 or 50 years before you have a full faith." (I suppose he meant full assur-

ance of faith.) "A waiting faith says thus: 'Relying on God's infallible word, the Lord helping me, I will wait; and in his own good time he will give me full assurance.'" He said, "Do the same when you have a cold heart; (Ps. cxlvii. 17, 18;) the same when in darkness, and when you have no light." (Isa. l. 10.) I knew this suited well the state of my soul, for I saw myself unworthy, utterly unworthy of the gracious promises of the gospel. My faith for some weeks has been at a very low ebb. My experience, at best and altogether, is much like Mr. Fearing's, Feeble Mind's, Ready to Halt's, &c., in the "Pilgrim's Progress." I was enabled comfortably to follow Mr. Berridge's sermon on Jer. xxxi. 18-20. His scriptural description of a true gospel repentance from this text tallied, in a blessed manner, with the Christian experience in my own soul; as did also this dear man of God's sermon on Isa. vi. 5-8.

About this time, I was greatly humbled by various afflictions I was exercised with; but I never enjoyed sweeter seasons than at this time of adversity and of trouble. All the former part of April also I was much afflicted in outward affairs, and in body; also not a little persecuted for righteousness' sake. This greatly tried my faith. These various kinds of afflictions discovered to me more the badness and hidden corruptions of my deceitful heart: " whatsoever doth make manifest is light." They discovered to me, in many shapes, the enmity of my heart, and my impatient and rebellious spirit. Now, undoubtedly, these corruptions lay in my heart, but were not before drawn out to my view. Grace has brought to light those hidden monsters of unbelief, impatience, carnal enmity, pride, self-will, wrath, &c. I thus conclude that these trials and afflictions by which I was exercised were sanctified to my soul.

Nov. 7, 1779.—On this much-to-be-remembered Lord's day, I heard Mr. Romaine in the morning from, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given," &c. In his sermon, he quoted Isa. lv.: "Ho, every one that thirsteth," &c. "Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this Man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." This last scripture came across my mind, or rather the words were darted into my mind with wonderful power. I immediately felt uncommon joy and peace flowing into my heart. A blessed, unspeakable calm ensued. It is impossible to express by words what I then felt. I praised the Lord with great freedom, liberty, and enlargement when at home on my knees. Then was fulfilled to me Isa. xii. 1, 2. I evidently felt my sins forgiven and blotted out, and experienced the truth of Mr. Hart's hymn:

"The sinner that by precious faith," &c.

O how comfortable was this precious hymn throughout to my soul. It ought to be written in letters of gold, as well as:

"The fountain of Christ," &c.

This Lord's day was a day of the Lord's power in my soul. (Ps. cx. 3.) I was made willing to receive Christ. I found sweet rest,

joy, and peace in believing. The promises were sealed on my heart. I felt the pardon of my sin, though I had experienced the pardoning love of God in a very evident manner, and in a lesser degree on many other occasions. I had also a blessed discovery of the love of God manifested to me when reading and meditating on John iii. 16, 17: "For God so loved the world," &c. This passage, ever since I was first convinced of sin, has been very precious to me. It is often like a staff to my soul when ready to sink in despair; and this also: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" and, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." The Lord has condescended many times to seal a fresh sense of his pardoning love to my soul since the first time that he did so. O my soul, thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged.

On Sunday evening, Dec. 10th, 1780, I went to St. Dunstan's, rather uncomfortable, dark, dull, and dead in my frame, expecting no particular or extraordinary blessing from the preaching; but the Lord met me in his sanctuary. Mr. Romaine preached from: "And I will shake all nations," &c. "That is, shake the elect in all nations by the terrors of Mount Sinai, convincing them of sin." Afterwards he referred to an infallible commentator on the text, even to Paul, as in Heb. xii. 24-29: "Some poor trembling, weak soul may say, 'I desire none but Christ; I have no other trust nor dependence but him; but I am afraid I shall not be able to hold out to the end.' Hast thou, poor soul, been shaken from thy sinful lusts and vile affections, and from all that this vain world can afford to satisfy thee? Art thou brought off from all self-dependence and confidence in the flesh, in thy own righteousness? Art thou brought to desire none but Christ? and hast thou been made willing to receive Christ as thy Lord, Saviour, and King, as well as Priest and Prophet? Then thou art a subject of this spiritual kingdom which cannot be shaken, but remains firm for ever. Thou hast received a kingdom which cannot be moved. Thou art 'kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.'" I had a precious and sweet visit from the Lord under this sermon, and beheld unspeakable glory in the text and the quotations from Scripture. When I got home they were wonderfully opened and applied to my soul, sweeping away my doubts, chasing the dulness, deadness, and darkness from my mind, and causing me to rejoice and glory in the Lord Jesus, in whom I have life and salvation. Mr. Romaine, in his concluding prayer, begged much that a great blessing might attend what he had been delivering. I believe his prayers were answered towards me then, and when I was returned home also.

On Wednesday evening, Dec. 13th, 1780, at Margaret Street Chapel, I received a blessing under Mr. Huntington, from Isa. xxxv. 3. I often was blessed under the ministry of this faithful servant of the Lord. Said he, "I would direct my discourse chiefly to you who have not seen your pardon clearly, or so clearly as you could wish or desire; for the hands in the text mean the hands of faith in weak believers; for I believe it possible for a person to be pardoned and justified, and yet not clearly to know it."

During the latter months of this year, 1780, Mr. Joss, every Tuesday evening at Tottenham Court Chapel, expounded in many sermons on 2 Cor. v. These discourses were very much blessed to my soul, I praise God.

(To be continued.)

THE TRUE CHRISTIAN DELINEATED.

(AUTHOR UNKNOWN.)

A CHRISTIAN, friend, is one of Adam's race,
Depraved by nature, but renew'd by grace;
No inward principle of good possessing
Till favour'd with the great imparted blessing.
Caught at the tempter's will in every snare,
And born a child of wrath, as others are.
A willing slave to that Satanic power
Which smiles with base intentions to devour.
Yet, heedless soul, he loved his bondage well,
Secure and thoughtless on the brink of hell;
Embraced his chains, obey'd the tyrant's laws,
A zealous servant in the devil's cause.
Till once without design he happ'd to stray,
(The God of grace and mercy led the way,)
Beneath an awful hill, where fire and smoke
In dreadful torrents from the summit broke.
Ætna, in all its horrors, can't compare,
Nor dread Vesuvius equal what was there;
For Sinai's mount the trembling sinner saw
And heard the dreadful thunderings of the law:
"Go, wicked rebel, hence, and die accurst,
The law condemns thee, and the law is just."
The Spirit open'd to the awaken'd soul
The solemn import of the sacred roll,
And conscience, starting from her heedless stand,
Appear'd a faithful witness near at hand.
Old sins, forgotten long, were now in view,
Of scarlet dye, and deepest crimson hue.
O'erwhelming scene! Where can the sinner fly?
Unfit to live, yet more unfit to die.
But die he must. Yet Gilead's balm is found,
And Gilead's good Physician heals the wound.
Convinced of sin the soul is led to view
The matchless wonders pardoning grace can do.
"Peace, troubled soul," the sacred Spirit cries,
And from the heavenly mansion downward flies;
Takes his abode where Satan reign'd before,
And, entered once, will never leave it more.
True faith embraces, though with trembling arms,
The dear Immanuel with his heavenly charms.
The new-born soul with sacred rapture cries,
"Father, thy law is just, but Jesus died;
My comfort, my rejoicing, all shall be,
Christ died and rose,—he died and rose for me.
He lives for me, for me he pleads above.
I'm lost in wonder at Immanuel's love;

My scarlet sins are wash'd in precious blood,
 My soul is cleansed in that atoning flood.
 Amazing thought that God should groan, should bleed;
 Yet none but God could answer sinners' need;
 No other sacrifice could sin atone;
 Dear Lord, 'twas thine, indeed; 'twas thine alone."

Is this the man we saw secure at ease?
 It is; he once was blind, but now he sees.
 Is this the man we saw in Sinai's smoke?
 'Tis he, yet Moses smiled when Jesus spoke.

Is this the wretch that dragg'd the devil's chain,
 Which gall'd his legs, yet never felt the pain?
 Thrice happy soul it is, it is the same,
 He's changed his master now, and changed his name.

Jesus he loves, he walks in wisdom's ways,
 Learns his commands, and as he learns obeys;
 Owns his corruptions strong, his graces few,
 Seeks pardoning mercy, grace to help anew;
 Goes out of self, his humble soul takes wing,
 To Jesus Christ, his Prophet, Priest, and King;
 Arm'd with his Saviour's strength against his foes,
 Into the field the faithful champion goes.

The world and Satan join, and find within
 A powerful helpmate—strong indwelling sin.
 But if the Christian's Captain heads the fight,
 His foes retire and take a hasty flight.

If he alone attempts the dangerous fray,
 He's overcome, and Satan gets the day.
 Yet if he falls he also shall arise,
 Secure and safe beneath his Father's eyes.

Thus through the wilderness he bends his way,
 Both in the stormy and the pleasant day;
 Flies to his heavenly Friend in every woe,
 His Friend supports him as he passes through.

Jordan appears! Why should the Christian shrink?
 A heavenly convoy waits him on the brink;
 His Saviour pass'd the rapid stream before,
 And death's attendant sting is now no more.

All good is his, the gloomy tyrant, Death,
 Smiles in his face, and asks the parting breath.
 His soul ascends, and finds a blissful place
 In heavenly mansions, thither brought by grace.

[If the Author be unknown, the above lines are both good poetry and sound divinity—a union not often found.—Ed.]

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. PARSONS, OF CHICHESTER.

My dear Son and Daughter in the Lord,—May the shield of Abraham, the fear of Isaac, and the crown of David be thine, through our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

I received your sweet epistle with the rest of the Lord's dear children's at C. It broke my hard heart, and led me to bless the

Lord's precious name with weeping and rejoicing to hear of the mercy of a good and gracious God to us poor black and hell-deserving sinners, in a precious Jesus; so that I do weep with them that weep, and rejoice with them that do rejoice. The day is fast hastening that our dear Jesus will come and make our joys complete in that eternal world of joy above with his ever-blessed self. Then he will be our everlasting light, and our days of mourning will be ended; and I believe that you will be part of my crown of labours and joy and of rejoicing in that glorious day when he shall come to be glorified in all his saints, and to be for ever admired in all them that believe, as God's best gift, the wonder of heaven, the glory of the Father, the fountain of everlasting love, light, happiness, holiness, truth, and peace, the admiration of angels, the endless song of praise and triumph of all his dear family. There we shall see him still wearing the dear marks and memorials of his death; for he appears in the midst of the throng as a lamb slain from the foundation of the world. "This is our God, we have waited for him. He will come and save us, and will wipe away all tears from our eyes," and lead us to living fountains of water, endless joy, everlasting love to the full, uninterrupted peace, without being disturbed, and we shall for ever see him as he is, and live for ever in his dear presence.

Cheer up! The prospect by faith is full in view; the world is all at our backs and heaven our eternal home in front. This was Abraham's city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God himself; and, blessed be his faithful name, he keeps it for us and us for that; consequently, will neither disappoint our faith nor cut off our hope: "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, has promised" us "who are kept by the power of God through faith." This, then, is the promise he hath given us,—eternal life; and this life is in his dear Son. Blessed for ever be his precious name, he has given us a knowledge of it; for we know that the Son of God "is come into our hearts, and hath given us an understanding that we might know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life;" nor shall the powers of hell, the united forces of men and devils, sins within or without, nor even death itself, ever dissolve this eternal union.

But, my dear friend, it is through much tribulation we must enter into this happy state of endless rest. We must often be called to walk in much darkness, mourning an absent God, and longing for the appearance of the day and for the spreading wings of the everlasting Sun of Righteousness to arise upon our hearts, to clear up our way, to shine upon his word, and upon our path, and into our dark understandings, to warm our cold affections, to cheer our desponding spirits, to comfort our drooping hearts, to revive and quicken our sinking souls, and to drive away all the beasts of prey, the dreadful monsters that range about the forest of the heart in the night of darkness and soul-desertion. But let the Sun arise, and they get them away into their dens. But expect this. As soon as night comes on again, they will crawl forth again and show their ugly heads, with the lion of the infernal pit roaring to strike fear

and terror all around, to alarm the poor timid sheep of Christ; but never fear. If he gets a lamb out of the fold, our spiritual David will rise up against him with his almighty power, and take him out of his devouring jaws.

My dear son and daughter, expect to labour under much darkness, deadness, coldness, hardness of heart, and often to grovel and fight against the awful abominations of your own hearts, the world, and the devil and his cruel instruments. Groan under the rod of the oppressor, cry beneath afflictions, sigh under a body of sin and death, often overwhelmed in trouble, but fear not. We shall be more than conquerors through him that loved us.

I am to preach in London to-morrow week, and am to continue so to do every week, if the Lord will, and if the people like the poor feeble instrument.

God bless my son and daughter. So prays your poor Pastor,
Hammersmith, June 13th, 1828. E. PARSONS.

A VOICE FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE.

My dear Friend,—I must not any longer defer answering your affectionate letter, lest you should think I am indifferent to your friendship. When I do not speedily reply to you, you should not stand upon the common rule of epistolary correspondence, to write only letter for letter; but, having so much time on your hands, should write again, and thus show that you have, with me at least, bidden adieu to formal rules and frigid ceremony.

How very precious is a season of refreshing from the presence of the Lord! I think I should not feel it a trouble to walk some miles to hear one whom I could respect and love for the truth's sake. When I am not preaching, I have often longed to hear the word of life from some experimental preacher; for my soul has thirsted for God, the living God; but, although there are men in the neighbourhood who are called "preachers of truth," there is but one that I could hear with any respect; and even he would make me uncomfortable, for I know he has spoken against the ordinance of baptism, and that his preaching is far from separating and searching, and builds up those who, I believe, need to be pulled down. Still, I believe he is a gracious man; at least I have heard things which have given me some reason to think so. He is an old man, and seems to be breaking up.

I can enter somewhat into the feelings of those who have not the preached word, and yet long for it more than their necessary food; but I know that when this is withheld, the Lord can, and does, feed by other means his little "flock of slaughter." I find a word, dropping upon the heart like dew, sweet indeed, when my heart has long been like the mountains of Gilboa; and, if I could have my desire, I should be often singing, "My cup runneth over." But then I could not, I am sure, enter minutely into the trials, fears, wants, and perplexing thoughts and dispensations which the Lord's dear people are exercised with. On the mount, we can tell of deli-

verance from the dark valley; but, in and coming out of the valley, we can describe, from feeling, the slippery ways, crooked turnings, ups and downs, and also the lifts and helps, guidance and support, encouragements, sights, and glimpses of the Lord, views of the land that is very far off; confidence in doubt; strength made perfect in weakness; comfort in sorrow; and little way-marks, stepping stones, peculiar features of the road, and other things which many are anxiously seeking to have pointed out to them. I remember well when I used to sit almost breathless with anxiety when anything relating to the tokens of grace in the soul were, as I thought, about to be spoken of, and how disappointed I was when the doctrinal minister said nothing of my peculiar difficulties and sorrows, but merely quoted, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." This, however, was something to me, and I could say that a crumb in a text, quoted but not opened, was better than no bread; for I needed no one to tell me that I could not do the things that I would, nor that I had a great conflict to endure in my soul from morning to night. But then I wanted to be sure that it was really the new and the old nature striving against each other. I was desirous of a "true token" that I could not be deceived in; something to assure me that I was "born again," and saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation. I never heard the necessity of the demonstration of the Spirit and power explained; but it was the very thing I wanted to feel, and for which I pined. Man could not satisfy me; and, indeed, no one seemed to feel as I did, so filthy, with such a black, unbelieving heart, so dreadfully tempted to unutterable blasphemies and to vile sins which made me cry, I may say, night and day to the Lord for help. And well do I remember the spot where, as I walked in the street, my soul had such a view of Christ as my eternal portion that I knew him to be mine for life, for death, for ever. I am sure that if he had appeared to my bodily eyes, I could not have seen him more clearly, nor have felt more joy and peace in believing. He was my all. I wanted nothing more. But after this, into what trouble did I again fall. No one knows what I have suffered at different times in my soul, and no one ever will know in this world.

But I am letting my pen run on about myself, as I very rarely do. I will not, however, say any more, or I shall send you a letter long enough for two letters. As it is, this which I have written is for your own eyes alone. I did not think of telling you what I have. An old woman once said, in my hearing, that when she had a new crock or vessel, she put only a little water into it at first, and, if that ran out, of course she put no more into it. You will understand my meaning.

My love to Mr. and Mrs. D., and all the friends, as also to Mr. G., when you see him. We are much attached to him; here, and wish he was nearer to us, that we might often see him.

Yours affectionately in the truth,

Stoke, 24th Dec., 1846.

G. S. B. ISBELL.

A LETTER BY THE LATE MR. H. FOWLER.

My dear Brother,—I thank you for your long and edifying epistle, which I perused on my return from Sussex last Friday.

I have had a rambling summer, and now I think I must be at anchor till 1836,—I mean stop at home. My mind is ever restless. At home and abroad, all seems alike. A wretched defiled nature seems to spoil all. That life should be maintained under all these deplorable, mortifying things, is to me a wonderful mystery. I sometimes, indeed, fear that it is mere knowledge without life; and what is a man's religion worth if he be destitute of life? The Lord revive his work. The further I go, the more I am puzzled and perplexed. If my salvation depended in the smallest measure on myself, I certainly should miss the prize.

I find by yours that you tread in tribulation's path also.

“It is the way; it must be so.”

Our poor flesh dislikes it much, but in the path of tribulation all the worthies have trodden who have gone before; and I am glad to perceive you expect *much* tribulation. Your many complaints are precisely my own. I have little faith and much unbelief,—much hardness, much stupidity, much impatience, with a train of desperate lusts, too devilish to name. God's fiery furnace, as you justly remark, has made the dross manifest. But grace reigns, and must reign, till we possess the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. Our faith does not give efficacy to the promise, but the promise gives virtue and power to our faith. “And this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”

I am glad that my testimony was of some help to you. I certainly found some help from God when I was with you, if I am not deceived. I have it in my heart to visit you again at some future period; but such are my engagements at present that I can fix no time. If I should go, it would be for two or three Lord's days. The Lord can make the path plain, I know; and if I have anything to do at Nottingham, he will so direct and make a way.

I am better in health than when I saw you. Travelling agrees well with me, and rouses my dull nerves; but this evil attends it, it takes me away from my books, and unsettles my mind for study. But I am obliged to sigh and beg for text and sermon as I go along, and very seldom receive any answer till I get into the pulpit; and then, after I have done, I have often to look over my poor sermon and put my mouth in the dust. The Lord knoweth I lie not.

I saw brother Cowper, and dined with him last Wednesday, in Sussex. He was quite well. He is to continue two Lord's days more in Sussex. I am glad he was well received among you.

My love to all friends in Christ. Grace and peace from God our Father and from Jesus Christ rest upon you.

Ever yours, for Christ's sake,

London, Oct. 5, 1835.

HENRY FOWLER.

THE end of the afflictions of the saints is the glory of God, and therefore they ought to be precious to us.—*Old Bible*, 1610.

THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN'S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS.

Dear Sir,—I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken in addressing a few lines to you. I have had a great wish to do so since reading your piece in the May "Standard" on growing in grace. Though you are personally unknown to me, yet, from reading your pieces in the "Standard," I feel united with you in spirit. I would there were more of the pieces, for they come so seldom. I have found them profitable to my soul, and particularly the one that is the cause of my writing a line to you; for I have felt the truth of it in my own heart, and I desire to speak of it to the praise and glory of God's grace.

Though I still feel myself the vilest and weakest of God's people, less than the least of all saints, and not worthy the notice of God or man, yet, be astonished, O earth, that the Lord has blest me with a firm persuasion and humble confidence that I am a monument of his mercy, and subject of his grace. But often daily do I look at myself and say, "Can it be that I am an heir of God and joint-heir with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?" But faith looks at what God has done in me; and this shall stand when the world is in flames; for every man's work shall be made manifest, for "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." It has been the cry of my soul for the Lord to search me, and try me, and lead me in the way everlasting, and to bring me to the light, that my deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God, that God himself has wrought them in my heart by his most Holy Spirit. Sure I am that nothing but this will stand the trying day and the storms and temptations that beset us in this wilderness world. Nothing but the life of Christ in the soul shall withstand them all, till we at last come off more than conquerors through him that hath loved us, casting off the sin which infects this mortal body, and flying into the embraces of our precious Christ, who will raise us up by his Spirit that dwelleth in us.

O precious time! My soul longs for it; for then, as the poet says, we

"Leave dull mortality behind,
And fly beyond the grave."

No more fighting then; for no sin nor devil can enter there to try to gain dominion over us. What a mercy it is that even now God's promise is that sin shall not have dominion over us, but "grace shall reign, through righteousness, unto eternal life." Until I shall be called to enter therein, may the Lord enable me to war a good warfare; not to expect peace and uninterrupted rest, but to take up my cross daily and follow Christ. I know, by blessed experience, that the nearer we are thus kept, whether in the enjoyment of his blessed peace and love, or seeking after him, that he would return and give one smile of approbation, saying, "This is the way; walk ye in it;" the more will sin, and self, and one's own righteousness be abhorred; and we would, as it were, cast it off with

contempt, counting it all dung and dross that we may win Christ and be found in him.

This is how I find it. I more fully discover the company of two armies; but if a Christian does not, from the leading and teaching of God in his soul, get more established in this blessed truth and his own personal interest therein, which will in some good measure enable him to walk humbly yet boldly in God's fear, notwithstanding he may and will be much exercised with a body of sin and death, and a tempting devil, I should be ready to say, I know not what real Christianity is; but I dare not, I cannot say this. This seems a point that is but seldom touched upon; but I believe it is, as you say, for the want of more regarding the works of God's hand inwardly in us. This is what I would more especially call taking deep root downward and bearing fruit upward, feeling ourselves more firmly built on the Rock of Ages, than to discover our own weakness and what we are saved from. O what should I do without this Rock and the witness in my own heart that God himself has planted me thereon by his special grace, living in this dark part of the earth, where there is little in the ministry on which my soul can feed? But God is able to make up for the want of those means. This I have found, though it has been through much trial and conflict of soul, and it has been more in God's supporting and enabling me to bear up under it than in God's manifested presence, at least in speaking home promises of peace and comfort to my heart, as in times gone by; but it has taught me this; not to rebel and fret, but to be still and know that he is God. That is what I want more to do; for I know that he is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind; but I find this a difficult matter, the more so when the minister which I hear does not enter into my path, though he preaches the truth, but rather brings me into bondage and darkness. I find this very painful and trying to my spirit; so that were it not for the abiding witness in my heart that God has called me by his grace, and has promised never to leave or forsake me, but be with me to the end, I know not what I should do. But O the blessedness of being enabled to realise this in one's heart; so that, though surrounded with much conflict, yet at times to have the peace of God reigning therein. O may I not murmur because the Lord blesses me no more, but rather, as Hart says,

“Be thankful for present, and then ask for more.”

O may the Lord, if his blessed will, send more labourers into his vineyard, instructed in the growth of plants in the garden of grace, that they may not be stunted too much. How few there seem to be that can enter into the path of a Christian, except, as it were, in the first stages of experience, not entering into the troubles and exercises of a Christian who is in some small measure established in the truth as it is in Jesus. It is this which perplexes my mind sometimes, and makes me fear I am wrong altogether; for, if I am wrong in this, I am wrong all the way through. The length of my experience in divine life is not so long as some whom I hope well of, with whom I am connected, and I think they should know best; but

when I find them so doubtful in their own minds, it greatly perplexes me. May not a Christian experience much darkness and trouble of soul and yet be enabled to maintain, in some degree, his confidence in God's grace, remembering what he hath done for him in times past, how he hath led him and instructed him in his truth? Will this be fully lost sight of, though the comfort of it may be fled from our hearts, and we may say, "Is his mercy clean gone for ever? and will he be favourable no more?" But does the soul fully believe this? I think not, but rather says with David, "Though my soul is thus cast down within me, yet will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites and the hill Mizar,"—if there really be any of these times and places in the soul's experience. Not to rest therein in presumptuous confidence in God's grace and mercy. No. God forbid! I believe a soul in this spot cannot do that. I would loathe this as much as Arminianism. That is not it. That would not be growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; but I am alluding more particularly to the period in one's experience where it is said, "Whom shall he teach knowledge, or who shall he make to understand doctrine, but them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breasts?"

It is now little more than six years and a half since the Lord spoke pardon and peace to my heart, after nearly 12 months' anxiety and trouble of soul, though not to such an extent as I have read of some. I was from a child brought up to attend where what is called the truth was preached; but at this time, being just turned 19, God was pleased to show me what I was as a sinner, and I clearly saw that if I depended upon what I could do, I should be sure to go to hell. This led me to cry for mercy, but without hope of obtaining it, till after a few weeks, one evening when in great distress of mind, these words came sweetly to my mind: "I will blot out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins." This was some relief, but I was afraid to receive the words.

Several times after this did the Lord sweetly bless my soul with a hope in his mercy. I will name two more before the one which set my soul at happy liberty. I am giving you this short outline of myself, in hope that you can better tell what I mean; for I cannot write to you exactly as I should wish. Having always attended chapel, and not knowing exactly the time, or what it was that first convinced me of sin, my mind was greatly distressed. I thought, had I been like some I had read of, and then been convinced under the word, I might have known better it was the Lord's work; but now I can never know; and one time I thought I would give it up and not think any more about it, when these lines came so powerfully to my mind:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain."

Another time I took up to read Mr. M'Kenzie's sermon on the "Sealing of the Spirit." There he says, "When the Spirit quickens a

vessel of mercy, dead in sins, the exact time is not always known," &c. A few lines further I shall never forget, and the impression the remarks made. I looked back at what I had passed through, and felt a good hope that it was God's work, and that I should see greater things; but I went some weeks after this, anxiously longing and waiting with but little help till the day before the blessing came. I was exceedingly cast down, and seemed to have no hope; but after a time I was led to look back at the times I had experienced a hope in God's mercy. But that was not enough; I wanted something more, and in the morning these words followed me: "They shall look on him whom they have pierced, and mourn." I went into a room, sat down by myself, and was led to look at Calvary's scene; and I said, "Did my sins pierce Him?" Then was the burden removed from my heart, and peace and love reigned in its place. O blessed period! I hardly knew what to do. After two or three hours, I said, "Lord, can it be possible?" when these words sweetly dropped on my heart: "Yes, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Many times since has this been questioned, doubts and fears rising, and more of the evils of my heart brought to light, but the Lord has been pleased to confirm it again and again, and led me more into his blessed truth.

I could name more which, with what I have here named, after many exercises of soul as to the reality of them, seem to stand as Ebenezers by the way; but I must not enlarge further, but just say, I do not now so frequently have these blessings; but what a mercy to feel that the Lord hath not wholly forsaken me. I was a short time back in much darkness of soul, and I found rebellion began to work, but the Lord was pleased to stop me. I looked at the ministry under which I sit, and the state of my own heart, and felt persuaded I should have to pass through much trouble, and could think for a little time of nothing but this: "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat;" but I had a good hope that God would sustain me. I at the time heard a sermon read from the words: "Be still, and know that I am God." How suitable it was!

I must proceed no further, but again beg of you to pardon the freedom with which I have written. If you would have the kindness to return a few lines, I should esteem it a great favour.

May the Lord abundantly bless you in all your labours for the good of souls.

I am, though unknown, yours, &c., for Christ's sake,
September, 1852.

J. W.

[The above letter was written to the late John Kay, author of the piece referred to in the May "Standard" of 1852, Vol. XVIII.—ED.]

As in a family where there is much business to be done, even the little children bear a part, according to their strength: "The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire, the women knead the dough;" so in the family of Christ, the weakest Christian is serviceable to the strong.—*Flavel*.

REVIEW.

Memoir of the late Mr. John Grace, written by his afflicted Widow. With Funeral Service and Three Sermons by Mr. George Abrahams. Brighton: Chas. E. Verrall, 4, Prince Albert Street.

OUR chief object in noticing this little work is the opportunity which it gives us of recording the last moments of a personal and dear friend and brother in the Lord, and of paying a slight tribute of affection to his memory.

It is rather more than 10 years since we so far knew the late Mr. Grace as to become personally and, indeed, we may say, intimately acquainted with him. We were supplying at Eden Street Chapel, London, in the summer of 1854, when one morning he quite unexpectedly, and without any mutual friend or other introduction, walked into our lodgings to make our personal acquaintance; for, though well known to each other by name, we had never met but once before, in the year 1838, and that only for so short a time as to afford no opportunity for anything beyond a little conversation. One very marked feature of his character was that he was "a lover of good men;" and believing, we suppose, that the unworthy writer of these lines was one of these "good men," he felt desirous to form his acquaintance. He therefore came and introduced himself. We at once fell into spiritual conversation, and a mutual union was, as we have reason to believe, found and felt, which not only subsisted without break, but, we may say, increased rather than diminished up to the time of his removal from this scene of sin and sorrow.

All who had the privilege of his friendship will long remember his open, cheerful, affectionate manner and address; his peaceable, tender spirit; and that where he had once formed a spiritual friendship, how firmly and uninterruptedly he maintained it by correspondence or conversation. He would often come out of his way on his journeys to the north, just to spend a few hours with us, and generally entered the room with such words as, "Let brotherly love continue." Divine things were uppermost with him in heart and tongue; and so at once we usually got, not into carnal, worldly conversation, or a long rigmarole of outside work, but into some sweet living and daily experience, into which we could see eye to eye and feel heart to heart. The life of God was much kept up in his soul, and therefore freely flowed out of his mouth. (John vii. 38; Matt. xii. 35.) He was not resting upon dry doctrine, nor even a past experience which, for want of continual renewings, had become stale and mouldy. A daily life of faith in the Son of God, daily exercises from a body of sin and death, daily communications of grace and strength out of the fulness of a risen Mediator, and all kept up by a spirit of prayer and supplications was both his experience and his theme. A dead, carnal, lifeless profession was his abhorrence. Life in the soul, feeling in the heart, communion with the Lord—in a word, a daily, living, feeling,

spiritual, and supernatural religion was what he knew for himself and what he looked for in others; and where he found not this, whatever were the pretensions, however correct the creed, plausible the tongue, or consistent the conduct, there, as he had no satisfaction, so he had no union or communion. But with all this there was no cant, no sanctimonious long face, or drawling, whining phrases; no putting on of a kind of mock spirituality, whereby so many try to deceive themselves and others. We never knew a more spiritually-minded man, and yet nothing of this mock spirituality or feigned humility was visible in him. Spirituality, indeed, of mind and of conversation he had; but with all this delight in spiritual things, there was a most pleasing frankness and openness. He would ask about the wife and family, have a cheerful word for the little ones—now with us no longer little ones, the olive-branches round the table, little and big, for he had not only a friendly but a fatherly heart. Thus he was a welcome guest wherever he went; for, without any worldliness or unbecoming lightness on the one hand, or pharisaic austerity on the other, he could so blend spiritual things in his conversation with passing occurrences, that there was nothing repulsive in his discourse on heavenly things, even to those who could not experimentally enter into their meaning or their fulness. But what made his conversation to be seasoned with salt was, that he had a good experience both of law and gospel; and sometimes at the breakfast or dinner table he would relate with much feeling some very marked and blessed things which he had tasted, felt, and handled in his own soul. The last time that he was with us at our present abode he gave us, after dinner, an account of the sweet deliverance which he received under Mr. Vinall when he rode so many miles to hear him on a week evening, and the deep exercises of his soul previously, with the fears and faintings of his deferred hope. In a similar way he would often refer to his early days, when he sat under Mr. Vinall's ministry, and whom he loved and valued as his spiritual father, though by no means insensible to his peculiar infirmities. The present low state of vital godliness in the churches, the want of dew, unction, and power in the ministry, compared with the days of Mr. Huntington and his immediate followers, as Mr. Vinall, &c., the carnality of professors generally, and the levity both in conversation and conduct which so stamps the generation in which our days are cast, were things which he deeply lamented and deplored. His own soul being kept alive and fruitful, he saw all the more clearly and felt the more deeply the want of life and fruitfulness in others. And yet with all this, he was not censorious or bitter. We never knew him guilty of that common yet detestable practice of picking holes in other men's or ministers' coats, and, under a show of a wonderful concern for holiness of speech and life, slandering and backbiting friends; nor did we ever find him spurring and flogging old nature, as if the creature, by a little extra exertion, could be made to perform spiritual acts. He did not thus belie either his knowledge or his profession. By grace alone he knew he was what he was; and without this grace in others

he equally well knew that as there could be no beginning, so there could be no advance in the divine life.

But besides these there were other noticeable features also in his Christian character which much commended both his profession and his ministry to those who knew and loved the grace of God in him. Amongst them was his great amiability of disposition and readiness to do good. He had naturally an active and, indeed, we may say a business mind; and as this was united to much natural amiability of disposition and was guided and directed by the love and spirit of the gospel, he was always ready for every good word and work. He was favoured also with a large congregation and a liberal people to help him forward; and, thus aided and seconded, he was always ready to do good in relieving the poor and needy, and taking up any destitute case which was commended to his conscience. In this way, by the liberality of his congregation during the Lancashire distress, he was able to afford timely help to many places in the North, and took a journey thither to see for himself the real state of things, and to have the pleasure of personally distributing it. Coupled with this amiable and affectionate disposition, we must add that he was possessed of a very liberal spirit, hating everything stingy and mean, and was ever ready to show kindness and liberality to his friends even when not needed* by them.

Of his ministry we do not feel in the same position to speak as freely and clearly as we have spoken of his personal character, from this simple circumstance, that we never, to our recollection, heard him preach above three or four times. But, as far as we could thus judge, he seemed possessed of considerable gifts, and to have not only a good knowledge of the word, but a great readiness in bringing forward passages and especially scriptural characters and personages in connection with his subject. This aptness of bringing forward scriptural proofs and illustrations not only gave a liveliness to his preaching and a force to his words; but much made up for his want of order; for it must be confessed that he did not usually carry into his discourses that orderly arrangement which so distinguished him in other things. He had also a nice and forcible way of quoting hymns, and especially those of his prime favourite, Hart, which backed his words with sweetness as well as authority. But

* Dropping the editorial "we," I cannot help mentioning that when he came to see me on his journeys northward, he would generally bring with him a basket of fish caught that morning, or some book which he thought I might like to possess. These things may seem trifles; but trifles, as they are called, often show men's real spirit more than larger matters; for the former are the free spontaneous flowings forth of the disposition, whilst the latter are often forced upon men by circumstances. But, besides these presents, thinking that I wanted some better table than I possessed for my letters and papers, he named it amongst his friends, and, to my surprise, on reaching home one day two or three years ago, I found in my room a very handsome library table, sent free to my door, accompanied by a kind letter, that it was given to me by himself and friends as a testimony to my long labours in the cause of truth. I love to mention these things as a little memento of my esteem and affection for him.—J. C. P.

what made his ministry so useful and acceptable was the living spring of experience by which it was fed. Gifts, the greatest and most splendid, soon dry up, or pall and wear, unless they are continually fed by grace. But he had the living water, of which the Lord spake, springing up into everlasting life. (John iv. 14.) He was also at a point about his religion and experience, that it was from God. He knew his standing, and could, therefore, speak with decision and power. He dwelt a good deal when we heard him, as we believe was usually the case, on his own experience, which, being unmistakeably the work of God, gave point and edge to his words. Thus, without being so separating as some are in word, he was more separating in deed; for nothing in our judgment is so separating as a good and sound experience, as it appeals so directly to the conscience; and, if there be any feeling, is so calculated to raise up the personal inquiry, "What know I of these things?" The Lord, as we have every reason to believe, much honoured his ministry. Again and again by letter, for we frequently corresponded, or in conversation, when we met, would he relate most marked instances of the blessing of God on his ministry. At Brighton he had many hearers from London, and indeed all parts of the kingdom, who had come there for health and change of air. Thus he could cast a wider net than most of his ministerial brethren, and many good fish were caught in it who had before swum carelessly in the sea.*

His was not a long, though in its first attack a somewhat sudden and unexpected illness, and he was mercifully dealt with, and most friendly and graciously supported in and under it. He had not what people call his peace to make, or a God to find on his death-bed. His loins were already girt and his light burning; and, reclining on the everlasting arms laid beneath him, he gently passed away into the presence of the Lord, whom he so dearly loved and had so long and faithfully served.

But we shall leave his bereaved widow to relate his last days here below in the following extract from the Memoir at the head of the present article, which also contains some account of his funeral, and three sermons preached by Mr. Abrahams on the Lord's day and the Tuesday evening afterwards.

"About three weeks before the death of my dear departed husband, he said to himself, 'Justified, sanctified, glorified. O! Who could do that *but Thou?* O that I could feel my soul drawn out in holy longings after a precious Jesus!' He paused awhile, then went on, "'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with him there is mercy, and with him plenteous redemption.'" In a moment afterwards, he said, 'The Lord has returned to Jerusalem with mercies. These are some of the former days.' He then continued to bless and praise God for his goodness and mercies to him, and talking to the Lord for a long time, and communing with him as a man would talk to his friend, and preached quite a sermon, dividing it into heads.

* Many persons of rank and wealth, as is well known, resort during the season to Brighton. These have, of course, a retinue of servants. To many of these servants Mr. Grace's ministry was singularly owned and blessed. We have often thought of the sovereign grace of God in this. The master or the mistress is passed by. They must go to church; the servant creeps into the chapel, where grace lays hold of his heart.

“This happy frame of mind lasted some days. Prior to that, he had been brought very low, both in body and mind, and quite thought one night he should die, but said, when apparently on the borders of an eternal world, *he had no fear, no dread*, and said he was not ‘afraid with any amazement.’

“From that time, he appeared to be kept in perfect peace, and, as he said,

‘To lie passive in his hands,
And know no will but his.’

And often said, ‘When I am restored, if it be the Lord’s will, how much I shall have to tell the dear people of what I have known and felt during this affliction. O the false, empty profession of the day! What I see of it I can never fully describe. How mercifully I am dealt with! No great castings down, no great joy; but perfect peace. I have had many afflictions, but this I shall always call my SWEET affliction. I could compare it to nothing but as if the Holy Spirit had been hovering over my spirit, and keeping the enemy from buffeting me or distressing me, and granting me that peace which none but those taught of God can know.’

“Some time afterwards he said, ‘Throughout this affliction I have not had *one murmuring thought*. I have been enabled to lie passive in the Lord’s hands; and the words that were so sweet to me in my last affliction have been equally sweet in this: “Whether I live, I live unto the Lord; and whether I die, I die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.” I have had no trouble, and Satan has never been permitted to harass me, but *no great joy*. The Lord has *graciously dealt* with me, in supporting my mind, well knowing I could not bear *much trouble* or *much joy* in my state of extreme weakness. Sometimes cast down, but then lifted up with the light of God’s countenance. I do not feel that the passiveness and quietness arise from a state of *carnal security*, for these words are often sweet to me, “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” “Their strength is to sit still.” This has been attended with the drawing of the affections heavenward, and sweet fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ.’

“At another time he said, ‘The Lord has been *my tender Nurse*, and his everlasting arms I have felt underneath me, to succour and sustain me. What a mercy that I have not had my religion to seek in my weak state! Sometimes I have no power to think or pray; the dear Lord *does all for me*, and *in me*. What a worthless worm I am to have the prayers of so many of the godly in the land!’

“Another time he said, ‘I think *I shall be restored*; and I should wish, before I leave home for a little change, to go into the pulpit before the minister begins, and tell the people what the Lord has done for me in my affliction. I shall tell them things I never knew before. The Lord has shown me *much* in my affliction.’

“On Thursday he had a good day, felt better, and was most peaceful and happy. He said many nice things respecting the Lord’s great mercy to him, in keeping his mind so perfectly calm; and said again, ‘This I shall always call my *sweet affliction*,—*not one murmuring thought* have I had during my illness, although no overflowing of joy. I should like to tell the people all about it, when able; but there will be nothing like the savour *afterwards*, that *I feel now*. I believe I shall be *raised up again*, and tell them things I never have done before. I think perhaps my long travellings are nearly over. I shall not go out very much,—probably only to Grantham and Littleport, and if it be the Lord’s will, once more into Yorkshire, to take my leave of the dear friends there; but I shall principally confine myself to *my own people* at home.’

“The doctor came in the evening, and expressed himself pleased and surprised at the visible improvement,—everything was going on better than could have been anticipated.

“He retired to rest; but at half-past eleven o’clock he awoke me by complaining that his supper (a little arrowroot and brandy) *made him feel uncomfortable*. Brandy and water (both hot and cold) were given to him. Afterwards hot flannels were applied, but *nothing relieved* him, although he said he had *no pain*, but flatulency made him feel ill.

"Various remedies were resorted to, but without success. About seven o'clock in the morning (Friday), he had a little essence of beef; and as soon as he had taken it, his breath seemed very short, and the difficulty of breathing increased. The doctors were sent for, but before they arrived his happy spirit *had fled*, his soul had returned to the God who gave it,—without a sigh, groan, or struggle!

"The immediate cause of his decease was flatulence pressing on the heart, which was *so feeble* that it was incapable of performing its office.

"One thing more I had forgotten. Not having written anything at the time, I must trust, as I said before, entirely to memory. A few days before his sudden removal, I saw him looking unusually sorrowful, when he said, 'I have been weeping, and telling the dear Lord I thought he was about to take me home, ever to be with him. "*Ever with the Lord!*" O! transporting thought!—and to be free from a body of sin and sorrow, and be for ever basking in the sunshine of his presence! He has been so precious to me, and his love has been so shed abroad in my heart. But now I think I shall be raised up again for awhile; but we know not for how long!'

"How merciful of the dear Lord to take him home without his even knowing he was dying, as how often has he said, both publicly and privately, 'How I shrink at the article of death!' (though not at the consequences). I am such a coward at suffering.'"

THE EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY OF MY MERCIFUL DELIVERANCE.

I WILL extol thee, Jesus, God and King,
 And will thy praises now and ever sing;
 For thou art great; thy greatness none can tell;
 Indeed, thy greatness is unsearchable.
 Though less than the least, I would a tribute raise,
 And tell thy wonders, to thy lasting praise;
 That those unborn may bless thee for thy grace
 To one of fallen Adam's sinful race.
 For who can so abundantly declare
 Thy love, like one that's saved from despair?
 Help me to utter, bring to memory, Lord,
 Thy goodness great, and now to me afford
 An unctuous recollection of the past,
 When all my sins behind thy back were cast;
 And fill with melody this heart of mine,
 That I may sing of righteousness divine.
 Gracious thou art, and of compassion full,
 (Thy anger slow to rise,) and merciful.
 Thy works shall praise thee, and thy saints shall bless
 Thy wisdom, grace, and blood and righteousness.
 The glory of thy kingdom, men shall tell,
 Talk of thy power to save from sin and hell;
 Thy mighty acts, and glorious majesty,
 The subject of their sweetest songs shall be.
 My mouth shall speak thy praises, dearest Lord,
 Who from destruction hast my soul restored;
 And let all flesh adore and bless his name
 Who to redeem his bride from heaven came;
 And, having done his glorious work, arose
 Triumphant o'er his and his people's foes.
 O magnify his name, ye sons of men
 Redeem'd from death, and say aloud, "Amen!"

A. H.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from p. 121.)

ONE of the first things which opened our eyes to see more clearly and distinctly the spiritual nature of the precepts of the New Testament was, observing their close and intimate connection *with the doctrines of the gospel*. This, indeed, presupposes a spiritual and experimental knowledge of the doctrines of grace; for unless we clearly see and experimentally feel the blessedness of salvation by sovereign grace, it is impossible to enter into the path of obedience which the Holy Ghost has traced out for the heirs of salvation to walk in. A son and a servant walk by two very different rules. As, then, in an earthly family, none can walk as a child who is not a child, so, in the heavenly family, none can walk as a son who is not a son. It is for want of seeing and knowing this for themselves that so many have stumbled over the precept, have carnalised and legalised it, and, full of confusion themselves, have done little else but confuse others. As this point, then, is what we may call, in military language, the key of the whole position,* which if we gain, and on which if we firmly stand, the whole field lies open to our view, we shall, at the risk of being somewhat prolix, dwell a little further upon it.

If our readers will refer to our last No., they will see this connection traced out in several examples from the epistles. And we may observe that these are not forced or solitary instances—examples picked by us for a certain purpose, but that so particular and, we may almost add, so jealous is the Holy Ghost in enforcing and preserving this connection, that there is scarcely a precept given which is not linked as with a golden thread to some gospel doctrine. Nay, what is still more striking, this connection of gospel precept with gospel doctrine is so closely preserved that there is scarcely even a warning against vile and open sins, which is not based upon and connected with a gospel truth or a gospel blessing. As an illustration of our meaning, (for this is a very tender subject, and needs careful handling) we will give one or two instances of this connection, which will, we trust, set this point in a clear light.

There can hardly be two worse sins,—that is, open sins, than lying and uncleanness. Should we not naturally expect that the apostle, if he touched upon these sins at all, would come down upon them with some terrific denunciation of the wrath of God against them, cutting and hacking at them with a two-edged sword? But no; that is not his way of handling either warnings or precepts. Let us see how he warns, and whether, even in what we may almost call these extreme cases, he leaves Mount Zion for a

* The key of a position is that particular spot on a field of battle, as some commanding height, on the possession and retaining of which chiefly depends the result of the engagement.

single moment to borrow the thunders of Mount Sinai. Not but that he does solemnly warn against such and other open sins, by declaring that those who live and die in them shall not inherit the kingdom of God. See for instance Gal. v. 21; Eph. v. 5, 6; Heb. x. 29-31, &c. But just observe how we are warned against these two sins by the precept in connection with the doctrines of the gospel.*

And, first, as to *lying*. How does the Holy Ghost warn us against that mean, low, and infamous sin,—the vice of thieves and cowards? “Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another.” (Eph. iv. 25.) Let us ask ourselves whether we should have ever thought of such an argument as this? Or, rather, ask yourself whether, if tempted to tell a lie, you were ever kept back by such a motive? If you say, as you probably will, “No,” does not your very answer show how little we have of the mind of Christ, how low and legal are our views of gospel precepts? Is it not, then, well worth observing on what peculiar, what high and gospel ground, the Holy Ghost here bids us not to lie to one another, but ever speak truth with our neighbour? It is “because we are members one of another.” If we had been asked to assign a reason why the children of God should not tell lies to each other, should we ever have thought of such a motive as this, that by so doing they would injure the union and communion which the members of the mystical body of Christ have with each other in him? Just look for a few moments at this reason, and observe the connection (for that is the point which we are endeavouring to show) between the precept always to speak the truth, and the gospel doctrine of the oneness of the body of Christ. Why should I not lie to my brother? Because we are both members of the body of Christ. If, then, I lie to my brother, I do the same thing spiritually as if I used my right hand to stab my left, employed my eye to thrust my leg into a dirty ditch, made use of my ear to put my foot under a carriage wheel. But when I speak truth to my brother, it is spiritually as when each member of my body truthfully performs its appointed function; as when my eye rightly guides my hand, when my hand rightly guards my eye, when my ear rightly warns my foot, and when my foot rightly takes my leg out of danger. Is not this high and holy ground? But what a close union it implies of the members of the mystical body of Christ, and what a spirit of communion and fellowship with their Head and with each other. A religion like this is almost lost out of the church. No wonder, then, that the precept is disregarded when its very foundation, if not wholly gone, is sunk out of sight.

Now look at the way in which the Holy Ghost warns us against

* Our readers will carefully bear in mind the distinction between warning against a sin and the actual commission of it. If the sin be committed, then comes in another rule,—the rule of church discipline, as in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. The warning has been neglected; then comes the rod,—the rod of God in the conscience or in chastisement, (1 Cor. xi. 30-32,) and the rod of the church in discipline. (1 Cor. iv. 21; v. 3-5, 11-13.)

sensual sins. The very nature of the subject compels us to treat it very cautiously. But, "unto the pure all things are pure;" (Titus i. 15;) and if we have brought the subject forward, it is with the sole object of throwing a fuller and clearer light upon our present point. Read, then, carefully 1 Cor. vi. 13-20. We say this as expecting you to have your Bible in your hand when you peruse our Meditations, and to compare with it all that we advance; for, if we speak not according to the word and the testimony, there is no light in us. (Isa. viii. 20.) Now just observe that there are three most blessed gospel truths here brought forward by the Holy Ghost as reasons against all unchastity. 1. That "*he who is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*" (1 Cor. vi. 17.) What an unsearchable depth of truth is lodged in that one verse,—union with Christ so close, so intimate, so near, so real as to be one spirit with him. To unfold this would be to open up the inmost heart, the deepest and warmest secrets of a living soul in its best and most favoured moments. But, as an illustration of this oneness of spirit with Christ, take what you have doubtless in greater or less measure felt, oneness of spirit with some dear child of God. There are those amongst the living family with whom we see eye to eye and feel heart to heart in the precious things of God. What a oneness of spirit is there between us when we see alike, think alike, feel alike in what is all our salvation and all our desire, and when our very souls flow into each other like two drops of oil, or as those of David and Jonathan. Now he that is joined to the Lord is in a similar, but in a much higher degree one spirit with him; therefore sees with him, thinks with him, feels with him. But see the conclusion drawn from this precious gospel doctrine of oneness of spirit with Christ, and how peculiar it is,—one we should never have thought of. This is the argument: Shall those who in *soul* are one spirit with Christ be in *body* one flesh with the vilest of the vile? (1 Cor. vi. 16.) What high, holy, and heavenly ground is this.

2. But now view another gospel doctrine in connection with the warning against uncleanness. It is this: *The body of the saint is the temple of the Holy Ghost.* (1 Cor. vi. 19.) Shall we, then, pollute that temple in which dwells so sacred and holy a Visitant by allowing in it any filthiness of walk and conduct? Would not this be like offering swine's blood upon God's altar, (Isa. lxvi. 3,) or committing the sin of Zimri (Numb. xxv. 6-15) in the very presence of the Holy Ghost? Do you not think that if you carried about with you a deep and daily sense that the Holy Ghost dwelt in your body as his living temple, it would make you very careful how you spoke and acted, lest you should by polluting his temple grieve that holy and divine Inhabitant?

3. And now observe the third gospel doctrine with which the precept is connected. "*Ye are bought with a price,*" (1 Cor. vi. 20,) a price no less than the blood of the son of God. What then follows? That "*ye are not your own*" in either body or soul, for Jesus has bought both for his own possession and his own glory. What, then, is the consequence? That you are neither your own

property or at your own disposal. And if so, what follows as the practical result? That you should glorify God in your body; therefore that it should be possessed in sanctification and honour; (1 Thess. iv. 4;) and in your spirit, which are both his. Is not this high and holy ground, so high and holy that we seem scarcely able to look at it, much less to reach it? But does it not amply prove our point,—the connection of gospel precepts with gospel doctrines, and that whether the Holy Ghost would warn us or exhort us, he always does so on the purest, clearest gospel ground; avoiding on the one hand, with the most holy and heavenly wisdom, the least tinge of what is legal, and yet on the other setting before us such a path of practical godliness, spiritual obedience, and Christian devotedness as to make our very hearts sink within us at the sight and sense of our inconsistencies and backslidings?

3. But we now approach our next point in examining the nature of the precept, viz., *the things which the precept specially inculcates*. And forgive us, dear readers, if here also we should be a little prolix. We want to bring you, as it were, face to face with the Scriptures; not merely to show you the outside of the temple, the buildings and the goodly stones; (Matt. xxiv. 1; Luke xxi. 5;) not merely to walk about Zion, and go round about her to tell the towers thereof; (Ps. xlvi. 12;) but to enter with you into the inner courts, nay, into the very sanctuary itself; for the veil was rent asunder from the top to the bottom when the Lord of life and glory died, and we may now have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. (Heb. x. 19.) It will be a great point gained if our Meditations bring you to a nearer and closer search into the treasures of the word; and a greater gain still if any of these treasures become experimentally your own by our laying them bare to your view, and faith being given you to embrace them in hope and love.

What, then, are the things which the precept inculcates? We may briefly answer that there is not a good word or a good work, not a grace or fruit of the Spirit, not an act of love toward God or man to which the precept does not call and invite the living family.

But as on this point, as well as on others connected with the nature of the precept, some misconception prevails, we will endeavour to clear it up according to the ability given us. There is an idea, then, generally prevalent, that the precept addresses itself chiefly to *outward* actions, and that its chief end and object is to guide and regulate the external life and conduct. Now, though this is to a certain extent true, it is but half true. The precept addresses itself mainly to the *inward* life, and to the *outward* life only in connection with the inward life. It is thus distinguished, root and branch, from the law—the “do and live;” for its call, its sweet harmonious voice, is not, “Do and live,” but, “Live and do.” It is, therefore, not so much a code of rules as a code of principles, a law put into the mind and written in the heart by the finger of God, according to one of the four special promises of the New Covenant, (Jer. xxxi. 33; Heb. viii. 10,) and not a stern, rigid list of doings and duties. Thus it

calls us to separation from the world; (2 Cor. vi. 17;) “to set our affection on things above;” (Col. iii. 2;) to be “transformed by the renewing of our mind;” (Rom. xii. 2;) to live and walk in the Spirit; (Gal. v. 16, 25;) “to put on the whole armour of God;” (Eph. vi. 11;) to “be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and supplication, to let our requests be made known unto God;” (Phil. iv. 6;) to “put off the old man, and to put on the new;” (Eph. iv. 22–24;) to “prove all things, and hold fast that which is good;” (1 Thess. v. 21;) to read, meditate, and give ourselves wholly to the things of God; (1 Tim. iv. 13–15;) to flee all covetousness and ungodliness, and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness; to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold of eternal life; (1 Tim. vi. 11, 12;) not to faint under our trials and afflictions, but to run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus. (Heb. xii. 1, 2, 5.) See how the precept, in such and similar exhortations, addresses itself to our inmost being, to our heart of hearts—that it is not a cold, dry catalogue of duties to be performed, but a gracious call to a living, loving obedience of spirit, and devotedness of affectionate service to him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.

But though this high and exalted character is the leading feature and peculiar blessedness of the precept, yet it graciously comes down to details, that we may have a rule of outward conduct, a code of practice as well as a code of principles. Thus, when the apostle has given us (Rom. xii.) a series of influential principles, as that “love should be without dissimulation;” that we should “abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good;” that we should be “kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another;” that we should “be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord;” that we should “rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, continue instant in prayer,” &c. &c.; when he has given us these general principles of a Christian life, he proceeds (chap. xiii.) to a more detailed line of conduct, such as subjection unto the higher powers; the payment of tribute to rulers, and their officers; the rendering to all of their dues, “custom to whom custom, fear (or reverence) to whom fear, honour to whom honour;” that we should “owe no man anything, but love;” that we should neither judge nor despise a Christian brother; (chap. xiv;) but “follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.” How comprehensive, yet how simple and beautiful a rule of Christian conduct is thus traced out in various minute details, which, were it but acted upon and carried out, would make gospel churches full inwardly of love and peace, and patterns outwardly of practical godliness. Thus we see that the precept has, if we may use the expression, an ascending and a descending voice. When it says, “Set your affection on things above;” “Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light;” “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free;” “Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, rejoice,” &c., it has an *ascending* voice, for it calls our hearts and

affections upward to heavenly things. But when it says, "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;" "Honour all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the king;" "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear;" "Wives, be ye in subjection to your own husbands; whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel," &c., it has a *descending* voice, for it comes down to the very minutiae of practical obedience, and issues directions for our daily walk and conversation. O what wisdom and grace shine forth in the precept when viewed in that light whereby all things are made manifest. (Eph. v. 13.) What a spirit of holiness, and yet what tender, affectionate condescension to our infirmities breathe through it. How graciously it blends the highest freedom and the deepest obedience; how it consults the glory of God and the good of man; how gently it leads us along in the only path where true peace can be found, and yet never scolds nor reproaches, though it sometimes reproves us; how it never winks at the least sin, ever maintaining the same undeviating line of gospel purity, and yet stoops down to the poorest sinner that lies at the footstool of mercy. And surely we may add that the more this perfect law of liberty is looked into, the more its beauty and blessedness become manifest; for we can truly say that even since we began our Meditations upon it, fresh light seems to have beamed upon our mind to see and feel the impress of the Holy Ghost visibly and powerfully stamped upon it, and to give us fresh proof that in it the living God speaks to the hearts and consciences of his people.

4. But now let us consider the next point which we proposed to examine, *viz.*, the *motives by which the precept is enforced.*

Actions spring from motives. What the wind is to a ship at sea, what steam is to an engine on the rail, or, to speak more correctly, what love is to a youthful lover, what honour is to a military officer, what ambition is to a statesman, such is motive to action. To take away love from the lover is like taking wind from the sail, and steam from the locomotive. No more longing for the appointed hour of meeting, no more swift and speedy step to the appointed place. So the precept has attached to it motives which give both wings to the soul and wings to the feet. We shall by and by hope to show how the Holy Ghost puts life into and applies these motives, for without his gracious breath they are ineffectual; but at present we shall merely speak of the motives themselves. If, then, you carefully examine the preceptive part of the epistles, you will find that the blessed Spirit, in giving a precept, almost always gives a *motive* with it. Take a few instances. Look at what we may almost call the first gospel precept: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate;" and see what a motive is attached to it: "And I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.) It is as if the Lord said, "Ye shall be no losers by coming out of the world, even if you must leave father and mother for my sake.

I will receive you into my kind care and tender embrace, and be a Father unto you, adopting you into my own family, and bestowing upon you every mercy and blessing which I give to my dear children." What a motive to take the step of coming out from among them, whatever sacrifices it may entail, and at once to plunge into the sea of mercy and love thus opened in the promise; instead of dallying with the world, like Lot's wife, or standing shivering on the brink, afraid to turn back, and afraid to go forward.

But take another instance of the connection between the precept and the motive attached to it: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Why? For what motive? "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." (Col. iii, 3, 4.) What an influential motive to set our affection on things above, that when Christ shall appear, we shall also appear with him in glory. Take another instance: "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for a helmet, the hope of salvation." (1 Thess. v. 6-8.) Here is a call to watchfulness and sobriety, and that, let it be observed, wholly of a gospel nature, as distinguished from mere legal watchfulness and sobriety; for it is by putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation. But what is the motive attached to the precept? "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." (1 Thess. v. 9, 10.)

We hope we shall not weary our readers if, as a further illustration of this point, we show how relative duties are similarly urged, as backed and influenced by gospel motives. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." (Col. iii. 22, 23.) Now, see the motive to influence and animate the servant to obey his master with a single heart and a single eye, in the fear of God, and with a view to his glory: "Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance; for ye serve the Lord Christ." (Col. iii. 24.) To see the full force of this, consider for a moment the case of the poor Roman slave, for to such was the precept originally addressed. He was at the entire disposal of his master, who could imprison, scourge, or crucify him at his pleasure, without interference or redress. The state of slaves has been, and ever must be, miserable and wretched in every clime, and in every age; but it has never been anywhere, or at any time, so thoroughly wretched as under the Roman empire.* Now, just

* As a proof, if a master were found dead in his house, all the slaves, sometimes three or four hundred in number, were immediately put to death, and often by the most cruel torments.

picture to yourself this poor slave called by grace, and serving a heathen master. See how he is bidden to obey in all things his master, not for fear of the lash, but from the fear of God; and mark the motive which is to support and cheer him under his daily toil, his slave's garb, his miserable food, his hourly exposure to the prison and the scourge. There was a blessed inheritance reserved for him, which would make ample amends for all his earthly servitude; for he was serving in spirit the Lord Christ, who would one day put him into possession of "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away." Now take the believing master. He shall have a precept too, and a motive also. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven." (Col. iv. 1.) The master must do what is just and equitable to the servant. Why? Because he also has "a Master in heaven" to whom he is bound, by every tie of Christian obedience, to do that which is just and right.

But we need not further pursue this part of our subject. Our object is not to dictate to our readers, but to put them, so to speak, on the right track, that, like the noble Bereans, they may search the Scriptures for themselves, to see whether these things be so. (Acts xvii. 11.) The Scriptures are much read, but for the most part little searched into, and less understood. If, then, the Lord will kindly use us to throw some little light upon his word, and especially the preceptive part of it, and if our spiritual readers, aided by this light, will prayerfully and carefully examine for themselves this portion of divine truth, they may, with God's help and blessing, derive both instruction and profit from it. We are nothing, and have nothing; but as the Lord works by instruments he can employ even our pen for the edification of his dear family. If our views of the precept are scriptural, the more they are examined, the more their agreement with the word of God will appear. Light will break more and more on the mind of the spiritual reader, as we hope it has on that of the writer; faith will be more and more strengthened as it becomes more fed and nurtured with the pure word of his grace; hope will cast forth her anchor more firmly in the glorious truths and promises as they are opened to the heart; and love will more warmly and tenderly embrace the truth, and especially Him who is the Truth itself, in whom centre all the promises and all the precepts, the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

Here, then, for the present we close our Meditations.

SALVATION by Christ has one kind of raiment here, another kind hereafter; here it is a kingdom of patience and hope, but there a kingdom of glorious employment! Here is the earnest, there is the fulness. When I would look over and see some glimpses of Canaan, a Jordan of difficulty stands in the way. What an adventure is it to go down into the depths of death, and the last concluding change! This is the last and great trial of faith, to venture all my hope in eternity at one cast; to expect to find the same God and Christ beyond the great gulph who appears on this side by the Spirit of his grace; to enjoy the same God to perfection whose name I now call upon by prayer.—*Dorney.*

JUNE 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JUNE, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from p. 153.)

On New Year's day, 1781, Mr. Joss preached from Isa. xliii. 1-3: "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee," &c. This precious text was wonderfully opened up to, and sealed upon my soul. I felt referred to Isa. xlv. 21, 22: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions," &c.; also, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

(There would be no end of relating the many promises that I have found sweetly applied at various times under various ministers, as well as in private prayer and reading God's word.)

I again had a fresh sense of the pardoning love of God sealed home upon my conscience. After that I believed I was sealed again with that Holy Spirit of promise. (See Eph. i. 13, 14; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Eph. iv. 30; 2 Cor. v. 5.) "Christ is mine and I am his." (Song ii. 16, with Gal. ii. 20.) I through grace believe the record and testimony of God concerning his Son. (Jno. iii. 33; 1 Jno. v. 11, 12; with Jno. iii. 16; vi. 47.) The God of hope filleth me with all joy and peace in believing, making me to abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. The Lord now did ratify, approve, and confirm my faith by the testimony and seal of his Holy Spirit.

"O what immortal joys I felt,
And raptures all divine,
When Jesus told me I was his,
And my Beloved mine."

O sweet manifestation! "Or ever I was aware, my soul made me like the chariots of Amminadib." Then again was fulfilled to me that promise, amongst many others, which I had so often pleaded, wrestling at the throne of grace: "Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." I am of the true circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and have no (allowed) confidence in the flesh. I desire to count all things but loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

I desire not to rejoice in any growth or progress in sanctification, but in Jesus Christ alone, who is my perfection. (1 Cor. i. 30, 31.) God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ. I rejoice that my name is written in heaven.

I was much visited with these words both before and after this: "I have loved thee with an everlasting love," &c.; "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," &c.; "God has spoken; in his holiness I will rejoice," &c. O how sweet are the promises when faith is in exercise! These were very precious also: "God hath made Christ to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "Their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." This also: "Christ is made unto us righteousness;" and one of the scriptures quoted by Mr. Joss on New Year's day, "The blood of Jesus Christ," &c. I here beheld my sin-wounded soul cured by the blood of Christ applied. I saw, as it were, Christ bleeding for me upon the cross.

"O what healing to the heart,
Doth Jesus' cross impart."

See the whole of this hymn. Lock Hymns, No. 47.*

O precious Christ! Thou art altogether lovely! "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." I also could see Christ's righteousness imputed to me, as I said before, &c. O how very sweet were these passages to my soul: "Now in Christ Jesus, I, who was some time afar off, am now made nigh by the blood of Christ;" for he is my peace; "Therefore, being justified by faith I have peace with God," &c. Therefore I, through mercy, "will greatly rejoice in the Lord; my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, and covered me with the robe of righteousness."

I attended the ordinance of the Lord's supper on the following Sunday, Jan. 7th, 1781. This, as Romaine observes, is an ordinance of praise and of thanksgiving also; therefore, "O Lord, I will praise thee. Though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. Behold, God is my salvation." "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name." I triumph and rejoice in this, that "Christ is the end of the law." This scripture also came with great power to my mind: "Through this man is preached unto thee forgiveness of sins," &c. Again, as several times before, I evidently felt my sins forgiven.

On Tuesday morning, Jan. 9th, Mr. Romaine preached from: "Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." He quoted Gal. iii. 6-10, about the blessedness of faithful Abraham, and said it was strictly from the original, "believing Abraham." The Lord shined on his word under this sermon. The Spirit witnessed that I had before, and do now put my trust in Christ. Being made partaker of this blessing, my soul on this day sang: "O Lord, I will

* The hymn will probably be given at some future time in the Supplement, as I have by me the book referred to, as well as Whitefield's, Toplady's, Lady Huntingdon's, Haweis's, Aldridge's, and others of that period.—J. G.

praise thee," &c. These words were truly the language of my believing soul. He spoke also of the happiness of believers in Christ, as a refuge at the last day, quoting Luke xxi. 25-29. O how sweet was this passage to my soul; Rom. x. 4.

On Sunday evening, Feb. 4th, I went to the Tabernacle, Moorfields, to hear Mr. Berridge from: "Behold, I lay in Zion," &c. He said, "The devil is often wanting to persuade weak believers that they have no faith at all, because they have not, as it were, all faith so as to remove mountains, and he very frequently distresses them; but let us turn to Scripture, and the marks there laid down, to know if we have faith. Is Christ precious to you? He is so to all that believe. Can you say with the psalmist, 'O Lord, whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none on earth I desire in comparison with thee?' Is Christ the only object of your love? Is he your joy, peace, &c.? Is he your only portion? Is he all and all to you? Do you deny sinful and righteous self, desiring to be found clothed in Christ's imputed righteousness?" I did not repent that I went so far in the bad weather to hear this sermon.

On Tuesday evening, Feb. 13th, at Tottenham Court, Mr. Berridge preached from: "Strengthen ye the weak hands," &c. He said this text was very suitable to his own state, for he found his state, at best, but weak. He greatly encouraged the weak, fearing believer, from the faithfulness of God to fulfil his promises to them. Though they may wait at the pool's mouth 20 or 30 years, he will come where he has given a waiting faith; most assuredly he will come to such.

The following morning, as I was on my knees praying over the text and following verses, these words came to my mind with much power and comfort: "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent. Has he said, and shall he not do it? Or has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Mr. Berridge said, "What will the Lord do when he comes with full power to his waiting, trusting, humble disciples? The answer is in the verses following the text: 'Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,' &c. In other words, they shall then enjoy the full assurance of faith; for there are three degrees of faith,—*faith*, the *assurance* of faith, and the *full* assurance of faith."

On the morning of Lord's day, Feb. 18th, I heard Mr. Berridge preach from Luke i. 76-80. In the course of his sermon he said, "How does the Lord give knowledge of salvation, and visit his people? Thus; when salvation and pardon of sin is proclaimed through the blood of Jesus Christ, he seals the promises from his word on the hearts of his chosen ones by the power of his Holy Spirit." It appeared very clear to me that I had experienced something of this sealing of this precious knowledge of salvation by the remission of my sins. The Dayspring from on high, Jesus Christ, has visited me at different times. A day much to be remembered by me. Mr. B. said, "You who have received the knowledge of salvation by the remission of your sins, still press forward; rest not in any present attainments, but follow on to know the Lord. Rest

not in any present attainments whatever. The more you know of Christ, still desire greater manifestations of his love and glory; greater and stronger manifestations pray for and expect from the Lord. Still, while here below, you travel on. Open wide your mouth, and the Lord will fill it." Again. "The Lord bids you grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Seek more acquaintance with this blessed Saviour. Such happy souls as have received the Spirit of adoption enabling them to cry, 'Abba, Father,' are enabled to praise the Lord for his redeeming love to them. I remember the time when I could pray, but could not praise. Such are crucified with Christ. They can truly say, 'I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.'"

N.B.—I wrote the last two and part of this in such joy and holy rapture that I forgot to put some words in their right places; so that afterwards I was obliged to write them at the top. I wrote it with such elevation of spirit, joy, holy rapture, and ecstasy, and transport that I was, as it were, caught up to heaven and in paradise.

For the first two months of this year, 1781, I enjoyed great and sweet manifestations of my Redeemer's love to my soul; but though then I was on the mount, yet at the beginning of March I was brought into the valley of humiliation, for I was sadly beset with my inward corruptions. They were very violent and strong, especially my stubborn besetting sin, which was ready to break out outwardly; but this word supported me: "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." I say I had this promise given me, knowing that I had before found sweet rest in Jesus. I pleaded the above promise at the throne of grace, triumphing in the victory of that Jesus who had delivered me from the guilt of sin, and would also, in his own good time, deliver me from the tyranny of this hell-born tyrant and monster. Therefore, in the triumphing language of faith, I sang the soliloquy to my soul: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee; for thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from (finally) falling." I say, in the triumphant language of faith I sang this soliloquy to my soul. Undoubtedly, the Lord this way brings me to see the badness of my heart, and my utter weakness and helplessness. He brings me this bitter way, after the sweet way, that I may see the vile abominations in my own breast. These inward temptations cause me to see, more and more, in the light of the Holy Spirit, the wickedness of my heart, and of my weakness to resist sin; for I now see so much of the vileness of my heart and of my weakness to resist any outward sin, proceeding from that filthy fountain, that I am always afraid of bringing a reproach upon the gospel by my outward conduct. O that my light might shine before men, that they, beholding my upright walk, might glorify my Father who is in heaven. O that they which are without might behold in me a good conversa-

tion, and upright behaviour towards them, from the active principle of grace implanted in me! I believe the Lord will deliver my feet from falling; for it is written: "He will keep the feet of his saints."

On Lord's day morning, March 18th, I heard Mr. Romaine, from Titus iii. 4-8. He said, "The believer's privilege is to say, 'I am now perfect in Christ, quite complete in him. I am now as I would wish to die. I have only the blood and righteousness of my Redeemer to plead at the judgment-seat or bar of God.'" He observed, "The more you believe, the more peace and love you will have. The love of God in the heart is holiness." I had sweet and precious meltings of soul under this sermon. It was a sweet, refreshing season to me.

On April 5th, Mr. Romaine's evening lecture at St. Dunstan's was on Isa. xix. He dwelt a long time on verse 20. He said, "The oppressors of the crying, awakened soul are many and strong. They have a great deal of sin, legality, and unbelief to grapple with. In this distress, a great Saviour is sent to deliver them, even the great and eternal God himself, Jesus Christ, the God-Man. He sets these poor captive souls at liberty in his own appointed time and way, in the day of his power." He said a great deal more than I can even attempt to write down here.

Towards the middle part of April, I laboured under a most violent depression of spirits, much greater than usual. O what a sinful sink or fountain of sin is my corrupt heart! My wicked, vile, deceitful heart! I am frightened when I look into myself, and am filled with terror. This increases my nervous disorder more and more. I was for some weeks, as it were, shaken over hell. I thought I should have run mad and distracted. Everybody took notice of my extraordinary dulness. I walked and ran about the streets and fields by myself, like one distracted and deprived of reason. "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled." I found Psalm li. and some others very suitable to my case; also Isa. l. 10. My memory, too, was greatly impaired; but as I was walking in Hyde Park one evening, (and a pleasant, serene evening it was,) accused for sin from all quarters,—from my conscience, from Satan, &c., this scripture came across my mind: Rom. viii. 33, 34; and on the back of that, Rom. viii. 1. Immediately an uncommon calm, peace, and joy took the place of great agitation in my breast, inexpressible and unutterable. Thus I was delivered from this conflict.

On Thursday evening, May 18th, Mr. Romaine was on Isa. xxviii. When on verse 6, he said, "Happy and safe are they who have built on this sure foundation. They are as safe as if in heaven, and enjoy a foretaste of heaven here below. What can give greater joy, peace, and satisfaction than pardon?" On verse 16 he said, "This foundation has been tried by many, and found sure. This passage is many times quoted in the New Testament."

I had a glorious view of Christ under a sermon of Mr. Romaine's on Whit Monday morning, June 4th, 1781, from John xiv. 18. He said, "When the soul is made willing to come to Christ, when the

convinced, sensible sinner can come, when it is given him to come to Christ, he is that moment justified and can by the Spirit call God his Father." He said many other things to other purpose, and the Spirit shining on my past experience was unspeakably glorious to me indeed. I looked back to that happy time with me, December 27th, 1775, when the Lord spoke to my soul from these very scriptures. He said, "The word 'comfortless' in the original is 'orphans.' This is exactly our state by nature. But," said he, "the word 'comfortless' is not a bad translation." He exhorted much not to rest in experiences or comforts, but to be coming daily to Christ for fresh supplies of grace, receiving out of his fulness, trusting to God's word which cannot be broken, and resting in Christ alone. Comforts which are the fruits of faith will come in due time. They will follow."

N.B.—Most sermons I heard this season at various places were much blest to me. In short, this was a happy and blessed Whitsuntide to my soul.

On Sunday, July 22nd, 1781, I spent the latter part of the day, from 5 o'clock in the afternoon in an unnecessary visit to Mr. —, for which I was for many days after in great darkness of soul. I paid dear for this indeed. The Lord will not fail to visit the wanton and wilful sins of his people with a rod and scourge. O! "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." The Lord so hid his face that I neither enjoyed nor found communion in ordinances, though I diligently attended them, for many days afterwards. O! I was in a horrible pit of mire and clay.

September 23rd, 1781. In the evening under Mr. Huntington, I got an answer to prayer. Being for many days bowed down in soul, I prayed for deliverance. The above man of God preached from John xiv. 18. I went away perfectly delivered from all my fears under this sermon. I went away praising a prayer-answering God.

Observation.—I believe one reason why I walk so much in the dark is because it is God's appointed will that his people must pass through much tribulation to go to heaven. Now in temporals I am not tried so much as some of God's people, but I have to grapple so much with spiritual afflictions that I sometimes envy the state of Christians who are tried in temporals, that I might enjoy their spiritual health and prosperity. We must have tribulation, if we are the elect, of one kind or another. I have tribulation and trouble also with regard to my weak, sickly, and infirm state of body.

On Tuesday, December 18th, at Blackfriars, I heard Mr. Romaine on John iii. 33. He spoke much from the 16th verse, and said, "Here is God the Father giving Jesus Christ to the coming, sensible sinner, and the Holy Spirit applies this testimony to the perishing sinner's guilty conscience, enabling him to believe the record of God concerning his Son." The Lord enabled me this day to receive this blessed testimony repeatedly, again and again, as I often have done before; for this 16th verse was one of the first

promises I was enabled to cast my helpless soul upon when first I was awakened, and again to set to my seal, as my own act and deed, that God is true. The Lord caused me this day believingly to do this.

In the evening I went to Tottenham Court Chapel, and heard Mr. Piercy from Isa. lvi. 2. The divine Spirit shined on all my former experiences and bore a happy and comfortable testimony within my heart under this glorious sermon.

On Tuesday morning, January 15th, 1782, I heard Mr. Romaine from 1 John v. 13. Amongst other scriptures, he referred to those two which he called most remarkable ones, Rom. xv. 13; 2 Thess. iii. 5. This sermon was greatly blessed to my rejoicing soul. I rejoiced the more. I rejoiced believingly; for, as Mr. R. often observes, "all the joy and peace of believers must flow from faith, hope, and love. Faith is the true source and spring of joy and peace."

On Sunday morning, January 20th, at Tottenham Court Chapel, I heard Mr. Berridge from John i. 14. He said, "Sinners behold the glory of Christ in that day when they believe and obey that call of his in Matthew xi. 28. 'Come unto me,' &c. He is true to fulfil every promise to those who trust him. In that day God's people are manifestatively united in Christ, their living Head. Christ is full of grace and truth to them." Throughout this sermon I found my case happily described exactly. The good Spirit shone upon all my former experience, especially on that of 27th of December, 1775, when this and other promises were sealed on my heart and effectually applied to my soul.

On Saturday afternoon, Feb. 23rd, as I was up in my room, solemnly engaged in private prayer, and confessing my sins, &c., this scripture was suddenly suggested to my mind: "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions," &c. Great peace and joy followed immediately, and I was filled with joy and peace in believing. The Spirit seemed to witness with my spirit my adoption. Jesus was revealed again afresh to my heart, revealed clearly.

On Thursday morning, August 1st, in my bedroom, after secret prayer, I was much visited with these words, "Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." This scripture followed me very closely all that day, and for a long while afterwards.

On Saturday evening, September 21st, and the Lord's day following, in my bedroom, I had an amazing view, by faith, of Christ hanging on the cross for me. The following scriptures were suddenly brought to my mind: "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world;" "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all;" "Who, his own self," &c.

In the evening of October 29th, at Tottenham Court Chapel, I heard Mr. Medley on Jonah ii. 7. This was a blessed opportunity to me, reflecting on my past and former experiences. I could well adopt and happily appropriate the words of the text.

On Sunday evening, the 24th, I heard Mr. R. on Rom. i. 16. It proved the power of God unto me, as it did that day seven years

for this was the anniversary of the day when my soul was set at liberty. It was not my spiritual birth-day; that I look upon to be January 20th, 1771, when, being dead in trespasses and sins, without seeking I was found of the Lord, quickened, and made alive by grace by the Spirit, unthought of and unsought for by me, when the Lord first laid hold of my heart in effectual calling; but I was not set at liberty till November, 1775.

At the latter part of 1783, I subscribed to Mr. Huntington's book, "The Arminian Skeleton; or, the Arminian," &c. O this book! It was much blessed to my soul in my happy deliverance, in a measure, from the remains of Arminianism, or proneness to lean to the law (Moses), a cursed bitter root continually springing up to distress God's dear elect children.

God set his seal to this book, I can witness for one, let who will condemn it.

I now, more than ever, frequented Mr. Huntington's ministry, finding abundant power attending it to my soul. He is a precious, dear man of God.

(To be continued.)

THE REIGN OF KING JESUS.

"Behold, a king shall reign in righteousness, and princes shall rule in judgment. And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly."—ISA. xxxii. 1-4.

O THAT the Lord Jesus Christ may say to each of us here present, "To-day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears!"

The prophet Isaiah, in the words of my text, beholds the power and glory of Christ's kingdom afar off, and glories in it. Like his father Abraham, he also "rejoices to see Christ's day;" he sees it, and is glad. The words are no vain effusion of fancy, but they set forth a clear, certain, and eternal truth, which greatly concerns us, but which we have neither eyes nor ears to see and hear, except we are born again. For, "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Yet is the kingdom in the midst of us, whether we see it or not, and a most mighty kingdom; and Christ is the King thereof, of whom Isaiah says in my text, "Behold, a King shall reign in righteousness." And there are also, says Isaiah, "princes that rule in judgment." Now, I believe that all the true children of God are made by Christ both kings and priests; for it is written in Rev. v. 10: "Thou hast made us unto our God kings and priests." I freely acknowledge, also, that there are true ministers of God and of Christ who are taught, guided, sent forth, and blessed by him, that they also should be a blessing to others; and these too are "princes who rule in judgment." But this is no order of men whether in the Roman Church, or the Greek Church, or the English Church, or any other church, transmitting their power by succession,

for they cannot transmit the grace with it. The Lord keeps the grace in his own power, and bestows it on whom he will; and without the grace, the power turns to Satan's power, and ceases to be the power of God. The true ministers in Christ's universal church are not persons honourable or exalted in their own eyes, but persons deeply humbled under the feet of Christ. They are lost sinners in themselves, and they know that all their power and authority is Christ's only, and that as far as they act under him, and are ruled and guided by him, so far and no farther do they edify his church and people.

A blessed and very large measure of this authority and power was given to the apostles, who, perhaps, may be considered in an especial sense to be those very princes whom Isaiah saw "ruling in judgment;" and as far as ministers in every age drink into Christ's spirit and have Christ's teaching as they had, so far they also may be thus considered. If now we have eyes given us to see, we shall always, first of all, look out for Christ himself, and then for such as reverently give all glory to him and abase themselves, and whose life and joy it is to find, by the teaching of the Spirit, entrance into the blessed doctrines of grace; and in him and in them we shall, with the prophet Isaiah, "Behold the king who reigns in righteousness, and the princes who rule in judgment."

Let us also take heed that, as this King and these princes reign and rule, so we obey this rule in the fear of God, and submit ourselves to it for the Lord's sake. What is the use of a kingdom and a king, if there be no subjects to submit and obey? The Lord has taught us, in his prayer, to say, "Thy kingdom come!" That is, let us be ruled over and be obedient to thee. This petition shows us how far off this kingdom of God often seems; yea, every day afresh we have to cry for its coming. It is through prayer, day and night, that this kingdom comes and is effectual.

I know this is a truth. We are all of us, even those who have the most grace, subject to painful and trying changes in our souls. The body of sin and death is in us, and the enemy works upon it amain, so that we become covered with such clouds of temptation and error that we at times cannot see this kingdom of God at all, and can scarcely believe it to be present. Yet, when we are very much tossed by these storms, some of us begin to learn a little wisdom, which teaches us to believe and to prophesy that the light of Christ's kingdom is at hand; for the strong enemy makes this bitter opposition, because a stronger than he is come upon him. (See Luke xi. 21, 22.) Some of us here are in the midst of these tossings ourselves. Let us, then, earnestly entreat the Lord that we may this day look for and find the fulfilment of Isaiah's *sure* word of prophecy in the second verse of the text: "A man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

1. Who is this *man*? Look through the whole Bible, and you will not find that the sinful children of Adam are exalted

therein. We are forbidden to put our trust in them, and are assured that there is no help in them; nay, we are told that "cursed is the man who trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm." Therefore we see at once that, as Isaiah exalts, extols, and makes very high one whom he calls "*a man*," this Man is no other than the Lord Jesus, who is both God and man in one Person. "God of the substance of the Father, begotten in the world; man, of the substance of the Virgin Mary, born in the world. Perfect God and perfect man; of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father, as touching his Godhead, and less than the Father, as touching his manhood; who, although he is God and man, yet is he not two, but one Christ." This is a most serious and weighty truth. It must be known, received, believed, cleaved to, and loved, that our Lord Christ is verily and indeed, from the day of his incarnation for evermore, God and man.

It is as *man* that he is spoken of in my text, and called "a covert," and "a hiding-place," "rivers of water," and "as the shadow of a great rock," and all this to show us how comforting, saving, refreshing, delightful, this holy gospel of his becoming very man will prove to all believers.

2. Look again at the words of my text, and see how it describes the *wants and distresses*, and the needy state and condition of all those poor sinners who come to this Lord Christ for salvation. They are exposed to "the wind," and to the "tempest;" they are in "a dry place;" they are in "a weary land." I might exhaust my whole time upon this part of my subject, and yet describe but a small part of the trials, griefs, and temptations which are set forth under all these figures. This I say, that the "wind" and "tempest" may set forth the attacks and assaults of sin, and error, and devils; and, above all, every feeling conviction of the wrath of God against sin, and his displeasure with us as sinners; all the invadings of God's holy law in the conscience, those arrows of his, of which David says in Psalm xxxviii.: "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presses me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin." I know, if we could but believe with a steadfast faith, all these terrors and fears would melt away; but faith is in the Lord's hand, not ours, and we cannot find and enjoy it in our own time. The Lord knows what is best for all his saints, and will bring them "through the fire and through the water," that they may attain the "wealthy place." In the Lord's time and method all, I say I believe *all*, his children are overtaken in these storms, and are, as David says, "in a great strait." These are serious and fearful things. The more we know of them, and believe them, the more serious and simple-minded we shall be in all our religion, in all our ways.

But, besides the "wind" and the "tempest," the prophet speaks in my text of "the dry place" and of "the weary land." These figures may be regarded as setting forth our feelings under the pressure of the enemies and evils felt on every side, and we in the bar-

ren and waste wilderness, Canaan out of sight, and almost out of mind too, and perhaps, which is worst of all, Egypt and its flesh-pots lusted after in the flesh. Sometimes and for long together there is a great dearth of all lively ordinances; sometimes there is no Christian communion; sometimes, which is worse still, there is unfitness for ordinances, and love waxing cold because iniquity abounds. There is always one thing which makes bad still worse, and that is that

“When our hearts we find thus foul,
We make them fouler still.”

It seems as if there could be no end of it, because we are driven from faith, and, like ships which cannot bear up against the wind, yet, if we let them go, we fear lest they should fall upon the rocks.

I hope the Lord will make us very simple to cry to him to keep us, as far as possible, from these evils, and when in them to deliver us speedily. They are, as Paul says of his perils by sea, “with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives.”

3. Now, there is one remedy, and only one, proposed to us in my text: “A man SHALL be both *covert and hiding-place*, rivers of water, and a rock” having cool shadow, as our manifold need shall require. As if the prophet said, and in spirit he does say, “This SHALL be, and no power in earth or hell shall hinder it.” It is not that these evils and afflictions shall be taken away, and our path made smooth; but it is that there shall be help for the afflicted and tempted in the midst of all.

This “*shall be*,” of the Lord’s own pronouncing, has a certain very blessed effect upon those who, being spiritually honest, are nevertheless in great affliction. The Lord ordains that their faith should thus be exercised, and that the exercise shall not prove in vain.

It is no small matter, and sometimes it is a very gradual matter, to find the consolation which is in this word: “A man, even Christ Jesus, shall be” all that you require. As if it said to you, “Do not look here and there; do not seek help in this or that; look only to this man. This is the Lord’s way out of your trouble, this is what the Lord has ordained. It is not your reformation, nor your good resolutions, nor your repentance, nor your works, but only the Man, in whom help shall be found for you.”

4. Consider the *reason* of this help coming to us by the Lord Christ. It is because all salvation is in this man; because of his atoning blood, and because of his fulfilling of the law. These truths respecting Christ are, in the essence and power of them, of the greatest possible efficacy and virtue. He, as man, came and set himself in the place of that poor convinced sinner who has need of *him*. From the very moment of his first existence as man, till he laid down his life upon the cross, he was under the law, and obeyed it, as we men are under it, and should obey it, but cannot. “God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law.” (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

This is a great and most needful part of the salvation which Christ wrought out. This perfect obedience is the holy robe of righteousness which he puts, by faith, upon all who are brought by him to believe. It was an act of unspeakable condescension in him, who thus fulfilled all righteousness from first to last, to put himself also under the law, as if he had broken it, even as we have broken it, and must be dealt with as the sinner who had really done so. He bore the "curse of the broken law."

In describing the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, we *should say* no less, and *can say* no more, than this only: "He endured the *curse* of the broken law." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.)

The whole advantage is in this, that Christ, having undertaken this work, accomplished it perfectly, fully, once for all, once for ever. What all men united could not do, Christ came and did by himself alone, without the help of any of them. What all men united could not suffer without eternal ruin, Christ came and suffered by himself alone, without the help of any of them; and, instead of being ruined, behold, "he liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore, and death hath no dominion over him."

5. Here, indeed, is the *mediation* of this man Christ Jesus. How shall we find it to be our *covert and hiding-place*? How shall we find him as *rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land*?" We must look to *him* for faith, that we may look to him continually, yea, till he also looks upon us. In our manifold trials and troubles we must beg, above all things, that we may be made to abhor and turn away from all secret self-righteousness. This great sin of self-righteousness is made to look like a virtue; and deceived men cleave to a hope in it, and do not know that they are self-righteous at all.

Most men, in their natural state, deny that they are thus self-righteous; but, indeed, they do not feel nor believe that it is sinful to be self-righteous. They labour and strive, when the law of God condemns them, to remove their fear by good works; but a man whom the Lord has taught will labour and strive to cease from attempting to remove his fears, except only by coming as a lost sinner to Christ. He sets himself to consider all that the Scripture has testified of this man Christ Jesus, that *he* is the Saviour, and if *he* save us not by what he has done already, we can never be saved at all.

This faith in Christ is a divine gift. It is an incorruptible seed, and also, as Christ says over and again, it is a very little seed. When fears invade our hearts, when we cannot realise hope, then to set ourselves steadfastly and against hope, to look, seek, cry, and turn to this Man Christ Jesus alone, is no easy matter. It is a great kindness of the Lord to us, indeed, if we find a desire springing up to cry and cleave only to this Christ of God. Yea, though we do not at once find this desire, yet to confess our sin and pray that we may find it, we are made to feel our manifold sins and shortcomings. We look back and see the innumerable sins of our lives past. Let

us begin now with our very infancy, and let us set before the Lord as a reason why he should forgive us the holiness of that little child who was born in Bethlehem, and in all his thoughts, words, and deeds, in childhood, in youth, in manhood, pleased the Father always, and fulfilled the holy law to the uttermost tittle.

Thus, also, let us look to the sacrifice of Christ's death, that Christ endured the curse of the broken law for sin; therefore there is forgiveness with the Lord, that he may be feared. When the wind and the tempest beat hard upon us, or when the "dry place" and "weary land" are grievous to us, then is the time for this exercise of faith. I have said already that, do what we will, we cannot find this faith in our own time, and ready at hand. The trouble invades us, and we feel most destitute, but this we must remember, that the Lord appears for the relief of his afflicted people. Affliction stirs them up; their sense of pressing fears and evils makes them cry; and then it is that the cry enters into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Now, in this way our very worst time becomes the forerunner of our best time. Those who are in earnest in this conflict of faith find it to be true. Christ knows how to appear in the right time, measure, and manner. If he but touch our souls, he brings a rest to us; hope springs up. The gospel enters with its still small voice. The Scriptures speak peace, and we find they edify our souls.

CANST THOU, BY SEARCHING, FIND OUT GOD?

TELL me, dear Jesus, why such matchless grace,
In golden streams of mercy, flows apace?
Why have I found such favour in thy sight?
Why brought from darkness to thy marvellous light?

In me no meritorious cause was found;
A sinner born, from head to foot unsound.
And as the tree, with such an evil root,
Was evil, so of consequence the fruit.

And since I've been into the living Vine
Engrafted by the Husbandman divine,
If fruit has ever on the scion grown,
The praise is thine, and not one jot my own.

Cease, then, my soul, within creation's bound
To seek the source of such a depth profound;
Nature herself, with all she has conceived,
Can boast of nothing she has not received.

A cause producing infinite effects
Must needs be infinite in all respects;
And nought so glorious as redemption stands,
Of all the wonders of Jehovah's hands.

Mercy and truth, uncompromised, agree;
Jehovah's glorified, the sinner's free.
This baffles thought, that an incarnate God
Should purchase sinners with his precious blood!

Thou infinite Jehovah,—Father, Son,
 And Holy Ghost, Three Persons, yet but One,
 In thy eternal mind the cause began,
 And grace reveals the full effects to man.

But ere we leave this tenement of clay,
 And Jesus says, “My fair one, come away,”
 We taste the sweetness of those streams which flow
 To comfort Zion’s mourners here below.

And if one drop, by God the Spirit pour’d
 Into my soul so much delight afford,
 How great, how inexhaustible, and free
 The Fountain of all blessedness must be !

Well may our puny mind astonish’d gaze,
 Absorb’d in adoration, love, and praise;
 And well may angels, with immortal eye.
 Desire into such wondrous things to pry.

Angels and saints, while countless ages roll,
 Shall with their utmost powers that grace extol;
 Yet, while they sing, and never, never cease,
 Their debt increases, and will still increase. •

Here, then, content thyself, my wondering soul;
 Let this suffice thee, Christ hath made thee whole.
 May all thy energies for ever be
 Employ’d for him who gave himself for thee.

TO A FRIEND ON THE DEATH OF HER HUSBAND.

My dear Friend in the Path of Tribulation and in the best of Bonds,—Yours I received, and, from the heavy tidings it contained my feelings are such as I know not how to describe; yet I have great consolation to hear that you have been so much supported, and so blessed with resignation to the will of God in this heavy trial. Thanks be to the Almighty, who has promised that as our day is, so shall our strength be; and you can set to your seal that God is true, and say, “Thus far he hath helped me;” and I know that his hand is not shortened, neither is his ear heavy. He has said in his blessed word, “Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me;” and he has promised that “all things shall work together for good to them that love him, to them who are the called according to his purpose;” and although we may be ready to say, as Jacob did, “All these things are against me,” yet the words of God must and shall be true; and so we shall find it in the end. It is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God;” and that informs us that it is through much tribulation we must enter the kingdom of God.

Our blessed Redeemer was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief from the cradle to the cross; and he has said, “He that will be my disciple, let him take up his cross and follow me;” and he told his disciples, a little before he suffered, “In the world ye

shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

O my dear friend, the great Captain of our salvation has fought the battle for us, and won the field:

"Through him we shall conquer the mightiest foes;
Our Captain is stronger than all that oppose."

May we be enabled to be looking to him as our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, and to say with Thomas, "My Lord and my God." Amen and amen.

Excuse my not saying much at present as to this heavy trial, for I am at a loss. I hope that it may please the Almighty to grant you his comfortable presence and his supporting hand; and that you may experimentally find him to be the widow's staff, and the orphan's stay. This is the sincere desire of one who has your welfare at heart, and cannot forget you; for "many waters cannot quench love," however it may be tried.

Yours, in sincerity and truth,

JOHN BRYANT.

EAT, O FRIENDS, DRINK, YEA, DRINK ABUNDANTLY, O BELOVED.

Beloved of the Lord,—Your letter came, bearing tidings of joy and sorrow, feastings and fastings, liftings up and castings down, darkness and light, bondage and deliverance, ins and outs, hardness and softening, deadness and life, weeping and mourning; and by these things I find you are still in the old beaten path,—hidings of the Lord's face, and the sweet meltings of his love, insomuch that you would make me long to have been with you at the feast, if I could have been favoured with the same feelings.

O how my poor soul longs for another of those love-visits. I begin to think it a long time since the dear Lord favoured me in such a way as you speak of; but I must wait. "The vision is for an appointed time," and "will speak in the end;" but "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." So I find it; and the devil and carnal reason will keep working; and when they do, and we hearken to them, what work they make with the things of God! What is there that we do not doubt at the time?

What a mercy that God is unchangeable, or I know not what would become of us poor things; but I know he is unchangeable in his love, in his purposes, and in his decrees; "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." And here I find a little comfort; but if these things were taken from me, what would become of such a poor, needy, worthless, helpless, vile sinner as I am, who have nothing and can do nothing, and am not worthy of the least of his mercies, and yet at times am honoured with a little of those things; which is a proof that the dear Lord has not forgotten me. Though not taken into the mount and feasted with the good old wine on the lees, or the fat things, or the old veil taken away, yet I long for it. I am a little like the poor prodigal. He says, "In my

father's house is bread enough and to spare," for the rest of the family; and I am not without my hope that God is my Father, though I am not in the sweet enjoyment of those things; yet there is a hungering and thirsting, a panting and longing; like the poor woman, when she said, "Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

I often call Jesus, Lord and Master, and he says, "Ye may well, for so I am;" and I know that he is a good master, and keeps a good table; and if I can but get under it, and pick up the crumbs which fall from it, I know it is better than I deserve; for it is a great favour for such a one as I, nay, a great honour to be allowed to be at all in the house. The provision is so good that when I do get ever so little, I find it to give me such support and strength that I both think and say, "I can do all things, or hear all things."

What a good table does my Master keep! and if at any time he seemeth to deal with a slack hand, it is for wise ends. It makes me have a better appetite, for the provisions are too good to be thrown away, or in any way to be lost. He says: "Gather up the fragments, that nothing be lost." There is wine for such as are of a heavy heart, bread for those that are hungry, and a little honey to sweeten the bitters; milk for the babes, and strong meat for the fathers. I was sitting at the table last night, and I believe the Master sat at the head of it; and I speak it to the honour of his dear name, he dealt out with a very liberal hand; and indeed I found it very easy work, and always do when the Master is there. When supper was ended, I heard some of the people who were bidden say they were so full, they could have laid them down and died; and one said she could have flown away; another had had a good time; another wished for the same things again; and another said he thought they had all had a feast. So you see the Master is as good as his promise: "I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread; I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall shout for joy."

So we go from strength to strength, being helped with a little help; and though the Lord has found so many, who are no more below, but are with their Lord and Master, singing and talking of the wonders of his love to them, yea, thousands and tens of thousands of them, there is still a fulness in Jesus, a fulness of grace to answer all our needs, (and they are many,) a fulness of blessings suited to our needs to bring us a little nearer home to our Father's house above; and though he has such a great family, and his care of them is so great, yet not one of them shall ever be overlooked, lost, or only be passed by. Sometimes I feel myself the poorest amongst them; yea, I could lay me down for them to tread upon me; for of all the rest, it appears to me to be the greatest wonder that such a poor thing as I should be among them.

O what a miracle of grace I stand! Surely it must have been of his free grace that God ever thought upon me in eternity; and then to see me born into this sinful world, and live in sin so many years, in open rebellion against him, yet after all to show mercy, why it

appears to me almost too great to believe; but it is "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight." I tell the Lord sometimes that if he does take me to heaven, he shall have all the glory. I will put the crown upon the right head, that is worthy to wear it; and I know he shall never hear the last of it; and sometimes I can and do give him all the glory while I am here below; how much more when I shall see him as he is, and be full of his glory."

"O happy hour, O bless'd abode!
We shall be near and like our God;
And sin and grief no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul."

Dear sister in the Lord, you say that there is one spirit running through the whole living family of God. The longer I live and the more I am convinced of the truth of it; and it is that which unites them so closely together as they are, and to live in the affections of one another. There is no religion that does it besides; and I do believe I have a little of it with you, and therefore subscribe myself,

Yours in the Best of Bonds,

Malmsbury, June 16th, 1857.

D. SMITH.

OPEN TO ME, MY LOVE.

Dear Friend,—Yours came to hand, and the heads, for the which I thank friend Clark and you; for I suppose you have been begging for me. Well, begging is the best trade I know of, if we do but go to the right door. The door of mercy is always open to such as feel and find every other door shut against them or slammed in their faces by a sin-spoiled world. When the dear Lord himself wants a lodging, he often goes begging for it, or he would not have to wait all day as well as all night, until not only his locks are wet with the dew, but his soul made to sorrow at the hardness and obstinacy of his spouse's heart. But knock he will, and wait he will, and woo he will, with, "Open to me, my sister, my spouse;" and if she has got into such a lazy fit as not to arise to open to him by gentle calls and knocks, he will knock so hard, by taking away the desire of her eyes with a stroke, as will make her feel as if the door of her heart was almost split to pieces. But this is her mercy of mercies; he will never knock the door from off the hinges, nor let devils, men, things, nor circumstances do it either; for it is hung by the Three-One God himself upon the golden hinges of eternal love; and to make it open freely to his liking, he comes when he will, and drops a little of his anointing oil into the lock. This is sure to make that old rusty bolt of unbelief give back, and then open goes the door, half-way into which he puts his all-loving, myrrh-smelling, soft, sweet hand, and open flies the door as wide as he can open it, that he may come in with himself, his love, his mercies, his goodness, his graces, or reproofs, or rebukes, or whatsoever he is pleased to bring, so long as he will but come

and place his dear heart-softening self upon the seat of her feelings; and when this is done, she is sure to fear being disturbed, and therefore gives a charge: "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye awake not up, nor disturb my Beloved till he please." But it is they, careful folks about many things, that are sure to say, "What is thy Beloved more than another beloved, that thou dost so charge us?" or else to find fault for breaking open the box of sweet ointment and pouring it all upon his sacred head, in calling him God, and Lord, and Christ, rock, refuge, strength, and righteousness, goodness, fulness, defence, and shield.

But these peace-disturbing folks only give an opportunity to let the spouse see what his all-commanding voice can do when he speaks, by saying, "Let her alone; she has done what she could." Poor thing, she is so poor oftentimes in body, soul, and circumstances, that she would have nothing at all to give him if he did not open her heart and give to her the opening of the mouth. And is Satan or his crew to close it before she has performed her vows? No, no. Praise she will with joyful lips, and call him "the chiefest amongst ten thousand," and the altogether lovely and loving Lord God of her heart, and mind, and soul, and salvation. This is her heaven upon earth so to do.

I am glad you find my little piece upon Zion's banner savoury. You may let friend W. have it. Perhaps his son may like to copy it. It has been copied and sent a long distance amongst one and another. It was a text that came to me while sitting very melancholy by the fire-side, and I could not call to mind that I had heard any one take notice of it; so I got up, took the Bible, found the text, and felt an impulse to write a few of my then thoughts upon it; but I found it would form a vast volume to do anything like justice to the text, so I sent it out unfinished, hoping it would be acceptable to plain folks, and set them to adorn it with such amendments as should seem good to them.

I am truly glad to hear of your good news from your son. May the Lord go on to work his good work of grace upon the rest of your children, if it is his holy will. Meantime let us not cease to pray, for who can tell what may be done for them when we poor cumbergrounds are laid aside? We are not all born nor new-born at one time, but not one will be missing when the grand muster is called.

Yours, in love,

June 21, 1860.

G. M.

WHO would not love him? "I have been with the Lord Jesus," may the poor soul say; "I have left my sins, my burden with him, and he has given me his righteousness, wherewith I am going with boldness to God. I was dead, and am alive, for he died for me. I was cursed, and am blessed, for he was made a curse for me. I was troubled, but have peace, for the chastisement of my peace was upon him. I knew not whither to cause my sorrow to go; by him I have received joy unspeakable and glorious. If I do not love him, delight in him, obey him, live to him, die for him, I am worse than the devils in hell.

—Owen.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from p. 176.)

OUR readers will, perhaps, remember that, in examining the *nature* of the precept, we proposed to consider it under two distinct heads:*

- i. The *letter* of the precept;
- ii. The *spirit* of the precept;

And that under the first head, viz., the *letter* of the precept, we named five distinct points as worthy of our attentive consideration. These were:

1. The *persons* to whom the precept is addressed.
2. The *connection* of the precept with the *doctrines of the gospel*.
3. The *things* which the precept specially inculcates.
4. The *motives* by which the precept is enforced.
5. The *form* under which the precept is revealed.

Four of these points we have already examined. There remains, therefore, but one point more for our present examination, the fifth and last, before we proceed to consider the *spirit* of the precept.

5. This point is, "the *form* under which the precept is revealed."

But as we wish to make every point which we attempt to handle as clear as we possibly can, let us first explain what we intend by the expression "*form*," as used by us in reference to the letter of the precept. We understand, then, by it that peculiar mode or strain of language which the Holy Ghost has made use of in revealing and enforcing the precept as a part of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by which he has impressed upon it that distinctive shape which it bears as an inspired rule for the obedience of faith. The word "*form*" is a scriptural expression, and is twice used by the apostle Paul in much the same sense as we have thus affixed to it. Observe, for instance, the following passage: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." (Rom. vi. 17.) "The form of doctrine" here spoken of as being delivered unto the Roman saints means the model or pattern of apostolic teaching, according to which their hearts were modelled. This seems evident from the marginal, and, we may add, preferable, reading, "whereto ye were delivered," as a coin to a die, and which, therefore, stamped upon them its peculiar impress, producing an obedience from the heart.† So again we find the apostle speaking: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Tim. i. 13.) This

* See our April No., page 116.

† The word translated "*form*" (Rom. vi. 17) literally means the stamp of a seal, or impress of a coin, (as produced by a blow,) and thence a model or pattern. Thus taking the idea of a coin, divine teaching is the die, and the heart of the believer the medal; the one being produced by, and the exact counterpart of the other.

“form of sound words” which Timothy was to hold fast was the model or pattern, according to which the apostle had delivered to Timothy the truths which had been revealed to his own soul by the Holy Ghost, as he speaks: “Which things also we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.” (1 Cor. ii. 13.) Or, as the words might be rendered, “combining spiritual things with spiritual;” that is, uniting spiritual truths to spiritual words,—the things revealed by the Spirit, (1 Cor. ii. 10–12,) being the truths of the gospel, and the words which the Holy Ghost taught, (verse 13,) being the form under which these truths were delivered to the church by the apostle.*

The Holy Ghost, then, has stamped upon the precepts of the New Testament a peculiar character or impress, which we call their “form,” and the nature of which we shall now endeavour more fully to unfold.

The main, the leading form of the precept is of course that of *injunction* or direction; that is, it authoritatively bids us do or not do this or that thing, pursue or not pursue this or that line of action.† It is thus distinguished from an *invitation*, such as, “Come unto me all ye that labour,” &c. (Matt. xi. 28.) “If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink;” (John vii. 37;) and from a *rebuke*, such as, “And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.” (1 Cor. v. 2.) “Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.” (Gal. iv. 10, 11.)

But though its main form is necessarily one of injunction, without which indeed it would not be precept at all, it assumes various shades of direction, and yet every shade in the fullest harmony with the grace and spirit of the gospel. By way of introduction to the point before us, we may briefly mention that these varied forms of preceptive direction are chiefly, 1. command; 2. injunction; 3. Entreaty or beseeching; 4. admonition.‡

i. Thus sometimes it assumes the language of *command*. “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” (2 Thess. iii. 6.) And again: “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.” (2 Thess. iii. 10.) So also: “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.” (1 Cor. vii. 10.) This is, so to speak, the highest note of the precept,—its strongest, loudest, and most authoritative voice.

* What a proof is thus afforded of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures.

† The definition of a precept, as given in our best dictionaries, is, “A commandment or order intended as an authoritative rule of action.”—*Webster*.

‡ According to our translation there is another, viz., “exhorting;” but as this in the original is the same word as that rendered “beseeching,” we shall not notice it as a distinct form.

If we examine the passages in which the precept assumes the form of a command, we shall find it employed for the most part in the four following cases:

1. When some danger is nigh; 2. or when some flagrant evil or error is denounced; 3. or when a strong injunction is laid on a man of God to invest him with peculiar authority; 4. or when some important precept is urged. To each and all of these cases the voice of *command*, as we shall see if we examine them, is eminently suitable.

1. Take the first case,—the voice of warning against some advancing danger or imminent peril. It seems thus used by the apostle Peter in his second epistle: "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour; knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts." (2 Pet. iii. 2, 3.) The apostles of the Lord knew that there would come in the last days ungodly scoffers, and therefore in the strong language of command they warned the people of God against these perilous times and these perilous men. Is there anything out of place in the language of command here? A low, soft voice, a gentle whisper, would not do were you to see a man about to cross the line as a railway train was coming in, or if in the dead of night it were needful to give an alarm of "fire" to your opposite neighbour. The voice, then, of authoritative command is not out of harmony with the grace and love of the gospel, when the precept warns the people of God against coming dangers and advancing perils, and shouts to them, as if from the top of the mountains, to take close heed to their steps.

2. But now take the case of denouncing evil or error in the professing church. Is sin or error to be sprinkled with rose-water, or dealt with lovingly and tenderly, as if in a lover's whisper on a moon-light eve? Look at the almost parallel case of the ministry. Does not God bid his servants "lift up their voice like a trumpet, to show his people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins?" (Isa. lviii. 1.) There is an allusion here to the two silver trumpets which, at the command of the Lord, were made by Moses for the priests to blow, for the calling of the assembly and the journeying of the camps. (Num. x. 1-2.) As, then, it was still the same silver trumpet which, "in the days of their gladness and in their solemn days," was blown "over their burnt offerings and their peace offerings" that sounded, when needful, an alarm, so it is still the same gospel precept which sometimes speaks in the language of the tenderest entreaty, and at others denounces sin and error as with trumpet voice. Thus the word "command" is used when the evil is denounced of not withdrawing from a brother that walketh disorderly; (2 Thess. iii. 6;) or of living lazily, without working, upon other people's bounty; (2. Thess. iii. 10-12;) or of a woman's abandoning her husband, or the husband putting away his wife, as not being a believer; (1 Cor. viii. 10;) or of warning against some gross sin. (1 Thess. iv. 2-7.) In these instances wisely and

graciously does the Holy Ghost employ the language of command, as thus impressing upon the precept a firmer and more authoritative character than mere entreaty. The evil of a wife's forsaking her husband, or of a husband putting away his wife, is surely to be dealt with by a firmer hand than the want of a forgiving spirit among brethren. Command is too strong for the latter; entreaty too mild for the former. Each has its place in the precept; and each is suitable and beautiful according to its use, and according to its place.

3. The next case in which the word command is used is the authority which a servant of Christ possesses as mouth for God. For instance: "These things *command* and teach. (1 Tim. iv. 11.) "Let the people know and feel," says Paul to Timothy, "that you speak with authority. Deal with them firmly when needful. God has put into your hands weapons mighty to pull down strongholds. (2 Cor. x. 4.) Speak out in the voice of command when evils arise, error springs up, or dangers threaten." In this sense it much approaches the nature of another ministerial weapon—the language of rebuke. "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (1 Tim. v. 20.)

It is a great mistake to think that the servants of Christ have no authority in the church; no power to command, as well as to teach. The apostle expressly says to Titus, "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." (Titus ii. 15.) Paul well knew that there were those in the churches who would seek to exalt themselves and depress the minister; consider him their servant, or try to make him their tool. He, therefore, meets this levelling spirit by bidding Timothy *command* as well as teach, and by telling Titus to speak, exhort, and rebuke with all authority.*

4. The next and last case where the precept assumes the language of command is when peculiar importance is attached to the injunction. Now, what is the grand precept of the New Testament; in fact, the sum and substance of all the precepts? Is it not *love*? Need we, then, be surprised if this best, this sweetest and greatest of all the precepts, should, above all others, be enforced with authority? How blessedly did this precept fall from the lips of our Lord with the voice of command! "This is my commandment, that ye love one another as I have loved you." (John xv. 12.) And again: "These things I command you, that ye love one another." (John xv. 17.) So also: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." (John xiii. 34.) In a similar spirit writes the beloved disciple: "And this

* Of course this authority is wholly spiritual; but it is derived from the Lord, not from the church. Those churches, and, we may add, those officers of churches, therefore, greatly err who treat their pastors as if they were rather *their* servants than the Lord's servants; and instead of obeying them that have the rule over them, and submitting themselves to their authority, (Heb. xiii. 17,) rather seek to domineer, and even tyrannise over them by carnal weapons, and by that worst and meanest of all—the *purse*.

is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another as he gave us commandment." (1 John iii. 23.) "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God love his brother also." (1 John iv. 21.)

Our readers will doubtless think with us that we have said quite enough upon this point. We shall, therefore, now proceed to consider the other forms of the precept of which we have already given a short summary.

ii. Sometimes, then, it takes the form of *injunction*, that is, it simply and plainly bids us do or not do this or that thing. This is its leading form, and that which mainly constitutes it precept. Thus when it says, "Put off the old man, and put on the new;" "Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks;" "Provide things honest in the sight of all men;" "Husbands, love your wives;" "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh," and so on, it simply bids us, as Christian men, do those things which become the gospel, and bring forth those fruits which are by Jesus Christ unto the glory and praise of God. As one of the simplest and most marked instances of this injunctive form of the precept, take what we may call that comprehensive code of directions given us Rom. xii. 6-21, or that line of Christian walk and conduct which is laid down 1 Thess. v. 15-22. The main feature stamped upon each of these concise yet clear lists of directions is that of *injunction*,—in other words, the Holy Ghost simply bids or enjoins upon us to pursue a certain course of Christian conversation.

This, in fact, is the precept in its simplest form,—a kind of medium between the voice of command, which is the highest, and the voice of entreaty, which is the lowest note in the scale. It therefore specially appeals to our spiritual understanding. Let us explain this point a little more clearly. Assuming, then, that a believer possesses these four things, as parts or members of the new man of grace,—a good or pure conscience; (1 Tim. i. 19; iii. 9;) an enlightened understanding; (Eph. i. 18;) a new, tender, and broken heart; (Ezek. xxxvi. 26; 2 Kings xxii. 19; Ps. li. 17;) and a spiritual memory, or recollection of the Lord's dealings with the soul; (Deut. viii. 2; John xiv. 26; Heb. x. 32;) the four distinctive forms of precept which we have already enumerated address themselves severally to each of them. Thus "command" addresses itself to the conscience, "injunction" to the understanding, "entreaty" to the heart, and "admonition" to the memory. Not that each of these forms does not take in, and address itself to, the whole of a believer's new man of grace; not that there is any real separation of his conscience from his heart, or of his understanding from his memory, for our spiritual as well as our natural faculties are so combined in thought and action that they cannot be separated; but for the sake of clearness we may view them as distinct both in themselves and in their action. Thus the precept under the form of "injunction," which we are now considering, addresses itself chiefly to our spiritual understanding. It thus becomes "a lamp

unto our feet and a light unto our path." (Ps. cxix. 105.) In that beautiful psalm just referred to, in which the yearnings of a living soul towards, the actings of a believing heart upon the word of God are so vividly portrayed, we may very plainly see the connection between the precept and an enlightened understanding. "Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law." (Ps. cxix. 34.) "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (18.) "Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes." (33.) "Make me to understand the way of thy precepts." (27.) How such and similar petitions show the existence of a gracious connection between understanding the precept and doing it. Indeed, how can we do the will of God unless we know the will of God? How can I tell how to act in this or that case agreeably to his revealed will unless my eyes are spiritually enlightened to see what that revealed will is? This is not head knowledge, or "the knowledge that puffeth up," but that gracious light in the understanding whereby it is divinely illuminated to know the truth as it is in Jesus,—the fruit of that "anointing which teacheth of all things, and is truth, and is no lie," (1 John ii. 27,) enabling its favoured possessor to say, "We know that the Son of God is come' and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true." (1 John v. 20.) It is then to this gracious, this enlightened understanding that the precept, under its simplest form of injunction, chiefly addresses itself. We have rather lingered on this point, as having long felt that so few see the distinction between what the apostle calls "the form of knowledge," (Rom. ii. 20,) or "the knowledge which puffeth up," (1 Cor. viii. 1,) or "that understanding of all mysteries and of all knowledge" which a man may have and "be nothing," (1 Cor. xiii. 2,) and that gracious understanding of the things of God which springs out of the teaching of the Holy Ghost, (1 Cor. ii. 12,) and the shining of God himself into the heart to give the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) When we come to the *spirit* of the precept, we shall see how this enlightened understanding acts in sweet harmony with the conscience, heart, and memory.

iii. A third form of the precept is *entreaty*. This is the tenderest form of the precept—its lowest, softest note, addressing itself immediately to the heart, as softened and melted with a sense of the goodness and mercy of the Lord. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren by the mercies of God;" (Rom. xii. i.); "Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." (2 Cor. x. 1.) "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. (Eph. iv. 1.) What a tenderness there is in these earnest entreaties of the man of God; and to show that he used this language not of his own personal authority but as the commissioned servant of God, he says in one place: "Now, then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." (2 Cor. v. 20.) How these tender appeals to our heart prove the true character of the precept—that it is gospel,

not law; mercy, not judgment; grace, not works; liberty, not bondage; life, not death; salvation, not damnation; love, not fear, which animate it and breathe through it. O how this sweet spirit of gospel grace, breathing through the precept, distinguishes it on the one hand from the hard bondage of legal service, and on the other from that looseness of lip and life which has done more than anything else to throw discredit on the glorious gospel of the grace of God. But we are anticipating another part of our subject, and shall, therefore, now proceed to the last form of the precept proposed for consideration.

iv. This is that of *admonition*. To admonish is a part of the ministry of the gospel: "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you." (1 Thess. v. 12.) And as it is a part of the ministry of the gospel, so it is also an appointed means of the mutual edification of believers by one another: "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another." (Rom. xv. 14.) So also: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. iii. 16.) We have already intimated that the voice of admonition addresses itself chiefly to the spiritual memory. We do not say that it does not appeal also to the understanding, to the conscience, and to the heart, for all these work and act together; but it chiefly and mainly addresses itself to our recollection. Thus when Paul says to his son Timothy, "Of these things put them in remembrance;" (2 Tim. ii. 14;) "If thou put the brethren in remembrance* of these things;" (1 Tim. iv. 6;) or when he appeals to his Hebrew brethren: "But call to remembrance the former days," (Heb. x. 32;) he evidently addresses himself to their spiritual memory—the recollection of the Lord's mercies towards, and his claims upon them. So when Peter says: "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth;" (2 Pet. i. 12;) and again: "Moreover, I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance," (2 Pet. i. 15,) he evidently appeals to their recollection of truths formerly laid before them, and of their own experience of their reality and blessedness in knowing that they had "not followed cunningly-devised fables." This mode of appeal singularly distinguishes the second epistle of Peter, and seems especially suitable to an aged apostle, and one about shortly to put off his tabernacle. (2 Pet. i. 14.) A dying man may well write as his last affectionate appeal to his beloved children: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, that ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy pro-

* It is true that the word in the original here is not the same as that rendered "admonish," but the idea and intention are the same.

phets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour." (2 Pet. iii. 1, 2.) This is admonition of the strongest, and yet tenderest kind. If an affectionate father on a death-bed had said to his weeping children: "Be mindful of my last wishes; remember my dying request, that you should live in peace and union with each other," would it be out of place if those children were admonished of their father's words by their mother or a friend when they seemed disposed to quarrel? Would it not stir up their minds by way of remembrance, and appeal to their hearts through their memory? And similarly do not our minds need stirring up by way of remembrance? Observe, it is our "pure minds," that is, our new man of grace—"the mind with which we serve the law of God," (Rom. vii. 25,) (not our carnal mind, our flesh, our body of sin and death,) which the precept stirs up by way of remembrance, when we call to memory the goodness and mercy of God, and feel warmed by a recollection of his past favours. Is there anything legal here? Anything like bondage, guilt, fear, wrath, hell, and damnation? O how the voice of the precept is misunderstood, when Sinai's thunders are heard in it, or when wretched legalists shake it over the poor distressed people of God, as though they would gladly tie them up to the halberds, and flog with it their bleeding backs. No, dear friends, there is no terror in the precept as revealed by the Holy Ghost in the word, and as revealed by the same Holy Ghost to the soul. It is all pure gospel, as pure as the grace from which it flows; and if it sometimes address itself to your conscience, sometimes to your understanding, sometimes to your heart, sometimes to your memory; if it command, or enjoin, or beseech, or admonish, it is still a Father's voice speaking to a son, and not a master's giving orders to a servant. It is the special privilege of the freeborn sons and daughters of Zion to have such a line of walk and conduct traced out for them by their heavenly Father that they may know his will and do it; and they have the greatest reason to praise and bless his holy name that he has so kindly condescended to teach and instruct them in the way which they should go, and thus ever guide them with his eye. (Ps. xxxii. 8.) Let, then, some legalise and pervert, and let others neglect and despise the precept; it still remains the possession and the privilege of the living family of God—their possession as their Father's revealed will, and their privilege as their inspired guide to the obedience of faith.

In our next No. we shall hope, if the Lord will, to enter upon the *spirit* of the precept; and may the Holy Spirit who has revealed it in the letter of the word, and who, from time to time, animates it with his vivifying breath, rest upon our spirit and our pen, and upon the spirit of our gracious readers.

THE life and soul of my religion is private prayer, and watching the hand of God; acknowledging every favour with thank-offering, pleading his promises, and trusting in him to make them good.—*Huntington.*

Obituary.

SARAH WILMOT, OF UPAVON.

ON March 28th, 1865, SARAH WILMOT, of Upavon.

Dear Friend,—The following is a copy of a letter sent me from Mr. Love, a member of Providence Chapel, Bath, giving some account of the life and death of Sarah Wilmot. I knew her for years, and always found her to be one whose desire was to live up to her profession; and the Lord mercifully provided for and kept her. The first thing generally when I was in her company, she would begin talking of spiritual things, as known and felt, or desired and longed for. But her words will speak more than I can say of her.

Yours in truth,

Milton, Oxon, March 28, 1865.

G. GORTON.

“Dear Sir,—I feel a desire in my mind to write a letter respecting the death of my beloved friend, Sarah Wilmot, who died at Upavon, Wilts. In her early days she was brought up to attend church; but even at that time was the subject of convictions; for when going once to a place of amusement with a girl of her own age, she remarked to her, ‘This will do our son’s no good.’ Afterwards she joined the Methodists, and remained with them some time, working for life. She thought herself very righteous, and hated and despised those who held the doctrines of free and sovereign grace, till the year 1848, when the Lord, in mercy, was pleased to bring her into deep distress about her eternal state, and on account of sin. So great was her distress, at times, that she thought her reason would leave her; and her body was brought almost to a skeleton. She was told by these people to be more diligent in her duties, which she tried to be, but it only tended to deepen her distress. She knew by experience what the hymn meant:

‘The more I strove against sin’s power,
I sinn’d and stumbled but the more.’

At length she was induced to go and hear the late Mr. Rudman, who was then labouring at Upavon; but felt almost ashamed to go, as she had been so opposed to the truths that he preached. After going once, however, and hearing her feelings traced out and her pathway described, she continued to go, although she had much to endure from those she had left; but the precious truths of the everlasting gospel had so endeared themselves to her soul that nothing could induce her to return to them. She said afterwards to Mr. R., when speaking of it, she had bought the truth too dearly to part with it for trifles.

“She was brought into liberty under a sermon preached by Mr. R. from Acts xix. 20.

“She was much humbled under a feeling sense of the dear Lord’s goodness to her soul, and her own utter unworthiness, and enjoyed much communion with the Lord, and union with his dear people at this time, and had a desire to cast in her lot amongst them; for her language then was, ‘Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul.’ But it pleased the

Lord, in the allwise order of his providence, about this time, which was in 1849, to remove her to Bath, where she afterwards lived till within six months of her death, and where I had the privilege of becoming acquainted with her; for I felt it to be a privilege, for she was the first friend to whom I could feel any liberty to unbosom my feelings; and truly in her I found a spiritual mother. We have mourned with each other in sorrow, rejoiced in each other's joys, and mingled our supplications together at the throne of grace. Her memory will be ever dear to me.

“She was baptized and joined the church at Providence Chapel, Bath, in 1852, and remained a consistent member to her death.

“She was known by many of the Lord's sent servants, whom she has heard with sweetness and savour, and was particularly blessed under Mr. Philpot's last sermon, preached at Bath; also at Calne anniversary, in 1863.

“She was the subject of much bodily affliction, as well as soul conflict; but as her afflictions abounded, her consolations abounded also. She had a special manifestation of the Lord's precious goodness to her a few years ago, under a sermon preached by Mr. D. Smith. In a letter to a friend, she speaks of the effects of it thus:

“This morning, under the word, I have enjoyed a little of that precious peace-speaking blood sprinkled upon my heart and conscience by the Holy Spirit, the blessed Comforter; and, like Mary, I could have washed the dear Lord's feet with tears of love and sorrow. My soul was melted down in the dust of self-abasement before a holy God, and seemed ready to burst through the poor, frail tenement of clay, to bless and praise the dear Lord. O my friend, I can, from my very heart, say with the poet:

“That Christ is God I can avouch,
And for his people cares;
Since I have pray'd to him as such,
And he has heard my prayers.”

“For the last two years she was much tried in providence, the state of her health preventing her obtaining a suitable situation. In June last she left Bath, with the hope of being able to fill a situation in the family of Mr. Parry, of Allington, but was obliged to leave again very shortly, after much kindness and Christian sympathy manifested by them, of which she spoke afterwards with much feeling and affection. During this affliction she wrote to some friends.

“My dear Friends,—I think when I left B. it was with a promise, the dear Lord enabling me, I would write you a line. I have many times thought of you and others that are dear to my soul, for the truth's sake as it is in a precious Christ, and I do trust and believe we do know and enjoy, at times, this precious Christ in our souls. O my dear tried friends in tribulation's thorny path, did we not we should sink under the many things we have to pass through from day to day,—the workings of a corrupt heart, the afflictions of a poor, frail body, the hidings of God's face; so many things the poor child of God has to encounter the world knows nothing of; but one smile from the dear Lord sets all things right. How it humbles

the soul down into contrition at his blessed feet. Then we can sit as Mary did, and receive the gracious words which fall from his lips:

“Sweet the moments, rich in blessing,
Which before the cross I spend;
Life, and health, and peace possessing,
From the sinner’s dying Friend.”

But these visits are short and seldom. My soul, like Abraham when the Lord left off to commune with him, returns to its own sad place, its wretched state to feel.

“No doubt you have heard how my path has been crossed in providence. My soul was truly united to dear Mr. and Mrs. P. the short time I was with them. Had the dear Lord seen fit, he could have strengthened the poor body; but his ways are not our ways, nor his thoughts our thoughts. The why and the wherefore are but known to himself. He giveth no account of his matters, but doeth as he will in the armies of heaven, and with us poor worms of the earth. He has promised to be with his people in six troubles, and in the seventh not to leave them, and I trust I can say I have proved his faithfulness many times; but he will bring us into suitable circumstances before we get the promise. Then they just suit the soul. We then can say from feeling,

“Choose thou the way, but still lead on.”

I trust this will find you as well in body as the dear Lord sees good, and your souls sweetly enjoying the smiles of your covenant God and Father; for what is all without it? May he bless you with much of his own life-giving presence to uphold you to your journey’s end; and then may you be enabled to

“Pass the river, telling
The triumphs of your King!”

I have thought much of death since we parted in the flesh. As I lay on a bed of great pain, these words dropped into my soul with sweetness:

“In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath thy sheltering blood,
’Twill Jordan’s icy waves divide,
And land my soul with God.”

O to have a hope in that precious atoning blood! Also this was precious:

“Through fire and floods she goes,
A weakling more than strong,
Vents in her bosom all her woes,
And leaning, moves along.”

O for grace to lean from day to day upon the everlasting arm! The Lord bless you.

“‘S. WILMOT.’”

“She continued ailing from this time, sometimes seeming somewhat better, then again not so well. She remarked to a friend, on several occasions, that the dear Lord did shine into her soul with such glory and blessedness, she wondered what he was about to do. Whether he was about to take down her poor tabernacle or not she could not tell.

“About ten days before her death, she took to her bed, and suffered much with pain in her back and extreme weakness, but bore it with much patience and resignation.

"On the Monday before she died, she said, 'I do not feel alarmed at death. I find the dear Lord now as I have ever found him,—a faithful God. "And by his saints it stands confess'd,

That what he does is ever best."

I believe I shall have another token.'

"On Tuesday she spoke much about the precious Rock, Christ Jesus. Then she would say, 'Precious blood!' 'From his wounded side which flowed;' 'A double cure.' 'Let me hide myself in thee.' Hymn 174, Gadsby's selection, was very precious to her, especially the last verse:

'As they draw near their journey's end,
How precious is their heavenly Friend;
And when in death they bow their head,
He's precious on a dying bed.'

The last words she was heard to say were: 'Light afflictions, light,—but for a moment, which work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' With help she uttered the last words, and her ransomed spirit took its flight into the bosom of her dear Redeemer, where she had so often longed to be. She died on Wednesday, December 21st, 1864.

"The following affectionate letter I received from her a few weeks before her death:

"My dear Friend, and I trust I may say Sister, in that Covenant ordered in all things and sure,—If so, and we have that living witness in our souls which is the blessed Spirit of the only true God, we do in some humble measure know what it is to be a witness for God and his precious truth, and we also know a little of what the filial fear of God is in our souls, a fear there implanted by God himself. It has kept you, my dear, from many evils; but it has kept this poor, unworthy worm from many more; and the sincere breathing of my soul is, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." My soul can testify to the truth of that promise: "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice;" and the apostle said it was "joy unspeakable;" and so it is; for when the dear Lord shines upon the soul with the sweet smiles of his everlasting love, and sheds it abroad in the heart and conscience, it is unspeakable. As one said, "My cup runneth over." This my soul in a measure experienced yesterday morning, in that little Bethel to my soul. This verse of a hymn came with much power and solemnity. It broke my heart down at the dear Lord's feet:

"Sweet to look back and see my name
In life's fair book set down;
Sweet to look forward and behold
Eternal joys my own."

Yes, eternal joys my own. It is a personal reality. As Job said, "I shall see God for myself, and not for another." We had no minister in the morning. J. K. read a blessed sermon, just suited to my soul's experience. You know words spoken in season are "like apples of gold in pictures of silver!" Mr. P. preached in the afternoon from Rom. viii. 10. How sweetly did he speak of the Spirit's

work upon the heart of a quickened sinner. My soul felt like a child at home.

“ My dearest E.; yes, as dear to me now as when my soul travailed in birth for your soul, with much wrestling in secret with the dear Lord for him to appear manifestively in your heart the hope of glory; nor did I wrestle in vain; for at length the set time to favour Zion came. This being so, there is a union between our souls which all the malice of hell or men cannot finally destroy, for it is cemented together with love and blood. It has stood the test of the enemy again and again, and I believe it will stand even death itself.

“ I have felt very solemn in my feelings of late. The word has been in some measure precious. Many Ebenezers have been called to mind, many mercies and blessings, both in providence and grace, and many tears have flowed at the remembrance of the goodness of a covenant God. During my sojourn in Bath, I did not think I had the love and esteem which I feel to have for the precious truth and the few dear friends of truth who meet at dear Providence, till removed from you. How many times has my soul been favoured at the throne with sweet access for a blessing to rest upon you as a church. I can say with the poet:

“ My soul shall pray for Zion still,
While life or breath remains.”

“ May you, my dear friend, still be enabled by the blessed Spirit to remember me at a throne of grace. We can meet together there in spirit when we cannot in person. What a mercy the dear Lord has so provided that blessed meeting-place, where himself and a poor sinner can meet together. O for grace in lively exercise to be often there with all our hard cases. Nothing is too hard for him. What a mercy to have that religion which will stand the fire.

“ My soul was bowed very low on Lord’s day, but was raised by these words: “ The Lord loveth the righteous; he raiseth up them that are bowed down; he openeth the eyes of the blind!” We do need to have our eyes opened continually, to discover more the hidden evils of our corrupt, fallen nature, and a daily watching unto prayer to be kept.

“ Remember me kindly to all the dear friends. May the Lord bless you abundantly as a church with truth and love to embrace it and hold it fast.

“ From yours in the best of Bonds,

“ March 4th, 1859.”

“ S. WILMOT.”

The following sentences were found after her death:

“ Blessed be God for a little feeling desire in my soul to seek his dear presence at the throne of grace, there to beg him to bless me with his holy fear kept alive in my soul.

“ 5th.—A longing desire for the return of the coming day to meet once more with the beloved and dear family of God. O may my soul be favoured like the beloved John, to be in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.”

“ 6th.—Heard Mr. D. with great comfort to my soul’s satisfaction.

“ 10th.—Went to see a beloved friend. In speaking a little upon the precious things that belong to our souls’ salvation, felt happy in soul.

“24th.—Much exercised; great sinking of soul; much cast down by the enemy.

“26th.—Went to chapel in great darkness of soul. Heard Mr. Dunster from, ‘Fear not, I am with thee. Be not dismayed, I am thy God.’ Returned a little refreshed.

“April 8th.—Much distressed by the enemy; feel that I cannot bear up if the dear Lord does not appear.

“10th.—Awoke this morning with these words on my mind: ‘They that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled.’ Went to chapel. Heard Mr. S. from Prov. vii. 1. A time of refreshing to my soul.

“14th.—Was much encouraged under the word, and had that blessed witness within which bore testimony to the precious truth.

“16th.—Enjoyed a little communion with the dear Lord.

“Feb. 18th, 1860.—Much exercised, feeling much the awful plague of my heart. Dear Lord, do appear once more.

“23rd.—Felt a little access at the throne, and opening my Bible upon these words, ‘Ask, and it shall be given thee,’ it gave my soul a little consolation.

“Sept. 8th.—A feeling desire for the Lord to appear and speak peace to my poor cast-down soul. O what is religion without divine power? Do, Lord, come with one more smile, one more token of love. Hymn 902 expresses my feelings.

“9th.—Heard Mr. Beard very blessedly. My soul desires to thank thee for a hope in thy mercy.

“17th.—Much cast down in soul; but in pouring out my distress before the Lord, a little peace and gratitude flowed in and up to the dear Refuge of my weary soul.

“26th.—Heard Mr. Godwin from these words: ‘He holdeth back the face of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it.’ A blessed subject; but my poor mind so worried by Satan.

“March 1st, 1862.—The dear Lord shone a little into my soul, and upon my path. He has said, ‘Thou shalt remember all the way the Lord has led thee.’ My soul was favoured something like the church of old: ‘I charge ye, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till he please;’ so fearfully did I move about, fearing I should cause the dear Lord to withdraw his sweet smiles.

“1863 has been a year of many changes, many sinkings of soul, many sighs and groans for deliverance. Lamentations iii. my soul has much experienced.

“Jan. 12th, 1864.—Had a sweet time at the prayer-meeting. How true the promise: ‘There will I meet with thee, and there will I bless thee.’ His wills and shalls are unchangeable, firm as his throne.

“April 19th.—A much-favoured time, a blessed soul-humbling, Christ-exalting season. How sweetly did the precious truths of the gospel drop upon my weary soul! Lord, why such love to such an unworthy worm of the earth? I have thought a few weeks or years of afflictions all are welcome while enjoying the presence of my dearest Lord. How sweetly the poet expresses my feelings:

“‘Let others stretch their arms like seas,
And grasp in all the shore;
Grant me the visits of thy face,
And I desire no more.’

“June 12th.—Went to Allington chapel, sunk very low; but while hymn 405 was being given, out my soul was drawn out in love to those dear to the soul by eternal relationship. O Lord, how wonderful are thy dealings! Help me to say from a heart made sensible by sovereign grace, ‘Thy will be done.’”

JULY 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

JULY, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from: p. 184.)

In the beginning of 1784, in a sermon on 2 Sam. xxiii. 5, I heard Mr. Huntington observe that he found now and then in old books, written by some of the Puritans, of their making and signing written covenants; but this, he said, was legal.

N.B.—This was my case in regard to the covenant in Mr. Alleine's "Alarm to the Unconverted," and I suppose was one reason that hindered my enjoying full, perfect liberty, and a comfortable, clear sense of my interest in Christ, which I obtained not until November and December, 1775, although awakened at the beginning of 1771.

I have heard Mr. Romaine observe also that there are certain books written by good men, in which they lay down certain marks and evidences for believers to try themselves by; but this has a tendency to legality, and may much distress those who know most of their own hearts, by directing them to look unto themselves, instead of out of self to Christ only.

In February I heard several sermons by Mr. Huntington, and my soul was highly feasted under all. I enjoyed a particular blessing under them. Henceforth I rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding rules my heart abundantly.

On Monday, April 19th, evening, at Providence Chapel, Mr. Huntington, on Num. vi. 24-26. The good man told us he felt much of the blessings in the text while preaching to us; and I can witness for one I experienced much of the Lord's presence while hearing this sermon, and a long while afterwards in secret meditation and recollection upon it. The following scripture was abundantly fulfilled to me: Ezek. xxxiv. 26. But I got again into desertion, as will afterwards appear.

About the beginning of June, Mr. H. preached on Ps. lxxxiv. 11. He observed that the law will sometimes rage in the believer's conscience most horribly when he has lost sight of Christ; and such are entangled again with the yoke of bondage. This was now my case. The law had been raging in my conscience for some days; but I soon after this was delivered, I bless my God.

I have often found this dark state of soul in my experience; and since I wrote the above lines, looking into Luther on the Galatians, I found it was so with that saint of God. (See particularly pages 144, 145.)

It was so with Mr. Glover the martyr just before he was burnt.

Whenever I suffer from others' ill usage or hard words, it drives me but the more to my knees to my God in prayer. I then immediately go up stairs to my bedroom, and tell my Jesus of it, spreading my case before him. After this I often rejoice that I am counted worthy to suffer shame and reproach for his name's sake.

One night I had a spiritual dream. I wept much in this dream to see, or rather at the sight of, my deliverance by Christ crucified, which I think I saw in this dream very plainly; that is, Christ hanging on the cross for me. I think I saw it as plainly as if I had been on Mount Calvary, looking up at the expiring Saviour, above 1700 years ago. After I awoke, these words came to my mind: "Before thine eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified." I praised the Lord in my morning addresses for this dream.

On Lord's day, August 22nd, I enjoyed a precious season sitting down at the Lord's table at Providence Chapel. The Lord of the table was present at his own ordinance. I sat down under his shadow with great delight.

In the evening the tempter suggested, "Where is your warrant that you will hold out to the end? Though you have grace now, you may fall away in time." Then this scripture was brought to my mind: "I am persuaded that neither height, nor depth," &c., "shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ." I afterwards turned to the chapter (Rom. viii.) and read from verse 28, and found wonderful light and comfort. Also from John x. 27-31; Heb. xiii. 5, 8; Phil. i. 6; Ps. lxxxix. 30-38; Eph. ii. 4-6; and abundant other scriptures holding forth the final perseverance of the saints. O how the Scripture promises were applied! How they were opened to my understanding! How Satan was foiled and put to flight by the sword of the Spirit and of prayer! This was a happy Lord's day to me.

I have often found, as Mr. Huntington says, "when God's people have had a remarkable and comfortable season, soon after, like their glorious Head, they are led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil;" but I have frequently found Ps. xlii. a great comfort to me when I have been exercised with long and great darkness of soul, as well as Isa. l. 10. When I mourn, my language is with them of old: "My hope is perished from the Lord;" and when my soul is restored like them, "I still remember mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall; my soul hath them still in remembrance, and is pained within me."

I feel more and more of the inward depravity of my heart. I find it the very nest and sink of all corruption. It appears and seems to me as if I grew worse and worse every day. Sin revives, (Rom. vii. 9-16.) I have such a deep sight and sense of sin that I wonder how the Lord can have set his love on such a wretch. I

know if salvation were not free I should have neither part nor lot in the matter; (how precious the promises are to me!) for the Lord would be just in sending me to hell, as I deserve; yet, glory to my suffering Saviour, I am enabled to look to him whom I have pierced, and mourn over him and love. O how precious to experience this passage, Ezek. xvi. 62, 63.

On Wednesday evening, Oct. 6th, Mr. Huntington preached on Isa. xlv. 17. I here had a precious manifestation of my personal interest in the glorious promises contained in the text; and when he expounded from verse 11 down to his text, my experience strictly agreed and tallied with the description there given of the Israel of God, who shall be saved in the Lord. The last clause of his text was particularly brought to my mind, accompanied with amazing light, for many succeeding days.

In Jan., 1785, I dreamt I distinctly saw our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, during his bitter passion. Much affected was I at this solemn and awful sight. A few days afterwards, reading Mr. Hart's hymn on the Passion, my thoughts were led, in holy raptures and heavenly ecstasies, deeply to meditate on the solemn transaction presented to me in my dream. How my heart was warmed, yea, inflamed with the love of my dear Redeemer. O what inflamed affections sprang up in my soul!

Mr. Huntington says repentance comes the last; (Ezek. xxxvi. 25-30, 31, &c.) for there is no true gospel repentance till Christ is fully known by faith. See about Ephraim. (Jer. xxxi. 19; Jer. xxxii. 39; Ezek. xi. 19.) He insists on it that repentance comes after faith in the work of conversion; then love to the dear Redeemer is the procuring cause. I bless God this is very agreeable also to my experience. I know repentance is legal, unless it springs from love.

On Lord's day morning, April 24th, and Monday evening, the 25th, Mr. Huntington's text was Deut. xxxii. 36. He observed that the judgment of God's people is already passed in this life, when they have been brought out of soul travail into perfect liberty. His other text was Heb. xiii. 5. These two sermons were much blessed to my soul.

On Monday evening, May 2nd, Mr. Huntington's text was Luke ii. 25. He showed how the Holy Ghost may be in a person as a convincer, and they waiting for the consolation of Israel, though not yet comforted. I could look back, blessed be God, with pleasure. The way the Lord had formerly led me was now made very plain before me. I could look back with great satisfaction, pleasure, and delight; for salvation is from the Lord alone. To him be all the praise.

On Sunday evening, May 29th, 1785, my father was taken ill, as we supposed, of a slight cold; but on Wednesday night he grew worse of a pain in his right side. The next day we sent for assistance twice, but he died before it arrived. I prayed much for him in private, but did not dare to speak to him about death. I read to him several parts of Mons. Drelincourt on death, but not before

asking leave. He said I might. I also read in French several parts of some chapters, as about the penitent thief, and other suitable passages. I told him Christ was the only atonement for sin. He said Mons. Lescure said so, (at the sacrament to which he had attended about two weeks before at Leicester Fields Church.) I then told him not to rely on that sacrament, or anything else he might have done. He replied, "No." I told him to rely upon the blood of Christ alone for pardon and acceptance; but I do not recollect what answer he made, I being so shocked at the appearance of things; for I wept and cried for grief almost all the while. I earnestly wished, if it had been the will of God, that he had not died so suddenly, but had lain long on a bed, expecting death; then, perhaps, I might have been able to have drawn some comfortable hope.

One evening, coming away from Providence Chapel and conversing with that precious saint of the Lord, Mr. Davis, the gold-worker, as I sometimes do, amongst other passages he quoted in the course of our conversation was this: "The mountains shall depart," &c. It then was sweetly applied to me by the Holy Spirit. In short, our hearts burnt within us as we talked by the way. Yea, we could hardly part till near 10 o'clock that evening, so close was our communion together. How sweet was our spiritual conversation with each united heart. For the best part of the time we were four of us in company, only I left him the last. We each spoke freely of our spiritual experiences. Mr. Davis is a deep-experienced Christian. In July, 1796, I was enabled to establish family prayer, morning and evening, a thing which I had long endeavoured to do, but till now unable to perform it for a constancy, through the fault of my mother. Long, very long had it been my earnest desire to use this privilege; but, alas, alas! I could not prevail. Though I read the Scriptures at those seasons frequently, yet I could not prevail to pray. But after all, I still am of Mr. Huntington's opinion, that the sweetest moments both to read the Bible and to pray are in secret, when the Lord only is present; for, as he says, then you may tell the Lord many things that you would not utter before a fellow-creature, were it your dearest friend. He often says those are the best and sweetest opportunities of prayer to him; and I can witness so they are to me, the very best I can enjoy.

OBSERVATION.—When I have been overcome by sin or contracted guilt, (which, alas! sometimes happens,) I find it a hard matter to come to approach a throne of grace in prayer. I find, as Mr. Huntington says, I am ashamed to look God in the face; but this I do,—I confess when I cannot pray. The Lord says, "They shall come with weeping," &c. (Jer. xxxi. 9.) A precious description of returning backsliders is that in Jer. iii. 20, &c.

On Lord's day morning, June 3rd, 1787, I heard Mr. Romaine at Blackfriars, from 1 Pet. i. 2: "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God," &c. He said, "To sanctify means to set apart for holy use," and referred to Eph. i. 4-8; Isa. xxvi. 3, 4.

It may not be improper here to observe that since I have known the Lord he has blessed me with a remarkably tender conscience, so

that Ps. xv. tallies with my spiritual experience. I might mention many fruits of my faith and upright walk since I have known him. (Neh. xiii. 14, &c.)

One Friday evening, about this time, I heard Mr. Jones, of Langan, in Wales, at Spafelds Chapel, on Hag. ii. 9: "And the glory of this latter house," &c. I here found much peace, in answer to prayer, for I went very burdened. When I got home, opening my Bible I cast my eyes on Joel ii. 32: "And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be delivered," &c. I thought it a good comment upon the text Mr. Jones had just preached from, and I experienced it then as well as many times before.

Mr. Huntington, Providence Chapel, Sunday morning, August 10. His text was 2 Tim. ii. 19. In the evening text (Ps. li. 12) he spake much of restoring grace to persons backslidden; I saw myself (as in a glass) as such restored. These two sermons were much blessed to me, restored from my late spiritual decay.

I recollect when first Mr. Toplady preached at Orange Street Chapel, he took his text (Exod. xv. 26), "I am the Lord that healeth thee." This sermon was very precious to my soul, a sweet and comfortable opportunity; I enjoyed a blessed manifestation; the comforts of the Spirit were neither few nor small.

On Thursday evening; March 10th, 1791, Mr. Romaine's sermon on 1 John. v. 9, 10, was most uncommonly blessed to me; I don't remember such a remarkably precious season for above two years before. He referred to Jer. xxxiii. 20, 21, 25, 26, and said these scriptures had been great supports to him in many a black, cloudy, and dark day. So they were to me at this time. I found great encouragement in my present dark state of soul, especially from the words: "I will cause their captivity to return and have mercy on them." My captivity was my backsliding. This sermon was much blessed to my soul; and after I got home, in private meditation and prayer, the following scriptures were deeply impressed upon my heart: John. vi. 36; x. 27-31. I found great liberty and freedom at the throne of grace. I afterwards thought of the words of the Psalmist: "He restoreth my soul," &c. Much encouragement and comfort I found in reading Jer. ii. 3. That sweet passage, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth," &c., was brought with much power to my heart, and this gracious promise of the Lord was precious unto me: "I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely." The language of my heart may be well seen in the hymn:

"Jesus, let thy pitying eye," &c.

Also

"See a poor sinner, dearest Lord," &c.

I knew what it was to be in darkness, in Doubting Castle, kept by Giant Despair, that old grim monster. I know that the gull of bitterness in various shapes is inseparable from the bond of iniquity, as dear Mr. Toplady has sometimes said. O Lord, forbid that it should be said of me as it is said of Solomon: "When Solomon

was old, then he sinned." (1 Kings xi. 4, compared with Neh. xiii. 26.)

This sunshine gradually departed, and from the mount I was down again into the valley, the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Ah! I thought of Bunyan's poor Pilgrim. I had such another deep view or sight of my late backsliding that at last I found myself locked up again in the Castle of Giant Despair. My soul anguish was great, especially at night. I at length found some support from Heb. vii. 25: "He is able to save to the uttermost," &c. After that, I had a little relief in my meditations on Isa. liv. 7-11: "For a small moment I hid my face," &c., my mind being often led to this passage of Scripture. This was the key to let me out of this iron cage, but the bolt did not effectually fly back till hearing Mr. Romaine from Matt. xi. 28, as will be related afterwards. It was on Nov. 15, 1791, a thing which, though very often tempted and harassed with, yet I fell not into it (since I have known the truth) till that unhappy moment. Alas! What are we when left to ourselves, and to the corruption of our vile and wicked hearts, although we are sometimes ready to say with Hazael, "What! is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?" I know he is well kept whom God keeps, and that if left of God one moment there is no abomination that the best may not commit, through a deceitful, vile, apostate, and abominably wicked heart, often ready to start aside like a broken bow.

Amongst other temporal chastisements for this season, I have observed this one, that a very few days after the above Nov. 15th I lost near the value of a guinea all at once in a very odd manner. And as to spiritual chastisements, such as darkness of soul and desertions, I have known not a little of them, especially since that affair. I know that it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against God, against light and love; it is grieving the Holy Spirit, it is quenching that good Spirit. (Eph. iv. 30; 1 Thess. v. 19.) The spiritual showers of comfort are then withholden, and there is no latter rain. (Jer. iii. 3.)

N.B.—God's people do not sin at so cheap a rate as the world does. Their consciences are tender; and what the world would call no sin, or a little one, God's people see it to be a very great one. The sin that I here so lament and repent of was not taking any one's property in any shape whatever, nor injuring any person in any way at all, but of quite another nature, and what people in general think but very lightly, if anything, of. I think it not a little one; and, in truth, there are no sins little in the sight of the great God against whom they are committed.

(To be continued.)

THE personal union of God and man in their distinct natures is the glory of our religion, the glory of the church, the sole rock whereon it is built, the only spring of present grace and future glory.—*Owen.*

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF JONAS EATHORN.

BY THE LATE H. FOWLER.

THIS man was the *paralytic* concerning whom Dr. Hawker has given an interesting account in his "Zion's Pilgrim." I wrote an outline of the *paralytic's* life from his own mouth, at the request of Dr. Hawker, but it was never printed. I shall devote a few pages for the purpose here, as I judge many of my readers will read the history of my worthy brother, Jonas Eathorn, with much pleasure.

Jonas Eathorn was by trade a barber and hairdresser. He attended close to his business, and when he went from home to attend upon gentlemen, he used generally to be seen in a full trot; but such a lover was he of *white ale*, (a beverage I never saw but at Plymouth,) that he seldom passed a public-house without hastily taking half a pint. This he continued in the practice of for many years; and as the day closed he was generally in a state of intoxication. He resided very near a meeting-house, called the Old Tabernacle, in Plymouth, but was not in the habit of attending any place of worship. He followed his hairdressing up to a late hour on a Sunday, and then finished the day a beastly drunkard.

In a state of intoxication one Lord's day evening he entered the aforesaid meeting-house, and with some difficulty he got into the gallery facing the minister. Just as he was settled, the minister, Mr. Shepherd, of Bath, gave out for his text these words: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.) The preacher, in a strong and solemn tone, immediately added, "And thou, drunkard, art the man!" The words had such an effect on Jonas that in one minute he was quite sober, but in the greatest terror of mind imaginable. He left the meeting-house with a dismal hell before his eyes, groaning and weeping. When he got home, he exclaimed to his wife, "I am a lost man! I shall certainly be damned, as sure as there is a God in heaven!" His wife was quite alarmed. "What!" she said, "am I to be plagued again with another Methodist?" Her first husband, I would observe, was a godly man, and she was opposed to everything that had the appearance of religion. When her husband died, she was determined, if she altered her condition again, to marry a man that was no Methodist. She, therefore, was quite content to be married to Jonas, the proverbial tippler in the town, that she might not be plagued with religion. This I had from her own mouth.

Now began Jonas's trials. He could no longer continue carrying on his business on a Lord's day; consequently, he lost the best part of his income, which drove him to great straits; and this increased the rage and malice of his wife against him and his religion. But he bore with great patience all her cavils and contentions, and used

often to say, "Who maketh me to differ?" Jonas now became a steady follower of the Lamb, and a regular attendant with the people of God in the place where he called him by the preached word. I think he was not brought to taste the sweets of redeeming love for nearly three years after the Lord first convicted him, but was striving and labouring under the yoke of Moses, as most poor convicted sinners do, some for a greater length of time than others. As he was so tried without, the Lord abundantly blessed him in his own soul. He was often destitute of a penny to buy food for his family.

One day when he came home, his wife said to him, with an angry tone, "We have neither bread, butter, nor tea in the house, nor any money to get them. You see what your religion has brought you to." Jonas said to her, "Put on the kettle; we shall have something by and by." "What use is it to boil the water?" she said; "I cannot see where anything is to come from." Jonas retired, and for some time poured out his soul to God in prayer; and he begged of God to appear for him as a God of providence, that his poverty might not open the mouths of the ungodly to reproach his cause. Jonas told me that before he left praying he was quite satisfied by the freedom he had in prayer, and by the sweet promises the Lord gave him, that supplies were on the road. He came down stairs in that strong confidence, and had not been down many minutes before a knock was heard at the door. Jonas went to answer the door, and saw a young woman, who said, "I was directed to deliver the contents of this basket to Mr. Eathorn." "Who sent it?" said Jonas. "I am not to tell you who sent it," said the woman. Jonas delivered the contents of the basket to his wife. "Here, Mary," said Jonas, "did I not tell you we should have supplies? Here is bread, butter, tea, and meat. God is a God that does hear and answer the cries of his children, and he has now confirmed his faithful promise to me, as he has often done." His wife was struck with silent surprise; and this and many other like striking providences stopped her from persecuting Jonas, as she has told me.

I forget how many years Jonas was with the people at the Old Tabernacle; but I imagine it could not be but a few years before he was seized with a paralytic stroke. This affliction of his puzzled all the medical men in the town; for it only extended to the lower half of his body; so that he quite lost the use of his legs and thighs. In this state of affliction the Lord continually made his goodness to pass before him both in spirituals and temporals. He was confined on the bed of affliction up to the close of his life; a period of *near twenty-seven years!* But I cannot dismiss the reader without giving him some further account of my worthy brother Jonas.

Soon after Jonas was taken ill, some one requested Dr. Hawker to visit him, which he did. But at that time Dr. Hawker was little better than an Arminian, as Jonas found by his conversation. On this occasion, Jonas stated very freely to Dr. Hawker his views, as respects the justification of a sinner before God; and he told the Doctor how the Lord had dealt with him, with which account the

Doctor was rather struck. Before Dr. Hawker left Jonas, he asked him if he was willing to receive the sacrament. Jonas said he was quite willing. "Then," said the Doctor, "when shall you be *prepared* to receive the sacrament?" "*Prepared*, Sir," said Jonas, "I hope, Sir, you know the meaning of Solomon's words, 'The preparation of the heart in man and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord.' I am quite ready, Sir. I am a poor, needy sinner, saved by grace." Many other observations Jonas made, which I believe Dr. Hawker never forgot.

From this time, the Doctor used frequently to visit Jonas, as well as many others of the Doctor's acquaintances. There was also a prayer-meeting established in Jonas's room, where twenty or thirty godly persons met two or three times a week, and the Doctor used to meet with them at times; and for many years he used to break bread once a month to Jonas and the brethren, and truly it sometimes was to me the house of God, and the very gate of heaven! Jonas generally gave out the hymns, and very appropriate they were to the occasion. By the help of a rope fastened at the foot of the bedstead, Jonas used to sit up in the bed and read the hymns, while his countenance bespoke the inward joy of his heart.

When first I became acquainted with Jonas, I used to write his letters to his numerous friends; but at length it struck me that I would try to bring him, by degrees, into the practice of writing. When I proposed it to him, he seemed terrified at the thought. "O, no!" said he; "I have not had a pen in my hand for some years, and I cannot think of attempting to write again." At length I prevailed on him to try. I guided his hand as I would a child's, and when he found that his letters were well formed he was greatly pleased; and after a few lessons he could write a bold hand. My chief object was, that he might be fully employed, and much gratified by correspondence with his Christian friends, both for their edification as well as his own; and indeed his letters were full of Christ, if I may so speak. Jonas also collected from various authors about five hundred hymns which he left in manuscript, but were never printed. This new employ of his used to beguile many of his solitary hours. Jonas was generally lively in conversation; for his mind displayed all the vivacity of youth, but free from levity. I have indeed sometimes found him very much cast down by a sense of indwelling sin, and by darkness of soul. But when I began to tell him of the wretched state of my mind, he would lose sight of himself and his troubles, and begin to preach to me of the stability of the promises, amidst all our darkness, deadness, guilt, and sin; of our complete justification in and by the imputed righteousness of Christ, until his gloom has been changed into a smile, which indicated the peace of God in his heart, which passeth all understanding. Many times has my soul been refreshed by the spiritual conversation of my brother Jonas. He had something to say about his dear Lord and Master to every one that visited him. His whole delight seemed to be to speak of divine and spiritual things. Many of the Lord's dear children, as well as myself, have left his room

under a sweet sense of the precious love of Jesus Christ, the friend of sinners!

About 1807, Jonas was deprived of his wife by death, which greatly shook him. He had now lost his tender nurse, and partner of his joys and sorrows. I have reason to hope she died in the Lord, though her mind was much beclouded the most of her days, as many of the Lord's family are. I have often heard her complain of her sin-polluted soul, and of her many fears and unbelief. Soon after her death, Jonas was removed to his only daughter's house, which in a great measure destroyed his pleasure in having frequent meetings with the children of God; this he found the loss of much. But he was often visited by the best Friend, and I have often seen him, in his new station, longing to depart and be with Christ.

I would observe that when Jonas was removed from his old habitation, the men that took him in the sedan chair asked him if he would have the covering removed, that he might once more see the sun, which was then shining in all his brilliance. Jonas replied, "O, no! Keep the top covered and the curtains drawn. I never wish to see the material sun shine again. I long to see the Sun of Righteousness! That is the sun I long to see!" But, lest by accident the curtain should admit the rays of the sun, Jonas told me he closed his eyes, until he was safely lodged in his daughter's house, which was adjoining the street where he had resided many years.

Jonas survived his wife about three years. Dr. Hawker had a particular desire to be with him in his last moments. Jonas had lain for many days before his death in a kind of torpor, taking little or no food, nor speaking to any one. At length the summons, long expected and often wished for, came. His attendants round the bed perceived a visible alteration in his countenance, and watched with anxiety his parting breath. He had not moved in bed for some days; but now, without any human assistance, Jonas arose in the bed, and, with a heavenly smile, waved his hands and exclaimed with holy rapture, "The victory is won! The victory is won!" and, without a struggle, fell asleep in Jesus. Thus Jonas realised the truth of his favourite promise, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee."

When the friends perceived a change in Jonas, they sent for Dr. Hawker, but he was engaged at church, and was a few minutes too late—Jonas was gone; and the Doctor, on entering the room, fell on his knees, with the friends present, and poured out before God thanksgiving and praise for his faithfulness, mercy, and love to Jonas. He was interred in the churchyard of Charles, Plymouth. Dr. Hawker, after reading the usual service in the church, delivered a short, but sweet discourse from the desk, on the occasion; and towards the close he made this remark respecting Jonas: "Though I never preached to him, he has preached many sweet sermons to me." I gave out, over his grave, that fine funeral hymn, chosen by himself,

"Why do we mourn departing friends?"

and the Doctor joined with his noble bass voice.

A LETTER BY THE LATE R. H. IRESON.

My dear Friend in the Lord,—If thought, word, and power be given, a line shall acknowledge your favour of the last month.

I am your debtor by many kind favours, and I would hope to be allowed to increase the debt by a visit once more to Everington Mill. It appears by your letter that you had almost concluded that my promise and hope were all lost; but I hope this is not the real cause of my not coming sooner than the present year. The Lord himself must time the movement. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." The hand and Spirit of the Lord are most necessary, perhaps, when least regarded. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Allow me to say I am inclined to think that the Lord's providence without, over the outer man, and the leadings of his Spirit within, in leading the inner man, are strictly and minutely connected together. The Lord's sovereignty is extensive, and the exercise of his mysterious and often confounding life of faith is a life of dependence, a life of receiving, a life of exercise. Faith is the grand secret grace, that perceives, apprehends, believes, and confesses, "Thou art the Christ." "He that cometh to God must believe that he is." The use of it is to transact spiritual business with God. To it as an instrument or principle are ascribed the achievements of worthies recorded. (Heb. xi.) Abel offers sacrifice, Noah builds an ark, Enoch is translated, Abraham leaves his father's house and country, Moses leaves the court, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. The base opposite of this precious faith is unbelief. This bars, clogs, pesters, and hinders the believer, so that he cannot believe as he would. This foul sin blackens the fair character of Jehovah, and the devil too often blows up the heart in rebellion against God in stormy weather.

I am a poor creature at believing. The blissful Man of Sorrows is only known as such by suffering with him. He left his Father's house and bosom, and took up his heavy cross, becoming the poor man. This Lily of the Valley bowed his lovely head in obedience to his Father's will, was made perfect through sufferings, got the victory by cries, prayers, and tears, suffers without the gate, a finished spectacle of consummate grief. The "lama sabachthani" ought, methinks, to put a full stop to sin in every sinner's life for whom he suffered. Alas that he should be "wounded in the house of his friends"—the honours of his cross blackened or sullied by a life, conduct, and conversation contrary to his gospel! What shall I say of myself, who ought to be an example in word, charity, conversation, and purity? If I could, I would shut my mouth and no more open it, because of my shame. I hope I can say, "The things that I do I allow not." But who can tell how often he offendeth? Who can understand his errors?

What a life of transgression is the life of one day of a believer! Surely, shame and confusion of face belong unto me; but it is the mercy of mercies that to the Lord our God belongeth mercy, and

that he delighteth in it is most wonderful. It is written, "Mercy shall be built up for ever." I sometimes have the mercy to lie in dust at Jesus' feet and find rest for my soul. How little do we know the need of mercy until brought low! I sometimes fear I shall turn up a hypocrite, and shall be lost after all. Gifts and knowledge, and faith to remove mountains, without the charity of Christ, will all prove nothing; but I have recourse to the mercy-seat, and beg of Jesus that if this is the case to have pity on me, and cast out the devils and forgive me my sins, and break up and break down all the powers of hell and sin in me and over me. Whatever it may cost me in a way of suffering, I desire to come to the light, that my deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

Nothing will stand the fire but experimental power. Christ has wrought out a salvation which is an everlasting one, and the Holy Ghost must work it in the sinner ere he can be a partaker of Christ to the salvation of his soul. Christ must be known, and well known, to be trusted; and sure I am I must be one with him and take up his cross if I walk with him, or if I follow him in the regeneration.

I am an unskilful and an awkward disciple. I too often forget my place and lessons, and forget, too, what manner of person I am. I perceive, at times, that the ways of the Lord are right, and it is said the just shall walk in them. I perceive, at times, that Christ is a sovereign over his own things, of gifts, grace, faith, hope, charity, his visits of love, his walks of communion. The openings and shuttings of heart and house, the keys and the kingdom, are his. I perceive it is my business to be a waiter. To wait, watch, and pray are indispensable exercises of the new man. The world, the flesh, the devil, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, the pride of life, these swarms of evils, with all the devils, soon do the man of communion a mischief, if prayer and the watch-tower be slighted; and, after all, "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." I would sigh and cry for every abomination that is done in this city; for every neglect of any privilege the Lord may appoint as a means of bringing the soul acquainted with so great salvation; but, alas! there, as in everything else, it appears some sharp discipline is necessary, to keep me sensible of the importance and value of Christ. To be found in him, to win him, to have the lamp burning and the loins girded, to be found of him in peace, how desirable! I find, upon solemn and sober consideration, that it is but little I know of Christ, his works and ways. My hope of salvation is founded upon his atonement; this is the rock upon which I build for time and eternity. The essence of the fall appears to be apostasy and rebellion; the ruin of our nature, the dark kingdom of fallen angels. The strongholds of sin, the deceptions, delusions, and destructions of mankind are practised in an almost endless variety. The devil's coming as an angel of light, the deceptions played off upon professors of the gospel, and possessors too, at times, is an alarming consideration. It is well with us, I trust, when we are either led, driven, or drawn to pray to be kept from every evil, and preserved unto his heavenly kingdom.

It is your mercy, I believe, to be a partaker of like precious faith with the apostles and prophets, and that you are favoured with a ministry that causes great searching of heart. This is a great mercy, to be searched, tried, proved, emptied, stripped, pulled all to pieces, and reduced to nothing. Christ is only precious and prized as known and needed. "These are they that came out of great tribulation," must be said of all the redeemed, for there is no other way to the kingdom.

It appears that false prophets of old never rebuked anybody for sin; they always cried "Peace," and abused those that would not give them anything. An experimental minister, who goes before the flock and casts up the way through fire and water to the wealthy place, has a business of a trying nature. "Prayer, meditation, and temptation make a minister," says Luther. A praying people is a great favour; a people poor, needy, helpless, tried in the furnace of affliction, form a rich flock. Those that sow in tears reap in joy.

I am still in the furnace. My path, for the most part, is trying to the very quick. I am reduced to a state of entire dependence, soul and body, mind and spirit. I am the poorest of all poor creatures. Bonds and afflictions await me; I am bound in spirit. It would be a mercy if I could welcome every cross, every cloud, every wave, and every furnace; doubtless they are as necessary as the food I eat. I have long endeavoured to shift and shun my trials; but the Lord has met with me at last, and I find that as Christ was made perfect through sufferings, so his followers must have their measure of suffering, and thus be conformed to his image. I find his manifestations generally preceded by something very trying. There is a wretched proneness to backslide, until a storm comes and surprises me, and then I must try the Friend of sinners again, and beg hard for pity and mercy to help me. Alas! What folly it is to forsake the Rock and Foundation, when such bitter consequences ensue.

I hardly know what sort of a letter I shall produce. I feel my fleece wet and dry, and I appear blind and lame; I am the subject of many, and sometimes sudden, changes; my little joys are sometimes very soon gone, and my little light changed for darkness, and I grope again. Sometimes I feel as stupid as a block, and hardly know how to answer a question, if hastily proposed. I sometimes hope things will be better with me. Pride and independence would like to do without Christ. Why do I wish for a favour in any other way than as dropping out of his dear hands? Why do I wish for any favour sooner than his time? O ignorance, unbelief, guilt, and slavish fear, these things too often darken the Saviour's gospel glory. But "if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," said the apostle; and when this is the case, the wilderness is not Mount Tabor.

Our times are in the Lord's hands, and all our springs are in him too; nor can we get at them. Drought and heat threaten to consume; and, were it not for this, the living water would not be prized. Up and down, the mount and the valley, tribulation and consolation, in and out, going in to be fed, and then going out of the Saviour's

presence to walk by faith to another resting-place and feeding time. A crumb of mercy is sweet to a poor hungry soul, comfort to a mourner, the balm, honey, and oil, milk, corn, and wine. Christ's sufferings are marrow and fatness. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed. I sometimes think that I do not know enough about my sin, because I do not sensibly feel it; at others, I see and feel so much that I appear to be in danger of being carried away with it; at others, I feel a lump of sin and death. Christ is very precious when he comes. A glimpse, a touch, or taste is precious. Some time ago I had these words: "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;" at another time: "Follow me;" at another: "His way is in the sea;" "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known." From these texts of Scripture you may judge whereabouts I am.

At present I shall not be able to see you, but as soon as I can see my way, the Lord willing, I intend going. I have a little business to attend to at present. When I see how it will go with me, I shall be more at liberty. I should like to have seen the darkness light, and the crooked straight, before I go; but this is not to be my lot.

The statement I have made in reference to the Lord's government and direction of a believer does not express all I intend. The outer man has a calling, connections in society, relations in life. The bounds of our habitation are fixed. The hand of the Lord directs and supplies us. The Lord manages all concerns of this nature. The new man has a calling, a business of faith to attend to. This new man is most dependent upon divine influence. The wind bloweth where it listeth. Prayer consists, or is made up, of groans, sighs, looks, desires, tears, cries, supplications, knocking and asking, begging and entreating. Jacob became bold, with a holy, humble importunity. He laid hold of Christ, and said he would not let him go except he blessed him. Moses asks for a sight of the Lord's glory. The way to ask, and what to ask, and how much to ask, the Holy Spirit only can tell us. He knows our wants and needs, and helps our infirmities. Our success at the Mercy-seat seems to vary; but in the end the Lord richly rewards the diligent seeker; he gives himself.

"Blest souls that can say, 'Christ only I seek.'"

But after all it is by life, motion, and power put forth by the Holy Ghost.

The bodies of believers are the Lord's temples; "I will dwell in them." Every look out of obscurity for Jesus is an evidence that he is coming. "The flesh lusteth against the spirit," and the devil is never idle. "In the world ye shall have tribulation" and "suffer persecution." How the flesh hates trouble! "Father, thy will be done." "Glorify thy Son." The trial of faith is said to be precious. The Holy Ghost and the Father of our Lord Jesus are one. They mean doubtless to glorify Christ; and those that know the Lord must aim at that end. If they seek anything else, mortification of the flesh and condemnation in the conscience will render them little

better in their feelings than a hell upon earth. "O that thou hadst hearkened unto my commandments."

What a mystery is a believer; a mystery of iniquity, a mystery of godliness, alive to two worlds! How mercifully severe is the Father of mercies towards some of his children; "And what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?" What a pity that pictures, toys, and trifles should give us so much trouble here. As I was sitting ruminating over my troubles one morning, it suddenly struck me very forcibly, "What a folly it must be to seek anything but God!" The effect was, everything appeared rather a hindrance than an acquisition. It produced one of the most awakened feelings I ever knew. My mind was instantly fixed, and remained for some time held as though arrested by an invisible object. It made an impression that I hope I shall not forget. A little of this world should do for a believer—food and raiment. "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Christ is worth worlds. If we might have worlds without him, we should be most wretched. I hope I shall never be put off with anything less than himself. The last time I was in London, on my way to Plymouth, I felt that he was in my heart, and that I was in him. I gave vent to my feelings in a flood of tears, and blessed him; but, notwithstanding this, I am so mauled with temptations that I sometimes fear Christ and I must part. I am not an Arminian in principle. "The righteous shall hold on his way."

The earthly house of this tabernacle is given as a residence for the redeemed spirit to reside in and worship God. This tabernacle is to act in subserviency to the spirit. The flesh, with its affections and lusts, is to be crucified, its dictates denied, and its desires and deeds mortified whenever they are contrary to gospel freedom. Superstition and will-worship abide. God never thanks any one for turning monk, while at the same time he says, "Be not conformed unto this world." If we want a pattern, we have Christ; if we want directions, we have his word; if we want a guide, we have his Spirit. How ample are we provided for! If we walk after the Spirit, we live. "To be spiritually-minded is life." If we walk after the flesh, we die in our life of communion, for "to be carnally-minded is death."

I have often suffered loss in my walk, and it has become a solemn question with me, "What is it to walk after the Spirit?" It is a hard thing to pass through the world and not to be snared, damped, and deadened to spiritual things. Nay, it is a hard thing, perhaps, to be out of it and not be in it, I mean in the absence of Christ. O where have I not sometimes rambled to in my thoughts and affections? The affections are very strong, and subtle, and secret in their movements and attachments. If Christ has not our first affections, he has them secondhand. Self-love, or creature-love, or loaves and fishes, his gospel food, may become a snare. We often love and follow for what we can get spiritually. How pure his mind, how fair his spotless, harmless, undefiled bosom, altogether lovely. He certainly deserves our confidence and affections. Whoever trusted in him and was confounded? O if I could ever come here

to be the passive clay, and say, "Father, thy will be done;" "Glorify thy Son." If I seem to be right for a little time, I am soon all ruin and confusion, and question whether I am capable of instruction; and if I am allowed to have anything, I seem very soon to get out of my place. Pride and self-sufficiency and glorying in a stock of goods make it necessary that I should be kept very poor in spirituals, hardly enough to keep me alive. My rags and nakedness teach the value of robes and wedding garments. If I love the image of Jesus, the new man, in another, that is a mercy. To love Christ and hate myself in any measure is a good evidence of being born of God.

I have rambled on and nearly filled the paper. You will excuse what I have written.

If a drop of dew or the presence of Jesus attend the perusal, to his name be all the praise. Unworthy is the sinner, worthy is the Lamb of all the glory of his great salvation, and of the things that accompany it. I would ever say, if ever I get to heaven, "Sovereign grace, grace, grace, grace! will be my theme. Amen." Farewell.

Yours in the Lord,

King's Cliffe, June 20, 1842.

R. H. IRESON.

CAST NOT AWAY YOUR CONFIDENCE.

SINNER, overwhelm'd with care,
 Listen now to what I say;
 I was once in sad despair,
 Thought myself a cast-away.
 Everything against me seem'd;
 God appear'd my chiefest foe;
 Law and gospel, too, I deem'd
 Fitted for my overthrow.
 "Go, ye cursed," follow'd me;
 Mercy seem'd indeed clean gone;
 Past experience proved to be
 To my feelings worse than none.
 How I wish'd myself unborn,
 Wish'd I'd never seen the light;
 Thus I felt of hope clean shorn;
 Satan gloried at the sight.
 But the time by wisdom set,
 Hasten'd on to set me free;
 God will save his Zion yet
 Out of depths of misery.
 Years elapsed before he came,
 Set my soul from bondage free;
 Endless blessings on his name,
 'Twas well-timed, I clearly see.
 Fellow sinner, wait, O wait!
 Call upon his name again;
 He that saved me from this state
 Will not let thee wait in vain.

Sept. 22, 1863.

ALFRED.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from p. 202.)

WE come now to a very important part of our subject—indeed, we may almost say the most important, for it is that part which gives life and spirit to the whole. This is the *spirit* of the precept as distinguished from the *letter*.

We have never seen any work on the precept which has given us full satisfaction; and for this simple reason. No man of truth, that we are aware of, has treated the subject fully and systematically. Owen, Bunyan, and most of the old Puritan writers have entered largely and fully into the preceptive part of the word of truth; but as they held the law for the believer's rule of life, their views were necessarily from that circumstance legal, confused, and imperfect. Mr. Huntington and Mr. Gadsby have both of them most clearly and beautifully unfolded the spiritual character of the precept, and shown its full and thorough harmony with the grace of the gospel; and from the "Posthumous Letters," and other works of the former, whole pages might be selected in which the immortal Coalheaver has, in his most masterly manner, described the fruits and effects of the gospel in heart, lip, and life; in other words, has drawn out the precept in all its living features as a rule of Christian obedience. But neither of these great men has handled the subject in a full and systematic manner, so as to enter into it in its length and breadth, and thus present it as a full, compact, and consistent whole to the consideration of the church of God. It was not, indeed, necessary for them to do this, as their object was rather to overthrow the current doctrine that the law was the believer's rule of life, and to establish the gospel, the perfect law of liberty, as the rule, than devote their attention to a minute consideration of the precept, which was but a part of their subject. It seemed, therefore, laid upon our mind to take up the subject as we had seen it revealed in the word of truth and in the experience of the saints, and handle it in a more full, clear, and systematic form than we believe has been yet attempted by any man of truth. And this must be our excuse if our exposition of it has been somewhat too lengthy and prolix. Dim, superficial, confused views of the solemn, weighty truths of the gospel cannot satisfy our mind. We love, if God give us the wisdom and ability, to go to the very bottom of a subject and turn it up for examination by the people of God, that they with us may be firmly established in the truth, and not be "children tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." (Eph. iv. 14.) This, however, requires not only much careful examination and meditation, but a certain fulness of detail which, from undue length, may become wearisome. It was for this reason, therefore, that we examined so fully the letter of the precept, which pro-

bably seemed to many dull and dry, but yet was necessary to be thoroughly gone into, to lay a deep and broad foundation for the more spiritual and experimental part of our subject to rest upon. But having laid this foundation, we now come to those inner chambers which wisdom has filled with all precious and pleasant riches, (Prov. xxiv. 4,) to those experimental realities, where we and our spiritual readers feel most at home, and most enjoy that sweet union and unison of spirit in which we mutually delight. We come, then, now to the *spirit* of the precept.

In examining, then, this part of our subject, we shall consider the *spirit* of the precept under three points of view:

- i. The nature and character of the spirit of the precept.
- ii. The connection between the spirit and the letter of the precept.
- iii. The way in which the spirit of the precept acts in unison and harmony, not only with the letter of the precept, but with the whole tenor and current of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

i. As it is most desirable to obtain, if we do not already possess, clear ideas upon the point now before us at the very outset, (for if we start confusedly we shall proceed confusedly, and shall probably end confusedly,) we shall first attempt to define as simply and as plainly as we can what we understand by the *spirit* of the precept; and then, to set the subject in a fuller, broader light, shall illustrate our definition by some experimental and practical instances.

1. We define, then, the *spirit* of the precept to be the life and power of the precept, as animated by the quickening breath of the Holy Spirit, and thus brought into and out of the believing heart by a divine operation and influence. In this life and power put into the precept by the Holy Ghost, and thus made spirit and life to the soul, lies all the difference between the spirit and the letter. This distinctive difference between the letter and the spirit we may see clearly exemplified in the Lord's own words to his disciples: "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." (John vi. 63.) Many heard the words in the letter which the Lord spoke with pleasure and approbation; for we read that on one occasion "all the people hanged on him to hear him," (Luke xix. 48, margin,) and on another, that "all bear him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." But to them it was but the letter of truth; for those very same persons, who wondered at his gracious words, when the Lord began to preach the discriminating grace of God "were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust him out of the city." (Luke iv. 22, 28, 29.) The Spirit did not quicken his words to their souls; they were not made, as to the disciples, spirit and life. They were, therefore, to them the mere letter of truth, and what is more, the killing letter, for by those words they were to be judged and condemned. (John xii. 48.) The spirit of the precept is, then, so to speak, the breathing of life by the Spirit into the letter of the precept, and thus a bringing of it into the heart with a divine influence of power, and

out of the heart into a gracious and practical fulfilment. Let us illustrate this explanation by several examples; and, to make the point clearer, we will take two distinct classes of precept: 1. That class which addresses itself peculiarly to our personal walk with and before God; 2. That class which addresses itself to our walk and conduct with and before man.

1. Take the following precept as addressing itself to our walk before God. "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Pet. v. 6.) I am here directed and enjoined to humble myself under the mighty hand of God. But can I do so? No, I cannot. I may make the attempt. I may fall on my knees, confess my sins, put my mouth in the dust, at least do all this in words. But can I produce in my soul that solemn humbling of my whole spirit before God, that believing view of his mighty hand under which I reverentially bow, that self-loathing and self-abhorrence, that brokenness and contrition of heart, that lying at his feet with weeping and supplications, that giving up of myself into his hands, without which all my humbling of myself is but lip service? No; I can do none of these things. I am so thoroughly destitute and helpless that I cannot produce one grain of real humility in my own soul. But let the Lord the Spirit graciously work upon my heart; let him fill me with a deep sense of the mighty hand of God over me and under me; let him humble me in my inmost soul as the very chief of sinners under this mighty hand as able to save or destroy; let my heart be broken and my spirit made contrite under a sight of my sins, and a sight, too, of the love and blood, sufferings and death of a dear Redeemer—now can I not humble myself under the mighty hand of God? Is any spot too low for me to creep into and lie in? Where are pride and self-righteousness now? Does not sweet humility fill and possess the soul? Here is the *spirit* of the precept. Here is life and power put into it; here the Holy Ghost brings it, in the substance of it, into the heart, and out of the heart too. Here the precept is fulfilled in its spiritual import, in harmony with the grace of the gospel, according to the will of God, and, therefore, acceptably to him.

Take another instance of the same class of precept: "Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. (Phil. iv. 6.) Can you perform this precept? There it stands in the letter of the word, a gracious injunction, a holy, wise direction. But can you be "careful," (that is, as the word literally means, "rent and torn in your mind,") "for nothing," when you know what anxious cares about almost everything daily rack your breast? And can you produce or maintain that prayerful spirit whereby "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving you make your requests known unto God?" You know that you cannot. But suppose that, in some unexpected moment, when full of cares, you are favoured with a gracious visitation of the blessed Spirit, and faith is given you to cast all your care upon the Lord, knowing that he careth for you; and suppose that with this a spirit of grace and of supplica-

tion is poured into your breast, can you now in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving for past mercies and favours, make your requests known unto God? You say, "I can; I do; all my requests I make known to his gracious Majesty, and he hears and answers me to the joy of my heart." This is the *spirit* of the precept; this is fulfilling it from the heart; this is serving God in newness of the spirit, not in the oldness of the letter.

2. Now take another class of precepts; those which prescribe and regulate our walk and conduct before man, and especially with our believing brethren. There is the letter and the spirit. We will look at both. Take the following precept from the letter of the word: "Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. v. 1, 2.) We are here bidden to be "followers of God," or, as it is literally, be "imitators of God;" that is, we are enjoined to imitate the example of God, in forgiving our brethren, as he has forgiven us, as is evident from the preceding verse. (Eph. iv. 32.) Now, can you thus imitate God, in forgiving a brother who has done you a grievous wrong? You try to do so before God and your brother. But whilst you are trying and trying to raise up a forgiving spirit, something rankles within which keeps you back from a full and free forgiveness. But let the Lord the Spirit but bring into your soul a sweet sense of pardoning love; let him set before your eyes and bring into your heart the suffering Son of God, as loving you and giving himself for you, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour—can you forgive your brother *now*? can you walk in love with all the dear family of God now? How freely and fully you can forgive; how warmly and affectionately you can love! Here is the *spirit* of the precept—not the cold, dead, naked letter, but the very spirit of it, warmed into life and motion, brought out of the word into the heart, and brought again out of the heart, all warm and glowing, into the activity and energy of practical obedience. This is a doing of the will of God from the heart, (Eph. vi. 6,) and therefore a spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. (1 Pet. ii. 5.)

We need not pursue this point further. But if you wish to have your mind and judgment more fully formed and established in this point, in which really the very pith and marrow of the whole subject lies, take one precept after another, and examine each by the light which we have endeavoured to cast upon it. You will see that in every instance there is the letter and the spirit; and that the only way of fulfilling the precept is by having the life and power of it in your own soul.

ii. We come now, then, to examine the *connection* between the letter and the spirit of the precept.

In a former No. we illustrated the distinction between the letter and the spirit of the precept by comparing the former to the body, and the latter to the soul of a living man. The soul, at least in our present time-state, does not, as a general rule, act separately from the body; and though each one's individual consciousness

sufficiently assures him of the distinctness of soul and body, yet are they so linked together that they for the most part act by and with each other. Can you, viewing the matter as a general, ordinary, every-day fact, see without your eyes, or hear without your ears, or feel without your fingers, or talk without your tongue? Yet what are eyes, or ears, or fingers, or tongue separate from the soul which uses them as her instruments to gather in her ideas, and then, sitting apart in her noble citadel, forms from them her plans, which she bids them, as her ministering servants, execute? And faithfully do they execute the biddings of their mistress till old age or infirmity dims the eye and dulls the ear, stiffens the joints and weakens the active hand and nimble foot, until at length "the silver cord is loosed and the golden bowl is broken; and then the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 6.)

Of course our figure is but a figure, and, therefore, must not be too closely pressed; and yet there are points of resemblance which may help to illustrate the distinction which we wish to draw between the letter and the spirit of the precept, and at the same time show their intimate connection with each other.

1. The soul is unquestionably the *nobler* part of man. God has given us "a body as it hath pleased him,"—a body fearfully and wonderfully made, and most admirably and beautifully adapted to our present time-state. But, as formed of the dust of the ground, it is and must be, from its very origin, inferior to the soul which God himself breathed into man's nostrils with the breath of life. (Gen. ii. 7.) So the letter of the precept is necessarily inferior to the spirit of the precept, as standing merely in so many words and letters formed from the ordinary earthly language of man, as Adam's body out of the dust, and, therefore, requiring an animating breath, the very breath of God, to put a soul into them. Except, then, as animated by the Spirit, the letter of the precept is cold and dead,—like a man asleep or in his coffin, a man with all the limbs and features of a human being, but lifeless and motionless for want of the living soul to inspire him into activity and movement. As, then, the soul of man is nobler than the body of man, so the spirit or soul of the precept is nobler than the letter or body of the precept. An example from the Scripture will show this point in a still clearer light: "And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 32.) How good, how wise, how gracious is this precept as it stands in the letter of truth. But surely the spirit of the precept, the spirit of kindness, of tenderness of heart, of mutual brotherly forgiveness, and all flowing from the sweet persuasion of being ourselves forgiven, is nobler than the letter of the precept; for it is that which animates it, carries it into practical execution, and makes it effectual to the obedience of faith. I may forgive as a duty. O how cold and worthless; how half-hearted, if not wholly insincere. But to forgive under a divine influence, as melted and softened by pardoning mercy,—is not this spirit of forgiveness

higher, nobler, fuller, more blessed than the mere fulfilment in the letter of a practical duty? For our obedience must be one or the other, must stand either in the letter or in the spirit,—be an act of moral duty, or a fruit of special grace.

2. But on another ground the soul is superior to the body. The soul can act *without the body*: but the body cannot act without the soul. We think, we meditate, we pray; our active mind runs hither and thither; we pass in a moment from heaven to earth and from earth to heaven; we skim over the wide Atlantic to a friend in America, fly on over the broad Pacific to a relative in Australia or New Zealand, and leap at one bound from pole to pole. Spurning sea, air, earth, and sky, on, on flies the unwearied soul, more quickly than electric flash or lightning stroke. And where is the poor body all the time? Ill, perhaps, in bed, lying languidly on the sofa, scarcely able, it may be, to walk across the room, chained fast with a broken leg or life-long lameness, whilst its ethereal mate, regardless of her clay partner, is soaring here and there swifter than light and freer than air. But is this not inconsistent with our previous assertion that the soul does not, as a general rule, act separately from the body? Not a whit; and that chiefly for two reasons. 1. First we qualified our assertion by the words "as a general rule;" 2. Though the soul can and does act separately from the body, yet it is only by means of those ideas which it has gained through the bodily senses that it thus acts in its rapid and varied flights. Thus in one sense the soul is dependent on, in another independent of, its sluggish companion, and yet remains in close connection with it—a connection of the past, if not a connection of the present. So with the letter and spirit of the precept. The spirit of the precept can act distinctly from the letter of the precept, and yet has gained from it its knowledge of the offices which it has to execute, its understanding of the work which it has to perform. If I love my brother, if I forgive my enemy, if I pray without ceasing, if I rejoice in the Lord, if I abhor that which is evil, if I cleave to that which is good, if I walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called, assuming that I do these things, and do them in the very spirit of the gospel as taught, led, and influenced by the Holy Ghost, I only feel, walk, and act in unison with the letter of the precept. I gather previously from the word of God what his will is and how I should walk according to it; and if the Holy Spirit open this will to my heart and enable me to act in obedience to it, I learn first from the letter of the precept what that will is. Our Lord could say, "Lo, I come; in the volume of the book, it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps. xl. 7, 8.) Thus though his delight was to do the will of God, yet that will was written in the volume of the book—either the volume of God's eternal decrees or the volume of the inspired Scriptures. So with us. If possessing any measure of the mind, grace, and spirit of Christ, we delight to do the will of God, we first see that will written in the volume of the book. For what know we of the revealed will of God except from the Scriptures of truth? Thus there is a connection

between the letter and the spirit of the precept, analogous to the connection of our body and soul. My intellectual knowledge, my mental ideas, have all been gathered in the first instance through my bodily senses, as sight, hearing, &c., and then my mind selects, compares, combines, and otherwise uses for its own purposes the materials of thought and reasoning which have been thus sedulously and steadily gathered. That the spirit of the precept can powerfully influence and vigorously act without the medium of the letter was evidently shown in that signal day when "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul." (Acts iv. 32.) It is true that the precept as delivered by our gracious Lord was in the mind and memory of his immediate disciples, and was at that time also in the mouth of the apostles, as we find Peter giving it forth; (Acts ii. 38; x. 47, 48;) but the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, the spirit of the precept, "Love one another as I have loved you," was so strong and powerful that it not exactly superseded, but soared above, all written directions. We have an instance of this point in the words of Paul to the Thessalonians: "But as touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another." (1 Thess. iv. 9.) They were so taught of God to love one another that they needed no written directions to do so, no formal precept to bind it hard and fast in their consciences. And yet to show the nature and necessity of the precept, and its connection with spiritual obedience, the apostle adds, "And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia; but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more." (1 Thess. iv. 10.) Their brotherly love might flag, or there were larger measures of it to be attained unto. The spirit of the precept might seem to render the letter almost needless in their happy case; and yet the apostle would not neglect the letter, but would still urge it upon their consciences, as a revelation of the special will of God. We may take an almost parallel case from the precept: "Husbands, love your wives." (Eph. v. 25.) A Christian husband may so dearly and fondly love his wife that he may need no precept to urge him to love her. The spirit of the precept in this case may seem almost to supersede and render useless the injunction; and yet it does not do the one or the other, for he may love her too fondly, with too much of carnal love, and this may entangle him in some of those numerous snares which ever attend idolatrous or inordinate affections. Here, then, come in the wisdom and grace of the letter of the precept to guide, to regulate, to sanctify conjugal love, to turn it into a Christian channel, to restrain its excess, and to hold up a pattern and an example that it may not be like the gross, sensual love of carnal men to carnal women, but be purified from idolatry and everything whereby the conscience may be defiled. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." (Eph. v. 25, 26.) The purity and sanctity of Christ's love to the church is thus offered as an example to purify

and sanctify the love with which a Christian man should love his wife. Thus though the spirit of the precept can act independently of the letter of the precept, yet from the letter it gains its knowledge of the will of God, and by the letter is guided, restrained, and regulated.

3. This, therefore, gives us another instance of the connection between the letter and the spirit of the precept and the extreme value and blessedness of this intimate connection. The letter guides and regulates the spirit, and thus preserves it from enthusiasm and fanaticism. What a deep debt of gratitude do we owe to the Holy Ghost for the letter of the precept. What a preservative from pretended revelations or spiritual delusions. We live in an awful day, when the vilest impostures or the very depths of Satan are palmed off as "spiritual manifestations." Now, what an unspeakable mercy it is for the church of God that there is a calm, sober, solid, weighty spiritual revelation of his mind and will in the New Testament, and especially in the preceptive part of it. This is at once a guide and a test, a restraint from all wild flights of what might be thought and called the spirit, from all erroneous views of what we might be told the Spirit dictates or enforces, and yet at the same time, a safe, wise, and holy regulator of all our walk and conduct with God and man. We have not space to prove it; but it might be easily shown that most if not all of the abominations of the Romish Church; her pretended revelations, her monkish austerities, her conventual discipline, her secret confessional, and the power which she wields over the minds and consciences of her devotees may be traced up to her casting aside the Scriptures as the only rule of faith and obedience. O the unspeakable blessedness, then, of possessing, as God's gift, the wisest, safest, holiest instruction to guide our every step heavenward. O the greater blessedness still of having a divine teaching, power, and influence in our own bosom to quicken the precept as with new life, and to animate our heart to love and obey it, as held forth to our faith.

iii. Having thus traced the connection between the letter and the spirit of the precept, we shall now attempt to show how the spirit of the precept acts in unison and harmony, not only with the letter of the precept, but with the whole tenor and current of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It thus elevates the precept out of the letter; takes it completely out of the hands of legalists and pharisees, who, by their ignorance or their self-righteousness, would pervert it into a mere moral code; brings it thoroughly away from Mount Sinai, where they would fain fasten it on the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire, and was shrouded in blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and puts it under the shade and shelter of Mount Zion, as a part of that new covenant of which Jesus is the Mediator, and of which the blood of sprinkling is the dedication. (Heb. ix. 18-23; xii. 18-24.) If you are still in doubt upon this point, ask yourself this simple question: "Is the precept a part of the New Testament or not?" If it is a part of the New Testament, which none can deny, it is of the new covenant,

for the word in the original is the same, and the meaning of the two terms but slightly differs. Now, if it is a part of the new covenant, then it must be in harmony with every other part of it, unless you suppose that the God of all wisdom and of all grace has given to the church a broken, divided, inconsistent, contradictory covenant; a circumstance which, according even to human covenants, would vitiate the whole. It is surprising how all difficulties, and especially those which we make for ourselves or others make for us by carnal reasoning, vanish and disappear before the simplicity of truth. How Mr. Huntington was abused for nearly half a century with the vilest names, called an impostor and an Antinomian by men who stood high in an evangelical profession, for merely holding and defending a truth which is as clear as the sun at noonday, that the gospel, not the law, is the believer's rule of life. Was this an error of the deepest magnitude? Was this "a heinous crime, yea, an iniquity to be punished by the judges," that in so doing he applied to God's last and best will and testament a principle known to every man who has a shilling's worth of property to bequeath, that a new will at once sets aside an old one, and that no judge or jury, court of law or equity, barrister or attorney would so much as look at a will dated last week when there lies before them a will dated this? And yet men and ministers, holding in their hands or laying on their pulpit cushion a Bible divided into the Old and New Testaments, in other words, God's Old and New Wills, heaped abuse on the head of a man who simply asserted that God's New Will virtually repealed and set aside his Old. But as bats and owls hate the sun, because under his bright beams they cannot hunt and hawk for their insects and their mice; so do half blind professors hate the sunlight of heavenly truth, as baffling their low and grovelling appetites for everything which feeds the flesh; whilst new-horn souls love its genial beams, and are ever crying, "Light, light, more light. Shine, Lord, into my heart; show me light in thine own most blessed light, and fix my affections on things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." And he answers them to the joy of their soul; for he "who commandeth the light to shine out of darkness shines into their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ." (2 Cor. iv. 6.) Readers, forgive this digression; but feeling our heart warmed with love to God's truth, our pen ran glidingly on. We have had some dry spots to travel over and toil through even in our present subject, when we were handling the letter of the precept. If, then, we can but get a little lying down in a green pasture, and a little leading beside the still waters, let us tarry awhile to eat and drink, and so pass on. The wilderness is still before us. Bless his holy name if the cloudy pillar there guide us, the manna feed us, and the well out of the rock follow us. Let us attempt to show, then, how the *spirit* of the precept acts in harmony with the whole tenor of the gospel.

1. The grand distinctive feature of the gospel is, that it is the revelation of a new covenant, the covenant of grace, made by the

Father with the Son on behalf of a peculiar people. By the term "grace" we understand the pure favour of God, irrespective of all worth or worthiness in the creature, and flowing out to his people as chosen, accepted, and blessed in the Son of his love. The declaration and proclamation of this new covenant we call the gospel, that is, glad tidings; and the gladness of its tidings or news consists in this, that it sounds forth salvation by grace. These are simple, well-known truths; but we need sometimes to be as if recalled to the simplicity of truth, especially when errors of various kinds spring up to pervert and distort it. As a revelation, then, of pure grace, the gospel is distinguished from the law, the covenant of works. Every part, therefore, of the gospel must harmonise with this grand characteristic; and as the precept is a part of this gospel, it too must, in all its varied bearings, move in fullest accord with the grace of God, as thus revealed in his dear Son. But grace is a most comprehensive term, for it embraces the pure favour of God both in its Source and in its streams, in its manifestations and in its operations, in its purposes and in its effects, in its counsels and in its consequences. The precept, of course, is not co-extensive with the grace of God, for it is but a part, and comparatively but a small part, of that wondrous plan, as being chiefly confined to this time-state; whilst grace not merely respects the present, but looks backward and forward,—backward to the eternal purposes of God in Christ, (Eph. i. 3-11,) and forward to the accomplishment of those purposes in "making known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had afore prepared unto glory." (Rom. ix. 23.) Thus the doctrines of the gospel are doctrines of grace, the promises of the gospel are promises of grace, the invitations of the gospel are invitations of grace, and the precepts of the gospel are precepts of grace. All this seems self-evident, and immediately that the gospel is seen and acknowledged to be a revelation of pure grace, it follows as an undeniable conclusion. But it is found, as a matter of daily observation and experience, that the perverse mind of man will evade, or distort, or deny conclusions or consequences, however plain or clear they may appear, which are opposed to natural prejudices, or which press hard upon habits of self-indulgence or self-righteousness. You may, for instance, show a man, in the clearest manner from the word of God, the sin of covetousness, and he will admit the truth and force of your arguments and conclusions. But ask him the next moment for a few shillings for the poor, and you will soon see how his covetous heart evades or denies the point to which you have just brought him. So with the precept. With one breath a man will acknowledge it as a part of the gospel of the grace of God, and with the next utter words which convince you that he pays no real regard to it, holds it in no honour or estimation, and has neither seen its beauty nor felt its power. Now, this one thing is certain to our own mind, for it has been worked out in our own experience,—if we have never seen the beauty or felt the power of a truth, we have never heartily, cordially, affectionately embraced it; indeed, it is a great question with us whether we have

embraced it at all. Put this point to a practical test. Why did you embrace the doctrines of grace? Because you saw their beauty and felt their power. Why did you embrace the Lord himself with true faith and hearty affection? Because you saw his beauty and felt the power of his grace and love in your heart. Then, on similar grounds, no one can embrace the precept heartily, cordially, affectionately, who has not seen its beauty and felt its power. But its beauty consists mainly in its grace. If we see beauty in its face, it is because grace has fashioned and adorned every feature, and stamped upon them its own loveliness; if we hear melody in its voice, it is because grace attunes it to its own beautiful harmony; if it attract and draw us to follow after it, it is like the influence of a beautiful woman upon her lovers and admirers who follow her wherever she goes, pleased to do her slightest bidings, under the irresistible charm of her smile. Thus it is the grace of the precept, its beautiful harmony with the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, which causes our heart to embrace it as at once holy and wise, tender and loving, savoury and suitable, a faithful guide under all difficulties, a loving monitor against all evil, a gentle reprover when we go astray, and a kind friend ever at hand to give affectionate and solid counsel. Now if you have never seen anything of this beauty in the precept, and never felt anything of this power in it, one of these two is most certainly your case and state; either you have never seen the beauty or felt the power of the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart; or that, as yet, you have not seen the beauty or felt the power of the grace of the precept.

We will fain hope that the latter is the case with you, if you know not the meaning of our voice, and we are unto you a barbarian. But as this part of our subject is not yet exhausted, we will make another attempt in our next Number to reach your understanding, touch your conscience, and soften your heart.

WE measure the good and evil of providences by their respect to the ease and pleasure of our flesh; but God sees this is the way to cast our spirits into a dead formality, and in removing them he doth but deprive us of the occasions and instruments of spiritual mischiefs and miseries; in which certainly he doth us no hurt.—*Flavel*.

GOD used his mercy and loving-kindness even in the midst of all correction; for when he would now expel man out of paradise into misery, he doth unto him in every condition even as a faithful father, which for some misdeed putteth his son away from him; notwithstanding leaveth him not utterly comfortless, but provideth him a garment, and comforteth him with friendly words, and then first sendeth him away from him. Even thus doth God the Father of heaven also. For first he clotheth Adam and Eve against the frost and tempest of weather; inasmuch as by the means of sin, the weather, the earth, the air, and all creatures were no more so subject, tame, and obedient unto man as they were afore the fall. Therefore, even now at this present time, whatsoever inconvenience and harm is in the good creatures of God, it cometh by the means of our sins.—*Coverdale*.

Obituary.

JOHN YOUNG, OF BIRMINGHAM.

JOHN YOUNG died April 3rd, 1865, aged 68, member at Frederick Street, Birmingham.

The Lord was pleased to call him by grace more than 40 years ago, while hearing a sermon from the words: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." This brought him into deep soul trouble, from which the Lord was pleased to deliver him; but by what portion the writer does not know, only he has heard him frequently speak how sweetly he enjoyed the truth for a long time.

As this account, however, is designed to give the gracious dealings of God with him in his latter days, I will come at once to that point.

About four years ago, the Lord was pleased to lay his afflicting hand upon him, from which he never recovered; but the Lord gave him these words with great power: "The Lord will provide!" He said they kept running through his soul as fast as they could for about half an hour. This portion was verified in a most wonderful manner to the day of his death. While he was afflicted the Lord was pleased to allot him some very heavy trials in temporal and spiritual things; but out of them all the Lord delivered him. Once, in the depths of them, the Lord so blessed him with spiritual blessings that he said he could not call them afflictions, or, if they were, he could rejoice in them. Three years ago, the Lord brought him very low in body, and it appeared as if he was about to call him away from earth. While in this affliction, the Lord hid his face from him, and he was sorely distressed. The enemy attacked him respecting his faith, and told him he had not any true faith, nor never had. He said this battle lasted for some hours; but in the midst of the conflict he was persuaded it was Satan, and, having recovered a little, he said to Satan, "Why, Satan, I have a faith that has overcome you and made you tremble many times, and I will still trust in God." At this Satan left him.

In this same affliction the Lord spoke these words to his soul: "I give unto my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish." He said the Lord led him, as it were, into heaven, giving him such sweet views of the Shepherd of Israel and the security of his sheep, that he wanted to depart. He said when his enjoyments left him, it was like returning from heaven to earth.

After this, his conversation was seldom upon earthly things. Though not without trials and frequent temptations from Satan, his conversation was in heaven. Christ, as the Son of God, and what he was to his church, was his daily delight. Sovereign grace was his only hope. He frequently quoted the following verse:

"When call'd to meet the king of dread,
Should love compose my dying bed,
And grace my soul sustain,
Then, ere I quit this mortal clay,

I'll raise my fainting voice, and say,
'Let grace triumphant reign.'

He often wished it might be his language, and certainly the Lord granted him his request.

In January of this year he had a change. His body became very weak, and his friends thought he was going to die; but he said, "I am almost sure I shall get up again. I feel a strong cleaving to the church and people of God. I do not feel willing to leave them, and the Lord will make me willing in the day of his power." The Lord strengthened him again, and he got down stairs.

During this trial, his mind was much under a cloud. I said to him, "Do you fear death in this darkness?" He said, "No, I have no fear of death. My feelings do not alter my state nor God's salvation." He continued in this darkness for a week or two, but appeared to rest upon the faithfulness and unchangeability of God.

About a fortnight before his death, the following portion of God's word was much blessed to him: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."

At the latter end of March he took to his bed for the last time. He suffered much from shortness of breath, thinking, at times, he must be suffocated. He often said, "Dear Lord, do give me patience;" and said, "What should I now do without my Jesus?"

The Lord now made him willing to die. As the weakness of nature became more manifest, the strength of Christ in his soul became still more so. He said Christ Jesus was so precious to him he knew not how to speak of him. The Lord's people were continually visiting him, but he never grew weary of their company. He said, "I never in my life loved the people of God as I have loved them the last few years. I never enjoyed Christian conversation nor knew the truth in such a blessed manner as I do. Christ was never so precious to me before." He blessed God for bringing him to Birmingham. He said, "When I was at Northampton, the Lord shut up every door. I could not remain there; and though I did not know a Christian person in Birmingham, yet my soul, for some time before I came, was running here; and then the Lord gave me this portion with remarkable power: 'Come over and help us;' and afterwards this portion: 'God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.'"

He spoke most sweetly of the goodness of God to him. He said, "O Lord, I am willing to be afflicted." At another time, when full of the blessing of the Lord, he said, "I never felt so much the necessity of being kept from pride." He spoke of it, how hateful it was to him, and said, "The nearer we come to God, the nearer we want to come. The more we bear of the likeness of Christ, the more we want to bear." He said, "'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his;' and that seal is the love of God in the heart."

On Friday, March 31st, he remained in the same state of mind,

and thanked God for keeping the enemy from him. During the night he said, "Help me to set him forth," speaking of Christ.

On Saturday afternoon I visited him. He said, "I have been in great distress for two or three hours. I never saw or came into the secrets of religion as I do now. How possible it is for a person to have a whining, pining religion, and go about amongst the church of God, and not be of it, and never be found out unless God is pleased to make it manifest; and this he does not always do." He then prayed for the Lord to make his people honest and faithful. While conversing, the Lord took away his distress.

Speaking of the heavenly Jerusalem, he said, "I love Jerusalem, but I want to get to it the right way." Then, speaking of victory through Christ, he said, "It has been nothing but victory all through, but not in a triumphant way;" and then added, "I am sure the things of God are real, not cunningly-devised fables; and I am persuaded he is able to keep that I have committed unto him against that day." He said, "We have talked about these things, found them true, felt them sweet, and realised the power of them. The Spirit has opened them up again and again; and this is how the people of God go on. These things are only known to the poor and needy. It is his will to make them known, and his will is unalterable. He will do his pleasure." He now laboured much for breath. His wife referring to it, he said, "I did not labour when I was loving the Lord." Then renewing his conversation, he said, "The covenant of God remains the same. It was the same when Christ was on the cross and when he was in the tomb. Indeed, the gospel is a blessed gospel altogether, and you cannot make anything else of it; and the covenant is a blessed covenant to them who are interested in it." His wife reminded him that next day was Ordinance day. He said, "I shall soon drink it in the kingdom of God."

On Saturday night he was again distressed in soul. A friend went to see him, when he said, "The Lord is a refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." His friend said, "You have proved him a present help in trouble." He said, "I never had such a quick deliverance;" adding,

"In themselves as weak as worms,
What can poor believers do?"

He lay quiet for a short time, and then broke out in blessing and praising God, saying, "He is the resting-place of his people." During the night he was so prostrated that those who sat up with him thought he was dying; but he suddenly revived, spoke sweetly of Christ as the light of his people, and said, "O Lord, conform us exactly to thy image." They asked, "Are you happy?" He said, "Yes, happy in the power of his grace." They said, "Are you on the Rock?" He said, "Yes; I have no other refuge." After this he spoke much of Christ as the wisdom of his people. He said, "I cannot express the glory I see and feel." Speaking of faith, he said, "There is but one faith for God's children,—One Lord, one

faith, one baptism, even as we are called in one hope of our calling." He said, "My prayer for the church is, that the Lord would bless the in-gatherings, and knit and unite their hearts in this one spirit. Yea, I can say, Lord, thou hast blessed thy church with peace. Still bless it, by gathering thy hidden ones." Then he said, "O my blessed Jesus, thou hast made an everlasting covenant for such wretched sinners as I am. He said, "O! I cannot tell you what I see and feel. There is such love and glory in Jesus. I must take the cup of salvation, as David did, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay that I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord." This he spoke in reference to his own saying, that if the Lord would be with him in death, he would shout aloud of his mercy. He then took a little wine, and said, "Everything fails now but Jesus." Suffering much from shortness of breath, he said, "Lord, I am willing to suffer." He spoke very much of the precious blood of Christ, and quoted the following verses, which were very sweet to him:

"What sacred fountain yonder springs
Up from the throne of God,
And all New Covenant blessings brings?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood.
What mighty sum paid all my debt,
When I a bondman stood,
And has my soul at freedom set?
'Tis Jesus' precious blood."

On Sunday morning one asked him, "Are you on the Rock?" He replied, with wonderful emphasis, "Yes, on the Rock my soul is founded," and tried to sing.

During the day he had a severe temptation from the enemy. He said he was lost. All seemed gone. His temptation was, he said, about what he and I had often talked. (This he spoke in reference to particular sins.)

He now became very exhausted, and, after struggling a short time for breath, he said, "I am persuaded I shall tell you. When I felt lost, this passage came so sweetly, 'By grace ye are saved.' So it appears it must be grace to the end of the journey." He frequently inquired the time, and said, "I am one hour nearer the kingdom of my God, where I shall drink full draughts of bliss." His wife said she thought he was too weak to speak with his son. He said, "I never was so strong before; but remember, it is in Christ."

On Sunday afternoon he often asked the time, and said, "I shall soon drink wine in my Father's kingdom;" adding, "O my precious Jesus! My precious Jesus! What should I do without my Jesus!" Soon afterwards he was again asked, "Are you on the Rock?" He replied, "Do you think the Rock can be moved about? No, nor they who are on it." He took a little wine, lifted up his hand, and said, "'There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.'" After this he said, "I ache." Seeing his wife affected, he said, "Do not begin to reason, for

'Not Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives.'

After this he lay quiet, but suddenly called his wife, and said, "I want you to lift up my arm," (it being dead.) She did so. Then he shouted as loud as he could, "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb." She was going to let his arm down. He said, "Hold it up as high as you can." She did so, and he again shouted, "Victory, victory, through the blood of the Lamb." This was about seven o'clock in the evening. After this he was exhausted and lay quiet for a short time, and then said, "Precious Jesus! Blessed Jesus! What a precious Jesus thou art to redeem a sinful worm like me."

Between eight and nine o'clock one of his legs being dead, and he being quite aware of it, he said, "I am not so good a man as poor old Jacob. One of my legs is gone. I cannot draw up my feet in the bed." He then called for the family, blessed them, and spoke to them in a solemn manner. A friend visited him and said, "You are finishing your course with joy." He said, "I *am* finishing my course with joy. It cannot be better." His friend said, "We are going to leave you, but you are going to a blessed inheritance." He said, "It is a blessed dwelling-place, and Christ is a blessed Rock and Foundation."

I went to see him about nine o'clock and took hold of his dead arm. He turned his face towards me, almost smiling, and said, "That has done his office." Then lifting up his right arm he said, "This still keeps its cunning; this still keeps its cunning." I said, "You are quite sensible to the last." He quickly replied, "Sensibly saved, and saved by sovereign grace," of which he spoke very sweetly. I said, "I am going to leave you now. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you." With calmness and emphasis he said, "Amen, and amen, and amen."

About half-past eleven, he said to those who were sitting with him, "I am now in a most solemn place. I am under the scrutinizing eye of God. He is about to open the seals. O if you could but see and feel the glory and blessedness that I see and feel!" Here his voice faltered. His wife said, "I wish I could." He replied, "It would not do for you." She said, "I suppose I must come into your place to know it." He replied, "Yes."

After this his attendants gave him a little wine, and fanned him. He said, "Blessed breeze." Two persons who were with him, and had always had a dread of being with any one when dying, said it was blessed to be in the room. The Lord took away every fear, and filled their hearts in measure with his glory. One of them poured out her heart and said, "Lord Jesus! Precious Jesus! Come and take his soul to thyself." Soon afterwards they heard something snap within him. His soul immediately left the body, entering into the joy of his Lord, about two o'clock on Monday morning.

J. DENNETT.

DIVINE faith will embrace divine truth; and by false doctrine is false faith made manifest.—*Huntington*.

AUGUST 1, 1865.

THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

AUGUST, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 10.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from p. 214.)

On Nov. 15th, 1791, Tuesday, at Blackfriars, heard Mr. Romaine from Matt. xi. 28: "Come unto me, all ye that labour," &c. He referred to Ps. lxxii. 12, 13—that is, the poor in spirit who are humbled for sin, though their sins may have been as scarlet, Christ receives such. It is the sick need the physician. This was a precious opportunity to my soul, and was above all blessed to me in a way of restoring grace after my backsliding, and a blessed season of refreshment from the Lord. Mr. Romaine very justly observed soon after, that the devil does all he can to make good men bad, and bad men worse.

Mr. Jones (a man of colour) in Castle Street Society said: "Reclaimed backsliders often speed with redoubled diligence after their fall. They go with fresh vigour in the ways of God, like giants refreshed with wine. The slips and falls of God's people generally drive them closer to Christ ever afterwards, astonished and amazed at the forbearance of their covenant God. They are filled with wonder, love, and praise. Sinners, pardoned sinners, saved by grace alone; the mercy, O how great!"

Another of the speakers there said: "When believers wander from their Father's house, it brings a dark cloud upon them for a while. (He was speaking from Mic. vii. 18, 19.) It brings guilt and distress upon their consciences; and there is no other way to restore backsliders but by their coming again to Christ as they did at first. Are they stung with guilt and fallen? Let them look to Christ as exalted upon the pole of the gospel." He spoke of restored backsliders; what monuments of grace they are—unspeakable! How should they admire the divine mercy and love, and be constrained to a holy walk for the future! The Lord sometimes permits and suffers his people to fall, (often fall very foully too,) that they and other Christians should know their weakness. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Mr. Romaine said that believers who indulge any sinful desire, walk in much darkness of soul and rob themselves of that comfort they otherwise would enjoy.

Mr. Cecil observed that a child of God may fall into a ditch or pit, but he does not remain in it. If he belong to God, he will be brought out, sooner or later. A believer may backslide and fall by sin, perhaps a besetting sin; but there are many encouraging promises in God's word to *returning* backsliders. Such may find abundant encouragement there. However, it is the happiness and comfort of every believer to be renewed in holiness after the image of Him that created him. Mr. Russell said he was much struck with some observations of old Mr. Berridge in a sermon on Neh. ix. 17. Says the good old man: "Every step you are coming to Christ, (John vi. 37,) think of a God ready to pardon—ready to pardon. Every step you take think of these words."

Another of the speakers said, on Ps. lxxxv. 8: "If they do turn again to folly, they shall smart for it in this world. Alas! God's children have their besetting sins, which they have to grapple with above their other sins. In some men it is pride, in some avarice, in others unlawful lust, &c.; some one sin, and some another."

On Lord's day, Sept. 2nd, 1792, after sacrament at Tottenham Court, this scripture was brought with power in my mind: "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven; go in peace." I recollected they were in Luke, and on searching I found them in vii. 47-50. And in the evening of that day Dan. xii. 13: "Go thou thy way till the end be (death); for thou shalt rest (in the grave and heaven), and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." (Judgment day.) Thus sweetly was it opened and applied to me.

On Nov. 18th, Lord's day morning, at Tottenham Court, Mr. Medley's text was Matt. xxv. 10: "They that were ready went in," &c. On the next Lord's day morning, Mr. Huntington, at Titchfield Street, Rev. iii. 3; and in the evening, at Tottenham Court, Mr. Medley, on Luke xiv. 22: "And yet there is room." These three sermons were much blessed to my soul. They spake some comfortable words to recover and restore backsliders.

I gather this from my fall and backsliding, that it has tended much to humble me and show me my weakness. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Mr. Romaine justly said these words once in his sermon: "That tyrant Sin, and the Devil, that wicked, malicious spirit, plague believers."

For years after I left my first love, I still walked tolerably close with God; but after that, alas! I walked at a distance from God in lukewarmness, &c. I bless the Lord I ever read most of Mr. Huntington's books, particularly his "Kingdom of Heaven Taken by Prayer."

In November, 1793, some good people who had known me in the beginning of my conversion, praised the Lord that I had still kept in the heavenly race.

I must notice here that some months before this I suddenly fell again by the force of a violent temptation, for a short space of time. Alas! Could I have believed it? Some time before, I thought myself so established. But the Lord let Satan loose upon me, that I might know more of my weakness, as I understood after I was restored again. But, after the sin, then came the punishment. The Lord's

rod was ready for my chastisement (Ps. lxxxix. 80-93; with Jer. ii. 19); for I got again into Bunyan's Dungeon in the Giant's Castle. I heard Mr. Huntington in a sermon speak of Peter's second fall, long after that of his triple denial of Christ; his dissimulation through a slavish fear of the Jews. (Gal. ii. 11, 12.) In another sermon he referred to the prodigal as a fallen saint, who, still claiming his adoption, said: "I will arise and go to my Father." (Luke xv.) He said: "A child of God may fall through weakness in an unguarded moment; the devil knows the person's besetting sins, lays the bait before that poor soul, and afterwards immediately turns or becomes accuser." This I well know by experience. In another he observed that sin brings on its own punishment in the backslider. The Lord then corrects his child for iniquity; he lays on many stripes. Sin kills the believer's comforts, brings on desertion and darkness of soul, &c.

I was led much to meditate and pray over Ps. li., particularly verses 8, 12, 17; also Jer. iii. 1, 12-14, 20-23; Hos. xiv. 1, 2, 4, 8; Zech. xiii. 1; with 1 John i. 9; ii. 1, 2. All this gave me great encouragement and good hope, through grace. I also found no small comfort in reading various parts of Luther's excellent Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, particularly from page 88-120, about Peter; also from Hart's hymns on backsliders. Thus I was enabled to look unto the Lord, and to wait for the God of my salvation, believing that my God would hear me, that I should arise, and, though in darkness, that I should have light. Though for sin I am under the indignation of the Lord, yet my Advocate will plead my cause. (Mic. vii. 9 and 1 John ii. 1, 2.)

Mr. Huntington says that "the Lord sometimes permits these falls to humble his people. He chastises them well for sin, but gives them not over unto death. (Ps. cxviii. 18.) What is the brightest saint when left one moment to himself?"

By degrees I found my burden gradually to wear away, and Isa. xlv. 22: "I have blotted out as a thick cloud," &c., fulfilled in my experience. Also: "He restoreth my soul." The language of my heart was, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity?" &c. Thus I was enabled, having had broken bones, (Ps. li. 8,) and been sore broken in the place of dragons, and covered with the shadow of death. (Ps. xlv. 19.) I lamented my late relapsed state, and rejoiced at my happy restoration therefrom. O how suitable is the 71st hymn of Hart's, "The Prodigal." Also the 104th.

In 1794, Mr. Huntington's preaching was much blessed to me, particularly on Sunday evening, March 23rd, from John vi. 28, 29, when he alluded to many such passages as these: John iii. 16-18; v. 24; vi. 47, having for many days together enjoyed much inward peace and joy in believing.

On the 28th, in my bedroom, meditating upon the mercy of the Lord to me, I was much visited with this scripture: "The Lord healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up," &c. (Ps. cxlvii. 3.)

On Whit Tuesday, at Blackfriars, Mr. Romaine's text was 2 Sam. xxiii. 5: "This is all my salvation and all my desire." Precious

communion and heart-felt union with my covenant God I enjoyed. O Lord, how precious are thy visits to my soul!

August 31st, Lord's day evening.—Mr. Huntington from Matt. x. 40-42. He that receives a faithful minister of Christ into his mind and heart receives Christ, and is made partaker of that minister's grace.

October 26th, Lord's day evening.—Mr. Medley, at Tottenham Court Chapel, on Job xxxiii. 24. The dark gloom under which I had laboured for many days was dispelled. Light and liberty again sprang up in my soul. Before this I was as poor Paul in the storm. (Acts xxvii. 29.) Afterwards, I could say with David, as in Ps. iv.

On Lord's day morning, Feb. 1st, 1795, Mr. Huntington, speaking from Rom. viii. 16, said, "If you have once felt this witness of the Spirit, for ever so short a time, or duration, or degree, ever so small in conversion, this is saving. It is effectual. You can never finally fall away. From that moment you are past from death unto life. He is faithful that promised. It is the earnest of the inheritance."

On Feb. 8th, 1796, Monday evening, Mr. H. on Ps. cvii. 20: "He sent his word and healed them;" and on Lord's day, 21st, Mr. Huntington on Hos. xiv. 2: "Take with thee words," &c. Under these two sermons my former experience was brought sweetly to my remembrance, according to that precious Scripture in John xiv. 26: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost," &c.

Being much buffeted by Satan and bowed down by reason of my sinfulness and unworthiness for some days, this Scripture came to my mind with power as soon as I awoke on Sabbath morning, Oct. 9th: "It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones should perish." Many times it was repeated. Also: "Blessed are the poor in spirit," &c. Also: "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit," &c. And soon afterwards these words: "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty," &c. "In that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee," &c. I was as happy in praises at my morning meditation as I could contain.

The next day this scripture was deeply impressed upon my mind: "And I will pour upon the house of David," &c. I found it fulfilled in my experience now in a greater degree than ever I did. I recollected what Mr. Huntington said a little while ago: "The believer worships God in the Spirit, under the influence of love, rejoices in Christ Jesus, and has no allowed confidence in the flesh." Mr. Romaine also, I well remember, quoted those words of Paul as descriptive of a believer's experience.

About a month before this, Mr. Lea lent me a printed sermon of Huntington's on Gal. v. 1, preached Sept. 9th, 1794, entitled, "The Child of Liberty in Legal Bondage; or, the Son and Heir in the Servant's Yoke." The reading of it was wonderfully blessed to my soul, as were also his letters called "Living Testimonies."

About the latter part of October, having had some disputes with persons concerning election, free-will, &c., and deeply pondering on

what had passed, when alone in my room this Scripture was applied: "Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." I soon afterwards found it in Matt. xiii. 11. Matt. xi. 25, 26 also occurred to my mind: "I thank thee, O Father," &c.; and lamenting, in my own mind, how blind even some masters in Israel seem in some things, it brought to my thoughts Ps. cxix. 99: "I have more understanding than all my teachers; for thy testimonies are my meditation." ("Testimonies" mean the sacred Scriptures.)

(To be continued.)

TRUE AND FALSE TRUST.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST PROVED TO BE THE REAL OBJECT OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

BY THE LATE JOHN RUSK.

"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.—Mic. vii. 5.

THIS prophet lived in the days of Jothan, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah; and heavy tidings he had against Samaria and Jerusalem. His name signifies poor, humble, or to strike at,—a very proper person to deal out reproof and rebuke,—one who feels spiritual and temporal poverty, and is well humbled under the mighty hand of God, as no doubt Micah was. He reproveth the people for their oppression, injustice, and idolatry, shows the cruelty of the princes, and the falsehood of the prophets; and yet how secure they were in carnal ease; but though he brought such dreadful tidings to the ungodly, he speaks very sweet, encouraging things to God's family, showing the glory, peace, kingdom, and victory of the church in the last days, the birth of Christ, his kingdom and conquest.

Now, in the chapter out of which our text is taken, the prophet appears to be hedged up every way: First, there was no spiritual entertainment as formerly; he had left his first love, the first ripe fruit. Secondly, he could find nothing but dishonesty, injustice, and wrong judgment in the world: "There is none upright amongst men. The son dishonours the father, the daughter rises up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man's enemies are the men of his own house." Add to this, he had a feeling sense of God's anger for sin: "I have sinned against him;" and, like poor Job, he had a cruel, wicked woman for a wife. Now, let a man get into such fires as these, having devils and men against him, it will try the reality of his profession to the quick. These are the times to prove whether God is on our side or not. But the prophet is sweetly humbled in the dust, and has a strong confidence that the Lord will appear for him. Hence he says, "I shall arise. He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness," or justice, in my behalf; and he found it come to pass, as you read in verse 18, where he breaks out, saying, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression

of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever because he delighteth in mercy." He also sees in faith the awful end of his persecuting wife, and declares that shame should cover her, and that his eyes should behold her trodden down as the mire of the streets. Thus God ever will be faithful to his promises, that "his hand shall be known toward his servants, and his indignation toward his enemies; for judgment shall return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it."

Now, without any further introduction, I will, as the Lord shall assist, take up the words of our text as follows:

I. Treat about the *false trusts* of the children of men, and show how very inconsistent it is to trust in a friend, to put confidence in a guide, and to tell the secrets of a man's heart to her that lieth in his bosom! "Trust ye not in a friend; put not confidence in a guide. Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom." This latter part is to be taken in a restricted sense.

II. I will *contradict* our text, and show that it is *right to trust in a friend*, to put confidence in a guide, and to tell all we can, keeping nothing back, to her that lieth in our bosom.

I hope to make all clear from God's word in these two propositions, and so conclude.

I. We are to treat of the *false trusts* of the children of men, and show how very inconsistent it is to trust in a friend, to put confidence in a guide, and to tell the secrets of a man's heart to her that lieth in his bosom! But this latter must, as I said before, be taken in a restricted sense.

When Adam fell, and all his posterity in him, he cast off at once all trust or confidence in God, and placed trust and confidence in Satan, in a lie, in the flesh, and in his own tabernacle; and as he begat a son in his own likeness, this likeness was the image of Satan. Now we all share the shocking effects of this fall, being plunged into the whole of it, every faculty of our souls corrupt, "alienated from the life of God;" and you may see our true state in Isa. lix., if God gives you the true light. It is clear, therefore, that in the fall we all are, whether elect or reprobate, and all trust in the flesh by nature, having no trust and confidence in God. False confidence, or trust, is faith in a lie; and here it all began, for Satan, hidden in the serpent, tempted our first parents, and they fell, trusting or believing a lie.

1. Thus the children of men trust in a *lie*, or *lies*. Hence you read that Hananiah, raised up by the devil, the father of lies, confronts Jeremiah, and tells the children of Israel that, instead of seventy years' captivity to the king of Babylon, within two full years God would break the yoke off their necks. "Then said Jeremiah the prophet unto Hananiah, Hear now, Hananiah; the Lord hath not sent thee, but thou makest this people to trust in a lie;" (Jer. xxviii. 15;) and Hananiah died that year for teaching rebellion against the Lord. "But," say you, "this was Hananiah's fault." Yes; but there is in us a corrupt nature

like tinder, ready to catch such false fire; and we read of others whom you may call Antinomians, and they trust in lying words, saying, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these;" and will steal, commit adultery, and swear falsely, and say, "We are delivered to do all these abominations." (Jer. vii. 4-11.) Thus you see that lies, dressed up by the devil to appear like truth, deceive thousands, and they trust in these lies; but no wonder, seeing that, by nature, we are nothing but lies. Hence we are said to "go astray as soon as born, speaking lies." "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie." (Ps. lxii. 9.)

2. Another false trust is *oppression*. If you and I get anything it is by earning it. It is wages for work, or it is given to us, or we find it; and if the owner is not to be found, it is our right. Now, in these three ways a man gets what he gets honestly, and oppresses no one living. Oppression, therefore, is taking that from another which I have no right to, to increase my stock. You read of oppressing the hireling in his wages, having power, and crushing men to the earth for little or nothing, while the poor creatures are afraid to speak the truth lest they should be discharged, and starve altogether. Now this is a false trust, and God will be a swift witness against such. "Trust ye not in oppression," &c.

3. Another false step is *worldly riches*. But why? I answer, they are not God, neither are they certain. Hence you read of "uncertain riches," and that they "make to themselves wings and fly away." A man may suddenly lose all, and many have lost all. Look at Job, though a good man, the greatest in all the East, reduced to extreme poverty, so as to become a proverb, "As poor as Job;" and, therefore, we are told that if riches increase we are not to set our heart upon them, nor trust in uncertain riches.

4. Another false trust is *man*; and a great snare this is; for such a trust is just as uncertain as riches. Man may be in great power, but his breath is in his nostrils; and, therefore, if he goes, where is my trust, if I trust in him? Besides, a small thing may turn him against me while he lives. See Haman, who trusted in King Ahasuerus; how soon are all his prospects blasted. Man is fickle at the best. The same king, how soon did he turn against Vashti, the queen, for refusing to come and show her beauty to the nobles; and he chose Esther in her room. Now, we are told not to trust in man: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and in his heart departeth from God; for he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land and not inhabited." (Jer. xvii. 5, 6.)

5. There is such a thing as a man trusting in *his own heart*; and this arises from gross darkness and blindness of mind. There is such a thing as for a man to act honestly in his dealings amongst men, to be liberal to the poor, sober, industrious, go to church, and read the Bible and read family prayers; and such really appear pure in their own eyes, and yet are trusting in their own hearts; and it is

no difficulty to them to go on so. No. It is natural, and they slide easily on. They don't know that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. Such was the man that went up to the temple to pray. He thanked God that he was not like the publican; whereas God says, "As face answereth to face in water, so does the heart of man to man. Now, under all this lies every wicked abomination, rooted and undiscovered; so that the man is deceived. "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool," says Solomon.

6. Another false trust is this, for a man to trust in his *obedience to God's law*, and expect to get to heaven by so doing; and such were all the Jewish scribes and Pharisees. But what is the cause of this? I answer, insensibility and a false light; for they never saw the spirituality of God's holy law, and, therefore, they view it only in an outward way; and if God, by a restraining power, keeps them from gross enormities, they, by attending to the letter of the law, conclude that they keep it. Here is the trap that catches them. The elder son declared he never at any time transgressed his father's commands; and such are as proud as the devil, saying, "Stand by thyself, come not near unto me, for I am holier than thou." But all are not quite so barefaced as these; for some, feeling at times qualms of conscience, catch hold of the letter of the gospel, and join this to the law. Of such are all the mongrel Calvinists. They take the new cloth to patch their old garment with; but instead of this being of any use to help them, the rent is made worse. Of this stamp were those of whom you read by the prophet Isaiah, who said, "We will eat our own bread and wear our own apparel, only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach." Such were the foolish virgins; foolish, not having the Holy Ghost in their hearts; virgins, so called for their attachment to the letter of the gospel; and this is one of the greatest delusions there is. The man was here who had not on the wedding garment. It does not appear that any suspected him but the king. When the king came in to see the guests, he saw one there who had not on a wedding garment; and he said to him, "Friend,"—for such you profess to be—"how camest thou in here, not having on a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king, Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." This wedding garment is the righteousness of Christ, as you may clearly see in Rev. xix. 7, 8, and Isa. lxi. 10. Now, short of this, nothing can possibly admit us into glory above; for the unrighteous cannot enter, neither can the self-righteous, as were these Pharisees. "They trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others," and also in Moses's law; but if destitute of Christ's perfect righteousness, he will accuse them; and so our Lord told them, "You have one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust."

7. Once more. There is such a thing as for a man to trust to a *form of godliness*,—to outside work, or to the religion of his forefathers; and this is a false trust. Some will attend a place of worship when they are young, and as they get used to it it is easy enough. They

grow up and imbibe the same notions as their fathers, and will contend for that to be right. Whether they be Church folks or Dissenters, Baptists or Independents, Arians, Socinians, Calvinists, or Arminians, it matters not, for, say they, "My father was a good holy man, and lived and died in that religion, whatever it may be, and I am sure he was right; so that I will change my religion for none." Alas, poor soul! Thou art deceived; for thou hast no religion at all. What is thy father's religion to thee? Thou must have real godliness in thy own heart ere thou art right. The devil has deceived thee to this day. It is not your being of your father's opinion, attending the means, hearing sermons, being dipped in water or sprinkled with water, receiving the Lord's supper, going to prayer and experience meetings, attending the church and saying the prayers after the minister, visiting the sick, and having a gift to pray with them. No; nor yet preaching even truth, uniting with the saints in appearance, &c. All this and much more there may be, and yet nothing but a false trust. Reader, may God help thee to examine thyself, for if thou art building on some or on all these things, thou art deceiving thyself, and only building on the sand; and the rain shall sweep away all these refuges of lies, and the water will overflow these hiding-places.

Say you, "You cut at all my hope?" Bless God for it; for it is a false hope, a Babel building, and the sooner it is down the better. The rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on the house, builded on the sand, and the ruin of that house was great. If thou art ever rightly built up on Christ Jesus the rock, the sure foundation, thou must be stripped from all such things as I have mentioned, and reduced to spiritual poverty. Then the Holy Spirit will lead thee in all thy beggary and misery to Jesus Christ. There thou wilt be built up, and there thou wilt only trust. "The Lord has founded Zion." What is the foundation? "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus;" and the poor of his people shall trust in it.

Now, Paul was one of those who trusted in such kind of things as I have mentioned before his conversion. Only hear what he says: "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof to trust in the flesh, I more. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee, concerning zeal persecuting the Church, touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Thus you see God stripped Paul; and after this he said, "We are the circumcision that worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Having showed seven of the many false trusts there are, I have to treat of three things more upon this head: 1. *How inconsistent* it is to trust in a friend; 2. To put confidence in a guide; and 3. For a man to tell all his heart to her that lieth in his bosom. But this latter is restrictedly. On this subject I am writing particularly to God's people; for as I have showed the false trusts of the world at

large, it is not inconsistent to carnal reason to trust in such things. No, by no means; but the inconsistency lies with God's people.

1. To trust in a friend. But what is a friend? I answer, a friend is one that seeks your real good, and tries to assist you, in your various afflictions, all that he possibly can. He will take your case in secret prayer to God; and as he really loves you in heart, your burdens will be his, and he will watch to see if the Lord appears in your behalf, and speak to others that are friends to him who have this world's good to help you if your troubles are beyond what he himself can do. He will rejoice at your prosperity, and be cast down at your adversity. He does not love in word and in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and sometimes, by telling him your various troubles, you will load him with your burdens and get lighter yourself. Such a friend is hard to be found. Now, the Scripture bears me out in all that I have said, and therefore you read: "To him that is afflicted, pity should be shown of his friend;" (Job vi. 14;) "O that one might plead for a man with God as a man pleadeth for his neighbour," or friend. (16-21.) Also, a friend will not see you go on in any erroneous backsliding way, and not reprove you for it in a spirit of meekness, considering himself also in the flesh. This is a proof of real friendship, though it is painful work to perform. Hence you read, that "faithful are the wounds of a friend, for thou shalt not suffer sin upon thy brother." Moreover, a true friend will give hearty counsel, such as he knows and thinks is the best and will turn to advantage. "Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel." (Prov. xxvii. 6-9.) And sometimes the very sight of your friend will make your heart leap for joy and brighten your countenance. "Iron sharpeneth iron, as a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." This is a little about real friendship from man.

And say you, "Why not trust in such a friend?" I answer, because God tells us not to do, agreeably to our text: "Trust ye not in a friend;" because man is changeable, and all this kind friendship may be removed from you to another, and your friend may be quite cool towards you when you need him most. It is, therefore, best to view man a friend only instrumentally in God's hand, and trust only in the Lord, knowing that no man is a friend to us in any one thing only as God makes him. This is keeping things in their proper place.

If we trust in a friend, we shall give him the glory and praise him up to others, independently of God. But God is a jealous God, and says, "My glory will I not give to another;" "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise;" "I will be exalted amongst the heathen." You read in Ps. cxxvi. that the heathen said, "The Lord hath done great things for them;" that is, for Zion; which shows us that they had been speaking to his praise in the presence of these heathen.

Another reason we are not to trust in a friend is, it is not he, strictly speaking, that is our friend, but God in him; for if God had left him in his first-born state, what friendship do you suppose that you, as a Christian, would have received from him? Why, none at

all. If he loves me, he is taught of God; if he prays to God for me, the Spirit helps his infirmities; if he freely gives me his property, God gives him a heart to do this; for some have a heart to gather together, but God has not given them a heart to do good. Besides, where does my friend get his property? Say you, "By his industry?" I say, No. "It is God that giveth man power to get wealth;" and indeed even this property is God's. "The silver and the gold is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills." God setteth up one and putteth down another." "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to men of understanding, nor wisdom to men of skill."

Again, if my friend reproves me for sin, this comes from God's Spirit; and therefore the prophet Micah says, "But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment and of might, to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin."

Lastly, if my friend gives me hearty counsel, this comes from the Lord Jesus Christ, the wonderful Counsellor; so that it is inconsistent to the last degree to trust in a friend. "But," say you, "we are not to slight and think lightly of such kind friendship on this account, saying, as some have done, I don't thank *you*; I thank God for it." No, by no means. Such characters are hypocrites in Zion, and they are a disgrace to their profession. Mr. Huntington, in the "Cry of Little Faith," speaks of one of these; and an awful character she was. No, not. Real grace humbles us to the dust, and we feel, under its sweet influence, grateful to God and man, and are astonished at every act of kindness which we receive, knowing what vile wretches we are. "He that hath a friend must show himself friendly;" not surly or unthankful, and yet not trust in his friend, but in that God that makes him so; and this is the way not to be ensnared, but to secure a friend.

2. Put not confidence in a *guide*. A guide is a useful person to one on a journey who either knows nothing of the road or has lost his way. This is all very well naturally; but spiritually it is very wrong to put confidence in a guide, and especially a blind guide; and the nation in this our day swarms alive with such. It is the blind leading the blind, and both are to fall into the ditch of hell, living and dying so. Paul speaks of such: "Behold, thou art called a Jew and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law, and art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law;" but if you read on you will find that this guide could steal, commit adultery, commit sacrilege, dishonour God, and occasion the Gentiles to blaspheme God's name. (Rom. ii. 17-29.) Now, of what use is such a guide? and how inconsistent it is to put any confidence in such! Yet men often do; yea, the elect of God do, many of them, till God opens their eyes, which he has promised to do; for he says, "Thine eyes shall see thy teachers."

(To be continued.)

THE LORD TRIETH THE RIGHTEOUS.

My dear Brother and Sister in Christ,—May grace, mercy, and truth be with you, and be abundantly enjoyed by you through our dear Lord Jesus Christ.

As I have a little time on my hands, and feel a little better at present, I thought upon my dear children whom the good Lord gave me in my afflictions at C. Often have I longed to see them since I have been here, that I might be a fellow-helper of their joys and impart some spiritual blessing to them, to the end they might be established more and more in the everlasting love of Jehovah Jesus, that their faith might increase, their love burn brighter to a precious Jesus for his unspeakable love to them the chief of sinners, and their hope abound through the power of the Holy Ghost. Glad should I be to see one of the least of my dear Master's flock from C., to hear them tell what he hath done for their precious souls. I have often found the moments sweet indeed amongst my dear little flock at C., but they are gone; but, my dearly-beloved children of God, the time is fast coming that we shall meet to part no more for ever. O! The prospect is cheering, the glory supporting, the heaven of rest consoling.

Cheer up, my son and daughter, you are partakers of grace, and you shall be of glory also. Your Jesus loves you too well ever to leave you in the hand of Satan, or to be overcome finally by your own hearts or all the malice of hell and the world. Try you he will, and that on all sides and all quarters; but, remember, he loves you in the furnace as much as he does on the mount of eternal love and glorification.

Methinks my dear tried children would rather, when in their right mind, walk in the path of tribulation until their dying moments than be bastards; for "if we are without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are we bastards and not sons." Are we tried in providence? So was Jesus, and so are most of the Lord's beloved ones. Do not judge of God's love to you according to outward appearances, but judge righteous judgment. Go down to the footsteps of the flock, and you shall find the man after God's own heart and his poor followers in a starving condition in the wilderness, whilst a rich glutton and drunkard, a blaspheming noble, had more than heart could wish. But God hath set them in slippery places. In a moment they are cast down into destruction, whilst poor David is preserved, and brought at last out of all his troubles. Reason no more about it. Your spiritual David has paid all your spiritual debts, and he will provide you with temporals also. He has said it, and he will make it good. "Bread shall be given, and water shall be sure." Are we tried in our souls from day to day, and often called to mourn an absent God? Our dear Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, from the cradle to the cross.

"But," say my dear friends, "if we could but have more humble hearts, patient spirits, and pray oftener, and find less sin and cor-

ruption, and deadly pollution, we should have more ground to hope he loved us." Who told you so? Not the word of God, nor one of the prophets or apostles, nor Jesus himself, but your own legal hearts, and the subtlety of the devil. O my dear friend, the blacker you are in and of yourselves, the more welcome to a precious Jesus. But, say you again, you are so dead and lifeless, barren, unfruitful, and empty that you think you are quite forsaken of God. O no! When you feel worse in yourselves than devils, then you cannot bring forth fruit, like Israel, to yourselves, but to God by faith in Christ Jesus; for you are obliged to go to him for all, having nothing in yourselves; and of this our God approves well, to come to his dear Son for all. The more he shows you the hell within, and causes you to groan under it, the more proof you have that he loves you; for all the mud and mire he brings us through, and the deeper discoveries he gives us of the wickedness of our own hearts, the more he favours us; for all this teaching is intended to lead us further off from ourselves, and to make us prize a free salvation more and more in a precious Jesus.

Arise, my son and daughter. He calleth you from sin and self; and when it is well with you, remember me.

May God for ever bless you. So prays your dear Father in Jesus,
Hammersmith. E. PARSONS.

WE are justified with ~~that~~ which truly appeaseth our conscience before God; but faith in Christ doth appease our conscience, and not the law; therefore by faith we are justified, and not by the law.—*Old Bible.*

THOUGH my purpose be now finished, even declared out of the scripture, that the Christian faith hath endured since the beginning of the world, yet will I add a short instruction concerning the time of grace and performing of all promises; and I will declare that God now also, through the appearing of his Son, would bring into the world and set forth none other religion, none other faith, neither any other salvation, than even the same which was showed to the old fathers; saving that all things are more evident, more clearly practised, accomplished, fulfilled, and performed; for the which cause also all figures and ceremonies do cease; for in Christ is all perfection. Yet shall we not therefore cast away the Old Testament, as some ignorant, unlearned, and foolish people do, but have it in greater reputation, forasmuch as we know now through Christ what everything signifieth, and wherefore everything was thus and thus ordained, used, and spoken. Now shall every man first have a courage to read the law and the prophets, when he seeth whereupon everything goeth. And thus also at the beginning did the holy apostles preach Christ unto the Jews out of the law and the prophets, as it is oftentimes mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles. And our Lord himself, when he went with the two disciples towards Emmaus, and preached so unto them that their hearts burnt within them, he began at Moses, and went through all the prophets, and opened unto them the old scriptures, and showed that so it behoved Christ to suffer, and to enter into his glory. This is the cause also that the scriptures of the New Testament hang all together and refer themselves to the scriptures of the Old Testament; so that these cannot be rightly understood without the other, no more than the gloss without the text. The text is the law and the prophets, the exposition are the evangelists and apostles.—*Coverdale.*

INQUIRY.

Sir,—Will you be kind enough to favour us with your thoughts upon the parable of the Prodigal Son? It is held by some eminent ministers of the present day, and even preached and published, that the elder son sets forth the elect angels; although we read in the same chapter, Luke xv. 10: "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." We read that the elder brother was angry, and would not go in. Does it not rather set forth the Jews and the Gentiles? The Jews were always jealous of the Gentiles being brought in; and even the apostles had to be entreated to receive their younger brethren, the Gentiles, as in Acts x. 15; xi. 17, 18. A CONSTANT READER.

ANSWER.

Where good men, and eminent and approved servants of God, have widely differed in their explanation of a passage of Scripture, there we are bound to offer our views of it with humility and modesty, whatever may be our individual persuasion of the truth of our own interpretation.

Thus some good men, and, if we remember right, so able an interpreter of Scripture as Mr. Bourne, in his instructive and edifying "Letters," explain the younger son as a convinced sinner; whereas we believe him to represent a returning backslider. Mr. Newton and Mr. Huntington explain the elder son as representing a pharisee, whilst we agree with Mr. Hart in believing him to be a child of God, possessed of a pharisaical spirit:

"YE elder sons, be still,
Give no bad passion vent;
My brethren, 'tis our Father's will,
And you must be content.

"All that he has is yours;
Rejoice, then, not repine;
That love which all *your* state secures,
That love has alter'd *mine*."

We cannot otherwise explain such expressions as the father's "dividing unto them his living." Does not God live in love? And did he ever give this love to a blind, dead pharisee? "Son, thou art ever with me." Where does God call a graceless pharisee, "Son?" and how is he a son? Can he be *ever* with God? Is he ever with him in time? Will he be ever with him in eternity? "And all that I have is thine." Can that be true of a graceless pharisee? Is all that God is and has, all his love, grace, mercy, truth, bliss, and blessedness the portion and inheritance of a self-righteous, carnal professor? Is it "meet" or becoming the character of God that he and a pharisee should rejoice together and be glad at a prodigal's return? And is such a one the "brother," in any sense of the term, of a pardoned sinner? These reasons have long convinced us that the elder son represents a child of God who walks very consistently, but who has never been much favoured in his soul. "Thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends,"

—no particular blessing or manifestation which I could speak of to rejoice the hearts of my spiritual companions.

What is considered the chief difficulty in the way of this interpretation is with us scarcely any difficulty at all. "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither have I transgressed at any time thy commandment." What he means is, that he had never broken out like his backsliding brother. He does not say, "thy commandments," but "thy commandment;" that is, to continue near to him, and in his service; to keep at home, not go into a far country, and waste his substance with riotous living. This commandment he had kept; whilst his brother was far away, he was minding the flocks and herds, and thus far serving his father. But this good conduct, this external obedience and consistency fostered, as in Job's case and Hezekiah's, a self-righteous spirit. But Job is not cut off and condemned as a pharisee because he said, "Neither have I gone back from the commandment of thy lips." (Job xxiii. 12.) Nor Hezekiah, because he said, "Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight." (Isa. xxxviii. 3.) All allow that Job and Hezekiah were children of God, but at that time possessed of a pharisaical, self-righteous spirit. Why, then, should the elder brother be cut off as a graceless pharisee, because, being possessed of a similar spirit, he was full of his own consistency, and naturally angry that his backsliding brother should have the fatted calf and the kisses, the robe and the ring, which had not been given to him? It does not say that he should not some day have them all; nay, rather that he should, for if all that the father had was his, the calf and the kisses, the ring and the robe were as much his as his brother's.

There probably is some reference to the Jew and Gentile in the passover, as intimated in the Inquiry; but according to our view, this is not its chief scope or intention. The gracious reception of a penitent backslider, and the self-righteous spirit of some of the family of God are, to our mind, the leading features.

These are our views of the parable, and these are the reasons on which they are based. But let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

The view that the elder son represents the angels is to our mind utterly inconsistent with their rejoicing over repenting sinners. Surely anger cannot enter the hearts of angels when they see poor prodigals return, for they are ever saying, with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing;" and would they seek to rob the Lamb of the glory, honour, and blessing of saving freely by his blood the basest of mourning and repenting prodigals?

But, as this view has been advocated by several, and especially by one whom we much esteem as a servant of God, and whose mind we would not willingly hurt, we will add no more.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

OUR readers will kindly bear in mind that the part of our subject which we are now handling is the *spirit* of the precept, and that the point immediately before us is the union and harmony which the spirit of the precept possesses, not only with the *letter* of the precept, but with the *whole current and tenor* of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To prove this point conclusively would require a close and thorough investigation of the whole current and tenor of the gospel; but, as this would be an almost interminable field, we shall content ourselves with simply stating a few leading characteristics of the gospel; and if we can show that the spirit of the precept is in union and harmony with these, it will necessarily follow that, as the gospel is a uniform, consistent whole, it will equally harmonise with all the rest.

We know no part of Scripture where the law and the gospel are more clearly, concisely, and beautifully contrasted than in that remarkable chapter, 2 Cor. iii. The whole chapter demands and will amply repay the most careful and prayerful examination and meditation; for in it the apostle places in striking contrast the two dispensations—the main points of contrast being the peculiar glory of each covenant, but the surpassing glory of the new. Paul does not, like some uninspired teachers, disparage the law, or push it contemptuously out of the way, but gives it due honour as a revelation from God, and as such, therefore, possessing a glory of its own. Following his invariable method of basing all his assertions on Scripture, he founds his view of the peculiar glory of the old dispensation upon a remarkable occurrence at the time of its revelation: “But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away.” (2 Cor. iii. 7.) We should be glad to enter into the various circumstances and accompaniments of the giving of the law, but our limits prevent this; and we shall, therefore, merely remark that these accompaniments when “the LORD descended upon mount Sinai in fire,” (Exod. xix. 18,) were but the shadowings forth of the terrible majesty of God, of his inflexible justice, and fiery wrath against sin, which burns to the lowest hell. Now, after these terrible manifestations of the power, presence, and glory of God on Sinai’s burning top, the Lord spake what are sometimes called “the ten words,” (Exod. xxxiv. 28, *margin.*) or ten commandments; and to impress upon them greater weight and permanency, he afterwards gave them to Moses written with his own finger on two tables of stone, at the end of his forty days’ and nights’ sojourn in the Mount. We read that “the glory of the Lord abode upon Mount Sinai, and that the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount.” (Exod. xxiv. 16, 17.) In the midst of this

glory Moses was, as it were, wrapped up; for he was the typical mediator of that covenant. When, then, he came down from the mount a second time with the two tables in his hand, the skin of his face shone, as if the glory of God in that covenant were reflected in it. This shining of his face Paul calls "the glory of his countenance," that being the reflection of the glory of God as seen by him face to face during the forty days' sojourn.

But on this point we need not enlarge, our only object, in dwelling thus momentarily upon the glory of the law, being to draw attention to the superior glory of the gospel, as contrasted with it, which we shall find to have some bearing on our present subject. The apostle, then, in the chapter to which we have referred, mentions five points of contrast in which the glory of the gospel excels and outshines the glory of the law: 1. The law is but the ministration of the *letter*; that is, it stood only in so many written words or letters, engraved on tables of stone; (2 Cor. iii. 3;) but the gospel is the ministration of the *Spirit*. (2 Cor. iii. 3, 6, 8.) 2. The law is the ministration of *death*, for "the letter killeth;" but the gospel is the ministration of *life*, for "the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) 3. The law is the ministration of *condemnation*; but the gospel is the ministration of *righteousness*. 4. The law genders to *bondage*; (Gal. iv. 24;) but the gospel is the spirit of *liberty*. 5. The law was for a *time*, and then to be done away; (2 Cor. iii. 11, 13;) the gospel is permanent and enduring. (2 Cor. iii. 11.) To work out these points, contrast them with one another, and to show from them the glory of each dispensation, and yet the surpassing and superior glory of the gospel, would be a subject of deep and profitable meditation. But we shall only consider them so far as they have a bearing on our present subject, and shall take but three of them, adding a fourth from another quarter. These four characteristic features of the gospel, constituting its main, its distinguishing glory, are, that it is a ministration of the Spirit of life, of liberty, and of love. With each and all of these four features will the spirit of the precept be in the fullest harmony.

1. The first leading feature of the gospel is, that it is the *ministration of the Spirit*; that is, through it and by it the Holy Spirit is promised and communicated. Thus Paul asks the Galatians, "This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?" (Gal. iii. 2.) The "hearing of faith" means that hearing of the gospel with the believing heart, whereby it becomes "the power of God unto salvation," (Rom. i. 16,) when it comes "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." (1 Thess. i. 5.) In this sense the gospel is the ministration or service of the blessed Spirit, that gracious and holy Teacher using it as a means of conveying himself into the heart. When our blessed Lord rose from the dead, and ascended on high, he "received gifts for men." (Ps. lxxviii. 18.) The prime and chief of these gifts was the Holy Ghost, which, being promised him by the Father as a part of the reward of his humiliation, sufferings, and death, is therefore called "the promise of the

Father;" "Behold, I send the promise of the Father upon you;" (Luke xxiv. 49;) "the promise of the Holy Ghost;" (Acts ii. 33;) and "the Holy Spirit of promise;" (Eph. i. 13;) the meaning of all these expressions being that the Holy Ghost, with all his gifts and graces, is the promised Comforter, Teacher, and inward Intercessor of all to whom the gospel comes with power. Thus the chief glory of the gospel is, that it is "the ministration of the Spirit." If, then, the precept be an integral part of the gospel, it must also be a part of the ministration of the Spirit. Not that the precept communicates the Spirit, as do the truths, the promises, the invitations, the declarations of the gospel. These *instrumentally* communicate the Spirit, whereas the precept does but *follow* it, and acts in union and harmony with it. Let us explain this point a little more clearly. When a gospel *truth*, such as "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin;" or a gospel *declaration*, as, "He that believeth on me hath everlasting life;" or a gospel *promise*, as, "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come unto you;" or a gospel *invitation*: "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink," comes to the heart with a divine power, the Holy Ghost is as if communicated thereby; for he comes into the heart through that truth, declaration, promise, &c. But he does not, at least not usually, come into the heart through the precept, for the precept follows as the fruit and effect of his coming. Yet, as the fruit and effect of his coming, the spirit of the precept is in the fullest harmony and union with the whole tenor and current of the gospel. Thus there is not a single precept which is not in harmony with the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost. May we use a figure to illustrate this? Here is a piece of beautiful music—the masterpiece of an eminent composer, say Handel's Hallelujah Chorus. What do you see? Several sheets of musical characters, as quavers, &c., which you may or may not read and understand. But whilst in the mere score, there is no music in them—at least, the body is there, but not the soul of music. Now, hear this score played and sung as intended. What a soul is put into it, and what harmony! Among thousands of notes you will not hear a jarring sound. So with the precepts. Dead in the letter, when a soul is breathed into them by the Holy Spirit, they all are animated as with one harmonious voice, every note being in perfect unison with the gospel of the grace of God.

2. Another distinctive mark of the gospel is, that it is the ministration of *life*. "The letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) As, then, the Spirit giveth life, the spirit of the precept must fully harmonise with the life given in and through the gospel. Christ is "the life;" (John xiv. 6;) "in him was life;" (John i. 4;) he "came that his sheep might have life, and might have it more abundantly." (John x. 10.) The life, therefore, of the gospel is the life of the precept. Your heart literally, naturally, is the centre of your bodily life; but your hands and feet are in union with your heart through the vital blood which flows from it into them. So with the gospel and the precepts of the gospel. Christ is the life; but this life he communicates through the gospel. Call,

then, the gospel the heart, as the centre of this life; and call the precept the feet and hands, whereby the life of the gospel is manifested in action; and at once we see that the life of the gospel is the life of the precept, as the life of the heart is the life of the feet and hands. How thoroughly, therefore, must the spirit of the precept harmonise with the gospel as the ministration of life.

3. A third feature of the gospel is, that it is the "*perfect law of liberty*;" for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty;" (2 Cor. iii. 17;) and, therefore, all the precepts of the gospel, as animated by the Spirit, harmonise with this perfect liberty. Under the law, all is bondage; under the gospel, all is liberty. Whatever, therefore, does not breathe liberty, call it what you will, wrap it up and disguise it how you may, is not the gospel. Here many teachers and preachers have erred in handling and enforcing the precept. They have read and heard of the liberty of the gospel, for that is too plainly revealed and insisted upon in the New Testament to be questioned or denied, but they have been afraid of extending this liberty to the precept, as if the necessary consequence was that we were at liberty to obey it or not, just as we pleased. Now this is a thorough misconception of the nature of the liberty of the gospel, and of the liberty of the precept as a part of that gospel. To this timorous though mistaken apprehension we may trace the tenacity with which so many have held that the law is the believer's rule of life. Their poor, timorous, servile minds, drenched and drowned in legal bondage, were afraid of the gospel, as if it were a kind of tamed lion, which would be very quiet and do nobody any harm as long as it was kept in a cage, but must not be allowed to get out, lest it should work incalculable mischief. Or, to change the figure, they treated it almost as if it were a ticket of leave man, who, though, from his good conduct in prison, he might be set at a kind of half liberty, yet was to be carefully watched, lest he should associate himself with thieves, or commit a burglary. And thus the free, noble, glorious gospel of the grace of God, containing in its bosom and holding forth the eternal love of the Father, the blood and righteousness of the Son, and the teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost,—this pure and precious gospel, which proclaims liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, has been shut up, caged, and confined within all sorts of bars, conditions, and limitations, as if it were a wild beast which "had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it;" and which, if let loose, would "arise and devour much flesh." (Dan. vii. 5.) Yes, this pure and precious gospel has been suspected of all manner of evil deeds; and if, by its good and excellent behaviour it has sometimes been allowed a half liberty, yet has it been most carefully watched with the jealous eyes of a whole host of clerical and lay police, lest it should plot a murder or accomplish a robbery. What so much troubles the clergyman of some quiet country parish as the appearance in it of a preacher of the gospel, and the opening of a little cottage where a few poor people meet to hear it? What an immediate outcry is raised. "O these dreadful, these

dangerous doctrines! Are they come at last into my parish, my freehold, my domain?" As if this poor, humble minister were come to burn down the rectory; or as if his few hearers, probably by his own confession the best-living people in the parish, met together to get drunk, or strengthen each other's hands in all manner of sin and wickedness. And this terrible outcry of "dangerous doctrines" is raised by men who see no danger in the careless profanity of the rich, and the loose licentiousness of the poor; no danger in, or at least who raise no warning cry against, the stealthy advance of Popery; no danger in the rapid growth of infidelity; no danger in bishops and deans denying the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. But they are not the first, and will not be the last, who have spared the thief and arrested the honest man, justified the wicked and condemned the righteous. But these blind judges are not the only men who bark at the gospel. How the great bulk of preachers and writers, far and near, whether they call themselves churchmen or dissenters, are of one mind either wholly to cast out the precious gospel, or, by abridging it of its liberty, to stop its vital breath. And to do this wretched work more effectually, they have constructed a cage for the gospel out of the precepts of the gospel; and thus not only made it a prisoner, but have found or fashioned bands and fetters to tie it hand and foot by strips torn from its own clothes. But how ignorant are all such men of what the liberty of the gospel is; and that it is a liberty not *to* sin, but *from* sin, a holy, heavenly freedom of spirit which engages every willing affection of the heart to yield the obedience of faith. In fact, liberty is the very essence of the gospel,—its vital breath, its animating spirit; for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) The gospel is "the perfect law of liberty," therefore the very perfection of liberty, and thus thoroughly and entirely free from the least taint of bondage, the slightest tincture of servitude. It is this perfect freedom which distinguishes it from the law which "worketh wrath" (Rom. iv. 15) and "gendereth to bondage." (Gal. iv. 24.) It is, therefore, a freedom *from* sin; (Rom. vi. 18;) from its *guilt*, as having "the heart sprinkled from an evil conscience;" (Heb. x. 22;) from its *filth*, by "the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" (Titus iii. 5;) from its *love*, through "the love of God, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost;" (Rom. v. 5;) from its *dominion*, as "not being under the law but under grace;" (Rom. vi. 14;) and from its *practice*, by becoming "servants to God, so as to have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." (Rom. vi. 22.) How, then, can this pure, holy, and precious gospel be condemned as leading to licentiousness? It is because its power, its preciousness, its happy, holy, heavenly liberty have never been experimentally known by them that some, like the Galatians, do all they can to frustrate the grace of God, by turning again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto they desire to be in bondage; (Gal. ii. 21; iv. 10;) whilst others, like those monsters of wickedness whom Jude and Peter denounce with such burning words, pervert and abuse the liberty of the gospel unto licentiousness, "sporting them-

selves with their own deceivings," and, "while they promise others liberty, are themselves the servants of corruption." (2 Pet. ii. 13, 19.) Now the liberty of the gospel, as revealed in the Scriptures, and made experimentally known to the soul, steers, so to speak, between these two extremes, and is as perfectly free from the least intermixture of legal bondage as from the least taint of Antinomian licentiousness. It is, indeed, this holy liberty, heavenly power, and gracious influence of the precious gospel, under the teaching and testimony of the Holy Ghost, which makes it so suitable to our case and state when first convinced of sin, and cast into prison under guilt and condemnation. What release but a perfect release would suit our deplorable case as prisoners in the pit where there is no water, shut up under wrath and guilty fear through a condemning law and an accusing conscience? This pure and precious gospel, therefore, comes down to us poor miserable captives, shut up in bondage under the law, under a guilty conscience, under the tormenting accusations of Satan, and the doubts and fears of our own trembling, misgiving heart. Yes, it comes down to our pitiable state and condition as a message of pure mercy, as revealing and proclaiming pardon and peace through a Saviour's blood; and when, by grace, we can receive, embrace, and entertain it as a word from God to us, proclaiming liberty as with a jubilee trumpet through every court and ward of the soul. And shall we take, or willingly allow any one else to take prisoner this heavenly messenger and shut her up in the condemned cell? Shall we stand tamely by and not lift up our voice with indignation when we see this beauteous visitant, fresh, as it were, from the very courts of heaven, and radiant with the glory of God, laid hold of by a villainous jailer, as if she came to rob and murder? What were we before this precious gospel reached our ears and hearts? Were we not bondslaves to sin, serving divers lusts and pleasures, taken and led captive by Satan at his will, and while we talked about enjoying life, were, through fear of death, subject to bondage? When we saw the saints of God not daring to do what we did greedily, we thought that *they* were the slaves, and *we* the free men, not knowing that "to whom we yield ourselves servants to obey, his servants we are, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness;" (Rom. vi. 16;) not knowing that "whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin," and that our boasted freedom was real servitude, whilst their apparent bondage was real freedom; for they had an interest in that precious declaration: "If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John viii. 36.)

As, then, the spirit of liberty is the spirit of the gospel, it must be the very spirit of the precept also as an integral part of the gospel. If, therefore, you have never known the spirit of liberty in the gospel, you have never known the spirit of the precept, which is a part of that liberty; and if you have never known the spirit of the precept, you have never once performed one of the precepts aright. All your obedience has been not in newness

of the spirit, but in the oldness of the letter. O how pious and religious some of you, ye readers of the "Standard," have been, if not now are! How you have set the precepts before your eyes and tried to keep them; how harshly you have judged others who were not so strict in keeping the commandments as you believed you were; how you spied out the liberty of some of the dear family of God which they had in Christ Jesus, that you might, by your conversation, or your preaching, your letters of advice, your solemn warnings, your sharp and angry reproofs, your praying at them, and, as you thought and said, for them, bring them into bondage. (Gal. ii. 4.) How dangerous you considered must be the liberty of the gospel if it should set any one who professed godliness free from all those shackles and fetters which, the more self-imposed and the stricter they were, the more closely you bugged them to your self-righteous breast. Thus you took the precepts of the gospel out of their connection with the liberty of the gospel, and turned them into moral duties to feed your legal, self-righteous spirit. And what was the consequence? Bondage, guilt, and fear in your own conscience, for you could never keep the precept even according to your own interpretation of it; harsh judgment of all who did not partake of your legal spirit, whatever might be their experience or consistency; close alliance with shallow professors held fast in the same bonds with yourself; and a gradual departure from the truths of the gospel, until a miracle of grace put you into the furnace, there to learn what your own arm could do for you, and that nothing but the gospel, in its blessed liberty and power, could save your soul.

We have rather wandered from our point, but we could not show the liberty of the precept as animated by the spirit of the precept, and its harmony with the whole tenor and current of the gospel, without entering a little into the nature of the liberty of the gospel; and, as this is a subject of great importance, and very dear to us, we have been tempted to stray somewhat from our due limits. But now observe the connection between the spirit of the precept and the liberty of the gospel. In order, then, that this liberty of the gospel should not be abused unto licentiousness, it is guided and regulated by the precept, and by the spirit of the precept as animating the letter. The liberty of the gospel is a living, animated principle—not a dead letter, but a gracious power and influence. This is one of its main blessings. The precept, therefore, in guiding and regulating this liberty, must be animated, too, with spirit and life, or you would have the strange anomaly, the gross and palpable inconsistency, of a living body walking with dead feet, or served by paralysed hands. In accomplishing this office, the precept serves two important uses: 1. First, it so far *restrains* this liberty that it should not degenerate into licentiousness. We are such vile wretches, such depraved creatures, that we should very soon abuse our liberty unless we were restrained. We are like our own children; they are at liberty to come in and go out of our house, to sit at our table, to sleep under our roof; for it is their house and home, as it is our own. Indeed, we cannot bear their absence from our table or

our roof, unless we know where they are, and that they are absent by our permission; for we know that they are only safe when they are under our eye. But with all this freedom, their birthright and inheritance, they are under a restraint—a restraint absolutely needful for their good. They may not go out when they please, nor eat and drink when and as much as they please, nor go to bed and get up when they please. Why? Because they would abuse this liberty to their own injury. And yet, it being a restraint of love and affection, and for their good, it is no hindrance to the liberty which they enjoy as our children. They are not our servants, nor treated as servants, but are dear children, and treated as dear children; and it is because they are dear children they are restrained from injuring themselves; for we should feel any injury to them much more deeply than they. Thus the precepts are to the children of God what the injunctions, commands, and declared will of a parent are to a child. And, as the happiness and well-being of a child, and, we may add, the happiness of the whole family as living together, much depend on the order and discipline of their home, and on the wise and affectionate authority and declared will of the master of the house, so the happiness and well-being of the child of God, and the happiness of the family of God, as united in church-fellowship, much depend on the obedience of one and all to the precepts of the gospel as the revealed will of the Lord of the house, for the maintenance of the order and discipline of each and all its members. Happy child, who obeys the precepts of the gospel in the spirit and liberty of the gospel! Happy church, where the precepts of the gospel form its rule, the spirit of the gospel its animating principle, and the spirit of the precept its influential guide.

2. And this leads us to another important use of the precept. It not only restrains liberty from degenerating into licentiousness, but *regulates* its actions. A person may not abuse his liberty, yet not know how to use it. Hart says :

“To use this liberty aright.”

Thus there is a using it aright, and a not using it aright. Here then, come in the value and blessedness of the precept, and especially the spirit of the precept, to teach us how to use aright the liberty of the gospel, and to enable us to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. (Col. i. 10.) Thus the liberty of the gospel and the spirit of the precept move, work, and act together in the fullest and most blessed harmony, the result being fruitfulness in every good word and work unto the glory of God. By this is accomplished liberty without licentiousness, and obedience without servitude. The union of liberty with obedience is the happiest of alliances. Liberty without obedience is licentiousness, obedience without liberty is slavery; their union guards liberty and ennobles obedience. This is true politically as well as religiously. Liberty is the Englishman's birthright. Liberty of thought, of speech, of action, of movement; liberty of public meetings, of petitioning parliament, of electing our

own representatives, of worshipping God according to the dictates of our own conscience; liberty of the press, of the pulpit, of the platform. Who can enumerate, who can sufficiently prize, those civil and religious liberties which our forefathers won for us with so much toil and suffering, and which we enjoy as our own birthright and inheritance? But mark how obedience to law regulates this liberty. Where is such liberty enjoyed as in England? But where is the law of the land so respected and obeyed? All that England is and has as the freest, most prosperous, and most favoured country in the world, we owe, under God, to her union of the greatest liberty with the greatest obedience. Without law an Englishman could not live; without liberty an Englishman could not breathe. Take away our laws, which all equally obey from the queen to the pauper, violence and bloodshed would fill every street; take away our liberties, and England would be one vast dungeon. So it is in grace. Without the precepts of the gospel and spiritual obedience rendered to them, gospel liberty would degenerate into licentiousness; without the liberty of the gospel, the precepts would be turned into the veriest bondage and the most miserable legal slavery.

Those men, therefore, are utterly wrong who twist the precepts into a rod to flog the backs of those whom the truth has made free. In God's house there is a rod: "Shall I come unto you with a rod?" (1 Cor. iv. 21;) but the precepts are not that rod. How plain, how clear the distinction. In a family the father's will, the rules which he lays down for the regulation of the whole house, are, so to speak, the precepts of the house. But is this will, are these rules the rod? No; that is hung up, or kept in a corner, and only brought out when these rules are wilfully broken by any of the children. The rules are of daily, hourly use for the comfort, convenience, order, happiness, and well-being of the house. But the rod comes forth only now and then, and more rarely the better, when the sad occasion, which often sets the whole family weeping, calls for it. So in the family of God. The precepts are the rules of the house; the hidings of God's face are the *inward* rod for inwardly disobeying them; reproofs before all by the pastor, (1 Tim. v. 20,) or setting aside and putting away by the church, (1 Cor. v. 13,) are the *outward* rod for outward disobedience. We have said enough and more than enough on this point, but, as this feature of the precept, as a part of the liberty of the gospel, is little known and less attended to, we have ventured to handle it at some length.

4. But we now come to the crowning feature of the gospel, and, therefore, the crowning feature of the spirit of the precept—*love*.

But as we cannot and must not hastily pass over so blessed a feature of the spirit of the precept, we must give it a higher and better place than the end of an article we fear already too long.

WHAT a miserable plight was Saul in, and how doleful was his cry and complaint to Samuel (1 Sam. xxviii. 15): "I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more." Heaven and earth forsook him at once.
—*Flavel*.

Obituary.

MRS. LOCKWOOD.

At Knossington, near Oakham, on April 2nd, 1865, aged 60, Mary Ann, wife of Thomas Lockwood.

The Lord called her by his grace many years ago, though the exact period is not known by the writer. It is believed that a neighbour who was a member at Providence Chapel, Oakham, was in some measure the instrument, by lending her a number of the "Gospel Standard." She became tried in her mind and desirous of hearing the truths preached at that place by Mr. P., which it pleased the Lord so to commend to her conscience, opening her heart to receive the word as suited to the state into which he had brought her by the power of his Spirit, that she abode firmly by the ministry until the close of her life. It was through much persecution at the first, which the Lord was pleased to overcome for her, and many things to oppose her coming to hear. She has walked to Oakham, nearly four miles, and by a rough and very hilly road, many times when weak and feeble and little equal to the exertion; but the word was so blessed to her soul, at times, and she was so met by it in her varied states of trial and affliction, that she felt constrained to go. She could mark spots on the road where she had to set up her Ebenezers to him who had brought her thus far, and has felt that she would rather die on the road than not hear the word which was such a support to her, and such a confirmation that she was under the Lord's teaching.

She was a woman of a "sorrowful spirit," knew much of what Mr. Huntington calls a "private religion," was favoured with much of a spirit of prayer and supplication, and kept tender and contrite in her feelings. Naturally there was much in her to be subdued, and the power of grace was manifest in subduing it.

She became exercised with a desire to follow the Lord in the ordinances of his house, and to join the people with whom she felt union. She was much tried by some who assailed her religion, and once, after a conversation with one of this kind, Hymn 715, Gadsby's Selection, was much blessed to her. She was then encouraged to go before the church and tell them what the Lord had done for her soul; and she was received by them and was baptized by Mr. P., on April 8th, 1849, and walked in union and consistency with them till the time of her death.

She was a great sufferer from rheumatism, and especially the last few winters of her life. Her frame became much worn down with it, and an attack upon the lungs gradually brought her life to a close. At the commencement of her illness, which was several weeks before her death, she was low in her soul and favoured with but slight views of the Light of life and her interest in Christ. Hymn 388, Gadsby's Selection, which at one particular time of trial was much blessed to her soul, especially the last verse, she would often refer to, and she desired greatly an increase of the spirit of grace and supplication.

As her illness increased, Mr. Knill, who, in January last, succeeded Mr. P. in the ministry at Oakham, went to see her, and met there a kind friend and neighbour who often went to see her and felt it a privilege to do so, and often had her spirit refreshed by converse with her. She manifested a very grateful and affectionate spirit toward them, felt much pleasure in seeing them, and expressed the same spirit of love and union towards the church and friends at Oakham. She told them that she felt deeply convinced that nothing short of vital godliness would stand before a heart-searching God. She felt much stripped of her own righteousness, and a deep desire to be more manifestly clothed in the righteousness of Christ. She could bless his name that he had begun the work of grace in her soul, that he had carried it on, that it was all his own, and she dare not doubt but that he would perfect it to the day of his coming. She felt that all he had done was in the eternal counsel of his will from the foundation of the world; but she had not her feet so firmly upon the Rock as she felt her dying circumstances called for. She had many sweet promises passing through her mind, but not with that overpowering sweetness and manifestation of Jesus as the substance of them which she had sometimes had, and which she desired. Her hope anchored upon the faithfulness of God, and there were many times when her heart again overflowed with love and gratitude to God for his great goodness to such a poor, weak, unworthy worm.

She would plead earnestly with the Lord for patience to wait his time of release from her bodily sufferings, which were very great, and she would dwell upon the sufferings of the Lord Jesus for her sins, and would say, "He undertook to bring me through." She would often say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be all the glory;" and various parts of Ps. cxv. were sweet to her. At times, her soul was raised to sing of mercy and free pardon of her sins, and she would say with the Psalmist, "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed my transgressions from me," and various other parts of that Psalm. She would also say,

"Not a wave of trouble rolls
Across this peaceful breast;"

and she would long for the time when it should be eternally so with her. At other times she was much tried and exercised with thoughts about those she was leaving behind, especially her only son, who was mentally afflicted. He had been got into an asylum at Red Hill by a kind friend for five years, which term would expire in October next, but about three weeks before her death she was enabled to commit him into the hand of God, and to leave him with the Lord in a most surprising manner, without another anxious thought; and it is remarkable that he survived her only until the 30th of the month in which she died.

She was much in prayer for her children, that the Lord might be pleased to call any of them by his grace, prized highly the privilege of being nursed by affectionate children, and the goodness of God in supplying all her wants. Always, when speaking of her late beloved

pastor, it was with the tenderest affection; but there was a godly jealousy, fearing it might be thought she gave too much honour to the instrument, and she would say, "Bless the Lord for the many times he has spoken to my soul through his dear servant; all the glory belongs to him." In great suffering she would pray to be released, and to see his smiling countenance, if it were his will; but begged that she might not be impatient and irritable, and would beg the forbearance and forgiveness of those about her if she were so. She would say, "O Lord, do cut short thy work and take me home.

"I feel this mud-walled cottage shake,
And long to see it fall,
That I my willing flight may take
To him who is my all."

Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?" The whole of Hymn 765 was particularly sweet and cheering to her, and seemed to express the inmost desires of her soul. She would often breathe out the opening of Ps. xxvii., "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?"

She prayed much that the affliction might be blest to her sorrowing husband and children, and desired to have the remains of her poor body interred without any unnecessary expense.

On the Lord's day she seemed to have a longing toward his earthly courts where she had so often been refreshed, and spoke of those assembled there with much affection and gratitude for their remembrance of her; but said, "I shall soon enter where I shall go no more out." O prepare me to stand before thee, to come and appear before thee, my God. The night has been long. O when will it be morn? 'My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.' O my dear, dear Saviour! I would that I had more strength to bless and praise him for all that he has done. 'To them that have no might he increaseth strength.' He has washed me, cleansed me, pardoned me with his own blood. What mercy! what love! The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin."

A day or two before she died, she said, "The Lord began the work, he has carried it on, and he will perfect it unto the day of Jesus Christ—one eternal day of bliss and blessedness, to dwell for ever with him. I fall into his hands like clay into the hands of the potter, and know no will but his. All's safe. I live on the covenant promises in Christ Jesus. He hath done all things well; blessing and praise be unto his dear name for ever." She was fully conscious that her end was near. "It will soon be over. It has been 'through much tribulation.' We must bear the cross before we wear the crown. One hour with Jesus will make up for all. 'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil.' 'O Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory?'" (1 Cor. xv. 55).

On the Lord's day morning on which she died, she seemed spent with pain; every effort was made to catch her few parting words, but these only could be gathered: "I am so weary, I want to rest; to go

to sleep in Jesus. Lord, thou knowest what a poor, weak, suffering worm I am; stretch forth thy hand to help me. O Lord, how long? how long?" And in about an hour she breathed her soul into the bosom of Jesus, where she longed to be. A. F. P.

[I knew Mrs. Lockwood well, and felt much union of spirit with her. She was, indeed, a woman of a sorrowful spirit, afflicted in body, tried in mind, of shattered nerves, and a weakly frame. But I believe she lived very near to the Lord, was a woman of much prayer and supplication, and at times much favoured in her soul. The effect of her deep trials of body and mind, and of her many temptations, was to make and keep her very separate from the world, and to live much alone; and if these things depressed her spirits and increased her nervous disorder, yet were they blessed to the good of her soul. I have generally, in my conversation with her, found her in a good spot, and, for the most part, much exercised in soul, but able to speak very sweetly of words coming to her mind to bring support and consolation. Until she came to see me to tell me the Lord's dealings with her soul, I had never spoken to her, and scarcely knew her even by sight; but I was much struck with her simple, honest tale. I well remember the thought passing through my mind: "Well, here is a woman whom I scarcely know by sight, but who has sat under me for years, and had all these precious things communicated to her soul. May there not be others like her, whose faces I hardly know, but to whom my ministry has been similarly blessed?" Time has proved that such there were, of whom some have gone home, leaving behind a blessed testimony; and others still remain to be a comfort and hope to him who now stands where I for so many years stood.—J. C. P.]

*"LET THE SIGHING OF THE PRISONER COME BEFORE
THEE."*

A PRISONER am I,
And I only can sigh;
My spirit with gloom is oppress'd.
Dear Jesus, draw near,
Bless'd Saviour, appear,
And hear a poor prisoner distress'd.

The chains of my sin,
How they gall me within,
And call forth a sigh and a groan.
The power to release
And give my soul peace
Is with thee, blessed Jesus, alone.

I often have cried,
And was never denied
When I sought thee in days that are past;
And wilt thou disown
Or expel from thy throne
A poor needy sinner at last?

To thy love I've no claim,
But I plead thy dear name,
And thy mercy so sovereign and free;
Thou never wast known
To expel from thy throne
A poor needy sinner like me.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

SEPTEMBER, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 10.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Continued from p. 245.)

On Dec. 11th, Lord's day evening, Mr. H. on John xiv. 19, 20: "Yet a little while," &c. O the power that accompanied this sermon to my soul! It came not in word only, but in power. When he opened the words, "Ye see me," as with the eye of faith, I could see eye to eye with him in my experience, as face answereth to face in a glass. He quoted the passage: "For I, through the law, am dead to the law," &c. O the light and liberty, union, love, and peace I enjoyed! I could look back on the day of my espousals. All things were brought to my remembrance that Christ had said unto me, agreeably to his promise. I could remember the Lord from the little hill Mizar; for the law of the Spirit of life had made me free. This I again experienced: "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven thee. Go in peace." Such love much. O how precious was Cor. xiii. to my soul! It is the chapter that treats of love. O the happiness to feel fresh applications of forgiveness of sins, under this sweet influence of love! Hard things become easy.

Mr. Huntington's two printed sermons, entitled "The Law Established by the Faith of Christ" and "Moses Unveiled in the Face of Christ," fell into my hands. The reading of them was much blessed to me, in leading me into this mystery, as well as the reading of God's word on this point, and what I had often heard Mr. Huntington say on it.

About the beginning of 1797, my mind was led to review, with much penitential sorrow of heart, mixed with love to my compassionate Saviour whom I pierced, my sad backsliding, which, to my shame, had been for some years, and by degrees leaving my first love. At this time I had always this scripture uppermost in my mind: "I will pour upon the house of David," &c. I had the testimony in my conscience that it had been and was now fulfilled to me in my experience. My mind was led much to the parable of the ten virgins, Matt. xxv., particularly verse 5, where it is said they all, wise and foolish, slumbered and slept. Alas! What is fallen human nature? How prone to backslide! Also the parable of the prodigal. How here I saw myself also, as in a glass, backslidden and re-

claimed. Also this is my case: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" See a precious hymn of Hart's on this passage:

"Thus saith the Lord to those that stand."

On Jan. 23rd, Monday evening, Mr. Huntington preached from I John ii. 28: "And now . . . abide in him." O how blessed was the whole of this precious sermon to me! How suitable, how seasonable to my case! I was so elevated with joy that I could scarcely write without making a blunder in placing my words. "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day," "a brand plucked out of the fire." He that has suffered in the flesh (for backsliding) has ceased from sin; that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh, &c. (1 Pet. iv. 1, 2, 8.) I had for some time prayed hard and earnestly to be led into the mystery of God's will with regard to the law, and Mr. Huntington's books, his "Letter to Mr. Caleb Evans," and "The Bond-Child Brought to the Test," were much blessed to me with regard to this doctrine, and were the means, with the preaching and reading of the word of God, of settling me in this point, especially page 121, where he addresses himself to the reader, and his advice in page 48. Laying these two books before God, and entreating him to convince me whether they contained the truth or not, that I might either embrace or reject them, a precious answer I received by the enjoyment of more love, peace, and liberty than I had before, the Lord having set his seal to the written labours of his ministers. Mr. H. says, "There are no better appeals than those which are made to the Searcher of hearts; nor is there any fear of false or evasive answers from a throne of grace. A trial there is sure to discover the rottenness of the author." (Ps. xlviii.)

About the beginning of February, this passage came in the midst of deep and inward retirement of soul and spiritual meditation: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of the spirit," &c. It came often to my mind with great power for a considerable time, with these: "Believe the truth, and the truth shall make you free;" "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed;" and it was answered in me: "It is done; for 'the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.'" "The law of sin and death" is the moral law; the children of God are not under that law as a rule of life, being made free by the law of the Spirit of life, which is the gospel. "Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Very glad and willing was I to yield to the obedience of faith in embracing this Scriptural doctrine of the liberty wherewith Christ makes his people free, for else I found myself dreadfully shackled, galled, entangled, and fettered again in my experience with the yoke of bondage. Some good men, perhaps, may not find it as I do, which I suppose has made them speak otherwise, for I can but speak of the things I have seen and heard, and experienced by strong fiery trials in this matter, the Lord knoweth. I wish the Spirit of love, where liberty is, and for the whole will of God to be my rule of conduct.

Mr. Huntington concludes his address to the reader thus: "That my reader may be enlightened to see the things which differ,—the difference between the law of faith and that of works; between the spirit of liberty and that of bondage; between a minister of the Spirit who preaches Christ, and is called an Antinomian, and a minister of the letter, who favours Arminianism, and yet is called orthodox; and that he may, after trying all things, be enabled to hold fast that which is good, is the prayer and desire of thy faithful friend and willing servant in Christ Jesus, William Huntington;" which prayer was answered, in great mercy, to the unworthy scribbler of these memorandums; all praise be to the Lord.

I know, by bitter experience, what I have heard Mr. Huntington often observed, that we shall find it as hard, if not harder work, to be recovered after backsliding, than we found when we were brought first to God.

On Lord's day, July 2nd, I had some very humbling views of myself at the Lord's table at Tottenham Court Road. Those words were much on my mind during the ordinance: "Yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them." When I returned home, in deep meditation, the following scripture fastened upon my mind: "Thus saith the high and lofty One," &c., with: "This is a faithful saying, and worthy," &c. Recollecting the Lord's pardoning love to me, the chief of sinners, to me whose many sins are forgiven, O may I, then, like Mary, love much! O what a privilege to enjoy now and then a glimpse of the Lord's smiling countenance, to behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord.

In the evening, Mr. Huntington's text was: "But my God shall supply all your need," &c. Precious, comfortable, and clear views I had of my interest in Christ, and precious, sweet, spiritual dreams I had at night.

The following evening I heard Mr. H. from Isa. xxx. 25, 26. I was enabled to follow him in my experience, praying for an increase of faith and love.

The evening following, I heard him at Monkwell Street from Ps. lxxxv. 11-13. It was good for me to be there, for the Lord met me with his comfortable presence, all that night, when awake, praying for an increase of love.

Next morning, as I was making my bed, suddenly these words again sounded, as it were, in the interior of my mind: (I know not how to express myself otherwise; it is better felt than related:) "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven. Go in peace." Just before and after this, I found such an uncommon frame that I cannot describe or express, mercy manifested,—a precious manifestation!

After this, my faith was tried from various quarters, from my own evil heart, from the world, from Satan's buffetings; and I got into legal bondage again; but at length got much relief under Mr. Huntington's sermon, (Wednesday evening, Nov. 1,) from John viii. 36; also his sermons from Amos ix. 13; Lam. iii. 25-27; Isa. xxv. 7, 8; and Prov. viii. 35, 36. A shining ray of light from the Saviour's blessed countenance, a precious, bright, clear evidence. I

saw again my interest in Christ clearly. I was struck with the following lines I saw lately:

“Did Jesus once upon me shine?
Then Jesus is for ever mine.”

After conversing with a Christian friend (Mr. Cambel) about our different experiences of the work of God upon our souls, we spoke about the awful departure of the generality of many ministers from the power of vital godliness as well as from the doctrine, as it contains the whole truth of the gospel, and so dwindled almost into Arminianism. We lamented this was the case at Tottenham Court Chapel with some that came into the pulpit. He said the ministers were the occasion of it, particularly Mr. F.* I was so deeply affected about it that I could hardly refrain from weeping in conversation, and as soon as I parted with the good man I burst forth into many tears. I shed abundance of tears at recollecting this sad declension at my (formerly) favourite place of worship. This scripture then came across my mind, Amos vi. 6: “They (gospel professors in general) are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.” Then I thought, This passage surely suits well my distress as a complaint, for it is an affliction to a church and people when her teachers are not valiant for the truth upon the earth. (Jer. ix. 3.)

Within those very walls lie the bones of that man of God, Toplady, under whose powerful ministry I was established in the whole truth of the gospel of grace many years ago. I abundantly find what Romaine says, in his Preface to Elisha Cole’s book on “God’s Sovereignty,” true in my own soul, that “those things are of daily use to real Christians, and absolutely necessary in daily experience.” He further says that “until he received them, (viz., the doctrines of grace,) he could not enjoy the blessings and comforts of the precious gospel.” Earlier in the preface he says, “The doctrines of grace, of which the above book treats, are of such constant use to the children of God, that without the steadfast belief of them they cannot go on their way rejoicing. It is from these doctrines only that settled peace can rule in the conscience, the love of God be maintained in the heart, and a conversation kept up in our walk and warfare as becometh the gospel.” And towards the end he says from his heart he recommends this book to his friends, wishing it may be as useful to all who read it as it has been to him.

I may with truth here observe that I have found it very precious to me also; and also Mr. Cooper’s four Sermons upon Predestination. 1798.

In the beginning of 1798, I heard Mr. Huntington on James i. 18; John xvi. 13, 14; John vi. 28, 29; and Mic. vii. 18. Under these sermons I enjoyed a heartfelt union to and with the Altogether Lovely. He whispered to me many times afterwards in my private retirement that he had loved me with an everlasting love, and said, “Come into the ark and hide thee from the public calamities, (this was written at the time of our destructive war,) as well as spiritual ones.” O the blessedness of a heartfelt religion!

*Doubtless, Mr. Fuller.

On Wednesday evening, Jan. 17th, Mr. H. on Isa. xxvi. 9, 10. On the 9th verse he dwelt very long, and all the while described my state, especially when he alluded to the parable of the wise and foolish virgins. In the lukewarm, backsliding state and recovery of the former I clearly saw as in a glass my state, in that respect, for many years past; how in that night my soul had slumbered; but when with my soul I desired thee in that night, the dawn of the morning soon appeared, the Sun of Righteousness arising upon my benighted soul. The sermon altogether was very suitable to the awful and alarming state of public affairs as a nation. But the inhabitants of the world, the elect world, were described in verse 9; as to the others, they are described in verse 10. O Lord, thou hast revived thy work of grace in me in the midst of the years; thou hast strengthened the things which remained that were ready to die, by giving me to remember from whence I was fallen, and granting me repentance. Glory be to thy sovereign, longsuffering, and sparing mercy.

On April 22nd, Mr. H.'s text was Rom. vii. 9, 10, and in the evening Ps. xxxiv. 19. He pointed out my experience from the time that I was first called. It was a precious Sabbath day to me. I was satisfied with favour, and full of the blessing of the Lord. (Deut. xxiii. 33.) That scripture was in my mind as soon as (nay, before) I was awake next morning, having had such happy dreams in the night. O the goodness of my God to the chiefest of sinners! The next evening Mr. Huntington's text was Eph. i. 13, 14: "In whom ye also trusted," &c. He said, "It is to believe the threatenings in God's word in a way of conviction; for there is faith even in that; and after this to have a promise applied and sealed home upon the heart, and this by various promises as we advance in the spiritual life, which is the full assurance of understanding. 'But,' you will say, 'I lose this assurance.' So do I. I have it not abidingly at all times alike. No; but this is the earnest. I have lost it a thousand times; but as sure as we have the earnest we shall have the whole, after our souls get to heaven, and completed when our bodies are redeemed from the grave at the resurrection, to the praise of his glory. I have lost my peace a thousand times, and got it again a thousand times."

On July 9th I was scarcely awake but this text was suggested to my mind: "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee;" and was immediately followed by this one: "Ye are complete in him." They came and were impressed with great power upon my soul, being, as it were, sealed home upon my heart and conscience, so that I had no doubt they came immediately from God.

A few days after this, the devil came down into me in a horrible temptation, having great wrath, because he knoweth he has but a short time to buffet me, as my life now draweth towards a close. The law also raged in my conscience as well as my being beset with Satan's fiery darts. Two nights and a day at least I was in the deep. It terribly shook my feeble earthly tabernacle, being all over in a tremour, with a most violent headache, and I could hardly

write anything, my hand shaking so, my nervous disorder being now much worse than commonly.

After I was delivered from this temptation, I was beset by another of a different kind, and that was at seeing the prosperity of the wicked, particularly at E. I went bowed down under this temptation for some weeks; but on the 3rd of September Mr. Huntington took his text from Mal. iii. 18. He referred to v. 17, and also went through Ps. lxxiii., and under this sermon the Lord delivered me from this temptation. Like Asaph, after I had been in the sanctuary, then understood I the end of the wicked, who prosper in the world and increase in riches. The Lord's arm gave me victory over this temptation.

On Monday evening, Nov. 12th, Mr. Huntington's text was: "Blessed are those that have a part in the first resurrection," &c. He went on describing those who were so blessed, and, through mercy, I was enabled to take the application to myself. This was accompanied with mourning and grief at Christ's long-suffering patience towards me, before and since I was called, during the time of my awful declension and backsliding. After I got home, yea, the next day, the passage in Zech. xii. 10 was much on my mind.

I thank God that I bought and read Mr. Huntington's book entitled, "A Correspondence between Noctua Aurita of the Desert, and Philomela of the King's Dale," as well as the pamphlet he published in March 1800, entitled, "A Portion to Seven and also to Eight." I found these books encouraging and establishing.

In April, 1800, a good man, (Mr. Sharp,) a member of Providence Chapel, reminded me of our hearing Mr. Romaine observe in a sermon that the gospel is in many places like our London milk, adulterated. He as well as myself sat many years under Mr. R., and he was set at liberty under him from this text, 2 Cor. v. 21, eighteen years ago.

Mr. Huntington clearly described to me in a sermon my lukewarm, sleepy, backsliding state years after I left my first love, a state that I now deeply lament and deplore.

During the years 1802, 1803, my frames very much varied. Sometimes I was up and sometimes down; sometimes rejoicing, sometimes mourning; sometimes full of faith, and sometimes faith at a very low ebb; so far as even to question whether I had any at all, and Satan often worrying and plaguing me with his various temptations.

In 1804 I was for several weeks much harassed with Satan's suggestions and fiery darts; also sorely exercised with legal bondage; but mercifully delivered by Mr. Huntington's sermon on Luke iv. 18, "Deliverance to the Captives," on Lord's day morning, July 29th. I felt my burden removed in an instant. What could I do but praise the Lord, my covenant-keeping God?

August 17th, 1807, Monday evening, Mr. Brook's text was: "Naphtali is a hind let loose," &c. He said, "Naphtali means wrestlings of God. It is by believing we are let loose and brought into liberty." "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and I will give you rest." It is by faith we enter into rest and enjoy the knowledge of

salvation by the remission of our sins through the tender mercy of our God." The Lord shone over and through my former experience at this precious season.

On Monday evening, Feb. 27th, 1809, Mr. Huntington's text was: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High," &c. He observed, "This secret place is Christ, and no other; and as the believer dwelleth there, so he shall most assuredly abide there and be certainly saved." Many other things he said which were blessed to me. Good was it for me to be there.

On May 23rd, Tuesday evening, at the City chapel, Mr. Huntington's text was: "Who is a God like unto thee?" The Lord condescended in mercy to meet me here. I enjoyed his blessed presence. He made me joyful in his house of prayer. I sat down (rested) under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste. The fruit was the promises which the preacher quoted.

In June, 1809, looking back upon the length of time elapsed since I first heard the gospel, which is now forty years come next November, my backsliding after that the Lord had revealed his pardoning love to my soul was painfully brought again to my recollection. I remembered the wormwood and the gall, and my soul was humbled within me. Reflecting upon this, I say, the Lord permitted it so to be to answer his purpose concerning me, as expressed of Hezekiah in 2 Chron. xxxii. 31: "God left him to try him, that he might know all that was in his heart," compared with Deut. viii. 2; 1 Kings viii. 38; 2 Chron. vi. 29; and Jer. xvii. 9. The very remarkable word, "desperately" wicked is in the original "incurably," and may bear that interpretation, I understand by the learned.

On Tuesday morning, Nov. 28th, I was favoured with most uncommon freedom and liberty with my heavenly Father at the throne of grace, with a great flow of utterance in prayer for nearly an hour; and although I had closed up my address much within the above limit of time, and had left off three or four times, still I found fresh matter with suitable words to go on again in both abundant prayer and praise, and such sweet communion and fellowship with precious meltings of soul as I had not enjoyed with my God for some considerable time. Yea, such nearness of access that truly I may say, "Truly my fellowship was with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, through the intercession of the blessed Spirit." O the joy and delight of such seasons! I afterwards repeated, with heartfelt joy and peace, the 99th Hymn, Toplady's collection:

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness," &c.

The savour of this lasted for many days, and I could adopt the apostle's language: "I am crucified with Christ," &c., my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost.

On Dec. 3rd, Lord's day, Mr. Huntington preached two sermons from, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you." A precious season I enjoyed. He quoted Gal. ii. 19, 20, and my conscience said, "Amen." The seal made a strong and lasting impression. I could

adopt and apply the whole two verses to myself. I saw for myself and not for another. I had rejoicing in myself, and not in another. "A good man shall be satisfied," not with, but "from himself,"—from within, from the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit witnessing to his conscience that he is a child of God. (See Toplady on "Necessity," page 203.) The "word" Christ has spoken to me is from his precious word preached, read, meditated upon, and prayed over, for the time of my whole spiritual experience; for at sundry times and in divers manners God spake unto me by his Son, from my first revelation, or of his first revealing himself to my soul in my bedroom, in Heddon Street, as related already, from Rev. xxi., until now that I am clean as well as at first. With God it is one eternal now. No time with God. Though this was first spoken to the disciples, they are applicable to myself, as no scripture is of any private interpretation, but profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for instruction, that the man of God may be perfected, &c. When Jesus spake rest to my soul, I then enjoyed a blessed perfect gospel rest, as Berridge expresses it in several of his hymns.

On Dec. 23rd, Saturday night, I went to bed very dark in my soul; no joy or comfort. It was very painful to me. When I awoke in the night, Satan sorely assaulted me. I was the same when I got up in the morning. I cried to the Lord for relief. I also told the tempter, "May the Lord rebuke thee, O Satan. I am a brand plucked out of the fire." My former manifestation being brought to my mind, I got some relief, seeing this true of myself in my experience. Satan was put to flight soon after. On reading Ps. xxviii. 6, 7: "Blessed be the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplications. The Lord is my strength and my shield. My heart trusted in him, and I am helped," &c. I found God's faithfulness.

About Feb. 22nd, 1810, I was much exercised in soul with darkness and legal bondage. In this night of affliction I sought him whom my soul loveth; I called him, but he gave me no answer. I told him that without him I could do nothing to extricate myself; and pleaded Isa. l. 10, with Luke xviii, 7, 8. Suddenly he brought my soul out of prison, that I might praise his name. I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. It never ceaseth to assault the Spirit more or less with its vile thoughts, legal workings, and rebellious inclinations, as Mr. Romaine observes in his "Walk of Faith."

Latter part of April, 1811, being lately, through mercy, recovered from an eight weeks' sickness; (fever;) impressed under a deep sense of my unworthiness of the divine favour, I may say worthlessness throughout my life; when considering my best things as in and of myself, I mean being then under a deeper and more than ordinary or usual discovery of my sinfulness, and my depraved and desperately wicked heart; having a deep sight of the sinfulness of sin, (as sin,) that there is only sin and misery in myself, even my best services being defiled therewith; for sin, by the commandment, became exceeding sinful, I find that I can do nothing but sin in

all I do. I cannot pray but I sin; hear, give away my mite, or receive the sacrament, but I sin. And what is the wages of sin, but death? But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

About this time I found some enlargement of heart, and sweet peace, though not ravishing joy.

Oct. 9th, 1811, Wednesday evening, Mr. Huntington on, "Whoso keepeth the commandment," &c. This commandment is love. (Jno. xiii. 34; with 1 Jno. ii. 7, 8, and iv. 21.) He exhorted much to follow after love above all. O what sweet communion with Christ, through mercy, did I enjoy! What a blessed sense of union with my Beloved did I feel! I had this passage applied in going home: "Satisfied with favour and full of the blessing of the Lord." My rapture was so high that I hardly know how I got home, and the time appeared to me very short indeed; and when I came to the street door, my key was of no use to me, I was so lost and swallowed up in deep thought and meditation; so that I went in by the shop door; and when I came to my room door, I could scarce find and use that. I was like one in love, (natural,) and drunk I was, but not with wine. Lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Oct. —, Lord's day evening, Mr. Huntington on, "I will give you pastors," &c. A precious Bethel visit I enjoyed, and had the Lord's presence all the way to my habitation. I was very happy all night, and awoke next morning with these words impressed on my mind: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been." "Yet surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

Dec. 4th, Wednesday evening, Mr. Huntington on, "All the days of the afflicted are evil; but he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." Then was experimentally fulfilled a fresh sense of the two foregoing precious manifestations that I awaked with that morning. Praised be my covenant God.

A few weeks before this, Mr. Huntington preached from: "Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it." Said he, "This speaks to the tried soul. Hear it. 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord.'" Now this came up fresh in my mind at the beginning of my present confinement, through sickness, which took place about the beginning of Dec., 1811, and on the 4th I heard the above sermon on Prov. xv. 15. A precious opportunity (through mercy) I enjoyed then, and have ever since had almost a continual feast. That evening it was very inclement weather, which sadly shook my earthly tabernacle, and laid the foundation of my present sickness.

January 21st, 1812, Friday morning, I awoke in a sweet, happy and comfortable frame of soul with these words of David: "Who art thou, O Lord God?" (2 Sam. vii. 18.) I thought in my mind, "Why me, O my God? Why me? I cannot account for it." But the question or inquiry is answered in Matt. xi. 26: "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

(To be concluded in our next.)

TRUE AND FALSE TRUST.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST PROVED TO BE THE REAL OBJECT
OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

BY THE LATE JOHN RUSK.

“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.”—*MAT. vii. 5.*

(Continued from page 251.)

Again. A man is not a right guide who only understands the letter of the Gospel. I believe that Ahithophel understood this very well, or David would never have made him his bosom friend, as he certainly did. Hence he says, “It was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it; neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in company.” “The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.” Now, here was a guide; and plenty such we have in our day; and they are very ensnaring, having much truth in their heads; neither is it an easy thing to find them out. The danger of placing confidence in them is this: However sound, at present, they may be in the letter of truth, they have no promise from God to secure such a standing, and, therefore, they may go into errors and be base in their outward walk; and if they get into our affections by hearing them, we may be drawn aside into such errors, or into a loose profession of Christ. Thus you see how dangerous it is to put confidence in such a guide. And this is not all; for as he that you hear is only in the letter, so he labours to fill your head with truth and settle you in the word without the power. Paul speaks of some that the Gospel came to in word only; but the kingdom of God is not in word, but it stands in power, in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Therefore put not confidence in a guide.

Once more. Another guide is a minister of the Spirit, one who can point out the road, having gone through the gates. He casts up the highway, takes up the stones, and lifts up a standard to the people. (*Isa. lxii. 10.*) To go through the gates is this. He must struggle and strive hard at the strait gate himself, and then God will give him a door of utterance to describe the difficulties that a sensible sinner has before he gets through this strait or difficult gate. What opposition from the corruptions and lusts in his nature, what sore temptations, blasphemies, and fiery darts from the devil, what strong opposition from the threatening parts of God's word, from the open profane world, and from hypocrites, and sometimes from relations; but if a man never travels in such a path, how can he describe it? He must go through this gate to be a proper guide. One gate, or door, is *hope*. Hence you read of “the valley of Achor for a door of hope.” Now, if a man has gone through this door, or gate, he can tell us how he was raised to hope under all his sinking fears, that it was

the sweet invitations of the Gospel that hope sprang up from, "patience and comfort of the Scriptures." He will "be ready at all times to give to every one that asketh him a reason of the hope that is in him, with meekness and fear," meekness toward man and fear toward God. This Paul did when called to preach.

Another door, or gate, is *faith*. Paul speaks of opening the door of faith to the Gentiles. Now, if a man is convinced of the sin of unbelief, and what bondage, slavish fear, terror, and despair he felt till God set his soul at liberty by fulfilling in him the good pleasure of his goodness and the work of faith with power, surely he can speak experimentally with Paul, and say, "Before faith came we were under the law, (the schoolmaster,) shut up," &c.

Another gate is called *righteousness*. "Open to me the gates of righteousness, that gate into which the righteous enter." If a man has come from a condemned into a justified state, has got rid of every accuser, and now, like Abel, has obtained witness that he is righteous, such a man feels peace, quietness, and assurance in his soul; and certainly if God sends him he is a proper guide.

One more gate he goes through is *praise*. "Thou shalt call thy walls salvation and thy gates praise." Therefore such a one is enabled, from the heart, to praise God; so that he praises, thanks, and glorifies the God of his salvation for bringing him in at the strait gate, painful as it was, for opening the door of hope under all his dreadful sinkings of soul, for opening also the door of faith and not leaving him shut up in unbelief, for bringing him out of condemnation through the gate of righteousness. And thus the man is formed for God's self to show forth his praise: "As a fining pot for silver and a furnace to gold, so is a man for God's praise."

I call such a man a right guide; and as God has taught him, so he leads him on teaching others; and it is all from experience. Such a one prepares the way; that is, he is useful, like John, to prepare the way of the Lord, by being the means of bringing God's family to a sight and sense of their lost estate; so that the way shall be all straight for the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when a man is well stripped and reduced to beggary and ruin, a sensible sinner, the way is prepared for the Lord and his paths are made straight. But the whole, the full, the wise, the righteous, the rich in themselves, these Christ's commission does not reach. To cast up the highway is to describe a spiritual birth or regeneration; to take up the stones is to remove the stumbling block; and to lift up a standard is to preach Christ experimentally, for it is the root of Jesse that is to stand for an ensign to the people; and it is right for us to be obedient to such a guide. Hear what the great apostle says: "Obey them that have the rule over you;" (it is in the margin, that "guide" you;) "and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you."

But, after all, man is not the Object of our faith and confidence. No, no mere man, even though he be a good man; but why? I answer that God says, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put

confidence in man; for he is the confidence of all the ends of the earth;" and Solomon says, "The Lord shall be thy confidence," which is far better than any mere man. Again. The best of men are but men at the best, and as man is not infallible, no man living, such a guide is not to be our trust or confidence. The best man may err, and does err. Hence David says, "Who can understand his errors?" Now, if I trust wholly to such, and they should err in any particular advice that I may need, so far I am deceived, and so far I have idolised the man that I trusted or put confidence in. It is, therefore, right to attend to what Paul says: "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ." So far, but no further. Wherefore, as none but God is unchangeable, faithful, and true, righteous and holy, without variableness or the shadow of a turning, he is the one only Object of all trust or confidence. Then how inconsistent is it to trust in a friend and to put confidence in a guide.

But an objection may arise, and that is this: If my guide is a good man, and gives me good counsel, am I not to believe him, and place confidence in him? To this I answer, you and I must learn to distinguish between the man, as a man, and God speaking by him; and if he proves what he asserts from God's word and from his own experience, I am to believe it; but this is not confidence in man, but in God's word. Now if, on the contrary, my guide, though a good man, teaches me or asserts anything that cannot be proved from God's word, then if I still place confidence in that assertion because he is a good man, a guide of long standing and looked up to, this is placing confidence in a guide; and this is quite wrong.

I am speaking of spiritual things. If you read all the accounts of the prophets and apostles, you will find this to be a grand truth, that the crimes and charges against every enemy was for rejecting God's word in them that he sent. It was his word that called for their confidence. Hence Christ says: "It is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."

But I proceed to the last part of this first proposition, which is,

3. How inconsistent it is for a man to tell the secrets of his heart to *her that lieth in his bosom*. Our text tells us to "keep the doors of our mouth." It appears from the chapter out of which our text is taken that the prophet Micah had a very bad wife, and that, through natural affection, he had told her secret things, which she had exposed to his enemies; for the word *bosom* here certainly means natural affections; and by the word "*her that lieth in thy bosom*," is meant *her that is in your heart and affections*; as you read, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, (that is, one that is in thine affections,) entice thee to serve other gods, thou shalt not consent." (Deut. xiii. 6.) What a snare was Samson's wife upon this head. She enticed him secretly, and he, to gratify his own lust, at last told her where his strength lay, even in the hair of his head; and this has been a snare to thousands, which arises from corrupt and fleshly lustings, and causes things to be spoken that ought not. "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth." "Keep

the doors of thy mouth," says our text. It brings fresh-contracted guilt, and a distance takes place between God and the soul; his word condemns it. As man is not to be trusted, neither is woman. The heart of both are deceitful above all things. A hint will do to the wise.

I am pointing out the wrong path. God only can keep us from walking in it. Your partner who is in your affections may disclose all your secrets. Samson's wife did his, and he lost his strength. They made sport of him, made him grind in a prison, and he then lost his life. "Keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom."

But, as I said, so it is, that this must be taken in a restricted sense. It does not mean that a man is to be churlish, and tell nothing to his wife. This would be keeping the doors of his mouth with a witness. What God does for his soul secretly, if his wife fears God, or does not, if he finds liberty and she will give him the ear, he has a right to tell it her, and not keep the doors of his mouth. The unbelieving wife may be won (if God pleases) by the conversation of her husband; and if she fears God, all the better for him. He may tell her of the awful state he was once in, treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, how God opened his eyes and quickened his soul, what a sinner he was and is, and what sovereign grace has done for him. Thus he may open his mouth, and it is right he should; but not to gratify his lusts, nor to the injury of the character of any. Hence Paul says: "Speak evil of no man."

II. I come now to the second proposition, to *contradict* our text, showing from God's word that it is *right to trust in a friend*, to put confidence in a guide, and to tell all that we can (keeping nothing back) to her that lieth in our bosom. Solomon says, "He that hath a friend must show himself friendly, and there is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Natural friendship is not so strong or close a tie as spiritual, for "we are taught of God to love one another;" and, therefore, I understand by brother here, a brother in the faith. But what is all the love and friendship of brethren in the faith to this Friend that is here mentioned? Truly there is no comparison. This friend is the Lord Jesus Christ, God and man,—two natures in one Person. When did this friendship begin? Before the foundation of the world. Hence Solomon, in Prov. viii., tells us that before the world was made he delighted in the Father's choice, "rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, and his delights were with the sons of men." Wonderful love. Real friendship beyond all conception! Was there anything good that he foresaw in us to ground this friendship upon? No; quite the contrary; for he saw us all ruined by the fall, plunged into sin and the express image of the devil, all enemies and haters of God to a man. What, then, was the cause of this friendship? His own sovereign love, goodwill, and pleasure. "But," say you, "does not Solomon say, or the Saviour by him, 'I love them that love me?'" Yes, he does; but you and I never can be first in his love; for as he was despised and rejected by men in former times, so he is now and so he is naturally by us.

“There is no beauty that we should desire him.” But John will explain it all: “We love him because he first loved us.” This is a true Friend, and here we may safely trust. Would you hear the language of the church of old? Then she goes on describing her Beloved to the daughters of Jerusalem, (or young converts,) and she finishes the account saying, “His mouth is most sweet, yea, he is altogether lovely. This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.”

But what *proof* did he give of his friendship? O, it is not in my power to tell. I can only hint at it, and hardly that.

He left his Father's glory, and assumed our nature: “Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich.” “He was made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, that he might receive the adoption of sons.” His whole life was a life of suffering: “A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He went about doing good to all in holy obedience to every law that God the Father gave, and that we were bound to obey under the penalty of everlasting destruction, and fulfilled the whole as the Surety of the better testament: “He magnified the law and made it honourable.” And for all his goodness to men, he suffered all the malice and cruelty that men and devils could invent. Millions of devils and men all let loose on him in full force: “This is your hour,” says our dear Lord, “and the power of darkness.” Add to this, all the sinless infirmities of the human nature. He was hungry after fasting forty days and nights; thirsty when he asked water of the woman at the well, and she denied him; wearied with the journey when he sat on the well; had not where to lay his blessed head; whole nights in mountains, praying to his heavenly Father; and he also said, “Now is my soul troubled. My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death;” and he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood; was mocked and derided all his days; and at last apprehended and taken, as a murderer or thief, to Pilate's bar, and condemned. Then mocked, blindfolded, spit upon, a reed put in his hand; then nailed naked to the cross between two thieves; then taunted by men, who said, “He saved others, himself he cannot save. Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe him.” They gave him gall for his meat; and when he said, “I thirst,” they gave him vinegar to drink. His Father hides his face. Our sins were all upon him, for he carried them from the cradle to the cross, and all the wrath due to us for these sins. He trod the wine-press, the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God, and at last cried out, with a loud voice, “It is finished.” Thus he completed the whole work for us men, and for our salvation. This is a tried stone, laid for a foundation in Zion, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, and they that trust in it shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end. Here, poor perishing sinner, lost sinner, vile sinner, backsliding sinner, if thou art sensible of thy need, thou art invited to come and partake of this heavenly provision, and not in a scanty way, without money and without price: “Eat,

O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Is not all this a proof of his friendship? Then trust thy all to this Friend, for every obstacle is removed out of thy way. Mercy and truth have met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other in Christ Jesus, so that we have boldness and access, with confidence, by the faith of him.

Having hinted at the *proof* of his friendship, namely, his great sufferings and death, a question may arise in thy heart, reader, as follows: "O that I were sure that he was and is *my* friend!" If this is the real and hearty desire of thy soul, let me ask thee a few questions: Did you ever feel sin to be your greatest enemy? Is it a sore burden to you? Do you groan, at times, under the weight of it, as David did when he cried out, "My sins are gone over my head. They are a sore burden, too heavy for me." Or as Jabez prayed: "O that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it might not grieve me." Or the publican: "God be merciful to me, a sinner." Do you feel that you are nothing but sin, from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head? If this is your case, you are in the footsteps of the flock, you are quickened by God's Spirit, or you never could have known your true state; Jesus Christ is your Friend, and you will find him come to you as the great Physician in his own time, when you are brought to give up all for lost. Hence he is called a Friend of sinners. He is no friend to their sins, but to their persons; for he is not the minister of sin. All men are in the same state, but they do not know it.

Again. Do you see a beauty in him? Is he, at times, very high in your esteem? Do you see how very suitable he is to you; just such a Saviour as you need? Do you like to hear him preached as the sinner's all in all, a whole and complete Saviour? Does it warm your heart, and do you feel, at times, your affections going out after him, so that you are dead and like a fool to everything in this world? If so, he is your Friend. The Church, as I told you before, had this view of him, and declares that he is the chiefest among ten thousand. His mouth is most sweet, because of the promises that he speaks home to the heart in due season; yea, he is altogether lovely. "This is my Beloved and this is my Friend, &c. Peter and John are both of the same mind with the church and the song. Peter says, "Unto you that believe he is precious;" and, "whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." And John says, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Again. Can you be satisfied with head notions of him, having only a loose profession of his name; or are you panting, longing, hungering, and thirsting to be like him? Do you love a holy life, or, in other words, to be continually living upon him from day to day, cleaving to him with full purpose of heart? Are you rejoiced to feel sin subdued and be dead to this vain world, and to feel faith, hope, love, peace, joy, humility, self-abasement, meekness, patience, &c., in lively act and exercise? And do you esteem it your highest

privilege, like David, "to speak of the glory of his kingdom and talk of his power, saying, 'O come hither, all ye that fear the Lord, and I will tell you what he hath done for my soul?'" If this is your blessed experience, at times, Jesus is your Friend. Hence Solomon says, "He that loveth pureness of heart, for the grace of his lips the king shall be his friend."

Then trust in this Friend. Pureness of heart is by faith in him as a sacrifice for our sins. God "purifies the heart by faith." To love this pureness of heart shows that I have that faith which works by love. The grace of the lips shows that I speak under the influence of the new man. When Christ is high in our affections, he is then upon the holy hill; (Ps. ii. 6;) holy because he consecrates our hearts with his presence, and because we are happy partakers of his most Holy Spirit.

Once more. If he is your Friend, he will visit you in a way that you little expect. Sometimes he will smile upon you when you are looking for his frowns, being so conscious of your backslidings; and he does this to let you know that his love is sovereign and free: "I will love them freely." At other times, when you think you have been diligent and circumspect in all his appointed means, you may find his frowns and a distance. This is to keep you from a self-righteous spirit. You would soon get into self if he left you to go on and see that you did this and that which was right. He would not be high in your esteem then; and here every self-righteous pharisee is. They are pure, not in Christ but in themselves.

Again. He will reprove and rebuke you for sin. He hates sin, though he loves you; and, therefore, he will wound you for it: "I wound and I heal;" but "faithful are the wounds of this Friend." Various are the changes you will feel; but all in love; for as many as he loves he rebukes and chastens. He scourges every son that he receives. Though he changes our feelings that we may know our proper place and stand in awe of him, he never changes in his love towards us. He is of one mind, and none can turn him. He loved us before the world was made. He loved us, when dead in trespasses and sins, just the same; he loved us when quickened to feel our sins, and when we concluded there could be no hope; he loved us when we felt our deliverance, and he set our souls at liberty; he loved us under all our backslidings,—sins against light and love, heinous, abominable, and vile transgressions. He never in the least alters in his love, though he makes us smart for our folly; and so wisely does he manage it all as to make us hate ourselves, and highly value him. He loves us under all the trying circumstances in providence, opposition from the world and from men; and this love will land us safe in everlasting glory above. Thus he is a Friend that loveth at all times. Find any other friend that is unchangeable, that loveth at all times, if you can. Thus he is a never-failing, true, faithful Friend.

(To be continued.)

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "CROOK IN THE LOT."

Very dear Sir,—We have had a threatening season, and the effects of the Lord's anger are found in the country, both on the sown ground and on the flocks; and I see the Lord's own children, in common calamity, miss not their share; so that all falls alike to all in respect of the matter. But O the difference that there is in the manner of conveyance! The two covenants are very different channels of conveyance; and it is the work of faith to perceive the coming of trials in the way of covenant grace, wherein the heaviest things bring down blessings with them.

It has been something relieving to me of late, in consideration of the Lord's hand gone out against me, and many of my dear friends in Christ, that whereas it is now a time of the church's peace; and others that went before us in the way of the Lord to the Kingdom through much tribulation, some suffering the spoiling of their goods, some long and tedious imprisonments, some the loss of their relations, lives, &c., and all these were needful to purify and make them white in giving evidence of their love to the Lord; the Lord is making up that want to us another way, bringing about to us, by his own immediate hand or by the hands of naughty men, the same things in the matter as he did formerly by the hand of persecutors. Now it is his to make choice of the manner of our trial; it is our part to take it as they did, and our work shall be rewarded, even our suffering work.

My wife is brought through the additional storm, and it pleased the great Manager not to carry her back again into the main sea at the time I last wrote to you. She is now returned to her ordinary, which is great and continued trial; but of late the Lord has been pleased to make his refreshing visits to her soul somewhat more frequent than formerly.

I long to hear how it is with your wife, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, with you. They will both hear at length, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity." Yours affectionately,

April 13, 1728.

T. BOSTON.

LET the world its idols have;
 Jesus died my soul to save.
 He was cursed upon the tree,
 That I might not cursed be.
 Faith in him the world o'ercomes,
 Looks beyond death, grave, and tombs;
 Sees its bless'd possessor stand,
 Clothed in white, with palm in hand.
 O the wonders of that cross,
 Where my Saviour suffer'd loss;
 Lost his Father's presence there,
 Me to save from black despair.
 Here I'm call'd to live by faith
 In his precious life and death;
 At the end of this short night,
 I shall live on him by sight.

THE EXPERIENCE OF HEZEKIAH.

My dear Sir,—I was reading, this morning, your reply (in this month's "Standard") to an inquirer, asking your views of "the elder brother," in the parable of "the Prodigal Sou." I most cordially approve of them; and have often reflected on the *progress* of divine grace in those who, like the elder brother, are fretted with envy or prejudice against their more favoured brethren, through the effect of that "body of sin," which abides till death, even in the regenerate.

They will all be humbled in their own sight, when the Lord's time to carry on his work in them has arrived, even till they see that their envy is a grievous sin in God's sight, and he makes them abhor themselves for it, and feel *worse* than their prodigal brother; and then they, in unity with him, shall feast upon the "fatted calf," together.

But will you excuse me for adding that, in illustrating this subject, you make a reference to the case of Hezekiah, which seems to me not borne out, by the favourable testimony given in Scripture, to that very prayer of his, which has been considered by many eminent Christians, as well as yourself, to savour of self-righteousness.

By your permission I will state, as briefly as I can, what I have, with inward delight, often contemplated as the real case with him.

He was, doubtless, an eminent partaker of grace, and had been so from an early period of his life. When first his trouble with Sennacherib commenced, we read in 2 Kings xviii. 16 that he tried to bribe him to depart by offering tribute, and even cut off the gold from the doors of the temple, to accomplish his end, which succeeded for a time; after which he was more sorely threatened from the same quarter. Now, it was just in this interval that his sickness commenced, though the account of it is not given till after all that happened with Sennacherib is related. It must have been so, because his submission to Sennacherib was in the 14th year of his reign; (2 Kings xviii. 13;) and therefore *fifteen* years before his death. Thus when struck down by sickness, his kingdom was threatened, his faith had wavered, and he fell into a grievous state of despondency and fear of death, through which it often pleases God to bring his people, to humble them and to prove them. He describes his dreadful condition of soul at that time in these words, written after his recovery: "I reckoned, till morning, that as a lion, so will he break all my bones;" and before the arrival of that morning, Isaiah came, as Hart describes it, to "strike the dying dead."

Then, by the almighty grace of "the Spirit who helpeth our infirmities," "he turned his face to the wall and cried to the Lord." In a moment, the temptation, which had made him suppose himself finally lost, was broken. He saw at once that he had the gracious work of God in his heart, the *new man* which is *holy*; and cried out, "Remember it, O Lord!" the instant it was brought to his own remembrance. His prayer was so divinely prevalent that we may well believe self-righteousness, and the old man with all his members,

were in that moment dead and buried in him both. The Lord instantly said to Isaiah, "Go back . . . say to Hezekiah, I have heard thy prayer . . . I will add 15 years to thy life, and deliver thee and this city out of Sennacherib's hand." Hart describes the case well in a few lines which, for force of expression and grandeur of composition, are unequalled throughout his whole book:

"He said, and, weeping, pour'd a prayer,
That conquer'd pain, removed despair,
With all its heavy load;
Repell'd the force of death's attack,
Brought the recanting prophet back.

The Lord grant, my dear Sir, that whenever we may, in our measure, be tried like that holy man, we may be enabled to say with him, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day." So prays,

Yours in the love of the Lord Jesus,

Bengeo, Hertford, Aug. 4th, 1865.

BERNARD GILPIN.

[In the above remarks on the experience and prayer of Hezekiah there is so much truth and force that we gladly give them insertion. Though we adduced both Job and Hezekiah as examples of the manifestation of a self-righteous spirit in acknowledged saints, yet we by no means intended thereby to convey the idea that their cases were strictly parallel with that of the elder son; and for this reason, that they were under special trial, placed by the hand of God in a hot furnace, which he was not, and that, therefore, there was this striking difference between them that their words were as if forced out of them under trouble, whilst his were the more deliberate thoughts of his heart.

We are glad, however, to have Mr. Gilpin's thoughtful and matured views of the experience of Hezekiah, especially as some of the expressions of his prayer seem inconsistent with other parts of it, and he has in good measure removed this apparent inconsistency. But we have long thought that those words, both of Job and Hezekiah, which seem to savour of self-righteousness, were more the spontaneous effusions of a heart conscious of its own integrity, and it may be of its participation of grace, more the appeal to God himself against hypocrisy, than the boasting language of a Pharisee, though it must be admitted that Job was not thoroughly humbled, and did not abhor himself in dust and ashes, till the Lord appeared. We should bear also in mind the darkness of that dispensation, its legal character, its attachment of reward to obedience, its service of sacrifices, and its train of rites and ceremonies, all which much fostered a legal spirit, and kept even the real saints of God under much bondage and bodily exercise. It is not fair, then, to compare them with saints under a clearer and brighter dispensation, and to assume that because no saint now would use the language of the elder son, though he might have much of his spirit, therefore that he was nothing different from the Pharisees, who crucified the Lord of glory. He was a son, and not a servant, had a part in his Father's living, which is love, (for God liveth in love,) and all that the Father had was his. Let us not, therefore, cast him out of his Father's house and heart, for there are still such sons in the wide-spread family of God. We are glad to have Mr. Gilpin's concurrence in our general view of the parable, as there is so wide a divergence of opinion even among the most approved expositors of its meaning.—ED.]

THE same Spirit which endueth the elect with the knowledge of the truth, and sanctifieth them, giveth them therewith all the gift of perseverance to continue to the end.—*Old Bible*, 1610.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Continued from p. 264.)

WE trust that we have not wearied our readers by our long and protracted Meditations on the preceptive part of the word of truth. But if such unhappily be the case, the weariness will be due not to the subject itself, which must ever be of the deepest interest to all who truly fear God and desire to walk in obedience to his will and word, but to our mode of handling it, and especially to the long and laborious consideration which we have bestowed upon it. And yet if a certain degree of length is absolutely necessary for a due examination of every important subject, how much more must this be the case in the weighty matters of divine revelation. A deep subject, like a deep river, holds in its bosom an amount of matter in proportion to its depth. Its very copiousness makes it deep. Thus whilst we would avoid that prosy diffusiveness which makes length wearisome, we are bound freely to say that we could not have done justice to our subject by giving it a brief, hasty, superficial consideration. This, then, must be our excuse if we have trespassed too much upon the patience of our readers. But if the voyage has been long, and to some tedious, land is at last in sight. We are approaching the shore; and in this or our following No. shall hope to furl our sails and drop our anchor. May a favourable gale speed our ship, and crown our voyage with a blessing which shall make amends for a protracted passage.

In our last No. we attempted to point out a few of those prominent features of the spirit of the precept which distinguish it from the letter, and elevate obedience to the revealed will and word of God into a spiritual service. From the letter of the precept we learn "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) But though we thus learn from the precept what is the acceptable will of God, we have no power in ourselves to perform it acceptably; for a mere letter obedience to the precepts of the gospel, however strict and conformable, is no more acceptable to God than an obedience to the ten commandments. To make our obedience acceptable, two things are absolutely necessary: 1. That it be presented through Jesus Christ; for as our persons, so our offerings are only "accepted in the Beloved;" 2. That it be sanctified by the Holy Ghost, as the apostle speaks: "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 16.) The apostle Peter beautifully brings together these two points, and shows us in a small compass who are the acceptable worshippers, and what is the nature of their acceptable worship: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priest-

hood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5.) The acceptable worshippers are the "living stones" which come to Jesus, and are built up in him as "a spiritual house," constituting them "a holy priesthood;" the sacrifices which they offer are "spiritual sacrifices," as sanctified by the Holy Ghost; and these sacrifices are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," as offered by faith in him and ascending up to heaven perfumed by his intercession within the veil. Thus, no mere letter obedience to the precept, were such a thing possible, for the precepts of the gospel being spiritual, based upon spiritual motives and addressed to spiritual persons, are out of the reach of natural obedience; no such mere obedience, were it possible, could or would be acceptable to God. It would be "another gospel," as many have preached and made it, and thus brought themselves under the curse, according to that fearful denunciation of Paul: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Gal. i. 8, 9.) Perversion is perversion, whether men pervert the doctrines of the gospel, the promises of the gospel, or the precepts of the gospel; and for perverting the gospel of Christ they will not be held innocent.

We have already pointed out that the chief blessedness and glory of the New Covenant dispensation is, that it is the ministration of the Spirit; and that, therefore, the blessed Spirit must animate the precept as well as the promise with heavenly life, that we may believe the one and perform the other. You know what it is to believe a promise when it comes with power; so you must know how to perform a precept when it comes with power. The power is the same; for it is the power of the Spirit acting through the word. A promise comes. I believe it, for I feel the power of it. A precept comes. I believe it, for I feel the power of it. Where, then, is the difference? Wholly in this, that by the promise I believe that it is the will of God that I should be saved, and by the precept that it is the will of God that I should forgive my brother. A letter obedience, therefore, is of no more worth or value than a letter faith; and to forgive my brother in the letter is no more real forgiveness than to believe in Christ in the letter is real faith. The precept, therefore, needs life breathed into it, that, as a word of and from Christ, it may be spirit and life to our soul. (John vi. 63.) If, then, there were no life thus put into the precept, it would be like a dead branch in a living tree, or a paralysed limb in our natural body; an unsightly object instead of an ornament, an incumbrance rather than a help—a withered, useless appurtenance, cut off from all life and movement, and a drag upon the gospel, as a poor paralytic drags after him a leg, on which he can neither stand nor walk. Compare this poor withered limb with a strong, healthy leg, and you may see the difference between the dragging obedience of a servant in the letter, and the gracious obedience of a son in the

spirit. *Life*, then, and that as breathed into it by the blessed Spirit, is one main feature of the spirit of the precept. But this life has two blessed adjuncts, *Liberty* and *Love*; for these are two special fruits of the Holy Ghost, and move together in holy concert and gracious harmony to help forward the obedience of faith.

Liberty we have already considered. Her sweet, tender, and affectionate companion we have now to present to view; and who that has seen her lovely face, and heard the accents of her melodious voice, will not welcome her as she comes forth for our contemplation? Her name is "Love." And do observe how the blessed Spirit holds, as it were, Liberty with the one hand, and Love with the other. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (2 Cor. iii. 17.) "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. v. 5.) And that life is his gift, is plain from the same inspired testimony: "The Spirit giveth life." (2 Cor. iii. 6.) Death, bondage, and enmity, then, those evil fruits of the flesh, and the men who walk in them, have neither part nor lot in the glorious gospel of the grace of God, where life, liberty, and love animate every truth, every promise, every privilege, and every precept. As, then, we have endeavoured to unfold the connection of Liberty with the spirit of the precept, so will we now attempt to show the part which is fulfilled by Love.

"God is love." That is his name, that is his nature; and what a proof, what a manifestation has he given of this love! "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John iv. 9, 10.) The gift of his only-begotten Son, and that for these two special purposes, 1. that he might be the propitiation for our sins; 2. that we might live through him, is at once the proof and the measure of this love. To proclaim this love is to preach the gospel; to believe in this love is to believe the gospel; to taste, handle, and enjoy this love is to know and enjoy the power of the gospel; and to obey the precept under the constraints of this love is to obey the gospel.

Liberty and love must needs go together; for where there is bondage there is fear, and where there is fear there is torment, and where there is torment there cannot be love, at least not perfect love, for perfect love casts it out. (1 John iv. 18.) Love, then, is the crowning feature of the spirit of the precept, and one of its most distinctive points of difference from the letter, for the strictest obedience to the letter of the precept without love is but legal bondage,—the task-work of a servant, not the compliance of a son. You may set the precepts of the gospel before your eyes, and try your utmost to observe them. You may admire the holiness which they inculcate; see the separation from the world and the devotedness to God which they enforce, and what is more than seeing it, you may try to act upon it; you may walk in the ordinances which they hold forth, and strive by diligent attention to rules and regulations, carefully framed, to regulate your own conduct and that of

your family, to attain to that inward and outward holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. All this you may do for years, and be at the end what you were in the beginning, a poor self-righteous Pharisee, shut up in bondage, lip-service, and bodily exercise, as far from the spirit and love of the gospel, as much in your sins, unwashed, unjustified, unsanctified, as a monk in his cell, or a Puseyitish parish priest intoning the Litany to a few old women and children in his mediæval church. All this strictness, indeed, sharpens your eyes to see the defects and infirmities of others, who do not pay tithe of mint, anise, and cummin, nor tie themselves to your rules. But what are you yourself, as weighed in the balances of the gospel? What is all your strictness without life, liberty, and love? Are you stricter in lip and life than Paul was when, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," (that is, its external righteousness,) he was "blameless?" If you turn obedience to the letter of the precept into a legal service, which you must do if destitute of life, liberty, and love, you are not a son but a servant, a child of the bondwoman; and could you read your inmost heart, you would see it full of prejudice and enmity against, and ready to persecute the children of promise, by condemning their liberty as Antinomian security, and suspecting their standing if not their state. How different from this miserable state of bondage in which many are held, miserable in itself and miserable to all with whom it comes in contact, is that favoured soul which moves in the path of obedience under the sweet constraints of love; for love is not only the fulfilling of the law but of the gospel too. Such power and influence has love in the obedience of the gospel that we may boldly say that with love every precept can be obeyed, without love not one. How plainly does our Lord speak on this point. "If ye love me, keep my commandments;" "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;" "If a man love me, he will keep my words;" "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." (John xiv.) Similar is the testimony of the beloved disciple: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John v. 2, 3.) We thus see that the keeping of Christ's commandments, in other words, obedience to the precepts of the gospel, is not only the test and proof but the fruit of love. Nay more, when this obedience is the obedience of love, it opens a blessed door for the manifestations of Christ and the indwelling of God, according to those wondrous words of the Lord himself: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John xiv. 23.) How careful, then, should we be to distinguish between obedience in the letter, which is mere lip service or legal bondage, and obedience in the spirit, which springs from love and furthers its enjoyment.

Taking a broad view of the precepts of the gospel, and the obedience inculcated by them, we may reduce them to two leading

heads: 1. What we owe unto God; 2. What we owe to the people of God.

1. The first will comprehend all that spiritual worship, all that devotedness of heart and life, all that submission to the will of God, all that glorifying him in our body and spirit which are his, which the precept so continually and forcibly inculcates; the second will comprehend the whole of our walk and conduct to our brethren in the Lord, whereby we manifest the power of his grace. As instances of the first we may mention such precepts as bid us "present our bodies a living sacrifice;" "to abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good;" "to rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation; to continue instant in prayer;" to "walk honestly as in the day;" to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." These, and similar precepts with which the Epistles abound, direct us how to walk before God as dear children. They address us, therefore, not as servants, bidding us perform a stipulated task, but enjoin us as sons to yield the obedience of reverent affection to our heavenly Father. They speak to us as one with Christ by mystical union, and this as "chosen in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." As, therefore, dead with him, buried with him, risen with him, and blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in him; as redeemed by his blood, and freely justified by his grace; as reconciled to God, brought near to him, and accepted in the Beloved, the precepts of the gospel call upon us to live to his praise, and walk before him in all devotedness of heart and life, to his honour and glory. But how can this be done without love? What holy, heavenly pleasure can there be even in such common, daily acts as reading his word, and calling upon his name; in meeting with his people in the house of prayer, and in Christian conversation; in separation from the world and the spirit of it; in living a life of faith and prayer; in watching our words and actions; in seeking a growing conformity to the image of Christ, and carrying out in a practical manner our Christian profession? We say not only what real pleasure can we have in this daily walk, without attending to which we shall be but barren, worthless professors all our days, but even what habitual attention can we pay to these things if not moved to them by love? Who will read the word, at least as it should be read, with a believing and understanding heart, but he who loves it? Who will continually resort to a throne of grace, but he who loves there to pour out his heart before God? And who will day by day seek to walk before God in the light of his countenance, but he who has known and felt something of the power of his love? If the service of God be ever burdensome to us; if ever the word be neglected, prayer restrained, the company of God's people shunned, the new man put off and the old man put on, it is when love is grown cold. The sacrifice may be laid upon the altar; the incense put upon the censer; but if the fire of love be not under both, there is neither flame nor fragrance.

2. And so it is with the second branch of the precept, which

directs and regulates our walk with and before our believing brethren. In that as in the service of God,

“Love all defects supplies.”

Without a loving, affectionate spirit, it is impossible to perform those precepts which inculcate mutual forgiveness and forbearance, “kindness, tenderness of heart, bowels of mercies, humbleness of mind, meekness, and long-suffering.” (Eph. iv. 2, 32; Col. iii. 12, 13.) To do all this from the heart, and not merely in lip, we must “walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us.” Without this love we may have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; we may bestow all our goods to feed the poor, and give our body to be burned, and yet be nothing and have nothing. (1 Cor. xiii. 2, 3.) But if blessed and favoured with this love, we shall obey those precepts which direct our walk with our brethren unto God and from the heart. Who that has seen much of Christian churches does not know the difference between the hard, cold, contentious, unforgiving spirit of some, and the tender, loving, affectionate spirit of others? Who that has a feeling heart has not been cut, wounded, and grieved by the pride, obstinacy, selfishness, hardness, and unkindness of the one, and been softened, melted, and blessed by the tenderness, meekness, humility, loving and affectionate spirit of the other? Love is so the spirit of the gospel, and therefore of the precept as a part of the gospel, that we may unhesitatingly say that few more break the precept than some of the very persons who most contend for what is called practice. Practice is excellent, admirable, indispensable; and the want of it grievous, lamentable, disgraceful. But let us be clear in our views as to what practice is and what it means. If it be the mere doing of what are called good works, as alms-giving, visiting the sick, strictness of life, dress, deportment, accompanied with unblemished conduct, a sister of mercy will outshine us all, and father Ignatius be a pattern of holiness. It is plain, therefore, that something more is needful for acceptable obedience than external practice, and that this something is love—love to the Lord and to his people. Nor is it less evident that this love must be made manifest by our general spirit as well as our conduct; for love is not a mere occasional spurt, a now and then warming up, like a hot fit of the ague, or the slow, relenting gripe of a miser over a charity plate, but a living principle, ever discovering itself in words and acts of kindness, forbearance, self-denial, self-restraint, consideration of the feelings of others, meekness, gentleness, and a humble, affectionate, conciliating manner and bearing. You may be outwardly very consistent; but if you are harsh, censorious, self-willed, obstinate, unforgiving; if you would sooner see the church torn to pieces with strife than give way on some point which involves neither truth nor conscience, but merely some concession of opinion, you are breaking the precept as much by your disobedience to its spirit as others by their disobedience to its letter. God, who searcheth the heart and reads our inmost thoughts, feelings, and motives, descries with unerring eye our spirit as well

as our conduct; and if, indeed, we see light in his light, we shall read our own heart too, and distinguish between the proud, obstinate, self-willed, contentious spirit of the old man and the humble, forgiving, affectionate spirit of the new.

As, then, love must animate every precept that teaches us what we owe unto the Lord for all his goodness and mercy to us, so must love equally animate every precept that guides and regulates what we owe to our believing brethren. Look at the following precepts, and see if love be not the ruling, animating spirit of them all: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." (Eph. iv. 1-3.) What but love can enable us to walk "worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called?" Are we not called according to God's purpose, that we may love him? (Rom. viii. 28.) And called also to walk in love with his people? How plain too are the words: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice. And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Be ye, therefore, followers of God, as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." (Eph. iv. 31, 32; v. 1, 2.) In a similar spirit writes the same "apostle of Jesus Christ" to the Colossians. "Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness." (Col. iii. 12, 13, 14.) O that this kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearance, and forgiveness more animated our spirits and guided our words and actions. There would then be no stormy church meetings, no broken friendships, no shy looks, no harsh words, no resentful memories, no magnifying and dwelling on infirmities and defects, no raking up of buried injuries, no malicious insinuations, or slanderous reportings. Having had so much forgiven us, we should freely forgive our offending brethren; and, feeling ourselves to be the chief of sinners and less than the least of all saints, we should rather wonder at their forbearance of us, and admire their kindness to us than cherish a resentful, unforgiving spirit, even against those at whose hands we may have suffered real or imaginary wrong.

DOES he save, or does he not?

Is his sacrifice forgot?

Did he die that I might live?

Then the Father must forgive.

My God is he who took my sin,

Bore all my stains to make me clean;

To gain my peace felt my distress,

And gives me all his righteousness.—*Zimmerman*.

Obituary.

WILLIAM SAGE, OF BULKINGTON.

AT Bulkington, near Bedworth, on March 15th, 1865, William Sage, aged 62, departed this life. He was for twenty years a member of the church at Bedworth, and ten years clerk and deacon. He was warmly attached to the late Mr. Congreve and a fellow-deacon. Being taught by the same Spirit, having one faith, with one mind they strove together for the faith of the Gospel.

As an honest, simple-minded Christian, he was much esteemed and beloved by the members of the church and the ministers visiting us. His excellent choice of experimental and savoury hymns has been remarked by the supplies, which have sometimes preached to them first, and given them both subject and text. He will be long remembered when some of Hart's and Berridge's, of which he was particularly fond, are sung.

By birth illegitimate, and his mother being very poor, he was at an early age placed in the workhouse; but after a time he became weary of the work he was put to there, and resolved to leave it, though he knew not where to go nor what to do for a living. Here the Lord in his providence interposed; for, as he wandered from the place, a person met him, to whom he told his case. He took him and taught him the trade of ribbon-weaving.

As he grew up, he became outwardly immoral and openly profane. Having no natural guardians to restrain him, he indulged his passions to an unusual degree. His companions and associates were of the baser sort, and he prided himself in pugilistic encounters, for which he appeared favourably set and framed; and in them, it is said, he was desperate.

But the set time drew near when the Lord designed to deliver him from the power of darkness and translate him into the kingdom of his dear Son, to make this proud champion a trembling sinner, and this man of might a little child. After his last battle, Satan, as though afraid of his prey, was hurrying him on and exciting him to proceed. He said to a companion, "I am determined to have my fill this year;" although he had a hell in his conscience, as he afterwards said, after he had fought. "A man's heart deviseth his way; but the Lord directeth his steps."

Shortly after this, as he sat at work at his loom, the Lord shot an arrow of conviction into his soul with these words: "Who among us shall dwell with devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Alarmed and conscience-stricken, he inwardly trembled, though he endeavoured to put it off. Pride struggled against it, but in vain. He would hide it, but the Lord would not let him. One night, in the corner of a garden where he thought himself hidden, and no one near, he was making confession to the Lord and imploring mercy, when a man on the other side of the hedge heard all he said, and went and told the people of the place he had heard Bill Sage "a praying;" which set them wondering.

He would sometimes go to the prayer meeting at Bulkington chapel, but had no ease or relief. He was burdened and dejected, when one day passing the place where he had said, "I will have my fill this year," suddenly a light broke in upon him, and he felt a softening and a sense of divine compassion, which raised a hope in his soul and encouraged him to wait. "Though a great sinner, who can tell but I may escape and be forgiven?" But this did not last long. He sank again very low. The burden of his sins became great and his hope gave way to distressing fears; his sins seemed so black a nature and his case almost hopeless. But one day, while in his house, two lines of Swain's hymn were brought with great power:

" See yonder rolls a stream of blood
That bears the curse away ;"

and he had such a revelation of Jesus Christ, as bearing the curse for him, that his burden fell, his load of guilt was removed, he had gladness and joy in his soul, and sweet peace in believing. This was a hill Mizar from which he remembered the Lord in after years, and spoke of it with much feeling.

Some time after this, he heard the late Mr. Gadsby a time or two at Attleborough, and desired to be baptized and walk in the ordinances of the Lord. He was baptized in the year 1826 at Wolvey, though at this time he was a member of the Independent church at Bulkington.

On one occasion, when his family had increased and trade was bad, at the end of the week they were without food or money to provide it, which had, no doubt, sent him to the Lord. At night, while he was away, some one came and placed a joint of meat on the table and went away, and another brought him half a sovereign. This kind providence of God, in a time of such need, filled him with admiration and gratitude to the Father of mercies.

As his inward exercises and outward trials increased, he became more dissatisfied with the preaching at Bulkington and went to hear where he could profit and find a living ministry. On one occasion he walked to Leicester (18 miles) to hear Mr. Gadsby, and was so wearied with the journey that, when he sat down in the chapel, he fell asleep, and did not awake till the last hymn was being sung.

In 1845 he joined the church at Bedworth. As the Lord had prospered him, and he had got a little forward in his circumstances, his children growing up and able to work, he began to manufacture ribbons on his own account; but, having no education, he was exposed, in a variety of ways, to injustice and wrong, and was much in the hands of others, some of whom appear to have taken advantage of him. What little he had saved wasted, and he failed. On this occasion the Lord's providence was conspicuous, and he told me he was more affected with this than anything else he could remember. Having made known to his creditors his circumstances, and frankly surrendered all he possessed, one favourite piece of furniture he was urged to except and keep back; but he said, "No; I am determined to give all up." The valuation was made. The creditors met, con-

sulted together, were moved to pity, sympathized with him in his adversity, believing he was an honest man and would not willingly do wrong, and mutually agreed to forego their claims and forgive him the debts. Each gave him a receipt in full, and moreover, offered to supply him with goods to begin again. He was so overwhelmed with the goodness of the Lord that he wept and blessed the Lord who had delivered him out of his distress, and in such an unexpected way. Grace had made him honest and willing to give up all, and grace had now freely restored all; but he (perhaps prudently) declined the kind offer of his creditors to begin business again, and now began to work for Coventry houses. The Lord blessed his labours, and he was enabled to provide comfortably for his family.

But fresh trials awaited him. His youngest son, who was most useful to him in his business, was taken ill of consumption and died in 1862. His wife also died of the same disease the following year. A married daughter came to live with him and keep his house, and it was not long before the same disease showed itself in her also, and she died in 1864. These trials, of a long sick house and death succeeding death, added to his daily labours, soul conflicts, and loss of rest, weighed heavily upon him, and it was evident his health began to decline. But God, who comforteth those who are cast down, left him not comfortless; for he had hope in the end of both his wife and children; therefore his sorrow was not as others which have no hope. His soul was fed under the word sweetly, at times, and some hymns were made a means of much comfort and consolation. His conversation was generally spiritual and savoury, and the life of his spirit in these things was manifest; for though, in his wife's illness, especially the latter part, he was chief nurse, yet he was generally able to attend the means of grace, and was always anxious to be there at the stated times, and it has done me good sometimes to see his heart and eyes both full.

In May, 1864, he married again. His wife was a judicious, God-fearing woman, who was a comfort to him the few remaining days of his life, and a valuable nurse in his affliction. He was able to carry on his business and to attend the Bedworth services up to December, the second Lord's day of which month was the last time he was there. The day following he was taken very ill, and his friends were apprehensive his end was near. But he rallied again, and in a little time left his room and came down stairs, and sometimes seemed to think he might recover; but this was not the Lord's will, and he soon had other thoughts himself. His appetite was failing, his strength declining, and his flesh wasting. His disease was diabetes and ulcerated inside. He said, "I have prayed for the recovery of my children, but I cannot for my own;" and (quoting an expression of dear Mr. Tiptaft's) said, "'What a mercy to have a religion of the right sort.' I have no fear of death." He desired to see the friends at Bedworth, for he said he did not know he loved them so much before. Most of them, if not all, that were able, at times visited him, and found it good to be there; "though the outward man was decaying, yet the inward man was renewed day by day."

He was subject to violent attacks of sickness, sometimes, when he took any food, which so exhausted him that he could not speak for some time, but afterwards would say what a support and comfort he found portions of the word to him. At one time the following was very sweet to him: "And they shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." Once, after much darkness felt, and his affliction heavy, the following verse greatly relieved and comforted him:

"He sees me often overcome,
And pities my distress;
And bids affliction drive me home,
To anchor in his grace;"

and he said, "He might have left me justly to perish in my sin; but, bless his precious name, he has not."

The first time I saw him in his illness was on January 9th, having received a letter from him, desiring to see me. In this letter he says: "I am very ill, and doubt whether I shall go to Bedworth any more. I feel I have a disease upon me which I fear will bring me to my journey's end; but I would say, the Lord's will be done. I wish to feel resigned to his dear will, for he is a faithful, unchangeable Friend. It is good at his word to be here; it is better indeed to be gone. As friend Tiptaft said, 'it is a mercy to be made right and kept right, and to be well laid in the grave.'" This being the first intimation I had of his illness, I felt it much, for I loved him much in the Lord; and (perhaps somewhat peevishly) said, "The Lord is taking away the best from among us."

I was struck with his serenity and composure, neither much elated nor depressed, but firmly fixed on that Foundation laid in Zion, on which, in holy faith, he was built up, and by which he could

"Survey with joy
The change before it come;
And say, Let death this house destroy;
I have a heavenly home."

I remarked to him, "You now feel the blessedness of having a religion that holds you up in the prospect of death, that has outlived the storms of your past life, and overcome the world." He spoke sweetly of the Lord's grace and goodness in having taught him first to pray, and heard and answered his prayers; who had been with him to support, to defend, and to deliver him in all his temptations, afflictions, and distresses. In answer to my questions, he spoke with much humility of his early life, and sinful habits. I left him, well persuaded the Lord would be with him, living and dying.

Some of his pains were exceedingly severe, and he feared their return, being almost intolerable. At one time, while suffering much from them, he said, "Lord, take it away;" and, turning to his wife, he said, "It's gone."

A few weeks before his death, Mr. S., a fellow-member, went to see him. Asking him how he felt, he said, "Sit down;" and, bursting into tears, he said, "I am as full of the love of God as I

can hold! O! What can heaven be?" Mr. S. repeated the last verse of hymn 472:

"If such the sweetness of the streams,
What must the fountain be,
Where saints and angels draw their bliss,
Immediately from thee?"

He appeared overcome with bliss, and exclaimed, "O grace!" After a while he said, "I feel it withdrawing." Mr. S. replied, "There is no man that hath power over the Spirit to retain the Spirit." He said, "No."

On Lord's day, March 5th, his son, living at Coventry, came over to see him. Mrs. Sage went to get a little rest, while he was with him. His son left the room for a little while, and in his absence he got up and dressed, went down stairs, and, to their great surprise, was sitting in his arm chair. When they were getting him back to his room, he turned and looked round, saying, "Good-bye, house; I shall never cross you any more."

The next day his throat was very sore and began to swell. The doctor said an abscess had formed there, and ordered a linseed-meal poultice. His throat was in extreme pain, and in a few days was greatly swollen, affecting his speech, so that he could scarcely articulate a sentence. His sufferings, at times, were great, but it was evident inward peace greatly abounded. He appeared full of matter, but could not relieve himself by utterance.

On Lord's day, the 12th, being at Bedworth, I went to see him between the services. Once or twice, in the course of the day, he appeared unconscious, but he was quite himself then, and knew those present. I shall not soon forget the love he evidently was filled with, and longed to show and express, nor that I felt. He drew me towards him, and tried to speak. I could hear him say, "Sing, sing!" and "Grace, grace!" I said, "Your heart is full of grace, and you want a mouth for it." He said, "Yes." He laboured to make us understand the hymn he wished us to sing; and to me it was painful I could not more quickly comprehend his wish, and relieve him of the effort, which must have been painful for him to use, as at this time his throat was nearly closed. The abscess having formed inside, he could not pass anything, and all they could give him for relief or support was a little moisture with a feather. At length the hymn was found, which I read:

"Hark! how the blood-bought hosts above," &c.

Whilst reading the hymn, he, in the most animated way, said, "That's it! That's it!" convincing us that he had the substance of it in his soul, which was sweetly sustained by grace and love, composing his dying bed.

Commending him to the Lord, and feeling that I not only could, but that I could not forbear, to bless him, I did so in the name of the Lord.

In the evening, and following day, Monday, he was restless, and tried, by motions and gestures, to make them understand, but without effect.

On Tuesday he was quite unconscious, and remained so up to three o'clock on Wednesday morning, March 15th, when he quietly breathed his last, and his happy spirit fled to the rest remaining to the people of God.

His ingenuousness of manner and unrefined plainness of speech to some were not pleasing, at times; but I think whoever had his acquaintance, and feared God, esteemed him highly, and the more so the better he was known. He was tender to the weak, generous to the poor and needy, and sympathizing to the afflicted. He highly esteemed the Lord's servants, and used to say, "Such a one has a place in my heart." When some wondered he could hear such of them as are learned so well, he would reply, "I can do with them, learned or unlearned, if there is life and unction."

C. MOUNTFORT.

[I knew William Sage well, as he was in the habit for many years of coming over to Leicester to hear me when I preached there, and I have had at times much conversation with him. I never knew a more sincere, upright, honest man, both in word and action. He was somewhat rough and uncultivated in manner and free spoken in expression, but neither forward nor unpleasant, neither contentious nor assuming. He was very clear and firm in the truth, and fearless in contending for it, and a dear lover not only of truth in its purity, but of truth in its power. I have always looked upon him as a remarkable instance of the power of grace; for you could see at a glance, or find as soon as he opened his lips, that one of nature's rough-cast sons was before you, and though not of powerful make or athletic build, one possessed of that courage and determination, and that thickset frame, which made his former pugilistic propensities very credible. But his pugilism, when I knew him, was to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and his fighting, not as one that beateth the air, but to beat down error with one fist and letter preaching with the other. With all his roughness, he had a tender, childlike spirit, and with all his bluntness, he had a fine ear and delicate appetite, counting no preaching worth hearing but such as was attended with power, and no provision palatable that was not seasoned with salt and savour. Being generally kept on low ground, and unable to get anything that was not given, his speech and conversation were that of a tried, exercised man; and as he had no good works to boast of in nature, and was not favoured with great things in grace, he was preserved both from boasting and spiritual pride in profession. I had not heard any particulars of his death until I read the above Obituary, and it rejoiced my heart to find that he made so good an end. Though favoured with a good hope through grace, I never heard him speak with much confidence of his state. Here, then, is another proof, that "at evening time it shall be light," and that sooner or later the Lord puts a new song into the mouth of all whom he has taught to fear his great name, to believe his dear Son, and call upon him in spirit and in truth.—J.C.P.]

Is the evening time at hand?
Will it then indeed be light?
Will the sun its beams extend,—
Chase away the shades of night?

Will the Lord indeed appear,
Give me light, and joy, and rest,
Drive away my gloomy fear,
Draw me to his lovely breast?

Then his love is rich and free;
Jesus, let me feel its power,
And my soul will cling to thee,
Love and praise thee and adore.—W. GADSBY.

SUPPLEMENT.

Recent Deaths.

JOHN PEACE.—On June 23rd, 1865, at Siddle Hall, near Halifax, John Peace, aged 42.

He was called by grace when young. He joined the Arminians, and was a member of their society for many years. Through the providence of God he came to Halifax and settled there. He then began to go to the Independent chapel, and ultimately joined their church, and remained a member there several years. About this time the church was formed at Siddle Hall, and John used to come and hear the men of God there, and expressed great satisfaction. Under such preaching he used to say his soul was comforted and refreshed, and he was sure it was the right sort. While attending those services and listening to the word spoken, the ordinance of believers' baptism was laid upon his mind, and it became a matter of deep concern with him; but he could not give up the thoughts of his friends and connections amongst the Independents; so he halted between two opinions for some time, not knowing which way to act. He would sometimes ask a friend what he must do under such feelings and in such a case. I advised him by all means to stay where he was until he could by no means stay any longer; "for," said I, "I would not hold out a hair, if that would draw you away from the place where you are; therefore go as long as you can."

Soon after this he got more anxious about the matter, and went to the Independent minister, and told him what he felt and how he was exercised about baptism by immersion. The minister tried all means to dissuade him, and to bias his mind against it. He told him that infant baptism was now substituted in the place of adult baptism, as he termed it, or sprinkling instead of dipping; and as John had been sprinkled, he said nothing more was necessary, therefore he need not be troubled about it any further. He also said he was the second Greek scholar in Halifax, and that he could prove from the Greek Testament that baptism was always administered by sprinkling, or pouring, in the days of the apostles. This caused John to search his Bible more and more, and to beg of God to direct him into the true meaning of his word on this important subject; and the more he searched the more he was satisfied that believers were the only fit subjects for baptism, and that they ought to be baptized by immersion; so that he found no real rest until he was baptized by immersion, when he was fully satisfied in his mind that this was the right way, and that he must walk in it. He then went and told the minister again what conclusion he was brought to on this point. He said he did not understand Greek, but he thought the English Testament was very clear to him, that baptism by immersion was the only right mode. He said to the minister, "I am afraid you are trying to pervert the word of God

and want to put a false construction upon it; and I am under the necessity of giving in my resignation to you as a church; for I cannot sit down any more with you, except I do it with smitten conscience and a wounded spirit.”

After this time he went no more among them, but came to our little church at Siddle Hall, and offered himself as a candidate, as a believer in Jesus, and was baptized.

He remained in full membership with us and in peace, until about fifteen months ago, when some grievance took place between two of the brethren of the church. These two brethren did not settle their business between themselves, and so the case had to come before the church. John, with three other persons, expressed their disapprobation at the manner in which the church settled the matter, and they became some what rebellious. Differences among brethren often lead to a party spirit; and so it was in this case. At the church meeting John got up and asked for his dismissal in a very confused and unsettled state of mind. I said to him, “John, where do you want to be dismissed to?” He said, “Nowhere.” Then I said, “We cannot give you any dismissal; we cannot dismiss you into the world, nor can we give you a dismissal to carry about with you. Besides,” I said, “no other church would receive you with any dismissal that we could give you under existing circumstances.” He then very roughly said, “I do not want to go to any other church; for I will never join any other church while I live.” He and the others then said they would have their names crossed out of the book.

John was left, after this time, “like a wild ass alone by himself.” He stood very stupid for a time, and was very rebellious; but after a while he began to feel his position as a wanderer from the fold of God. He felt the smart of a guilty conscience in this matter, and would have given anything he possessed to have undone what he had done, for he believed he had done wrong in taking the course he did at that time. He also became willing to acknowledge his fault before the church, that he might again sit down with them and enjoy the ordinance of God’s house. As a proof of this I will here insert a letter written to the church by him, which would have had the church’s attention in a few days if he had been spared to live.

“Dear Brothers and Sisters,—I appeal to you to see if there cannot be brought about a Christian and scriptural reconciliation.

“Beloved, I cannot think but that surely there remains some love and affection for a poor outcast. Beloved, I am aware I have done wrong in speaking against one of my brethren, but I did it through passion and a revengeful spirit, and I am guilty.

“You will no doubt say, ‘We are glad he has come to himself;’ and so say I, blessed be God. Had you felt the horrors of mind that my poor soul has been the subject of, you would be glad to get to the feet of Jesus with a desire to cry, Lord, help me, for it is hard work to sin against grace and love with one’s eyes open! I have found, by bitter experience, wrath for my wages. O the

anguish of soul I have felt. My heart has been well nigh broken to pieces. "JOHN PEACE."

His letter would have been read to the church on the evening of the 29th of June, and he would have been no doubt united again to it, if he had lived.

He left off work and went home ill just a fortnight before he was buried. The disease of which he died was typhoid fever and inflammation of the lungs, which made rapid inroads upon his poor feeble body. He found that his bodily strength was becoming perfect weakness, and with this weakness of body a darkness and distress of soul, which he feared very much, came upon him, and under it he groaned and mourned for some days. In the midst of his bodily pains and soul darkness he said, when asked how he felt, "It is the good Physician I want. It is the balm of Gilead I need. I want God to remove the burden from my mind. I want peace within my breast."

A day or two before he died he had a sweet and full deliverance from the state of bondage in which he had been held. The darkness was removed, and his fears subdued. He said, "The Lord has appeared and made all right at last. My burden is gone. This earthly house is fast dissolving, but I have a heavenly one to go to, which is far better."

After this blessed visit, he seemed to take but little notice of anything. He left his affairs in the hands of a covenant God. His speech was almost taken away before he died; but when told by his wife that he would soon be gone, he said, "I shall land safely on the other side." His last words, I am informed, that could be understood were, "Bless the Lord, O my soul;" so his ransomed soul departed to be with him that redeemed it from all iniquity, and purified it and made it meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.

DAVID SMITH.

Siddle Hall, near Halifax, June 29th, 1865.

HENRY HARPER died at Godmanchester, on December 23rd, 1864, aged 52. He was a loving and affectionate husband and father, and a member of the church at Godmanchester.

He was from early life the subject of natural convictions, and, in a measure, of the fear of God in his soul, which kept him from many outward things that the young fall into. He used to attend the Church of England, and was there quickened into divine life, but not made God's free man, although I often heard him say he believed that before he heard the sound of free grace he was, in a great measure, feelingly a subject ready for it. Here we see how God breaks up the ground and makes it ready for the gospel seedsman to scatter the words of life, while the poor soul, with all its wants, seems like the earth in a dry season, open to receive the cooling rain; for as cold water to a thirsty soul, so was this good news to this dear man's soul.

Well; the time to favour him drew near. In the providence of God it pleased the Lord to send that favoured man of God, Mr. Gadsby, that way to preach, and he said the sermon seemed all for him. I think the words were these: "My love." (Sol. Song.)

Here his soul was brought into the banqueting house and the glorious blood-stained banner was spread over his sin-pardoned soul. Here the first part of his time he fed upon the high mountains of Israel; and there seemed to be nothing that his soul rejoiced in more than in the security of the church of Christ, and of himself as a member thereof.

He often said that when the Lord favoured him with a horse and cart to go to hear the truth, how it used to humble and melt his heart at the goodness of God to him, more so than when he had several horses. The Lord blessed him in providence in a marked way; so that his dear partner and two children are not left to the cold charity of a selfish world, and he often felt it was more blessed to give than to receive, which many have not the power to do.

Not often was the house of God opened, but he was there, although he lived some distance from the chapel; and often said that on the Wednesday night his soul had been quite refreshed under the preached word, his path being traced out and his evidences made clear, so that in great measure he went on his way rejoicing. But he was often in the dark; and the nearer his time on earth, the blacker the cloud seemed to gather in his feelings; so that if his soul got a little of the oil, it caused its face to shine.

But to come to the closing of his pilgrimage. I spent some of the time between services with him. This passage was much blessed to him; the tears dropped down his face: "I am with thee, and will never leave thee." He exclaimed, "What more do I want?"

His affliction lasted five weeks.

R. C.

JOSEPH ABBOTT.—At Witham, Essex, Feb. 24th, 1865, Joseph Abbott, aged 63.

In his youth he was brought up to attend the Church of England, but when a young man he became connected with the Independents, and while attending there received his first serious impressions.

He became greatly concerned about his state as a poor, guilty, lost, and undone sinner; so much so that his sleep departed from him, and he walked about his bedroom at night, bewailing his awful condition, wringing his hands, and crying out, "I am lost! I am lost!" The Lord eventually appeared for him, and set his poor soul at happy liberty by the application of Isa. xlix. 16: "Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me;" causing peace, joy, and liberty to flow into his soul in a most blessed and heavenly manner.

He was directed by the Lord's kind providence to make choice for a wife of a kind, affectionate, God-fearing young woman, and they lived together in union and affection, both naturally and spiritually, for nearly 39 years. They were both members of the Independent church for several years; but were led experimentally and doctrinally into the truth, and found eventually the preaching they sat under was not food for their souls. They frequently attended the Baptist chapel, and felt more at home there, and at last were obliged to come out from among those with whom they had worshipped so many years, and cast in their lot with the poor and despised followers of Jesus.

By the grace of God, Mr. A. was enabled to live the gospel as well as profess it; yea, grace made him an ornament to his profession. He was kind, generous, and open-hearted. His heart, hand, purse, and house were all open to assist the cause of God and truth, and the poor of the Lord's people. His generosity was without ostentation, and he was truly enabled, in a great measure, to follow our Lord's injunction in Matt. vi. 3. He was strictly conscientious in all his business transac-

tions, and greatly respected by his numerous commercial friends. He was also most attentive to the services of the Lord's house. Whosoever was absent he was sure to be there whenever the doors were open.

He was a Bible-reading, Bible-loving, and Bible-living Christian. His Bible, hymn-book, the "Gospel Standard," and Hawker's "Morning and Evening Portions," comprehended nearly the whole of his library. The poor of the flock have lost a kind helper, the cause of truth a warm supporter, the house of God a constant attendant, his wife one of the most affectionate of husbands, and myself a warm and attached friend. Still he was only what grace made him, and no one was more sensible of this than he was, or more ready to acknowledge it. He had his infirmities. He was a sinner. He was of a very hasty temperament, which often brought him to feel guilt and condemnation. He also deeply felt and freely spoke in conversation and prayer of what he felt of the law in his members warring against the law of his mind, which often made him sigh, groan, and cry by reason of folly, temptation, sin, and unbelief.

He loved the communion and fellowship of saints, and often after business hours his house was the resort for spiritual conversation, reading, singing, and prayer. He was truly a lover of Zion and God's ministers, and had a special regard, sympathy, and concern for the poor, tried, and afflicted of the Lord's family in temporals. I do not believe he ever knew of a case of real need that he did not aid.

For several years he was afflicted with disease of the heart, which continued to get worse until he became so weak that he scarcely knew how to bear up under it and attend to business. He was 52 years in one establishment, and had only two masters during that time.

Although very unwell, he was enabled to attend the chapel on New Year's Day, and was particularly blessed in hearing the word preached. A few brief notes of the sermons were given in the April number of this magazine. On reaching home from chapel, he seemed delighted and over-joyed, repeating the text over several times with sweet confidence and delight: "For surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off."

On Feb. 4th he was seized with fainting. The blood rushed to the brain, causing excruciating pain. He lost his sight and never recovered it again.

A day or two before he was taken with his last attack, being in the warehouse, the following scripture was applied with power to his mind: "Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more." (Nahum i. 12.) He went into his house and named the circumstance to his wife, asking her what it could mean. She replied, "Wait and see." Eternal things, which were at most times with him of the greatest importance, lay now with great weight upon his mind, and he said, "Nothing but God's religion will do to die with," repeating those lines of Kent, hymn 1093, Gadsby's selection:

"In that dread moment, O to hide
Beneath his sheltering blood,
'Twill Jordan's icy waves divide,
And land my soul with God."

Hymn 958 was also much on his mind and repeated by him. Indeed he was highly favoured by God the Holy Ghost in his soul, through the blessed hymns in that selection.

He belonged to a very large class of God's dear people who may be said to be all their life subject to bondage through fear of death. Before he was seized with his death-illness, he was greatly exercised how it would be with him in death, but when brought into the swelling waters

of Jordan, all fear was taken away, and he blessedly experienced Heb. ii. 14, 15. From taking his bed until his death, which was three weeks, he did not appear to have a single doubt or fear, but, on the contrary, he enjoyed the greatest confidence and settled peace of mind. On being told the doctor had said he could do no more for him, he replied, "I am in the Lord's hands. All is well!" He was calm and placid as a little child, and his patience under his great sufferings was astonishing. Not a murmur or complaint escaped his lips. Many were the sweet portions he repeated, descriptive of the happy state of his mind. Isa. li. 11 was very sweet and refreshing to him. Nahum i. 7: "The Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble," was his dying portion, given to him when first taken ill, and the Lord graciously fulfilled it in his soul's experience all through his affliction.

A Christian friend calling to see him on returning from chapel, he inquired about the subject of the discourse. Being told it was the anointing of the Spirit, he said, "I trust I have many times experienced that anointing," and spoke of that memorable time when Isa. xlix. 16 was so powerfully applied to his soul, when he was first delivered from the curse of the law, and brought into the glorious liberty of the gospel; and Jer. xxxi. 3 also the Lord sweetly blessed to his soul, and he said to his wife, "When the Lord speaks to you, and says, 'I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee,' you will be enabled to bear up in the prospect of death as I do now."

A friend who called to see him exclaimed, "Poor thing!" He said, "I am rich, not poor." The friend added, "And an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ." He replied, "Yes." His wife, on moistening his lips, heard him say, "Vinegar and gall," evidently alluding to the sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, and how much better he fared, was cared for, and attended to than the Lord of heaven and earth. On being asked if he had any fear of death, he replied, "None."

I was obliged to leave home to fulfil some engagements, and during my absence he died and was buried. On one occasion, inquiring for me, he was informed I had not returned. He said, "Give my love to him, and tell him all is well. I am happy. All is well." He frequently said, "I shall praise Him," expressive of the feeling he now had that he could not do so to his satisfaction while in the body.

A few days before his death, he revived a little, and said many precious things, although he had hard work to articulate so as to be understood. On his wife asking him if Christ was still precious, he whispered, "Yes." She then added, "You will soon be in glory." He smiled and whispered, "Yes." A favourite hymn of his being named, he endeavoured to make his attendants understand that he wanted it read to him, but could not do so for some considerable time, his speech being almost gone, yet he laboured hard to repeat the first line. At last they understood him and read the hymn through, which is the 996th. As it was being read, he made signs, testifying how fully and sweetly he realised the blessed substance of it.

He was quite sensible until within a short time of his death, but could not speak. In his dying moments his wife asked him, "Is Jesus precious? Are you happy?" Having hold of his hand, he pressed hers with all his remaining strength, testifying the blessed state of his mind in the article of death; so that he who had so many doubts and fears respecting how it would be with him in the solemn hour of death, was so blessedly delivered by the internal witnessing of God the eternal Spirit to his soul, that from his being seized with his last illness there did not appear the least shadow of a doubt. He fell asleep and breathed out his spirit into the arms of Jesus.

J. FORSTER.

JOSEPH H. WARD.—On the 29th of January last, Joseph H. Ward.

He was united to the church at Gower Street nearly seven years before his death. His exercises on the occasion of his admission, I think, being those of a truly gracious character, I feel a desire to give an extract or two from letters he wrote to his mother at that time:

“Dear Mother,—You are aware that last night I was to go before the church at Gower Street to testify of the Lord’s dealings with my soul. I went, but felt as though I could say nothing. All seemed dark, and I was filled with inability and flooded with fears, not so much about their not examining me, as that I should not be able to say anything; for had they kept me back, I should have been the gainer, inasmuch as it would have made me more earnest before the Lord, that he might give me more grace, that he might show me more proofs of his love; but it was his will that I should be received. I am exceedingly thankful to him for constraining his people to receive into their number such a poor stammerer as I. I trust the Lord will keep me near him, make me cast my care on him, and enable me to ask for grace that I may walk consistently and in the fear of God, knowing if he does not keep me I shall fall.”

Shortly afterwards he wrote to his mother again:

“Bless the Lord, I can say I am better in health than ever I was in my life, which is a source of praise; but I am sorry to say my soul gets darkened, and I am brought to my wits’ end, fearing all things which I have known and felt to be notions, that I am nearer perdition than any one; but when the Lord reveals his countenance, all these things appear as nothing, and I am enabled to bless him for making my conscience tender. I count it a blessing beyond expression that the Lord opened my eyes and my ears that I might know for myself the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. It was a great mercy that the Lord showed me that the pith of the matter was left out when the work of the Holy Spirit was omitted. At Gower Street I heard it contended for, and the Lord was pleased to bless the word to my soul.”

He was kept tenderly in the fear of God, and though, after the writing of the above letter, troubles on every hand abounded, yet he was remarkably kept from a murmuring spirit. I speak to my own shame. He was often a wonder to me during a trying illness, for the Lord laid his afflicting hand upon him nearly two years before his death, for which he often expressed gratitude to God, and frequently said, “I esteem everything a mercy out of hell.” He was visited by many of the friends, who expressed a sweet union to him.

He was sweetly led out in prayer, that the Holy Spirit would speak comfortably to him, which petition was answered in the following manner. He awoke me by his cough one night, and there being a terrible gale of wind at the time, I said to him, “Do you hear the wind?” “Yes,” he replied, “I hear a still small voice as well. I feel so happy, and I am not afraid to die now.” And he then gave me a sweet account of the blessed Spirit’s restoring operations. This was about ten days before he died. I cannot remember all he said, but I felt at the time it accorded with Ps. xxiii., and I was in hopes the Lord would not withdraw from him; but he did for a time; for after this he sank in his feelings, though he did not lose his hope. His conversation was solemn and sacred. How it savoured of heaven! He told me he was broken off from every earthly tie, and prayed for me and our sweet babes, one of which has since been removed.

I must now come to the last day. He was taken much worse during the night, and he complained of acute pain, besides distressing restlessness. I did all I could to relieve him, but death was severing soul

from body; and what human power can avail them? I asked him how he felt. "I am where none but God can help," he replied. I said, "Now, at this trying moment, do you feel you can put your trust in him?" He turned, opened his eyes, and looked at me, then with emphasis said, "More than ever." A friend came in, but he was too far gone to talk, though he recognised him.

A few minutes before he died, I said, "If you get a blessing, and are not able to speak, hold up your hand. He said something, but all I could understand were these words: "You watch the Lord's hand just ere the last breath." His hand went suddenly upward, which I believe was in token of his Saviour's presence. I forgot to say that one day he told me if any one wanted to know his experience, they would find it in the 196th Hymn.

58, Great James Street, Lisson Grove.

M. WARD.

WILLIAM BARTON.—On March 3rd, 1865, aged 84, William Barton.

He was born at Cottam, near Preston, Lancashire. He was brought up to the farming business, grew up in great ignorance, and ran in the ways of sin greedily. When he grew up a young man, he went to sea, and there indulged in the practice of all kinds of iniquity. After he had been two or three long voyages, he gave up the sea-faring life and began to work at farm labour.

He was a man very obstinate in his own way, and of a very cross, short temper, which caused him to meet and make many enemies. God called him by his grace in about the 29th year of his age in a very striking way. He was guilty of a gross sin, and God was pleased to lay the weight of this sin upon his conscience in such a way that he often said he was as if he were in hell. For three years before he was delivered from the guilt of sin and the curse of God's holy law, he was an attendant at the Church of England; and once, while he was under conviction of sin, he went to hear a Mr. Town, who preached at the parish church of Preston, who, it is said, preached truth in a great measure. On this occasion he was going, as he thought, for the last time, for he had determined in his own mind, after this time of going to church, he would put an end to his wife and children; for he thought, as he has often said, of cheating the devil of his wife and children. While he was sitting in the church during prayers, he wished that some one would come and take him by the heels and dash his head against one of the pillars in the church; but the time had come that God had fixed to meet with this vessel of mercy. Mr. Town was led to take for his text Rom. vi. 21, 22, and was led to speak of the fruit of sin, and how the sinner, taught by the Spirit of God, was made ashamed of himself. Barton thought some one had been telling the minister all about him. Then Mr. Town went on to show how God made his people free from sin, by imputing their sins to the Son of his love, and God the Son putting them away by the sacrifice of himself. This was so attended with life and light to his soul, that he came out of the church another man in feeling, and was ever after this much attached to Mr. Town, and was a most regular attendant upon the preached word; but after this deliverance he got into a pharisaic spirit, and was so carried away that he gave up his farm and removed his family into the town of Preston, for the purpose, as he thought, of making his children Christians; but God was pleased to deliver him from this, by laying the rod of affliction upon him and his family. They were laid aside with fever. He often spoke of his trial as, through the blessing of God, being the means of saving him from becoming a Pharisee.

After this he removed back to Balderstone, and got on a farm again, through the kindness of friends; for he had lost all he had in going to

Preston; but he was a very honourable man in his dealings. If he could do a kindness to any one, and especially a believer, it was a great pleasure to him. He had a large and unruly family, which was a great grief to him.

He was for a real beginning of grace in the soul. If people could not tell a little of what God had done for them, he made short work of them, and would soon tell them they were where sin had placed them, and, living and dying in that state, there was no hope for them.

He was a widower for nearly twenty years, and his sons and daughters were all removed by death, with the exception of one, and he knew not where he was. He was much cast down about being dependent upon his friends or having to go to the workhouse in his later days; but he often said in his last days the Lord had been good to him; and more especially had he been led to see the good hand of the Lord towards him in his latter days, for he never knew the want of a shilling.

He would have parted with his bread rather than give up God's truth; yes, I believe he would have parted with his life sooner than those precious truths God the Spirit had taught him. Though completely dependent upon "charity," he never was the man to flinch from the truth as it is in Jesus, neither was there that cant about him that is put on on a Sunday so commonly now a days.

He admired the power of grace in the believer's life, and loved to see good works, not as a condition for life, but as a fruit of divine life in the soul; and I never saw a man that was brought to cleave more firmly to the Person and work of Christ for acceptance than he. The doctrines of grace he contended for were the electing love of God the Father, the finished work of God the Son for the salvation of his people, and the work of God the Spirit upon the hearts of his redeemed people. Though so illiterate, he had very correct views upon the plan of salvation.

He was brought to join the church at Blackburn through hearing one of his daughters read a chapter out of the New Testament wherein believer's baptism is spoken of; and decided there and then, in the presence of his family, to be baptized according to the order of the New Testament. He was threatened by his family; but it was to no purpose. He felt that it was binding upon him through what the Lord had done for him, and he conferred not with flesh and blood.

He remained a member of the church at Blackburn till his death, and often spoke of their kindness to him as a church.

He was a great admirer of men of truth and the "Gospel Standard," and often said the pieces by Mr. P. had been a great blessing to his soul.

He often longed to be gone to meet his dear Lord, whom he often said he loved more than his necessary food. He longed to be gone day after day, yes, for years; and his prayer was that he might not lie down long ill. This the Lord graciously answered, for he was only in bed from Sunday to the Friday morning.

I saw him the day before he died, when he was fast sinking. I said, "How are you, William, now, in the prospect of death?" He said, "Very comfortable." I said, "What is your trust and hope now?" "Nothing but Jesus; nothing but Jesus."

He passed away without a sigh or groan; I was told by one who was with him it was a falling asleep. M.

HANNAH SEAGER.—At Hullavington, Wilts, Feb. 26th, 1865, Mrs. Hannah Seager, aged 70.

She was for many years an attendant of the little cause of truth at Hullavington before she was received a member. She was truly a woman of a sorrowful spirit, mourning over her sins and after Jesus, often fear-

ing she should be lost, Satan suggesting that there was no hope for her; yet she was helped with a little help, through the ministry of the word and Christian conversation. She was not a big talker, but a good walker, her character being nearly without blemish. She was an honest, upright, godly woman, possessing a peaceable, meek, and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. She loved a free-grace gospel. The "Gospel Standard" and other good works were the means of affording her a little consolation.

As she was in death's embrace she repeated two lines of Cowper's hymn:

"God moves in a mysterious way," &c.;

and then added, "The Lord is good or else he would not save such a vile sinner as I."
THOMAS HENLY.

JOHN ABEL.—After a few days' severe illness, John Abel, of Farringdon, Berks, my dear father, sweetly breathed his last, and entered into that rest that remaineth for the people of God, Jan. 29th, 1865, aged 48.

He was well known and much loved by many of the ministers of truth. He contended for the life and walk of professors being consistent with their profession, and adorned the doctrines of God his Saviour, who had redeemed him by his own precious blood.

He said he felt great sweetness in hymn 832, Gadsby's Selection, which had been given out by a friend at the prayer-meeting. He was taken ill the same night.

Among the many things that fell from his lips, he said to me, "My boy, you must not think I am altogether without the Lord's presence; for I am not; but what I want is a testimony, as Hart says, from God's own mouth, to say I am his. Then I can die." At another time, when my brother came into the room, he said to him, "Ah, my boy,

"There is a Friend, who sticketh fast,
And keeps his love from first to last,
And Jesus is his name;
An earthly brother drops his hold,
Is sometimes hot and sometimes cold,
But Jesus is the same;"

And he has proved the same many a time to your poor father, and is the same now."

His speech left him about ten minutes before he died. My brother came into the room. He fastened his eyes on him with a heavenly smile, which did not leave him. He tried to speak, but could not; and thus he breathed his last.
JOSEPH ABEL.

ELIZA ANN ELLESMERE.—On June 5th, 1865, after a brief illness, Eliza Ann Ellesmere, of Cloth Fair, London, aged 62. She was dearly and deservedly beloved.

"No trust in self, on firmer ground she stood;
Her hope was founded in a Saviour's blood;
A sinner saved, who, in death's trying hour,
Did cast her soul on Jesus' love and power.
And now, with myriads of the ransom'd race,
Ascribes her bliss to free and sovereign grace.
Such being her happy lot, then why complain?
Our loss, though great, is her eternal gain."

J. C. S.

WILLIAM HATTON.—At Wolverhampton, on Aug. 6th, 1865, aged 70, William Hatton, late minister of Temple Street Chapel, Wolverhampton.

J. HATTON.

“TURN THEE YET AGAIN, AND THOU SHALT SEE
GREATER ABOMINATIONS.”

Who can describe the depths of sin,
That deep and deadly stream,
The awful guilt I feel within
When light doth in me beam?
When God sends forth some piercing rays
Into this chamber foul;
And its polluted scenes displays,
What terror fills my soul!
Lord, I am vile! I scarce can raise
A trembling thought to thee;
Yet on thee would I fix my gaze;
Thou only canst help me.
None other can these foes subdue
That lurk within my breast;
None other can my heart renew,
Or give my spirit rest.

C. SPIRE.

AT HOME IN HEAVEN.

1 THESS. iv. 17.

“For ever with the Lord!”
Amen! So let it be;
Life from the dead is in that word;
’Tis immortality.
Here, in the body pent,
Absent from Him I roam,
Yet nightly pitch my moving tent,
A day’s march nearer home.
My Father’s house on high,
(Home of my soul!) how near,
At times, to faith’s foreseeing eye
Thy golden gates appear!
Ah! Then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.
Yet clouds will intervene,
And all my prospect flies;
Like Noah’s dove I flit between
Rough seas and stormy skies.
Anon the clouds depart,
The winds and waters cease,
While sweetly o’er my gladden’d heart,
Expands the bow of peace.
Beneath its glowing arch,
Along the hallow’d ground,
I see cherubic armies march,
A camp of fire around.
Then, when I feel that He,
(Remember’d or forgot,)
The Lord, is never far from me,
Though I perceive him not.

MONTGOMERY.

“*THERE REMAINETH, THEREFORE, A REST FOR THE
PEOPLE OF GOD.*”

HEB. iv. 9.

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

But oft (with shame I will confess)
My privilege my burden is;
No joy, alas! have I;
When I would take my harp and sing,
I find it oft without a string,
And lay it coldly by.

But while I thus confess my shame,
'Tis right that I should praise his name,
Who makes me sometimes sing;
Yes, Lord, (I'll speak it to thy praise,)
My cheerful song I sometimes raise,
And triumph in my King.

O let the case be always so,
My song no interruption know
Till death shall seal my tongue;
In heaven a nobler strain I'll raise,
And rest from everything but praise;
My heaven an endless song.

KELLY.

THE CHIEFEST AMONG TEN THOUSAND.

JESUS, how suited is thy grace;
Thy worth no tongue can tell
To the distress'd, the guilty race
Who are brought near to hell.
No other name with thine can vie,
No other face so bright;
With thee I would both live and die;
Thou art my whole delight.
But O this vile, this wretched heart,
This mind that's prone to stray,
How they annoy my better part,
And turn my eyes away,
From him whose glories fill the sky;
From him I love to see;
From him who hears me when I cry,
And looks with sympathy;
From him who died to save my soul
And raise me from the grave;
From him who does my foes control,
And makes me them outbrave;
From him who paid my heavy debt,
And brought my liberty,
And will my soul at freedom set
In bliss eternally.
Then I with all the host shall bow
And swell the sacred song,
To him that call'd me from below,
With an unflinching tongue.

OCTOBER 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

OCTOBER, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE DEALINGS OF THE
LORD WITH MY SOUL. BY THE LATE PAUL AVRIL.

(Concluded from p. 277.)

IN the years 1771-2, &c., when under convictions of sin, I well remember how I wished for an opportunity to relate my state to some Christian person who had felt the same as I did; but, alas! I had no religious acquaintance but Mr. Lesley, and hardly any opportunity to speak to him. However, I did in some measure speak to him, but not as I could wish, being not so free with him. Another Christian person I knew a little of was Mr. Cyrus. To him, also, I spake about my feelings at that time, but in a very shy manner, not being free with him either.

As near as I can remember, some of the first promises I found some hope and trust in were John vi. 37: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Also, 1 Tim. i. 15: "This is a faithful saying, Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief;" "But unto you that fear my name," &c.; "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you, and will take away the stony heart, and give you a heart of flesh;" "Whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When I was under conviction of sin, and praying earnestly to be brought into gospel liberty, and that mercy might be manifested to my soul, I was much encouraged to persevere, (though the Lord seemed not to hear or answer me,) from, among many other examples in holy writ, that of Jacob in Gen. xxxii. 24, &c.; also the woman of Canaan, as in Matt. xv. 21-29.

Mr. Lesley used to tell me, "The gospel you sit under will either convert you or harden you; for, as the apostle says, it is either a savour of life or death." This used to frighten and terrify me greatly.

When I was in my first love, (and often now I praise God I have such seasons, the Lord multiply and increase my love and inward joy and peace; may it flow more and more abundantly,) I was like Elihu of old, I could not withhold from speaking what I inwardly felt. I must give it vent, for I was full of matter and ready to burst. I must speak that I might be refreshed. (Job xxxii. 18-21.) This conduct brought not a little persecution on me from my — especially, and from others also; and so it does now; but I cannot

help it. The Spirit within me constraineth me to speak; and as Peter and John, I cannot but speak the things which I have seen and heard. I can say in some small degree, "O Lord, the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me." Also with the psalmist, "My heart was hot within me. While I was musing, the fire burned. Then spake I with my tongue." It is with a good man in this respect as with an evil one; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Like Jeremiah, "I am in derision daily; every one mocketh me," &c. (See Jer. xx. 7-10.)

When I was in my unconverted state, I used now and then to pray. True prayer, in the strictest sense of the word, it could not be, but then it was chiefly for temporal things; or else I would say many prayers by way of merit, and to be accepted of God. Poor, ignorant, legal wretch! As to spirituals, I was almost utterly ignorant of the want of them, supposing I was more in the road to heaven than the generality of people, because outwardly more moral. When I was under legal convictions, I made use of all things I could think of but Christ, to try to subdue my sins and corruptions. Over and over again I made strong vows, promises, fastings, and prayers, which I always as often broke. I had pictures of death and of hell, &c., and representations of things most dreadful and terrible. I would carry them about in my pocket, and look at them in the street or any where else near when tempted to sin or when in the way of temptation. I would look at them morning and evening also. I would draw a picture of hell, with flames, &c., and write awful passages from the Scripture about it, and put it in a drawer I often looked in, in my bedroom; yea, hang it up in my room sometimes, and look at it every morning and often in the day, to frighten and terrify myself from sin, especially my besetting sin. But these and many more out-of-the-way methods that I tried only proved like Samson's bindings, too weak to subdue sin. The devil and sin reigned triumphant nevertheless. They only, as it were, laughed at these things. Labouring under the strength and power of sin unpardoned so many years without deliverance greatly hurt my nerves. I may well say in the words of the hymn, which begins

"Jesus, my all, to heaven is gone."

From the beginning of 1771, when I first was under convictions, I would sometimes go to hear legal (moral) preachers, both French and English, but found no comfort at all; on the contrary, only enough to make me quite despair. This is the reason I now never can hear them without a holy indignation, and because for so many years of my life I have been so blindly led astray by them. The reason of my being so long under the awful spirit of bondage was owing to my too often hearing moral, legal preachers and reading legal books; for I had then in my possession many of Mr. Wesley's tracts, and was very fond of reading them, as well as of hearing at Mr. Wesley's, West Street, and Dr. Merrick, at St. Ann's, on Sunday afternoons, and many others. I believe Dr. Merrick to be the

sincerest Arminian preacher I know of; but I now pity his blindness. His case was once mine. Amongst many other legal books, French and English, that I read and followed as well as I could, was "The Practice of Piety," in English. This I admired greatly. It grew old with my frequent using it. Then much trouble, time, and patience I took to paste and mend it, and cover it also. Alas! The many years I was kept in that legal, hard bondage, through the blind directions of this and other books, Alleine's "Alarm," &c.

In 1784, on Monday evening, Nov. 15th, I heard Mr. Huntington at Providence Chapel. His text was: "Who is a God like unto thee," &c. A blessed evening it was to me. I could have sat to hear him till midnight. As soon as I was up that morning, "In all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will come unto thee and I will bless thee," was my prayer founded upon. The Lord most gloriously broke in upon my soul this day, especially under this sermon.

On Monday evening following, Mr. Huntington from: "Incline your ear," &c. O how I rejoiced, reflecting on that happy 24th of November, 1775, while Mr. Huntington expounded from the beginning of the chapter down to his text. It refreshed my mind concerning what had passed in my mind on that happy day, being one of the portions of Scripture by which I was then set at liberty. With joy did I come for pardon to these waters, to this fountain of the blood of Christ. "With joy did I draw water out of the wells of salvation." Mr. Huntington said, "The first manifestation the children of God have, the devil will sometimes persuade them is a delusion; then the Lord makes it plain by other manifestations." So he did to me, blessed be his name; I praise the Lord.

Towards the latter part of October, (year not given,) I found much consolation from a sermon Mr. Brooksbank preached at Tottenham Court Road from: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they know not," &c. Said he, "We do not read in the word of God of people being under convictions of sin for so long a time as some people suppose they ought to be. Pray how long were the 3,000 souls under conviction? Just while Peter preached. How long was the jailor? How long was Saul? The promises are made to convinced souls. It matters not how long. By this means people cherish unbelief; but it is faith that saveth, that is, instrumentally." The language of my heart was:

"Mercy, good Lord! mercy I ask;
This is the total sum,
For mercy, Lord, is all my cry.
O let thy mercy come."

As I was reading in my Bible in the morning, and communing with my own heart on April 10th, my soul was much refreshed from our Lord's words in John xi. 25, 26, and afterwards 1 John v. 1: "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God," &c. The words came to my mind with much comfort, power, and energy.

On the 15th, in the morning, as I was silently poring over the sinfulness of my heart, greatly distressed indeed, this scripture was

brought to my mind: "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." I directly opened my Bible to find the passage, and saw it immediately. For many days I had such a sight of my evil heart, that I saw quite clearly if salvation were not of grace I must never be saved at all; for every day, hour, and moment my just desert is the wages of sin, and that is death. I feel now, in a greater measure than ever, the abominably wicked workings of my corrupt heart, from whence issueth all manner of sins, as from a corrupt fountain, or a cage of all manner of vile and venomous creatures.

The last day of this month was a blessed Sabbath to my soul, a day much to be remembered. For the space of two weeks, the former part of February, I was in great darkness of soul, horrors almost as great as when I was first convinced of sin. "A wounded conscience who can bear?" When the comfortable influences of the blessed Spirit, and the glorious believing views of Jesus are gone, it is a hell in the soul; it is a hell upon earth. The soul is then in a horrible pit. How very much cast down in spirit was I all the time of this desertion; but the Lord afterwards vouchsafed to deliver me in a great measure under Mr. Joss's sermon one evening from Song ii. 9, showing himself through the lattice. The Lord Jesus condescended in great mercy to show himself to my soul. Great reason had I to be deeply humbled on account of sin, though, blessed be God, not cast off; for the Lord will heal the backslidings of his people. Now if I had hearkened to the accusing devil, and to my own legal temper and good or bad frames, I should have dropt my shield of faith, and got into the spirit of bondage again to fear, as I pharisaically formerly did; yea, I have much too great legality even now. I would fain go about to establish a little of my own righteousness if I could. God grant that the love of sin and of my own righteousness may be taken out of my heart, that Jesus alone may be exalted. I was under a cloud a long while. Sin seems sweet when enjoyed, but leaves a very bitter sting for a long time after. I know this from my woful experience of it. I had neither rest nor quiet in my mind night or day because of my foolishness (that is, my sin, my backsliding). Because this sin had not got the master of me for many months, I thought foolishly that it was almost dead. Although I felt the stirrings of it and temptations to it more or less every day, still I was in hopes it was almost dead, because those stirrings and temptations of it and to it were not so violent as formerly. However, that day it revived and reared its accursed head. My heart was melted in reading, some days afterwards, Jer. iii. 12-14, 19-25; also Hosea xiv. came, which the Lord, by his Spirit, made very refreshing to my soul.

Mr. Romaine said in a sermon, "Perhaps the work of grace in your souls has been carried on gradually in some of you. It may have operated in such a gradual manner that you cannot remember, nor recollect, nor tell the circumstances, such as the time, the place, the minister, the text, the words, the day, &c. This, I say, is often the case where the work of God has operated gradually in the soul. Such souls are often troubled and puzzled on this account. There-

fore hear for your comfort, that if you have felt the bitterness of sin and its just desert; if you now find peace, joy, liberty, repentance, and love; if you can call God "Father," and pray to him as such; if you are hated and persecuted by the world, it is because you have been chosen out of the world. You have also various afflictions and crosses. By these and divers other marks you can or may conclude your state is safe; yet rest not here, but press on to obtain the full assurance of faith."

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Hervè,—I hope this will find you and your family in health; for, beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as I trust your souls prosper.

I here inform you that I have been put into the furnace since I saw you last; but, as the divine Refiner sat by, I believe I have lost nothing but some of my dross, as too great attachment to this vain life, and to the things of time and sense, pride, unbelief, &c.

"Gold in the furnace tried
Ne'er loses aught but dross."

But to speak without metaphors, I caught cold when I went to see you, which much increased my old complaint, short breathing. During one whole night I was very bad indeed; but, praised be the Lord, I was happy in soul,—my spiritual support and comforts were neither few nor small. In the multitude of my thoughts within me, the Lord's comforts delighted my soul. He was with me in my sufferings by his supporting arm, and by his power has brought me through them; so that I am now much better in body, and in soul would humbly hope not a whit worse; for now I would not wish to have been without this cross; from which I conclude it was sanctified to me. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth in Christ." I, even I, have felt the power of this text many times. Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory over sin, death, and the grave, through my Lord and only Saviour Jesus Christ.

P. AVRIL.

January 21st, 1803.

Mrs. Hervè,—I looked for you last Monday evening at Providence chapel, but saw you not. Whether you were there or not I know not; but this I know, that the Lord was there with me! He condescended to be with me indeed by his powerful presence. I felt that the words of the wise (the preacher) were as goads and as nails fastened by the master of assemblies, (the adorable Triune God), which are given from one shepherd, even Christ, the good Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Mr. H.'s text, 1 Cor. xv. 57, were the very words and triumphant language of my heart in the first scribble I sent to you. In the course of his sermon, as he spoke upon verses 24 and 25, I rejoiced in spirit that all in me which, alas! now strives to have all rule, all authority and power, would be put down.

at death; for Christ must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord. To be short, I enjoyed a most precious and happy opportunity. I praise and bless my God.

I recollect last Sunday evening you said you believed you should have great troubles to go through, alluding to Rev. vii. 14: "They came out of great tribulation." I have just looked at Toplady's observations on it. He has the passage in Greek, and says the words signify very grievous oppression, affliction, and trouble of every kind. He then goes on to mention the various distresses of God's people. This, my favourite author, observes elsewhere upon Isaiah li. 6, that this is a sheet anchor in every possible storm, and that Providence, unerring Providence, governs all events, (Dan. iv 35,) and grace unchangeable is faithful to its purpose. (Rom. viii 28.) We rejoice, says he, that the Saviour of sinners and the blessings of his cross continue immutably the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This reminds me of the Hymn:

"Rejoice, ye saints, in every state," &c.

I here conclude with the apostle's exhortation: "Wherefore comfort one another" (for I now address you both) "with these words; and I must add, not with these words only, but with many more words enclosed within God's blessed book, the precious Bible.

P. AVRIL.

February 2nd, 1803.

TRUE AND FALSE TRUST.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST PROVED TO BE THE REAL OBJECT
OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

BY THE LATE JOHN RUSK.

"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."—MIC. vii. 5.

(Continued from page 284.)

But I will now treat a little about *trusting in this Friend*. It may be asked, "What is trust?" To this I answer as follows: Trust is grounded upon a promise made. If there were no promise made, there would be no foundation for any trust. The time of trusting is the delay of the promise; and when every promise is fulfilled, and we get to glory above, there will be no more trusting to the Lord to fulfil his promises. Time, therefore, is when we are to trust the Lord to make his promises good continually to us poor needy creatures; and when time ends, then we shall all of us, the whole body of God's elect, live for ever with the Lord and glorify a promise-making and a promise-fulfilling God to all eternity.

But we are to trust in this Friend; and, therefore, I will now show some things that we are to trust him for, and as I go on show that what we are called to trust the Lord for is founded upon a promise. Observe, then, that we shall need every promise till we go out of this world, and some even when we close our eyes in death, for which we are called to trust this faithful Friend; for in him all

the promises are made; for "all the promises in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us."

The first thing I shall mention, and a valuable blessing it is, is *Mercy*. Now mercy presupposes misery. It is the miserable who need mercy; and truly we are in a miserable, wretched condition, when we see and feel our true state by the fall. Look at the poor publican! He dared not so much as to lift up his eyes to heaven, but smote on his breast, saying: "God be merciful to me, a sinner;" but though his prayer was answered, and he went down to his house justified, yet he still needed this mercy in the display of it to the day of his death. So shall we need it; and everything we receive is a mercy, both for soul and body. Now God has appointed a throne of grace and a mercy-seat, where we are continually to come with humble boldness, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For my part, I need it every moment. The blessed Spirit is to help our infirmities, and we are to approach this throne in the name of the Lord Jesus, the Mediator, and no other way. David had a large experience of this mercy, and, therefore, finishes every sentence of Ps. cxxxvi. with these words: "His mercy endureth for ever." Here it was that God made the promise: "I will never take my mercy from David as I took it from Saul;" and here David trusted. Hence he says, "But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the mercy of the Lord for ever." But no mercy can possibly come to us without this Friend; for this is a part of God's covenant name: "Merciful and Gracious;" which name is in Christ Jesus the covenant Head. Then trust in this Friend for mercy.

2. *Strength*. You and I are compassed about with innumerable enemies, hosts of devils, wicked men, and the abominable corruptions of the human heart; and there are legions of these; but we are not inlaid with a stock of strength; no; for we are extreme weakness itself. Now this calls for trust, and we have good ground to go upon, because the promises are made to the weak, to the faint. God's strength is made perfect in our weakness. Then "trust in the Lord for ever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." Thus both mercy and strength are grounded upon a promise, and both come from this Friend. "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me;" "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

3. *Judgment*. And here we need this Friend as an advocate; for it is not only once being arraigned at the bar of God and acquitted, but continually; and the cause is this, even sin and fresh contracted guilt. Now God has filled Zion with judgment and righteousness; and what can you and I do against Satan, the accuser of the brethren, when he stands at our right hand to resist us, as he did Joshua the high priest? What can we do against our own hearts when they condemn us? What can we do when we feel the bondage of the law and the anger of God? Why, blessed be God, we have a Friend; for "if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitia-

tion for our sins." Micah, that man of God, had been fully acquitted before he uttered those words: "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause and execute judgment for me." I say this was not the first time. No it was not; neither was it the first time with David after his fall. Now the Lord Jesus, our Friend, will execute judgment for us; for "the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father." Then press on, fellow traveller, though everything makes against thee, however painful the path. He that is writing at this time has been in many of these storms, been sorely tried for a number of years, and yet never forsaken of the Lord; and "Although thou mayest say thou shalt not see him, yet judgment is before him; therefore trust thou in him;" (Job xxxv. 14;) "But judgment shall return to righteousness, and all the upright in heart shall follow it;" "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass; and he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day."

4. We are to trust in this Friend *for salvation*. Now salvation is a very copious thing; indeed everything we can mention is couched in salvation; and what could you and I do without this Friend? Thousands and millions of souls are carried away to everlasting destruction by their sins, and we have in us every sin in the root to this day. How is it, then, that we escape? I answer, "God the Father imputed our sins to this Friend, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Surety, and, therefore, will not exact them of us. Our old man, that is such a plague to us, was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. And here is salvation. "His name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins. We have many enemies, but our old man is the worst; and as this Friend saves us from this, so he does from every enemy and from the hand of all that hate us, from every danger we can possibly get into; for "salvation belongeth unto the Lord." But we shall feel the force of these enemies, more or less, from day to day; and this calls for trust. Neither do we trust our Friend in vain. Would you hear the language of one who proved the truth of all this? Then take it as follows: "Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Hannah, also, was another that proved this faithful Friend. She had long been vexed with Peninnah, her rival; and at last the Lord heard the moanings of her soul, and she did not trust in vain; for she says, "I rejoice in thy salvation." (1 Sam. ii. 1.)

Thus we are saved from the reigning power of sin in time, and at death from the inbeing of it, from devils, from men, from every bodily and family affliction, from every afflictive providence, &c.; for everything shall turn to our account; from the wrath of God and from the second death, and with an everlasting salvation. Then trust to this Friend for salvation. Hear the word of the Lord; "And the Lord

shall help them and deliver them. He shall deliver them from the wicked and save them, because they trust in him."

5. We are to trust in this faithful Friend as our *Foundation*. He that is now writing knows by experience what he is writing about, if any soul living does. O how has my soul sunk! O what despair have I felt! O what alarming views have I had of the majesty of God! My hope appeared gone, and I have expected nothing but the vengeance of God and to be consumed. This is the way to know the worth of this Friend as a foundation, and the only way; and as you are tried upon this head again and again, as I was for years, so you will know the infinite worth of him. But beware of trusting in him in any other way than the eternal Jehovah. There are many in our day that will tell you they trust in him, but they have never been tried upon this head. You may exalt him very high; but if he is not in your faith Jehovah, your religion is not worth a straw. We are told not to trust in man: "Cursed is the man that trusteth in man;" "But they that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved." "But," say you, "it is the Father that is meant by Lord." To this I answer, that if you take away Christ, neither the Father nor the Holy Ghost can be trusted in, because you and I are sinners, and Deity abstractedly would consume us. The object, therefore, of our trust is God in Christ. Every perfection of Deity is in Christ Jesus. I will mention a few passages of scripture to prove this assertion: "Thy Maker is thy Husband; the Lord of Hosts is his name;" and Paul says this Husband is Christ: "I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ;" and in the Revelation the church of God is called the wife of the Lamb: "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." And as her Maker and as her Redeemer, she trusts in this true and faithful Friend. Hear her language: "Behold, God is my salvation. I will trust and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation." But if Christ was not the self-existent and independent Jehovah, how can they be eternally blessed that put their trust in him? I conclude, then, that the God-Man is the proper object of our trust; and this is the foundation: "Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation;" and "other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus."

Now the way we are brought to trust in him as a foundation is this: In a natural state, every man living builds upon himself. There he trusts, there he depends. He trusts in what he has done, in what he does, or in what he hopes to do; for, being ignorant of God's law in its spirituality, he really imagines that he can obey it, and that wherein he comes short Christ will do the rest. Yet some are different from this, for they profess to believe the gospel, but still it is in a working way. These talk about progressive holiness or sanctification; and this, joined with a sound creed, passes for real godliness. But as sure as you are born, they all build upon self. In heart they are all one. The difference only lies in head notions; and many

of God's elect get into these refuges of lies till God is pleased to undeceive them; and the way he does it is by putting life and light in their hearts; and then, by degrees, all this Babel building goes down. Then they feel and see more and more the fall of man; and this teaching goes on till they can set to their seal that God is true, not only from observation in others, but from painful experience in themselves. They know that in their flesh there dwelleth no good thing. They see it, they feel it, and they groan under the burden of it from day to day, struggling and striving till they are worn out and their strength is all gone. This is a brief account of God's stripping his people and reducing them to spiritual poverty; which teaching will go on with them till death. Such are sensible sinners; and if you ask them, they will tell you so; not in a canting way, nor yet merely what they hear from God's ministers; no, nor yet because the word of God says so; but because their experience agrees with God's word, and they tremble at the majesty of God. Now it is that all their false hopes are swept away, and they sink for want of a foundation; but the Holy Spirit testifies of Christ Jesus to them, and leads them to him, poor, wretched, miserable, blind, and naked as they are, without money and without price; and there they trust their all upon him. Hence the prophet Isaiah tells us that "God has founded Zion, and that the poor of his people shall trust in it."

O what hard struggles do some have to keep from black despair! I have travelled this painful path long.

6. We are to trust in this Friend as our *Deliverer*; and this takes in every trial in soul, body, family, circumstances; in darkness, in temptations, &c. What can you and I do to help ourselves when we get entangled in these things? Nothing at all, except it is to make bad worse. How often have we tried our carnal reason, how often have we chalked out paths for the Lord to walk in. How often have we leaned to our own understanding and looked to others, and as often have we been baffled in the whole, to teach us our dependence upon him, and to humble our proud hearts, that we might be brought to entreat the Lord, to creep to this Friend who resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble. Those that are humbled under the mighty hand of God find it so. Now, the way he delivers us is truly wonderful, as I well know. It is by visiting our souls with his comfortable presence. I have ere now been entangled in providence, had knotty experience in soul, many passages of Scripture that appeared to cut me off, under oppression in my work, or else out of work, family and bodily afflictions, debts of long standing, temptations to break through all bounds, or else to despair of the mercy of God altogether. These things have bowed me down. Heart and flesh have both failed, and I have expected nothing but destruction for soul and body. Strong corruptions and lusts of all kinds, and slipping into many forbidden things through the love and power of sin. O what sore conflicts do we have with the law in the members, which is a love to sin! But after all this we have this true Friend, and I have found his presence deliver me from all that I have mentioned effectually in my feeling, though per-

haps no change at all in outward things in providence. Hence David calls the Lord his deliverer, and prays to him as such. Hence we are to trust; for "the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. He is their strength in the time of trouble; and the Lord shall help them and deliver them from the wicked. He shall deliver them and save them because they trust in him." "Call upon me," says the Lord, "in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee," &c.

7. We are to trust in this friend as our *Physician*, both for soul and body, family and friends. Sin has brought into this world many sore afflictions, and very great bodily infirmities. Where do we, in a state of nature, look for help when we get entangled this way? Why, we look wholly and altogether to doctors, and to any one of our earthly friends, in order to get clear of pain, sickness, &c. There we trust, and add our own wisdom to it also; for we know nothing of this Friend, nor have we any faith in him; and when we are brought to a saving knowledge of him, yet, as it respects outward afflictions, we still keep hanging on the old way; and, indeed, if he did not let us try the vanity of the creature without himself continually, and prove it all in vain, we never should be brought off and kept off from such a false confidence and trust; but he lets us try these means that we may learn how useless they are without him. Here lies the deception. We hear that such and such a thing has cured one and another, and we try to get the thing, and in that very thing we trust; but it proves to us, as Christians, abortive, that we may know that it is not the means that cure every one, but God in the means. The world at large will often find these means answer their purpose, because they are left of God to trust in the flesh; but God's family shall, like the poor woman in the gospel, spend all their money trying various things, and get worse and worse. "But," say you, "are means to be neglected?" To this I answer, that they are no snare only as we trust in them. If we use them, and have no trust only in this Friend, then we act right; but this is no easy thing. That Christ is the same now as he was in the days of the flesh is clear. Hence Paul says, "The same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;" so that they had no more advantage when he was upon this earth than we have now he is in glory. In his highest nature he fills all space, being immensity itself; but you and I must be pinched very hard, and things must get very bad indeed before we can rely wholly upon him for any outward cure, either for ourselves or for others. I remember some years ago our first daughter, when quite young, had the smallpox, and we had the doctor to her; and being our first child, it was a great trial to lose her. However, she got worse than ever,—all one mass of corruption, quite black; neither could any one, at times, perceive breath. The doctor gave her over; my wife's mother the same. I came home to breakfast very cast down. She lay in a corner of the lower room, and they asked me to look at her; but I did not, but went up stairs to call upon this only Friend, who has all power in heaven and on earth; but before I could kneel down I had the fullest persuasion that she would get well. I had not a single doubt of it, and felt thankful to

God. I went down stairs cheerful; but, after this, unbelief and carnal reason came in and damped me. At night I went to my father's, close by, and told them what I had found in faith, the child still as bad as ever, and I said that the scripture told us that whatever we asked, believing, we should receive, and that I had felt this confidence. I returned home, went up stairs again, shut myself in, and felt the same full assurance. After this she began to mend, and is alive and well, as far as I know. This was about 20 years ago, and I firmly believe that a work of grace is begun on her heart.* Now, certainly I proved this faithful Friend as the great Physician to the child, for he restored her to perfect health. We also had another proof in the next child, whose eyes were very bad. We went to the flesh as usual, tried the golden ointment, and other things; but they got worse and worse, and we expected she would lose her sight, grow up, and be begging in the streets. But we cried to this Friend, this Physician, and he cured her.

There is a remarkable account in 2 Chron. xvi. 12, of King Asa, who, in the 39th year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceedingly great; yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians, and died in the forty-first year of his reign.

But Christ is the only true Friend and Physician to the soul. Hence David calls him God's way upon earth, and his saving health amongst all nations. It is he that brings health and cure, and heals us, and reveals to us the abundance of peace and truth. But all these things are only to the poor, the halt, the lame, the maimed, and the blind; and, therefore, he told the pharisees that the whole did not need the physician, but those that are sick. He heals our backslidings, binds up the broken hearted, and never failed in curing any one person that ever came to him. He heals all manner of diseases, and as many as touch him are made perfectly whole; and he can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. Sin is the whole cause of any sickness, whether spiritual or temporal; and, therefore, in glory above the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick," and the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

From what has been written, you may clearly see how right it is to trust in this Friend, though exceedingly wrong to trust in any other.

(To be continued.)

* This daughter of Mr. Rusk's is now, we believe, in the Aged Pilgrims' Asylum, Camberwell, aged 67, having been elected through the votes arising from the subscriptions of our friends.—J. G.

NOAH was warned. This warning he believed, and saw the destruction coming on. It was attended with fear, which moved him to prepare an ark. Without faith and fears we never begin in truth to look out for escape from the wrath to come. The ark, as a place of safety or security, may be a type of Christ, though in other respects a type of the Church. And faith, which is God's gift, and fear, of his own implanting, both act and move by God's word, and will never suffer the soul that is possessed of them to be at rest, till it find security from wrath and ruin in Christ Jesus.—*Beeman*.

DELIVER HIM FROM GOING DOWN INTO THE
PIT.

My very dear and highly-esteemed Sir,—Being a poor man myself, I can sympathise with the Lord's poor. If it were in my power, I should feel a pleasure in sending as many sovereigns as I have sent shillings. It is about 38 years since I married. I was then a journeyman blacksmith, and when we were married we had not more than £4 to buy household goods with, and I was working for twelve shillings a week. My dear wife had nineteen children in 22 years and three months. Neither of us ever knew what a day's good health was.

Many of these years were spent under the terrible hand of God in my poor soul. When his wrath lay hard on me, I can truly say his terrors made me afraid; yea, fear was on every side, and I found sorrow and trouble. I saw with a witness my lost and ruined estate, and that unless the Lord did freely pardon my sins, to hell I must go without any possibility of recovery. This kept me continually searching the Scriptures, if possibly I might find any hope for such a sinner as I found myself to be. I saw clearly the plan of salvation and the blessed estate of the righteous; but I saw as clearly too that he "would have mercy upon whom he would have mercy, and that whom he would he hardeneth."

O, dear Sir, how has that word "hardeneth" made me quake and fear! I tried with all my power to repent, and to mourn for my sins; but instead of this, I was made to feel the hardness of my heart, and the impenitency of my spirit; though the Lord would, at times, help me to cry unto him. How many times have I, in the bitterness of my soul, when on my knees, cried unto him, saying, "O Lord, if thou hast but one drop of mercy to bestow upon a poor sinner, let me be the happy recipient of that mercy!" But instead of this he withheld the blessing of mercy from me. Then how would those words pierce my soul: "He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Then I felt as though he had given me up to hardness of heart, which I feared more than anything, and I thought I should never have repentance given me. This was a sore trial to me; for I saw clearly from the sad cases of Cain, Esau, Saul, Judas, and many others, that they were left without the least hope of pardon. O what fear and quaking I found in my poor heart! and upon the back of this I have had such a terrible sight of the workings of my corrupt nature that I have been afraid to bend my knees before the Lord, fearing he would strike me dead for my awful presumption. I thought if I were born again I should ever be humble and holy and free from all evil thoughts. Then I had a world of trouble; first, a large and trying family, then cross providences, an afflicted wife, a weak and sickly tabernacle, a tempting devil, an unbelieving heart, and a rebellious nature.

This is the place to test the strength of free will. In fact, I found these things and my will did not agree together; so that I was more like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury and rebuke of God.

His terrible Majesty has sunk me into nothing; so that I despaired of ever obtaining life and salvation. O the horrible forebodings of despair which would seize my thoughts, until I was near distracted!

But when all my hopes failed and fled from me, the Lord was pleased to speak peace and pardon to my soul. This broke my hard heart, melted me as wax before the fire, laid me at his footstool a humble worshipper of a Three-One God in Christ Jesus, my Lord and my God. How sweet the moments; how rich the blessing, never to be forgotten while memory holds her seat. "What!" said I, "is it possible thou canst look on me? Is it possible, dear Lord, that such a hell-deserving sinner can obtain forgiveness for all the offences done against thy holy Majesty? What I, who was on the borders of black despair; I, who had done nothing but sin from my youth? Dear Lord, is it possible thou canst look on such a wretch as I am? Is it possible, Lord?" But here, dear friend, my poor soul was overcome with the exceeding grace of God to me, by those blessed words: "When the enemy cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." This standard was Christ, the Son of God, which I found to be the sum and substance of the gospel of the grace of God. O what a change took place in my feelings! Instead of the terrors of God, which drank up my spirit under the apprehensions of his being my enemy, the very thought of which would fill me with indescribable terror, and from whose face I sought to hide myself, now I found him to be my Friend, my Portion, my Redeemer, my All; for he had broken my bonds asunder and cast away the bonds of my sins from me. The thundering and lightning, the terrible blackness and darkness, the voice of words which had made me fear and quake, and under whose terrors I had lain for six years or more, were now passed away, and instead thereof I heard the still, small voice of Jesus saying, "Deliver him from going down into the pit; I have found a ransom;" and again, "By the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water."

This brought peace and joy in my soul. Before this shame and guilt covered my face; now my shame and guilt were removed and a humble confidence filled my heart; and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, so overcame me that I called him "my dear Lord, my dear Lord," without any rebuke.

O what a solemn time it was to me! What! All my guilt, all my fears, all my sins, all gone? What! No fiery indignation to devour me as an adversary? Nay, more. What! The love of God to me who was so utterly unworthy of his favour? Truly, I can say he receiveth sinners and eateth and drinketh with them. Instead of frowns, it seemed to me as if the whole Trinity were smiling on me, which broke my heart and melted me into tears of joy, while every power of my soul was adoring and blessing the Lord for his grace and mercy.

Here, my dear friend and brother, I found the gospel to be a feast of fat things, of fat things full of marrow, of wines well refined, which

never intoxicate, though they give a little love-sickness; and of this sickness may I live and die; for his love is better than wine.

O what a change took place in my soul. Now, instead of the word of God cursing me, his word comforted my heart and filled my soul with unutterable joy. Truly I could say, "He leadeth me in green pastures, and by the still waters;" for his consolations were not small.

Now, dear Sir, I hope you will not take it as an offence in the liberty I have taken. I had no intention of disclosing what took place in my soul nearly thirty years ago; but when I began to write I thought of giving you some account of other matters; but as I began I found my mind drawn on thus. I therefore send it to you with my kindest love, while

I remain, Yours in the Bonds of the Gospel,
Butleigh, Jan. 12th, 1865. JACOB BLAKE.

[The above sweet experimental letter accompanied a subscription to the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society.—Ed.]

MY DEAR FATHER'S EIGHTY-THIRD BIRTHDAY,
NOVEMBER 4, 1864.

My aged parent, let me greet thee still,
While here detained by thy Father's will;
He still preserves thee in his fear and faith,
And, doubtless, will preserve thee unto death.

Thy earthly house, I know, must soon decay.
For thou hast number'd eighty-three to-day;
The time of thy departure is at hand,
When thou shalt in thy Saviour's presence stand.

Finish'd thy course, and kept, through grace, the faith,
Thou shalt a conqueror be o'er sin and death.
Well, blessed be thy Father God and mine,
That we should both be in his covenant line;

Elected, ransom'd, quicken'd by his grace,
Out of the number of our fallen race;
Wash'd in the Saviour's blood, and clothed no less
Than in his perfect, spotless righteousness.

O grace, immensely great, that we should be
One in the same bless'd, happy family;
Ere long to be admitted Him to see,
Who died to ransom rebels such as we!

May thy last days on earth, then, be thy best,
Like faithful Tiptaft's, who is gone to rest;
May Christ more precious be, his name more sweet,
Till call'd by death, thy Saviour there to meet,
Where sin and sorrow shall be done away,
And earthly night give way to endless day.

A. H.

GOD calleth his Son, our Lord Jesus, the Seed of the woman; a seed, because of the very nature of man, and because that our Lord should not take upon him a fantastical, but a very true body.—*Coverdale.*

INQUIRY.

Dear Mr. Editor,—It is my lot, in the providence of God, to be frequently brought into contact with professors of religion, particularly those who advocate the doctrines of free will. A short time ago one of the said professors brought forward in support of his argument that passage of Scripture, Isaiah xxiv. 5: "They have broken the everlasting covenant." Will you kindly favour me with an explanation of the passage?

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER.

ANSWER.

To our mind, there is little or no difficulty in the passage brought forward, and no support from it whatever to the cause of what is commonly called free will. The whole verse, it being unfair to take one clause of it separate from the connection, runs thus: "The earth also is defiled under the inhabitants thereof; because they have transgressed the laws, changed the ordinance, broken the everlasting covenant."

Nothing is here said about the people of God, or any charge against them that they have broken the everlasting covenant of which Jesus is the mediator. (Heb. viii. 6; xii. 24; xiii. 20.) The charge is directed against "the inhabitants of the earth," or rather the land of Canaan, which was defiled by their ungodly practices, for they had "transgressed the laws, changed (or perverted) the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant." The connection of the words plainly shows that this "everlasting covenant" is not the new covenant, the covenant of grace, but the *law*, which in itself, or in its signs or seals, is often called in Scripture an "everlasting" or "perpetual covenant." This covenant was a covenant of perpetual obligation on all the seed of Israel, and is therefore called everlasting, as extending from age to age. The sign and seal of this covenant, as first made with Abraham, on behalf of his posterity, was *circumcision*. We therefore read: "My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant." (Gen. xvii. 13.) This covenant could be broken, for we read in the next verse: "The uncircumcised man child shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." (Gen. xvii. 14.) Similarly, the fixing of the *priesthood* in the house of Aaron was by "an everlasting covenant;" for we read that "he was taken from the children of Israel by an everlasting covenant." (Lev. xxiv. 8.) But what place has circumcision or the Aaronic priesthood in the everlasting covenant sealed and sanctified by the blood of Christ, and by which he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us? (Heb. ix. 12; xiii. 20.) Circumcision has passed away, nay, become, if not a positive sin, a renunciation of the gospel: "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (Gal. v. 2.) And the Aaronic priesthood has vanished away with the old legal dispensation, (Heb. viii. 13,) and become changed and disannulled. (Heb. vii. 12-18.)

As the Sabbath day was ratified and sanctified with peculiar solemnity at the giving of the law, *that* was also a sign of this perpetual or everlasting covenant. We therefore read: "Wherefore the children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their generations, for a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever; for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." (Exod. xxxi. 16, 17.) Here the Sabbath is spoken of as the standing sign of a perpetual or everlasting covenant. (Ezek. xx. 12.) The words perpetual covenant and everlasting covenant are precisely the same in the original, ("berith olam,") literally a covenant of age, and are rendered by our translators sometimes by one word and sometimes by the other. The word "olam," literally "age," is rendered "perpetual," Exod. xxix. 9, xxx. 8, xxxi. 16; Lev. iii. 17, xxiv. 9; Jer. l. 5; and "everlasting," Exod. xl. 15; Num. xxv. 13; Isa. xxiv. 5. We thus see that circumcision, the Aaronic priesthood, and the Sabbath were either a part or signs and seals of a perpetual or everlasting covenant. But all these might be broken. Thus, if a man child were left uncircumcised, or one not of the family of Aaron promoted to the priesthood, or the Sabbath profaned, it was a breaking of the perpetual or everlasting covenant made with Israel after the flesh. But what has all this to do with the new covenant, the everlasting covenant between the Father and the Son? This covenant cannot be broken: "My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him." "My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness that I will not lie unto David." (Ps. lxxxix. 28, 34, 35.) This covenant was not made with man, but with the Son, on behalf of his chosen people, and therefore cannot be broken by man. It is, therefore, "a better covenant, as established upon better promises," (Heb. viii. 6,) and Jesus is its mediator, that "they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance," which they could not do if this covenant could fail. But these miserable free-will preachers understand neither what they say nor whereof they affirm, and, totally ignorant of the truth, catch at some expression which they think favours their erroneous views. When, then, the Lord reproves Israel for breaking the everlasting covenant, he has no reference to the covenant of grace which cannot be broken, as being between the Father and the Son, but to the covenant of the law which they broke, as he speaks, (Jer. xxxi. 32.) "Which my covenant they brake." Indeed, the context would show this to any one not blinded by obstinate adherence to error, and full of desperate enmity to the truth.

If you entertain such thoughts as these, "If I could only see in myself anything to recommend me to Christ, if I could feel myself to be good or amiable, I would go to him," this is quite wrong. Come to him just as you are. He receives sinners, and those who come to him poor, lest, and helpless, he will in no wise cast out. He will cast none out who come to him, being drawn by the loving-kindness of the Father, or attracted by the invitations and promises recorded in the word.—*Chamberlain*.

MEDITATIONS ON VARIOUS IMPORTANT POINTS OF OUR MOST HOLY FAITH.

II.

MEDITATIONS ON THE PRECEPTIVE PART OF THE WORD OF GOD.

(Concluded from p. 294.)

WE are approaching the harbour. Land was in sight in our last No.; and now all that we need is a gentle yet favourable breeze to waft us on until we drop anchor, and bless God for giving us a pleasant and, we hope, not unprofitable voyage.

Two points remain for consideration,* to dwell on which at any length, even at as great a length as they deserve, would set us again out to sea, and perhaps, a stormy sea too; for one of them involves a subject not only of much difficulty, but of considerable strife and debate. These two points are

1. The place which the precept occupies *in the word*;

2. Its place in *the heart and life*.

III. The place which the precept occupies *in the word*.

After our long and laboured explanation of the *nature* of the precept, this point need not detain us long. But as the place of the precept in the word admits of two meanings: (1) Its place in the *written* word; (2) Its place in the *preached* word, we shall address ourselves to the consideration of both of these significations.

1. First, then, its place in the *written* word.

One main point with us has been to show that the precept, as it stands in the written word, is an integral, that is, a real and constituent part of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and is as much a gracious revelation of the mind and will of God for our instruction and guidance as the doctrines themselves of our most holy faith are for a knowledge of the way of salvation. We do not mean that a knowledge of the precept is saving in the same way as a knowledge of the truth is; but as a means, in the hands of the blessed Spirit, of influencing the heart and life, it is sanctifying. It is necessary to make and keep this distinction clear, lest in our zeal for the precept we should strain it beyond the place which God has assigned to it in the word of truth. We are saved by grace through faith; (Eph. ii. 8;) are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; (Rom. iii. 24;) are reconciled to God by the death of his Son; (Rom. v. 10;) are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph. i. 3, 7.) These are the grand foundation truths of the everlasting gospel, are salvation matters, and as such stand apart from all works performed in us or by us. We cannot, therefore, elevate the precept into a level with them, for we may be saved and sanctified too, as was the dying thief, without knowing or performing one gospel precept except that of love—love to the Lord for his manifested mercy. But as it is the purpose of God that his re-

* See our March No., p. 94.

deemed, justified, and saved people should glorify him here below, he has most graciously revealed to them how they shall learn to know his will and do it. This is the end and object of the precept. How beautifully does the apostle pray to this effect for his Colossian brethren: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. i. 9, 10.) How blessed to be filled with a knowledge of the will of God in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, so as to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. We are also bidden "not to be conformed to this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our mind, that we may prove," (that is, learn, ascertain, and approve of,) "what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) To know the will of God and do it, is the desire and delight of every regenerate soul. The apostle, therefore, says: "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is." (Eph. v. 17.) So he speaks of "doing the will of God from the heart." (Eph. vi. 6.) Our Lord also said: "For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother." (Mark iii. 35.) The apostle also prays that the God of peace would "make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen;" (Heb. xiii. 21;) and John's testimony is, "He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John ii. 17.) How any one who calls himself a believer in Christ Jesus can think lightly of knowing and doing the will of God, is indeed a mystery. But this all must do who ignore the precept, think lightly of it, and neglect it. It is almost become a tradition in some churches, professing the doctrines of grace, to disregard the precepts and pass them by in a kind of general silence; and thus in a sense they "have made the commandments of God of none effect by their tradition." But when we are brought to see and feel the blessedness of knowing the will of God and doing it; when we can enter experimentally into the meaning of such words as, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again;" (2 Cor. v. 14, 15;) and again: "What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's;" (1 Cor. vi. 19, 20;) when such gracious precepts fall, we say, with weight upon the heart, we see what a blessed place the precept occupies in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. When, too, we read and can enter a little into the spirit which breathes through such prayers of the apostle as, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men,

even as we do toward you. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints;" (1 Thess. iii. 12, 13;) and again, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (1 Thess. v. 23;) we see from these prayers what are or should be the desires of our own soul. To despise, then, the precept, to call it legal and burdensome, is to despise not man, but God, who hath given unto us his holy Spirit in the inspired Scriptures for our faith and obedience.

But we have rather wandered from our point, which was to show the place which the precept occupies in the written word.

This is best seen by examining the epistles of the New Testament. The three which we would select for that purpose, as being most systematically written, would be that to the Romans, that to the Ephesians, and that to the Hebrews. It would take up too much time to give even a short analysis of these blessed epistles, or even of one of them, but we may observe generally that doctrine occupies in them the first place, experience the second, and precept the third; and yet all these three are blended so beautifully together that they sometimes run into one another, or, if not, always harmonise with the sweetest accord. Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Romans. Chapters i., ii., and part of iii. are taken up with proving the sinfulness of the Gentile and Jewish world, and the universal depravity, ruin, and condemnation of man. The apostle then, (iii. 21-31,) in a few but most significant words, opens the grand remedy—justification freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This grand point of justification by faith (iii. 28) is proved chap. iv. by the case of Abraham, of whom the Scripture testified that "he believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." In chapter v. commences experience in our having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as being justified by faith; and this strain of living experience, ranging from the deepest conflict (vii.) to the highest assurance, continues, blended with doctrine and precept, to the end of chapter viii. Chapters ix., x., and xi. are chiefly doctrinal, as opening the case of the present rejection and future restoration of Israel after the flesh. In chapter xii. commences the precept, and runs on in the most beautiful strain to xv. 14, the rest of the epistle being chiefly occupied with Paul's personal matters, greetings, &c.

In the Epistle to the Ephesians, doctrine occupies the first place. Election, predestination, redemption, the death, resurrection, and glorification of Christ, occupy the first chapter. In chapter ii. begins experience in the quickening of the soul from its death in trespasses and sins, its spiritual resurrection with Christ and sitting together in heavenly places in him, blended with the sweetest doctrinal truth, (ii. 11-22,) and accompanied with the earnest prayers of the apostle (iii. 14-19) that the saints to whom he wrote might know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, so as to be filled with all the fulness of God. In chapter iv. commences the preceptive part of the

word sweetly blended with both doctrine (4-13) and experience, (20-24,) and occupying the rest of the epistle, with the exception of that beautiful, experimental description of the whole armour of God, (vi. 11-18,) and even that urged with all the earnestness of practical exhortation. The Epistle to the Hebrews is constructed on the same pattern; first, doctrine in chapters i.-ix.; then experience, x., xi.; then precept, xii., xiii. This brief sketch of the plan of these three epistles must suffice; but a longer and more detailed analysis would only more plainly show that though there is a systematic arrangement in them all, yet there is such a blending together of doctrine, experience, and precept, that the three form but parts of one harmonious whole, and, like a compact and beautiful building, mutually strengthen and adorn each other.

2. But our view of the place which the precept occupies in the written word would be incomplete unless we added the place which it should occupy in the *preached* word. This is, we know, a difficult and delicate point, and yet we shall not shun to declare our views on it, whether they meet with the approval or disapproval of those whom they may concern. As the ministers of Christ profess to preach the same gospel that the apostles preached, there must be some uniformity with the pattern which we have just laid out of apostolic teaching; for though preaching a sermon is not the same thing as writing an epistle, yet we may gather from the account which Paul gives us of his own ministry (Acts xx. 21-27, 35; 2 Cor. iv. 1-6; 1 Thess. i. 5-6; ii. 7-12) that there was a considerable resemblance between what he spoke by tongue and what he wrote by pen. Doctrine, then—pure, sound doctrine, must be the basis of the Christian ministry: "In doctrine showing uncorruptness;" (Titus ii. 7;) "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus;" (2 Tim. i. 13;) "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.) Let us endeavour to keep every part of divine truth in its right place, and no more sacrifice doctrine to experience than experience to precept. He is the ablest minister who is soundest in doctrine, deepest in experience, and most godly in practice; for he preaches with heart, tongue, and feet. The servant of God, therefore, must "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered unto the saints," (Jude 3,) and "hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." (Titus i. 9.) He must have also a gracious experience in his own soul of the truths which he preaches, in their savour, sweetness, and power; or how can the unction of the Holy Ghost rest on his ministry? All this will be readily granted; but now as to the precept. Is he to preach *that* also, as well as doctrine and experience? If he do not, there would seem to be something lacking, if we take apostolic teaching as our model. Assume, then, that he ought to preach the precept. Now comes a more delicate and difficult point. *How* is he to preach it? For as to preaching the precept, this is done by hundreds of mini-

sters who know no more what the precept really is as a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ than they know what is a gracious experience of truth by the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Anybody may preach the *letter* of the precept. But that is not what we want. It is the *spirit* of the precept which is needed, and which must be preached if preached at all. There is dry precept as well as dry doctrine; and as the latter is often concealed Antinomianism, so the former is open and often barefaced legality; for looseness, like Tamar, covers her face (Gen. xxxvii. 15) when Pharisaism stalks abroad in open day, for she loves to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, to be seen of men. What was true of old is true now. "For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath day." (Acts xv. 21.) The preachers of Moses are to be found in every city and every synagogue. How, then, should the precept be preached? We answer, In the same way as doctrine and experience should be preached—from a gracious knowledge of its spirit and power, and its sensible influence on the heart and life. To preach the precept in any other way is either legality or presumption. If a man know nothing in his own soul of the spirit of the precept, and is not under its gracious influence, he cannot handle it with the fingers of a workman, and must either legalise it, or handle it deceitfully. If he bind burdens upon the people of God inconsistent with the liberty of the gospel, he legalises it; and if he bid others do what he himself never does or attempts to do, what is this but hypocrisy? And may God not justly say to him, "What hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?" (Psal. l. 16, 17.) We see, then, what a narrow line it is,—the very line of which Mr. Hart says, "The space between pharisaic zeal and antinomian security is much narrower and harder to find than most men imagine. It is a path which the vulture's eye hath not seen, and none can show it us but the Holy Ghost." (Preface.)

But you will, perhaps, say, "Then you make the preaching of the precept depend on the feelings of the minister." That is an invidious way of putting the point, and it is neither our mind nor our language. What we say is this, that no man can preach the precept as a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ who has not a gracious experience of the power and spirit of the precept in his own soul. Is not the same thing true of preaching the doctrines of the gospel? Can any man preach the doctrines of the gospel as they should be preached, who has had no gracious experience of the doctrines of the gospel? And is not this all the difference between letter preaching and letter preachers and those who preach the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven? Is not this the main, the real distinction between the two classes of ministers, that the one have no gracious experience of what they preach, and the others have? Now, we carry this same distinction between letter preaching and spiritual preaching into the precept as well as into the doctrines. Can they be separated? Have we not laboured again and again to

show that the precept is as much a part of the gospel as the doctrines and experience of the gospel? If this be so, then the preaching of the precept must stand on precisely the same footing as the preaching of gospel doctrine and gospel experience; and to preach the letter of the precept without a gracious experience of the spirit of the precept is no more preaching the precept as it should be preached than to preach doctrines of which you never felt the power, or experience of which you know only the theory, is to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (2 Tim. ii. 15.) Besides which, look at the inconsistency of a man preaching the precept who himself does not practise it, nor even know under what power and influence it should be performed. Consider the contradiction of a covetous man preaching up liberality; of a worldly professor inculcating, "Love not the world;" of an unforgiving persecutor admonishing to forgiveness; of a light, trifling preacher, full of jests and jokes and foolish anecdotes, exhorting "young men (much more grey-haired ministers) to be soberminded," for all "to put away foolish talking and jesting," and that their "speech should be always seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace unto the hearers." Such men instinctively feel that their hearers would despise, and that justly, such preaching and such preachers. They, therefore, quietly drop, not only the precept itself, as condemning their own conduct, but all allusion to it, and ignore it just as much as if it had neither part nor place in the word of truth. And as many, if not most, of such men's hearers are in precisely the same state, as unwilling to hear the precept enforced and as unable to bear it as their ministers, need we wonder that there should be a silent compact between the pulpit and the pew that the subject should never be introduced at all, and that all mention of it or allusion to it should be considered legal and inconsistent with the doctrines of grace? The consequences of this silent compact may be easily read in the state of many churches professing doctrinal truth,—that they are flooded with carnal professors, who think no more of the precepts of the gospel than of an old almanack, and that even among those who are partakers of the grace of life, vital godliness is, for the most part, at a very low ebb. This sad state of things some writers and preachers have seen and sought to remedy. But how? By rushing into the opposite extreme, and urging the precepts as legal duties, separating them, if not avowedly, yet tacitly, from the spirit and grace of the gospel.

After all this fault-finding and harsh censure, as some will doubtless consider it, may we be allowed simply to declare *our* view of the right way of preaching the precept as a part of the ministry of the gospel of the grace of God? It is this,—that no man can do so, or ought to do so, without a gracious experience of the power of the precept in his own heart. And we will go further still,—that we firmly believe no man can preach the precept with any power, savour, life, or unction, unless he be *at the time* under a divine and gracious influence. Why does the preaching of the precept fall from some men's lips, even good men, hard, dry, and repulsive?

Why does it produce bondage and death instead of life and feeling in the soul of the hearer? Principally, for the best of hearers may be much bound, very cold and dead under the warmest and most savoury preaching, but principally because the preacher himself is not under a heavenly influence when he handles it, and does it more as a duty at the fag-end of his sermon than as a part of his gracious message. But assume that his soul is warmed and melted with the life and power of the blessed Spirit, and is full of tenderness, love, and affection to the Lord and his people, how freely and fully can he exhort, admonish, entreat, and even reprove to love and good works. The people of God who sit under his ministry, for it is chiefly the pastor's office to preach effectually the precept, know the man and his communication. They esteem and love him for his work's sake. He has a place in their hearts and affections, and they look up to him with a mixture of reverence and love. Such a man can speak with authority, and enforce the precept without legality or presumption, as a part of his message from God. His exhortations will not be legal, nor will they fall upon the people's ears and hearts as dry, harsh, or bondageing. They will see and feel that the man speaks under a gracious power and influence; that he is not binding upon their shoulders heavy burdens which he himself will not touch with one of his fingers; that if he exhort to love and union, he does so because love is in his heart; if he call for separation from the world, he is separate himself in spirit from it; if he admonish to every good word and every good work, it is because he is himself desirous to speak and perform them. The grace of God in a man cannot be hidden. If Asher be blessed with children, and be acceptable to his brethren, it is because he dips his foot in oil. (Deut. xxxiii. 24.) As anointed with fresh oil, his very countenance will sometimes shine; (Ps. xcii. 10; civ. 15;) the sweet savour of the knowledge of Christ, like ointment poured forth, will be made manifest in him; (2 Cor. ii. 14; Sol. Song i. 3;) and his heart being melted and softened with the love of God, there will not be a tinge of legality or harshness in his enforcing obedience to the revealed will and word of God. The Lord's tender-hearted people will receive this ministry of the precept, will fall under it, and feel the benefit and blessing of it. Antinomians, evil-doers, open or secret sinners, those at ease in Zion and settled on their lees, the quarrelsome and the contentious, will all make an outcry against this ministry as legal, bondageing, and burdensome. But those whose conscience is tender in the fear of God will, if not at once, yet sooner or later receive it, even though, at times, it cut them very deeply, and reprove their inconsistencies and backslidings. They will feel, at times, very much searched by it, for a power attends it. This ministry of the precept will often find out hidden idols, lay bare indulged inconsistencies, and detect secret snares in which they have been long held, or allowed practices in business or in the family, which have weakened their strength and sadly marred the spirituality of their heart and life. They would resist it if they could, for it so crucifies their flesh; but they must fall under the

power of the word when brought home to their conscience. Nothing more detects hypocrites, purges out loose professors, and fans away that chaff and dust which now so thickly covers our barn floors than an experimental handling of the precept. A dry doctrinal ministry disturbs no consciences. The loosest professors may sit under it, nay, be highly delighted with it, for it gives them a hope, if not a dead confidence, that salvation being wholly of grace they shall be saved whatever be their walk or life. But the experimental handling of the precept cuts down all this and exposes their hypocrisy and deception. It thus takes forth the precious from the vile, and becomes as God's truth. (Jer. xv. 19.)

To do all this, indeed, as it should be done, demands wisdom and grace, such as the Lord only can give. Nor can it be done at all times and seasons. Here the Lord the Spirit can alone help and teach the servants of God. But we can say for ourselves that we have, at times, especially of late years, felt such a holy influence resting upon our spirit that we could preach the precept as freely as the promise; and whilst we never had a deeper sense of our own sinfulness and helplessness and of the freeness and fulness of superabounding grace, yet we could urge upon our own conscience and upon all who loved the Lord the obligation laid upon us by that grace to live and act in all things according to the revealed will of God. We are, then, well convinced, both from the word of God and our own experience in the ministry, that there is a way of preaching the precept in the fullest harmony with every truth of the gospel, and every gracious, tender, and affectionate feeling of the heart; and that the right thing, spoken in the right way, will fall into its right place.

But you will say, "If this be the right way of preaching the precept, how you are limiting the men who should preach it!" With this we have nothing to do. It is not for us to say how many or how few real servants of God there are at all; for your objection equally applies to all preaching and to all preachers. Should any preach the doctrines of the gospel who has not felt their power and influence? Should any preach the experience of the gospel who has not felt it in his own heart? Similarly, should any preach the precepts of the gospel who has not felt their power in his heart, and does not manifest their practical influence in his life? The difference between us and you, supposing there is a difference, is this, that we put preaching the precept precisely on the same footing with preaching the doctrines and experience of the gospel. Now if you deny this, what will be the consequence? That you put asunder what God hath joined together. You allow that a man should not preach the doctrines of the gospel or the experience of the gospel without knowing them for himself; and yet you think that he may preach the precept without a gracious experience of its power, or without living under its practical influence; or else you would strike out of his hand that part of the ministry altogether as legal or unnecessary. The Lord knows that it is neither one nor the other,—not legal, but full of precious gospel; not unnecessary, for we see all around us in divided churches, loose profession, worldly conformity, and the low

ebb to which practical godliness has almost everywhere sunk, the urgent necessity of its being more attended to. But we must wait patiently for the Lord's time and way of bringing it about. A great step would be gained towards it if it were laid upon the heart and conscience of the servants of God to enforce it in the spirit of the gospel. We say "the spirit of the gospel," for there is no use flogging and spurring, scolding and censuring, setting tasks and impositions like an angry schoolmaster with school-boys, or giving extra drill, bread and water, and putting into the black hole, as an officer deals with refractory soldiers. The precept needs the most cautious handling, or in your zeal for it you may soon turn it into the veriest legality, or drift yourself into the general preaching of the day, and getting far, far away from the experience of the Lord's tried and tempted family, may become a nurse for Pharisees. You may take the precept into the pulpit and preach it in such a hard, dry, legal, universal way that a casual hearer might well suppose he had strayed into the wrong chapel, or that you were one of the general dissenters. This will never do, and is as great, if not worse, a fault than not preaching it at all, for to pervert any part of God's truth is worse than to pass it by. Well, then, may we say, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Certainly not the writer of these lines; for bear in mind that it is one thing to see what is spiritual and right, and in some measure strive after it, and another thing to be able to do it. The best of men and ministers must ever see and feel their miserable deficiencies and shortcomings even in the things which they see to be according to the will of God, and which they desire with all their heart to be ever found doing. But we must not lower the standard of divine truth because we ourselves cannot reach it, or handle the word of God deceitfully to please the vitiated palate of ministers or hearers, preachers or professors.

It will be seen from these remarks what are our views of preaching the precept; and as the apostle said of the law, "We know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully," (1 Tim. i. 8,) so we may say of the precept,—the preaching of the precept is good if a man preach it spiritually. But surely there is a vast difference between a man's getting into the pulpit and preaching the precept in a hard, legal, bondage way as a kind of moral duty, whipping up the poor distressed, exercised family of God to a fleshly holiness and to a rigid line of strict practice which he himself never performs, and a man of God setting forth the precept in a spiritual, experimental manner, from a sweet sense of the goodness and mercy of God tasted, felt, and handled in his own soul. The former kind of preaching repels, irritates, provokes, burdens, and distresses the real family of God; the latter, as applied to their hearts and commended to their consciences by the Holy Ghost, softens and melts them, is received in love and affection, and even if it smite them it is in kindness, or if it reprove them it is an excellent oil which does not break their head. A servant of God has to "reprove, rebuke, exhort," but then it must be "with all long-suffering and doctrine;" that is, patient, experimental, gracious teaching. (2 Tim. iv. 2.) He is bidden "to exhort and

rebuke with all authority." (Titus ii. 15.) But, to do this, he must have a strong place in the esteem and affection of the people, and his ministry must be commended to their conscience as attended with unction and power from above. His life and conduct, too, must be consistent with his profession, and he must practise what he preaches, or the people may well say, "Physician, heal thyself." The true pattern of exhortation is given us by the blessed apostle: "For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." (1 Thess. ii. 3, 4.) And again: "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us." (1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.) And again: "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves among you that believe; as ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." (1 Thess. ii. 10, 11, 12.) Backed and recommended by such faithfulness, such a walk and conduct, such a tender, fatherly affection, we should feel no more bondage under the preaching of the precept than we should under the preaching of the doctrines and experience of the gospel. But to sit and hear every and any whipper-snapper who has just jumped from the counter into the pulpit, after being ground in the academical mill, exhorting and exhorting as if he were a Paul, or some poor legal, blind pharisee whipping and spurring, or some loose liver reproving and rebuking, or some graceless preacher admonishing to every good word and work, in whom a microscope would not detect one good word or one good work from one year's end to another—who that knows anything of doctrine, experience, or precept, in their vital influence and power, would not turn away with disgust from such preaching and such preachers? Who ever commissioned them to preach God's word? If he had sent them they would preach it faithfully; and then, like a fire, it would burn up the chaff which gathers round them, and, like a hammer, would break into repentance and contrition rocky hearts now hardened under them. (Jer. xxii. 28, 29.)

We would close up our views on this part of our subject with one question to the dear family of God. Do you feel any bondage in reading the precepts as they stand in the epistles of the New Testament? We can say for ourselves that we have felt as much sweetness in the precepts as in any other part of those blessed epistles. If, then, the precept is preached as we find it in the epistles, and by men of God under the power and influence of the same blessed Spirit, it will meet with the same acceptance, and be received as a part of the same gospel. If it be otherwise, there is a fault somewhere, and whose fault that is let them search and find who would not willingly be deceived.

IV. And now for a few words on our last point, the place of the precept in the *heart and life* of the saint of God. We have said so much on its place in the heart, as attended with light, life, liberty, and love, that we should only fall into wearisome repetition were we to go over that ground again. If it have no place in our heart it is to us at present but a dead letter, and will either be legalised or neglected.

But if it have a place in our *heart* it will have a place in our *life*. The heart is the first seat of all obedience: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you;" (Rom. vi. 17;) "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thess. ii. 13.) Now, from this obedience of heart, this effectual working of the word of God in those that believe, spring all the fruits of practical godliness. The word of his grace, coming into the heart with a divine power, has a cleansing, purifying efficacy. "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." (John xv. 3.) But the effect of this is to produce an abiding in Christ. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing." (John xv. 4, 5.) "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." (John xv. 7, 8.) We thus see that Christ is the source of all fruitfulness, and that only as we abide in him can we bring forth fruit to his praise. But we abide in him by his words abiding in us, for they are spirit and life. (John vi. 63.) He himself is our life, (John xvi. 6; Col. iii. 4,) and he has most graciously promised, "Because I live ye shall live also." (John xiv. 19.) As our life, he is the life of the precept as well as the life of the promise, for only as he liveth in us can we live by the faith of him, (Gal. ii. 20,) whether it be to believe or to obey, to do or to suffer, to stand or to walk, to fight or to overcome. Sadly should we miss the mark, grievously should we mistake the way, should we lay on the creature a hair's-breadth of will or power. "Without me ye can do nothing," finds a responsive echo in every believing heart. And yet he does work in his people both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and, by the gentle constraints of his love, enables them not to live to themselves but to him who died for them and rose again. (Phil. ii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) His word has a place in their heart, and where this is the case it has an influence over their life. It separates them from the world and the spirit of it; makes and keeps their consciences alive and tender in the fear of God; produces uprightness and integrity of conduct; extends its influence to the various relationships of life; subdues pride, covet-

ousness, selfishness, and contentiousness; softens and meekens the spirit; gives tender feelings and gracious affections; fosters prayer, meditation, and spirituality of mind; and makes itself manifest in the general life, walk, and conversation, that there is a grace in the precept as well as a grace in the promise, and that there is a glorifying God in our body and in our spirit which are God's. (1 Cor. vi. 20.)

Our task is done. We have attempted, however weakly and imperfectly, to unfold the spiritual nature of the precepts of the New Testament as a part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Lord graciously pardon all that he has seen amiss in our interpretation of his mind and will; and, so far as it is agreeable to his sovereign good pleasure, may he commend to the conscience and apply to the heart of our readers his precious truth, that, like his own inspired Scripture of which it is an exposition, it may be "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Tim. iii. 16.)

Obituary.

SOME OF THE LAST WORDS OF THE LATE MR. J. T. SMITH,
OF PETERBOROUGH, MINISTER.

At one time he said, "Read me that hymn,

"Heaven is that holy, happy place,
Where sin no more defiles."

At another time he said, "The Lord has enabled me to do what I have long wanted to do, that is, to pray for my enemies. I feel now like Stephen of old, I can say, 'Lay not this sin to their charge.'"

Another time he said many times over,

"Hail, sovereign love, that first began."

Another time he said, "They want me to settle my little earthly affairs, but I want everything of a spiritual matter settled first; then I know everything else will drop in the right place." Another time he said, respecting his earthly affairs, "They want to hurry me; but I am waiting for God's guidance." Many times he would repeat,

"For mercies countless as the sands
Which daily I receive;"

then he would add, "I desire to thank God for the kindness done to my poor body."

On leaving him for a short time to go to chapel, he said, "Do give my kind love to all the dear children of God, and tell them my last days are my very best days; tell them I am now living on the truths I have been enabled to preach." I am sure the church of God lay very near and dear to his heart. Another time he said, "Be assured that when this breath has left the body, I shall be in glory," such assurance he had at times of his interest in Christ.

He always had had a great fear of death; but it was now all taken away. He said, "The swelling of Jordan I have so much dreaded; but I can now meet it with pleasure." Once he said, "This heart and flesh fail." I said, "Yes; but God is the strength of your heart and your portion for ever." He replied, "That's it."

Another time he said, "Is it not wonderful? Here I lie as happy and as comfortable as I can well wish to be. My bed has not been made for such a time, but the Lord makes my bed. I lie as soft and as comfortable as though it was made every day. How good the Lord is!" Many different times he said, "You can't think how happy I am; I think I never felt so happy in all my life." "O!" he would say, "it is good to be brought here."

A few days before he died, he took my hand and pressed it, and said, "I am very happy and comfortable, for the Lord is round about me. He won't let Satan harass me." And he waved his poor hand.

Another time, when he had scarcely spoken all day, a little before twelve at night, he said, "Now I feel a little revived, I want to give you a little instruction about my funeral;" and this he did with much composure. He felt quite satisfied respecting the dear children. Many times he would say, "I have left them in the Lord's hands, and I feel confident they will be taken care of and well provided for."

He always seemed to express much thankfulness for what was done for him, and was often much in secret prayer to God, not able, at times, to talk much, owing to the disease.

The last night he was here, he was most of the night very restless. I said, "You can't find a place of rest; but I trust you will soon rest on the bosom of Jesus." He said, "Yes; but this is the conflict. Pray for me." I was enabled to lift up my heart to God on his behalf, that the Lord would cut short his work.

About five o'clock in the morning he had a severe struggle for a few minutes, expecting every minute he would go off. After much sickness he revived again, and several times asked for his medicine, and then a little brandy and water. I said to him, "I hope the Lord is precious?" His answer was, "More so." He said very few words after this; but a short time before he died, I said, "What a mercy it is your senses are retained!" He looked up, and said, "Yes, I am surrounded with mercies." At another time he waved his hand and said, "I am so happy; for the Lord is all round me."

This I would also add; his heart and hand were always open to them that needed, whether in the church or out of the church.

At half-past seven in the morning, January 10th, 1865, he quietly fell asleep in Jesus, without a sigh or a groan.

Alice Newell.

[The above account truly gladdened my heart, as I well knew and truly sympathised with the deceased in his trials and afflictions.

A few words, perhaps, as to my first acquaintance and connection with him may not be uninteresting. In 1858, I received a letter from him, he being a perfect stranger to me, mentioning his exercises about remaining in the Church of England. He was then vicar of Winterton, near Brigg, Lincoln-

shire, worth, perhaps, from £200 to £250 a year. I liked the general tone of sincerity which breathed through his letter, and invited him to come and spend a few days with me at Stamford, as I knew that conversation was a far better medium of communication than correspondence. He accordingly came, and, as I expected, I found him remarkably sincere and tender about doing wrong; but of a warm, determined spirit, and with little personal experience of either law or gospel. I felt myself, therefore, placed in a trying position. I hoped, however, from his great sincerity and his readiness to make any sacrifice for it, that the life of God was in him. His views doctrinally of truth were sound and clear, and I could gather from his conversation that he was bold and unflinching in preaching them, to the no small offence of the leading people in his congregation. But I have been so often deceived in men, and fair beginnings have so often proved bad endings, that I am now very slow to receive any one who is not fully commended to my conscience as taught of God. I could not, therefore, give him any counsel one way or the other, except not to sin against his conscience. Indeed, he did not need my counsel, as he had already written to the bishop to resign his living. I found he had no private property, and that a small income by his wife he had given up to a relation. I felt deeply for him, as seeing before him such a sea of difficulties, and he a raw, inexperienced mariner, leaving a peaceful harbour for a stormy ocean. If I had been fully persuaded of his being under the teachings and guidings of the blessed Spirit, I could have comforted and encouraged him; but lacking a clear testimony, and having only a hope, I could say but little. All I could say was this, "God has taken care of me both in providence and in grace, and he can do as much for you. When I left the Church of England, I had not a penny, except a little I had saved in the days when I had a considerable income, nor the prospect of any. And now I am living in a comfortable house of my own, and have never wanted a shilling." We parted very friendly. I lent him a volume of Huntington's works to take home with him, and soon received the following letter:

"Winterton Vicarage, Brigg, Oct. 11th, 1858.

"My dear Sir,—I am thankful to say that I reached my home in safety, on Saturday night; nor should I feel comfortable did I abstain from saying how pleasing the remembrance of my visit to Stamford is to me. Though I was not in such circumstances as to be able to ask advice about an immediate step, yet, your committing me to the care, protection, and guidance of the Lord was a course that must be right and safe at all times. I must not forget to state what a rich treat I have received in the perusal of Huntington's 'Bank of Faith.' It proves eminently that the God of believers is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. As I was unable to say so little by word of mouth to you respecting the path in which I have walked, I shall perhaps trouble you ere long with a short account of what has passed within me. To be sure I am only adding to your already heavy labours by such an act, but as I seem to have been drawn towards you, I am audacious enough to think that I may trespass on your kindness and forbearance.

"That peace may be to your house, and all that dwell therein, is the sincere wish of,
"Yours, my dear Sir, most sincerely and truly,

"J. T. SMITH."

In the early spring of 1859 he quitted his living, and came to reside at Stamford for the benefit, I believe, of my ministry and personal intercourse. Here, again, I felt myself placed in a most trying position. I should have much liked to ask him to preach, as I was often ill, and wanted help; and some of the people wished to hear him. But two things held me back: 1. I was not fully clear about his call by grace, still more about his call to the ministry. 2. It would have been said, as indeed it was, that he had come to Stamford for me to ordain him. On one or two occasions, however, he spoke on a week evening for me, and as he had a good gift, a bold delivery, and a beautiful voice, he took much with some of the people. During his stay at Stamford he had some remarkable interpositions in providence in answer to prayer, which much encouraged him.

After some time he was invited to Peterborough to take the charge of a church and congregation in a newly-repaired chapel, where three causes, or perhaps to speak more correctly, three parties had united themselves together. He had been previously baptized, but not by me or in any way connected with my church. He could not, perhaps, have gone to any place where grace, wisdom, and judgment were more needed to guide his steps. And here he was full of sincerity, disposed to put down with strong hand whatever he believed was wrong, fearing no man's face; bold and most decided in his declarations, but warm in temper, and lacking that judgment which under his circumstances was so needful. In some of his movements I could not see with him, nor could I justify some of his words and acts. But we were always very friendly, and he never wavered, I believe, in his esteem and affection for me. This is the more remarkable, as many men would have taken offence at my not standing more fully by him, or not manifesting more sympathy with him, as a brother seceder and a brother minister. It was not that I did not feel for and with him, for I felt much for him in his trials and afflictions; but there was much said and done by him of which I could not approve, and when that is the case I never can stand by any man, be he who he may. Besides which, I felt that I did not understand sufficiently the state of men and things with which he was connected to be a fair judge of matters. Some to whom he was most opposed I had personally known, and others whom he most warmly received have since proved themselves to be altogether out of the way. I therefore judged that my best and wisest course was to stand apart from all the strife, and to watch and wait the result. Indeed, whenever we talked of his church divisions, he used to say, "None can know how matters are at Peterborough who is not in them." I therefore wish to be silent upon them.

In 1863, he had a most severe and unexpected stroke in the loss of his wife, to whom he was much attached. She died in childbed, and left him with three little children. Soon after, his own health began to fail. He had always a consumptive appearance, and it showed itself in him in a peculiar and very deceptive form, manifesting itself in the throat with hoarseness, and not so much in the chest. He could, therefore, scarcely believe his complaint was so serious, and almost to the last entertained hopes of recovery. Though his chapel had become much thinned, and some of his best supporters had left, still the Lord wonderfully appeared for him in his providence, and raised up help for him in a remarkable way. Though never really separated, for I felt deeply for him, and always manifested it to him, yet as I could not sanction all his proceedings, there was a little suspension of intercourse between us. He sometimes, however, came over to see and hear me, and always manifested much friendship and affection, which I reciprocated, and never treated him with coldness or distance, for I much liked the man, though I did not like all his ways. But in the autumn of 1864, I left Stamford, and saw afterwards but little of him. He gradually grew worse in health, and lost his voice from the affection in the throat, which of course put an end to his ministry. He was most tenderly and affectionately nursed by a member of his church, the writer of the above account of his last days. I understand that on his death-bed he acknowledged and lamented his warmth of spirit, though his views were not altered as to the general circumstances. As I always hoped well of him, admired his great sincerity of heart and integrity of life, for none could find a blemish there, though I never had that full union of spirit with him which I have had with many others, it rejoiced me that the poor dear man, after all his trials and afflictions, made so good an end, and is entered into his eternal rest. His name and memory thus leave a sweet savour on my spirit, and will, I believe, on others also, for he was much beloved by the few who continued under his ministry, when, for various reasons, others had withdrawn from it.—J. C. P.]

THE end of the afflictions of the saints is the glory of God, and therefore they ought to be precious to us."—*Old Bible*, 1610.

NOVEMBER 1, 1865.

THE GOSPEL STANDARD.

NOVEMBER, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

TRUE AND FALSE TRUST.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST PROVED TO BE THE REAL OBJECT
OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

BY THE LATE JOHN RUSK.

“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.”—MIC. vii. 5.

(Continued from page 312.)

But again. It is very right to put confidence in a guide. But who is this Guide that we are to put confidence in? Why, it is no mere man, no creature Saviour; but it is God-man. Not two Persons, but two natures in one Person, Immanuel, God with us. This is our Guide, and we are to put all our confidence in him. But let me prove all this from the unerring word of God. Then it will be evident that the Lord Jesus Christ is our confidence, the right and true Object of it. Take particular notice of Ps. lxxv. 5: “By terrible things in righteousness wilt thou answer us, O God of our salvation; who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, and of them that are afar off upon the sea.” “But,” say you, “how do you know that David here alludes to the Second Person in the Trinity?” I answer I am sure that he does; and so you will find if you carefully read the first five verses in this psalm, and compare the fourth verse with what Paul says in his Epistle to the Hebrews: “O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come. Iniquities prevail against me. As for our transgressions, thou shalt purge them away.” David was a prophet, and he could see that the Messiah would become incarnate, and that he should purge away sin; and Paul says that he did: “When he had by himself purged our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.” Now if you read the psalm, you will find that it is the same Person that purged our sins or transgressions who is the confidence of all the ends of the earth.

Again. That the Lord Jesus Christ is our confidence is clear from Prov. iii. 26: “For the LORD shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken;” and if you begin at the 11th verse you will find that it is the Lord Jesus Christ that he is speaking of.

Having proved him to be the Object of our confidence, I am now to prove that he is our Guide. He is expressly called our Guide in

Luke: "And thou child shalt be called the Prophet of the highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." Here Zechariah is speaking of John; and then he tells us what the ways of the Lord Jesus are: "To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." Now, seeing that this is our Guide, who knows every step of the way we have to travel in this wilderness world, and has all power in heaven and on earth, here we are to put confidence. He is the Father's gift to us for this very end and purpose. Hence God the Father, speaking by the prophet Isaiah, says, "Behold, I will give him for a witness to the people, for a leader and a commander to the people;" "And the Lord shall guide thee continually," &c.; which shows the constant need we have of such a Guide, and that we cannot guide ourselves. Yes, we shall need his guidance all our journey through; and this is promised. Hence the psalmist David says, "This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our Guide even unto death." What an encouragement it would be to you if literally you had a journey to go, and though you knew nothing of the road and were altogether defenceless, yet you had a guide well acquainted with every step, well armed against every enemy, and one that would let you want for nothing. "Yes," say you, "this would be a great comfort." Well, this is our case spiritually. Our Guide instructs us and teaches us in the way we should go, and guides us with his eye. See how he led Abraham, the father of the faithful. Abraham went out, not knowing whither he went. How was it, then, that he went right? Why, he had this Guide, and put confidence in him, and he led him to the land of Canaan. He also led Isaac and Jacob; and Jacob called upon this Guide, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall the Lord be my God," &c. And God promised that he would: "Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again to this land; for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." And Asaph says, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory." The wicked have no judgment in their goings; but God's family have, because they have this Guide; for "the meek he will guide in judgment; the meek he will teach his way;" and his way certainly is walking and living by faith, and not by sight.

There are three blessed places that he guides us to, even in this wilderness world below: 1, as I told you before, in the way of *peace*, which proves that we are pardoned and justified; 2, into *rest*: "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls,"—rest from the burden of sin, and from all legal labour to please God; 3, to partake of *living waters*: "He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them." These are the streams that make glad the city of our God; and the Lord will lead us again and again to these

waters while here below, and in glory above he will lead us also, for "the Lamb in the midst of the throne will feed them and lead them to living fountains of water," &c. Therefore put confidence in this Guide.

I now come to the last part of our text, which, instead of keeping the door of our mouth, I shall prove that it is right to tell all that we can, and keep nothing back from her that lieth in our bosom; which I shall take up in three particulars. 1st, who or what is intended by her that lieth? 2nd, what are we to understand by bosom? and, 3rd, treat a little of what we are to tell her; and so conclude. First, then, who or what is intended by her that lieth? I must acknowledge that there is a hard knot in what I have laid down, yet I hope that the Lord will never suffer me to be wise above what is written, but that he may ever guide me by his Spirit into all essential truth.

Then observe; by the "her," I would understand the Lord Jesus Christ. Say you, "He never goes by such a name, or by such an appellation?" To this I answer, that you are wrong; for he really does; and I hope to prove it: "Doth not wisdom cry, and understanding put forth her voice?" Who is intended by wisdom and understanding in this verse? I answer, Christ; and if you read the chapter through you will find that it can be applied to no one else. Hence Wisdom says: "By me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." (Prov. viii. 15, 16.) But I need not labour to prove this, seeing that it is allowed by good men on all hands, that it is Christ speaking in this chapter. I never knew any one deny this; and in this very chapter the appellation "her" is given to Wisdom, or Christ; and twice the word "she" is mentioned: "She standeth in the top of high places; she crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors." And if you read the 9th verse, you will find this appellation twelve times: "Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars, she hath killed her beasts, she hath mingled her wine, she hath also furnished her table; she hath sent forth her maidens; she crieth upon the highest places of the city. Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled," &c. You will also find it nine times in chap. iii.: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom," &c. She is more precious than rubies, and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."

Now, everything that is in these chapters is applied to "her," or "she," or "wisdom," which is Christ, is very easily to be proved as only belonging to the Saviour in other parts of the holy Scriptures.

1. "Wisdom cries, and understanding puts forth her voice," and "the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God and live." "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice," &c.

2. "Wisdom hath builded her house." The house is the Church; and by the word "hath" in the past tense, it is shown that the whole work was completed in God's eternal decrees, for he calleth things that are not as though they were. Hence it is said that he rejoiced in the habitable parts of his earth, and his delights were with the sons of men; and this was before the foundation of the world, or ever man was made. The house, I said, is the church of God. Take it from the apostle Paul: "But Christ, as a Son, over his own house, whose house are we," &c. (Heb. iii. 6.)

3. "She hath hewn out her seven pillars." Seven is a perfect number; and I do believe these seven pillars signify Christ anointed, having the sevenfold gifts and graces without measure. Hence you read, "Who is this that cometh out of the wilderness, like pillars of smoke, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?" He is also called the pillars of the chariot; the chariot being his willing people, and he is the pillar that bears them up. His legs are called pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold.

4. "She hath killed her beasts." This is Christ as a sacrifice, called the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world; the fatted calf that fed the prodigal, &c.

5. "She hath mingled her wine." The wine is his love: "Thy love is better than wine." Mingling shows that the cross goes with it, as in another text: "All thy garments smell of myrrh," that is sweet, "aloes," that is bitter; and so we find this wine to be mingled.

6. "She hath also furnished her table." The table is the heart. Read 2 Cor. iii. 3: "The fleshy tables of the heart;" but the table is furnished in himself, for he is our provision.

7. "She hath sent forth her maidens," or gospel preachers. Hence Christ tells them: "Go, preach the gospel to every creature," &c.

8. "She is more precious than rubies;" and Peter says, "Unto you which believe he is precious."

9. "All the things thou canst desire are not to be compared with her." It is Christ who is the desire of all nations; so that desiring her, or wisdom, is desiring Christ. He is the desire which, when it cometh, is a tree of life.

10. "Length of days is in her right hand;" and Moses says to Israel, "He is thy life," (that is Christ, the Rock,) "and the length of thy days." All the happy, sunshiny days which you and I have are owing to his presence comfortably enjoyed. This makes long days with us.

11. "In her left hand riches and honour," or the outward blessings that come to all in the bounties of providence; for he is heir of all things. "The silver and gold are his, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. He sets up one and putteth down another. He made Abraham, David, Solomon, and Job rich; and not only his own family, which are so here and there one, but all worldly men receive all they have from him, though they know it not.

12. "Her ways are ways of pleasantness." Have we knowledge which is pleasant to the soul? It is in Christ; "for it is life eternal to know him," &c. It is his words that are said to be pure and

pleasant, the riches of his grace that are pleasant riches, and the fruits of his grace and Spirit are called "pleasant fruits." His fruit is sweet to her taste. (Song vii. 13.) Is it a pleasant thing to the eyes to behold the sun? He is the Sun of Righteousness. Are praises to his name pleasant, and are they comely for the upright? Then David might well say, "The lincs are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

13. "All her paths are peace." I have, I think, in one of my books, fourteen or fifteen of the paths of wisdom mentioned, and peace is conjoined to them all. Paul says, "He is our peace." He made peace by the blood of his cross, and is the sum and substance of all these paths.

14. "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her." This tree of life you have in Rev. xxii. 2; a tree that bare twelve manner of fruits, called expressly the tree of life; and the leaves of this tree were for the healing of the nations.

Now that we may be at a full point that Christ is meant both in Proverbs and the Revelation, let us go to the prophet Isaiah: "But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed." What John calls the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations, the prophet calls the stripes of the Lord Jesus, or his sufferings and death. Thus you see that all these fourteen things in the Proverbs belonging to Wisdom, are in other parts of holy writ applied to the Lord Jesus Christ, wholly and altogether. Solomon says, "She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her," and Paul tells us that Christ is our life; and he speaks also of laying hold: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life," &c.; and happy is every one that retaineth her, and this the Church did in the Song. She held him fast and would not let him go. The King was held in the galleries; and Jacob also told him: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me; and he blessed him there."

(To be concluded in our next.)

WHEN the sacrifice also and ceremony was executed after the ordinance of God in the congregation, the beloved friends of God had not only respect unto the outward thing, but much rather beheld they Christ with the eyes of faith, and thought thus: Behold, the will of God hath ordained to do sacrifice for sin. Now are we all sinners and debtors unto God; insomuch that he hath power and right over us, that, like as the beast which is now slain and offered dieth, and hath his blood shed, even so might God now also kill us all and condemn us for ever. Nevertheless he hath taken us to his mercy and promised us a Seed which should thus die on the cross, and cleanse us with his blood, and with his death restore us unto life; which thing no doubt shall as surely come to pass as this beast is slain and offered now afore our eyes. And like as the blood is sprinkled over the people for the bodily cleansing, so shall the blood of Christ be sprinkled upon our souls, &c. And out of such a thought and faithful consideration of the sacrifices grew repentance and sorrow for their sins, a gladness, praise, comfort, and thanksgiving unto God the merciful Father.—*Coverdale.*

MY COVENANT WILL I NOT BREAK.

My dear Sister in the Lord Jesus,—I was glad to receive a line from you, and to find that your soul is still alive, although you are walking among thorns. What a mercy it is to be made a sensible sinner, and so kept from day to day, and made thereby to flee to Jesus, the lost sinner's only hope and last shift, but sure foundation and defence.

I should have written to you before this, only I waited opportunity, or else had no mind; nor do I write now because I have much to say of any importance, but because I feel a love to you for the truth's sake, which I cannot but be persuaded you possess. And,

“ Never shall the foe confound thee
While the truth maintains thy fight.”

Although your trials seem severe when viewed by your carnal reason, yet, beheld in the light of truth, by precious faith, they are light as a feather, compared with our desert and compared with the sufferings of our dear Lord Jesus or with that glory which we, through grace, expect; and their duration is but for a moment.

“ Trials may press of every sort;
They may be sore, they must be short.
We now believe, but soon shall view
The greatest glory God can show.”

You are deprived of the ordinances of God's house, but you are not deprived of the God of ordinances. Nothing can deprive you of him. He is nearer to you than you can be to yourself; nor water, nor fire, nor devils, nor men, nor place, nor sin, nor life, nor death, nor eternity can deprive you of the love of your heavenly Father in Christ Jesus your dear Lord; your doubting, fearing, fainting, halting cannot alter it. You may have broken peace, broken bones, or a broken heart, but not a broken new covenant. No; bless his dear name, his covenant stands for ever sure: “My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my mouth.” Jesus is just the same now as he was the first time you tasted his love. Still hang the whole weight of your concern upon him, body, soul, husband, children, world, church, friends, foes, money, poverty, sickness, life, death, sin, and all; and my soul for yours if you shall sink.

“ To trust him endeavour; the work is his own;
He makes the believer, and gives him his crown.”

“ He has help'd in every need;
This emboldens us to plead;
Yea, his love and power are such,
You can never ask too much.”

Pray if you can or cannot speak. Be bold to believe and venture wholly on him, for he is thy Saviour, thy God, thy Friend. I know your answers beforehand; but let your faith answer me, and you shall find him as I tell you. And remember one who has said,

“ This answers all questions: The Lord will provide.”

Your heart will tell me I cannot do all you say. I wish I could. I know it, my sister, I know it. The Lord help you to take my counsel, and you shall find the goodness of it.

My love to your dear husband and all friends, And believe me,
Ever yours in the love of the Gospel of Christ.

London, Feb. 9th, 1844.

JAS. SHORTER.

P.S.—Through rich mercy, we are all pretty tolerable in health bodily, and I sometimes feel the Lord is with us indeed and of a truth. I am favoured with a few choice friends, and we all, like you, know the path of tribulation, more or less. Those who know it not are no companions for me.—J. S.

A WEDDING WISH.

KIND Father, grant my wish sincere!
My brother bless, my sister dear;
O smile upon their marriage day,
And guide them through life's thorny way.

Pour out thy Spirit, gracious Lord,
On these the purchase of thy blood;
Their union bless, and grant that they
May dwell in love and peace each day.

Thy boundless love, thy tender care,
Thy holy arm for them make bare.
O manifest thy faithful love,
And let them never from thee rove.

O keep them, Lord, beneath thy eye,
And do their every need supply;
Through life support, protect, defend;
Be thou their Guardian, Guide, and Friend.

If prosperous should be their way,
O suffer not their feet to stray;
If keen adversity they prove,
Let all be sweeten'd by thy love.

May this be their united aim,
On earth to glorify thy name.
Thus may they live in love, in faith,
And, dying, triumph over death.

Oct. 19th, 1844.

M. B.

WHATEVER notions are lodged in the head, they do not break the heart; and while that remains unbroken, free-will and self-righteousness will be set to work, though never so secretly, to procure us salvation. These trials are like some kindly storm at sea that drives us into port. The soul thus tossed with tempests is compelled to wait more favourable gales; yea, to embark on the bottom of free and sovereign grace alone. Christ, the only Master Almighty, Watch, Defender, and Pilot of this Vessel; the Holy Spirit, alone supplying every wind by which we move to our desired port. He provides us, when we are compelled to ride at anchor, with that of "a good hope through grace;" and trial proves it an anchor both sure and steadfast.—Hardy.

REVIEW.

*The Faith of Rahab the Harlot. A Sermon Preached on Sunday Morning, June 18th, 1865, by Mr. James Wells, at the Surrey Tabernacle, Borough Road.**

MOVING on in our own quiet track, and simply seeking, so far as the Lord gives us grace and wisdom, the spiritual edification of our readers, we rarely take any public notice of the various events and movements which are passing in what is called the religious world. Several reasons combine to induce us to observe this course, and to close our pages against the introduction into them of religious news. First, we have long seen the evil of that spirit of gossip and news-mongering everywhere so prevalent, and are therefore determined, with God's help, not to do anything to foster it. Secondly, we are well convinced that if we once opened our pages to these subjects, as we could not always secure truthful and faithful accounts, being necessarily dependent for them upon the communications of correspondents, we should soon be overwhelmed with a flood of replies, explanations, contradictions, &c., which we could not well reject without unfairness, or insert without these weeds stifling our crop. But, thirdly, we have found in our own experience that in all this "news of the churches," as it is called, there is little else, spiritually viewed, but barrenness and death. It may, indeed, for the moment amuse our carnal mind, and gratify that love of news which is so deeply imbedded in us all, to read what is going on in the churches; and could we believe the truth of the glowing accounts thus presented to our view, and that the Spirit of God was really at work in the various chapel-openings, anniversaries, tea-meetings, &c. recorded, it would be matter of rejoicing to our inmost soul. But when we know, not only by our own observation, but the general confession of all possessed of spiritual discernment, at what a low ebb vital godliness everywhere is, and see how shallow and superficial, to say the least, the religion contended for in these "newsy" periodicals is, what barrenness and death then appear stamped upon the whole! We do not impute wilful deception to the writers and collectors of this religious news, nor doubt the truth of their statements, as recording certain events and facts. But what we doubt is whether the power, the presence, and the manifest blessing of the Spirit of God rest upon these chapel-openings, &c., as they represent and would make us believe. Truth is all of a piece, consistent with itself and with the word of God. It is the simple who believeth every word. (Prov. xiv. 15.) We are bidden to prove all things, and hold fast only that which is good; (1 Thess. v. 21;) not to believe every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they are of God. (1 John iv. 1.) We are bound, therefore, to try and examine the accounts thus presented to us, and hold them up to the searching

* We think it right to mention that as our Review, though sent to the office, could not be inserted in the September No., we have re-written nearly the whole, especially the first part.

light of truth. When, then, we read the lavish flatteries bestowed upon minister after minister,—a point that we shall have presently to speak more upon, the glowing colouring, to say the least, thrown over almost every recorded event, the suppression of everything unfavourable,* and the strong party spirit pervading the whole, we may well ask the question, Is this scriptural? Does the word of truth sanction this giving flattering titles to men? (Job xxxii. 22.) Paul could say, “Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness;† God is witness; nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others.” (1 Thess. ii. 5, 6.) Can these time-serving publications, for so we must call them, filled as they are with the grossest flattery, say the same? Are the Acts of the ancient Apostles written on the same plan as the acts of the modern apostles? Does the Holy Ghost ever lavish praises upon the gigantic abilities of Paul, the pathetic eloquence of Peter, the sweet consolation which distilled from the lips of Barnabas? We know that these men of God were thus endowed, for they made it manifest in every place by the sweet savour they carried with them of the knowledge of Christ. But our modern apostles—what should we know of their gifts or their graces, their gigantic abilities, their pathetic eloquence, their sermons so full of consolation, and the blessings which fall in such copious showers with every sermon unless we were told so in the pages of some religious periodical?

We shall, doubtless, be considered by many very severe thus to speak of these religious newspapers, for they are really nothing else; and very bigoted and narrow-minded, because we cannot receive with implicit faith the glad tidings which they bring of the power and presence of the Lord being in their midst. To justify, therefore, ourselves in thus speaking of the religious intelligence presented for our acceptance, we will give some extracts from a periodical calling itself the “Gospel Guide;” and let us see into what paths of truth and blessedness it would lead us were we to follow its guidance.

Mr. Wells has lately removed, with his church and congregation, to a new chapel, and great doings, according to our “Gospel Guide,” occurred in connection with this event. The glory, indeed, of these great doings was sadly marred by the withdrawal of two leading ministers in the connection, who had undertaken to preach at the opening of the “New Surrey Tabernacle,” in consequence of the sermon at the head of the present article; but there was present a considerable array of ministers both from town and

* As a striking instance of this, a religious weekly periodical, called the “Gospel Guide,” to which we shall soon more fully refer, has suppressed the speeches and proceedings at Mr. Foreman’s Jubilee Meeting, simply because they were unfavourable to Mr. Wells. How much more honest is the public press, which gives both sides of every question with admirable impartiality.

† What a light do the flatteries, on which we shall presently more fully enter, throw upon this expression! We never saw its meaning so clearly before, or understood the connection between “flattering words” and “a cloak of covetousness.”

country; and amongst them sat one named S. Cozens,* who thus records in the "Gospel Guide" his impression and opinion of Mr. Wells:

"Mr. Editor,—As I sat in the New Surrey Tabernacle on Wednesday afternoon, I thought of David. I thought there had been great men in every age of the world, but the ages have rarely, if any age has ever, produced so great a man as David. And I could not help putting David and Mr. Wells together in my thoughts. David was a great shepherd, who, in defence of his father's flock, slew a lion and a bear. And is not Mr. Wells a great shepherd of his Father's sheep? Does he not ministerially slay the lion and the bear, and rescue the lambs of Christ's fold? He was a great soldier; he was brave in battle. And is not Mr. Wells a good soldier? Many giant sinners have been laid low in the dust of death by the pebble of conviction from the sling of truth. He was a great saint; his devotion to his God was without a parallel in the history of the church. And is not Mr. Wells a great saint? If in the bowels of mercy, he suspends the moral government of God to cover the supposed fault of another, is he thereby the minister of sin? God forbid. Mr. Wells's life does not suspend the moral law. Where is there a more consistent man in the world? I said his charity covered a supposed fault, and I use the word 'supposed' because there was no more *sin* in the *act* of her faith, than there was in the *act* of Abraham's faith. If God loves mercy rather than sacrifice, then he loved the mercy of *Rahab*, rather than the sacrifice of the *spies*. David was a great *philosopher*. Who, like the Psalmist, made all the works of God to praise him? And is not Mr. Wells rapidly increasing in the knowledge of the philosophy of nature? Probably he can sing the 8th Psalm with as much astronomical pathos, as did the sweet singer of Israel. He was a great *preacher*, he preached the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow, as few men enter into those solemn and sublime subjects. And surely Mr. Wells preaches the atonement and its glorious results in a way that few, if any, can equal."

This comparison of David and Mr. Wells is pretty strong, and the absurd remarks upon Mr. Wells's "great philosophy," and his "astronomical pathos"† are supremely ridiculous. But now read,

* This Mr. Cozens published some years ago, a work called "The Teacher's Thought Book," in which he strongly advocates the eternal Sonship of Christ; but, during the late controversy, wrote a most violent pamphlet, in which he as strongly denies it. What are we to think of such a man's testimony either for or against a doctrine, or a minister?

† What ridiculous, bombastic language! How lowering to David and to the holy inspiration under which he wrote Psalm viii., to call it "his astronomical pathos!" and how irreverent to compare Mr. Wells's flimsy smattering of astronomy with the deep views which David had of the humiliation and exaltation of the Son of God in Psalm viii., as interpreted by the apostle, Heb. ii. A few more words upon this.

We cannot measure the extent of Mr. Wells's "astronomical pathos," but we can gauge pretty well from the following extracts from his sermon preached at the opening of his new chapel his astronomical *bathos* (depth). He thus dazzles with his astronomical learning the eyes of his admiring audience:

"'And the posterity of Abraham shall shine forth,' saith the Saviour, yea, even 'as the sun in the kingdom of their father.' 'So shall thy seed be as the stars.' Now don't say one word against high-doctrine people; after all, would not you like to be one of these stars? How you would laugh at the man that threatens to pull one down; how you would laugh at the man that throws stones at the stars; how you would laugh at the man that would attempt to stop a star in its course! So these heavenly stars, they all move in their destined orbits; but to use a few astronomical terms, they are sometimes in their detriment, and sometimes in their fall very low; sometimes in their peregrinations very wandering, sometimes stationary, can go neither backwards nor forwards; sometimes in fortification, and sometimes in exaltation;

ye who fear God, and desire to walk in all honesty and faithfulness before man, the following extract, as a specimen of the way in which one minister can flatter another; and then ask yourselves, Is this gospel guidance? Does the Spirit of truth, who guides into all truth, ever guide tongue or pen into the use of such fulsome flattery of any man, whatever be his grace, whatever be his gifts?

"In conclusion, I would say, for one, I am proud of Mr. Wells, for in him we see the patriarch's abstraction from the world, the priest's devotion to the altar of divine service, the prophet's communings with the spirit-world, the apostle's self-abnegation in seeking the good of others; indeed, in him is con-

sometimes in combustion—burnt with fiery trials, and at other times rushing forward in their glorious orbits shining with all the splendours of eternity; when mortality by-and-by shall be stripped from the soul, then shall they shine forth as the stars for ever and ever; rise at the last great day, when mortality shall put on immortality, corruption put on incorruption, weakness put on strength, the natural put on the spiritual, then shall they rise to shine and to set no more."

Let us examine all this display of astronomical knowledge; this, as Mr. Cozens calls it, "vast and classical intelligence." How full it is of wild confusion, not to say the grossest ignorance when fairly examined. The stars which God bade Abraham tell were the fixed stars as seen in the midnight sky, and it was the innumerable multitude of these which he was to look at and measure his seed by. But Mr. Wells destroys all the simplicity and beauty of this interpretation by his absurd comment. The heavenly stars which Abraham was bidden to count have no "destined orbits;" and that is the reason why they are called "fixed," in opposition to the planets which have elliptical orbits, that is, move round the sun in a peculiar circle, called an ellipse, and to the comets, whose orbits are "excentric," that is, ellipses exceedingly prolonged. How absurd, then, to talk of the "destined orbits of the heavenly stars." But his astronomical terms are still more ridiculous, and are either misprints or the most curious mistakes that a man could well make, indeed could not make had he read with the least attention the simplest work on the subject. They are "sometimes in their detriment." There is no such word used in astronomy, nor have we the least idea what he means by it. There is "declination," but that does not suit the sense, and the word "decrement," or decrease, is not an astronomical but a mathematical term. The word "peregrinations" is not an astronomical word, but may be used of the motions of the planets. "Stationary" they never really are, though they appear to us sometimes to be so. What in the world is meant by their being "in fortification" we cannot tell, nor do we believe the preacher himself knows, or what he means by their "exaltation," as opposed to it. What, too, is their "combustion," unless he means the tail of a comet, which we have no reason to believe arises from the comet being, as it were, on fire, blazing away like a burning haystack; nor how "they rush forward in their glorious orbits, shining with all the splendours of eternity," when the excentric orbit of a comet takes it every night more and more out of sight.

We think he must have dipped into some old astrological book—a companion, perhaps, to Moore's Almanac, and its curious hieroglyphics, and jumbled it up with a little smattering of astronomy; enough, however, to astonish the people, and draw from the Editor of the "Gospel Guide" the expression "How spiritually grand!"

There are plenty of cheap and excellent treatises on astronomy. If Mr. Wells thinks he may profitably study such subjects, let him buy one of these, and read it carefully, before he dazzles his audience again with his scientific attainments. Sham knowledge is as contemptible naturally as sham religion is spiritually. If we speak strongly, or even severely, on these points, it is because we are thoroughly disgusted with the late flatteries so profusely heaped upon him, and feel called upon to show their deceptiveness and falsehood; for if we do hate anything, it is "shams."

centrated the zeal of Wicklif, the daring of Luther, the sagacity of Calvin, the imagery of Bunyan, the discrimination of Toplady, and the spirit of the Master."

If your stomach can bear it, do, good reader, read this extract again. "In him we see"—Who are the "*we*"? Was there ever a man or minister, who lived and breathed the breath of life, that combined in himself the patriarch's abstraction from the world, the priest's devotion, the prophet's communings with the spirit-world,* and the apostle's self-denial? Wherever was there one man in whom were concentrated the best qualities of Wicklif, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, Toplady, and all crowned with the spirit of Christ? Does Mr. Cozens really believe what he writes? Is it his calm, deliberate judgment, that Mr. James Wells is that unheard-of paragon of all natural and spiritual excellence, that phoenix who combines in himself the greatest gifts and graces of the greatest saints and divines who ever lived? If he believe this, if this be his serious and deliberate opinion, what amazing ignorance of everything naturally or spiritually great, to think that any one man, and, above all, Mr. James Wells, can combine in himself such a constellation of heavenly gifts—gifts and graces not to be reckoned up by simple addition, but to be calculated by the multiplication-table, for if the shining qualities of ten men meet together in one man, he is not only ten times as great as any one of them, but a hundred times, from the strength and force of their combination and concentration. If he do not believe it, and writes all this bombast merely to please Mr. Wells—who, by-the-by, if he have but the common feelings of an honest man, would, we should think, kick such a flattering article out of his house with both feet—what servile adulation, what fulsome flattery, what mean, wretched *toadying* of a great man in the connection by one of the humbler satellites! Have our readers had enough of it, or shall we trespass too much on their patience by furnishing another extract from the same pen on the same occasion?

"I heartily wish every man of God in London had as beautiful a chapel, as large a church, and as liberal a congregation, as our highly-favoured brother, Mr. J. Wells. That man must indeed be a narrow-souled, lean-hearted, and ill-conditioned being who refuses to join with the Surrey Tabernacle worshippers in singing the 'Hallelujah Chorus.'

"The preacher is almost as fresh and as unctuous as the dewy morn; his physical powers seem unimpaired; his mind is as richly stored with ivine treasures as the coffers of *Craesus* were with gold; his thoughts flow like the rapids of a river; his utterances dance about the green pasture like young roes upon the mountain; his eyes flash with intellectual fire, and his arms appear to wield the sword of his mouth with marvellous effect. Dr. Hugh Allen said to me after the evening service, 'His enunciation is extraordinary.' Indeed, it is, doctor. His declarations are bold and manly; his attestations are

* If we did not know better, we should almost think that Mr. Cozens was tainted with that abomination of our day called "spiritualism;" for the expression, "communing with the spirit-world," is the very language of those modern impostors or necromancers who pretend to converse with the spirits of the dead. What does he mean by the prophets "communing with the spirit-world?" They communed with God; the Spirit of Christ was in them. (1 Pet. i. 11.) But what communing had they with the spirits of the departed? Is this doctrine gospel truth, or go-pel guidance?

clear and convincing; his intelligence is vast and classical; his information is wide and scholastic. He is a prodigy of indomitable perseverance, and of great acquirements. Our young ministers would do well to emulate his assiduousness.

"The deacons are like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot. The Aminadab in the pulpit holds the reins, and the horses without kicking or prancing move on stately, and grandly carrying in the chariot of ordinances a great number of precious souls from the things that are seen to the things that are not seen. God bless them for the active part they have taken in building the temple.

"The church is like a flock of sheep on the high mountains of Israel. That they live and feed in a fat pasture is patent to all spiritual observers. Pharaoh's lean kine could not live among the fatted sheep of the Surrey Tabernacle. Brother Wells's 'bill of fare' is a 'feast of fat things and of wines well refuted,' and therefore it is that his people are fat and flourishing in the courts of our God."

What wretched daubing is this? We do not like to make promises or protestations; but we think we can say, in all honesty, that, sooner than daub any man or men with such untempered mortar, we would never touch pen again. Besides which, what in the world can Mr. Cozens know of the deacons and church of Mr. Wells to warrant such fulsome praise? And when we consider all the circumstances under which such lavish flattery is bestowed upon minister and people, when it was matter of public notoriety that Mr. Wells has advanced and still maintains views of sinless falsehood which have shaken the confidence in him of many of his warmest friends, it makes such conduct more suspicious and more censurable.

Are we wrong, then, in saying that in all such religious news, that is, when dressed out according to the specimen just given—and this is but a sample of the usual spirit given us to drink, though it must be acknowledged that the articles supplied by Mr. Cozens are rather "above proof" in every sense of the term, there is nothing but barrenness and death? What fruitfulness to God or man can there be in flattery? What life in deception? It is well known that Mr. Wells has lately published a sermon which, as we shall by and by show, strikes at the very foundations of truth and honesty, if not common morality. Just at this very juncture, when he stands in such a perilous spot, when he has drawn upon himself the animadversions of the public press, when his most intimate and long-tried friend, Mr. Foreman,* felt himself compelled to decline his engagement to open his new chapel—just at this very crisis, this turning-point, it may be, of Mr. Wells's ministerial career, instead of remonstrating with him on his errors, and thus, perhaps, instrumentally turning him from them, ministers and editors who call themselves men of truth come forward to back him up, and thus confirm and harden him in his views.

But in our desire to show the evils of the present system of reli-

* Mr. Foreman has been condemned, and, what is worse, accused of jealousy as a reason that he would not fulfil his engagement. But we may be sure that, after so long and intimate a friendship of 35 years, he must have been exceedingly pained so publicly to withdraw himself from Mr. Wells; and in our opinion he has acted most properly and creditably to himself in bearing this open, unmistakable testimony against Mr. Wells's grievous errors.

gious intelligence, and the reasons why we so set our face against it, we have rather overrun our mark, which was to review Mr. Wells's sermon on the faith of Rahab. It is indeed no pleasurable task for us to enter upon what will probably prove a very sea of strife; but silence on our part, when the very foundations of truth are assailed, if not absolutely criminal, would at least be interpreted into timidity or acquiescence; either that we were afraid of attacking Mr. Wells, and with him that strong party of ministers and others who stand by him, or that we secretly approved of his views and sentiments. We feel, then, bound to declare our opinion without fear and without flattery. To come, then, without further preface to this now celebrated sermon.

On Lord's day morning, June 18, 1865, Mr. Wells preached a sermon at the Surrey Tabernacle, which was duly published in the "Surrey Tabernacle Pulpit," and therefore, doubtless, not only had his sanction, but passed under his eye for revision for the press. We may fairly, therefore, accept this sermon as a public statement of his deliberate views, and as such it is open to us, as to every other reader, to examine these sentiments by the light of scripture; and, as editors of a religious periodical, to lay before our readers our opinion upon them, if, as becomes our profession, we do so with fairness and impartiality.

The subject of the sermon, as will be seen from the title, is "the Faith of Rahab, the Harlot." The introduction to the sermon contains sound truth well and vigorously expressed. Take, for instance, the following extract:

"But perhaps this does not come exactly to the point; it is God's way of saving the soul that man objects to. God loving a man simply because he would love him, and choosing him simply because he would, and imputing the man's sins to Christ simply because he would, and imputing the work of Christ to him savingly because he would, and preserving that man while in a state of nature simply because he would, and calling him at the appointed moment simply because he would, and dealing with him after he hath called him just as seemeth good in his sight, not as seemeth good in the man's sight, nor as seemeth good in the sight of others, but as seemeth good in his own sight, and keeping him to the end with infallible certainty, and presenting him ultimately on the vantage-ground of victory before the throne; this is that which the spirit of the world hath always hated and still hates. This is the salvation that the world and Pharisees grudge a poor sinner."

Mr. Wells then ably shows how different the case is when God really takes the soul in hand by his grace:

"But let God take a Saul of Tarsus or any other man in hand, and let the Lord break up the foundations of the great deep within that man's heart; let that man's soul be tried with the ten thousand infidelities and unnameable abominations of his heart; let him see and feel himself spiritually as the word of God declares, full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores, no part sound; let a sinner be thus convinced, he will feel that he has not a stone to throw at any one. He will look at what he is, and say, 'What have I to do with other people's sins? I have nothing but sin to call my own.' 'This is a faithful saying, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.' I am the greatest wonder here. I am aware it has been declared that Saul of Tarsus alone can adopt that language, 'I am the chief of sinners;' but it is the language that every real Christian adopts, because every real Christian sees more sin in himself than he can see in all others put

together. And where there is this spirit, then it is that spirit the apostle exhorts to when he says, 'Esteeming each other better than himself.' And the Christian, when he comes to his right mind, is glad to see the grace of God anywhere, let it be wherever it may. He is glad to see the grace of God in Manasseh, in Magdalene, the thief, or anywhere. Yea, so far from the Christian, that knows his own heart and his own state, grudging another his salvation, he rather blesseth God for those wondrous instances given in his word of his grace reaching down to the lowest, taking up the most depraved, the most monstrous, and turning them into kings and priests to God, consecrating them to himself for ever."

Had Mr. Wells confined himself to this simple strain of divine truth, and not launched into views and speculations which he must have known were dubious, not to say dangerous, how much better would it have been for himself and his congregation. But then that would not be Mr. Wells. Unless he can bring forward something new, striking, startling, and, to use a modern term, sensational, it would seem to be poor tame work to himself and the people. It is also but doing Mr. Wells common justice to give another extract in which he disclaims a doctrine as horrid and loathsome, which we fear we shall have occasion to fasten upon him. But let us thus far give him the benefit of his own disclaimer:

"I shall not this morning occupy your time in dwelling (for I shall leave you entirely to your own reflections, lest I should be misunderstood) upon some points that I could have entered into. I will leave you to your own reflections upon the wonderful counsel of God pertaining to this woman, his deep counsel in suffering her so to degrade herself, his deep counsel in placing her in a house that should be just convenient for the spies to come to, his deep counsel in overruling the worst of things to the best of purposes. I will leave you to your own reflections upon this, lest any should go away with an impression that I hold the horrid and loathsome doctrine of doing evil that good may come. I hold no such doctrine, and no child of God ever did, or ever will, or ever can sin from such a motive. I shall, therefore, pass by all the circumstances of original character, and shall simply notice what our text presents, namely, her faith. 'By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not.'

"I shall notice first, *what she believed*; secondly, *her integrity*; thirdly, *her prayer*; fourthly, *her manifold success*."

The first head we shall pass by. Mr. Cozens would probably see in it all the gifts and graces of all the patriarchs, the priests, the prophets, and the apostles, and Wicklif, Luther, Calvin, Bunyan, and Toplady all concentrated in one. But our dim sight sees nothing extraordinary in it; nothing that, either as regards ideas or language, is much above the general average of the leading preachers in his connection. Nay, if we were disposed to be critical, we should seriously object to such a crude, naked statement as the following, which in our judgment does not display the ripe, matured wisdom of the patriarch, the devotion of the priest, the sublime communing of the prophet, and the grace of the apostles, let alone Calvin's sagacity, and Toplady's discrimination:

"Why, if I were the greatest sinner practically that ever walked God Almighty's earth, and if I had been carrying on sin with gigantic force for a thousand years, or even ten thousand years, if I am blessed with a grain of faith in Immanuel, my sins are swallowed up, the devil defeated, my soul saved, grace prevailing, the truth made good, the Saviour triumphant, God glorified, and that for ever."

Now, we do not say that a man who has been "carrying on sin with gigantic force for a thousand years" would not be saved by a grain of faith in Immanuel. His precious blood, God's name be for ever praised, "cleanseth from all sin." But what is there said in this extract about repentance, confession, and forsaking of sin? What of broken bones and a guilty conscience, of the floods that such a saved sinner must have to wade through before salvation was sealed on his breast? As it now stands, the impression left by it would be simply this, that a man might live in all manner of sin all his life, and then a grain of faith would be all he would want to save him at the last without repentance, confession, or a broken heart. We do not say that Mr. Wells holds any such doctrine; nay, we fully believe that he does not; but this we must say, that Calvin, Luther, Bunyan, and Toplady never advanced such naked, unguarded doctrine, or thus left out all mention of repentance; nor was it Paul's preaching, (Acts xx. 20. 21,) or Peter's either. (Acts ii. 38; iii. 19; v. 31.)

But we will now furnish an extract from that part of the sermon which has caused so much excitement; and, though rather long, we give it in full, 1, that our readers may judge of the whole matter for themselves; and, 2, that we may not be suspected or accused of garbling his statements:

"Second. I notice *her integrity*. Now where there is this faith that I have noticed, good works will follow. First, integrity,—she took care of the spies. Ah! say you, she told two untruths. She did, and jeoparded her life in so doing. The king sent and said, 'There are men come unto thee, bring them forth.' 'Well,' she said, 'men came, but I do not know whence they came.' That was not true. No, it was not. 'And about the time it got dark, and the gate was about to be shut, they went out, but I do not know where they have gone to; you had better pursue after them.' Now here are two falsehoods. Now, then, some of you hypocrites, get your piety ready, for I am going to shock it a little. Was Rahab justified in those falsehoods? Certainly she was. Say you, would you have told them? Yes, sir, I would tell ten thousand if I were placed in the same circumstances, and had the same divine authority for it that she had. She must either utter those falsehoods or else betray the spies, and their lives would have been lost. Then she could not have saved Jericho; it would have been destroyed all the same, and she would have been destroyed, and her father and mother, her brothers and sisters, would have been destroyed, and all would have been destroyed. Some say, Well, I have sometimes thought that she told those falsehoods by virtue of the law of hospitality; that in the East, when they receive a person as their guest, they feel bound to venture any and every thing for him. Well, oriental customs are all very well in their place, but we must not lay too much stress upon that; I choose to keep close to the blessed God. Well, but say you, there are the falsehoods, and so how do you get over them? I will ask you a question or two. First, the shewbread was lawful for none but the priests; David did not even belong to the priestly tribe, yet ate the shewbread. Then how do you get over it? Oh, say you, won't you tell us? I don't think I ought. What saith the law? 'Thou shalt do no manner of work on the sabbath day.' 'The priests profane the Sabbath,' mark that, 'and are blameless.' The Pharisees were confounded at that. Did not the Saviour say so, that they profaned the Sabbath, and were blameless? Rahab from two principles uttered these falsehoods. First, she was placed apparently between two evils; she must either inflict injury upon the cause of God, by destroying—which she would have done by admitting the spies were there—the lives of these two godly men; she must either do that, or else speak as she did; therefore, between the two evils she chose the least. But were not the untruths she told sinful? No, I believe not; I'll have a word upon that presently. But, mind,

we must be placed in analogous circumstances to tell an untruth with divine sanction. I will not here give you a lecture upon the vice of lying, which is a dreadful vice, as you all know. But it is the peculiarity of the circumstances in times past; and even now I could easily show you we may be placed in circumstances where such untruths, which untruths would do no one harm, would be commanded. Did she injure any one? If by exposing the spies she could have saved her country, there might have been some plausibility about it; but it would not; Jericho would have been destroyed all the same, and she too, and, as I have said, her house as well. Now then, to be careful here for a moment, I will tell you a doctrine I hold, and I may as well bring it to light; a little open air will do it no harm. I hold this doctrine; that in the physical, in the moral, and in the spiritual world the great God can suspend for a time any law he chooses. When the sun stood still, some physical laws we do not understand were suspended; when the sea was divided, physical laws we do not understand were suspended; so when Jordan was divided. In all the Saviour's miracles there were physical laws suspended, and other laws put into their place we cannot understand. The literal law of things was for the loaves and fishes to remain as they were; but to suspend that law, and by some other law we do not understand multiplied those loaves and fishes into what you read of. And just so in the moral world; God here suspended the law of falsehood, and by suspending that law did hereby take away the criminality of Rahab's falsehoods; that though she told two falsehoods, there was no sin in them, no crime in them; necessity demanded it; God suspended the usual law of truth, and made that morally true which was literally false; that is, Rahab did not *choose* to know whence the spies came, or whether they went; and in the exercise of this right she was justified; hereby suspended one law to make way for another. What cannot the great God do? 'Do to others as you would they should do to you' is a law existing among creatures of equality; but God has not his equal; he has no other to do to him as he is done to. Why, say some, you seem to rejoice in it. Of course I do. I would rather lose the last drop of my blood any day than give up one iota of Jehovah's right—absolute, original, and moral right—as the great original, inconceivable God, to do just what he pleases. There are some laws he will not suspend; the law of his love—never alter that; the law of salvation; not because he cannot—he careful how you attribute *cannots* to the great God. God cannot lie because he will not."

This is plain enough. There is no obscurity of thought or language here. Mr. Wells does certainly possess the faculty of clearly and forcibly expressing his meaning, and in this much of his ability as a preacher consists. As, before we have done with him, we shall have to give him some hard blows, let us do him justice as far as we can. But let us now examine the sentiments and views thus plainly expressed. Mr. Wells here allows that Rahab told two falsehoods, but sets himself vigorously to justify them, and we must say on such grounds that, if they could be carried out and fully established, would overturn every distinction between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, good and evil.

He has a suspicion, indeed, that his views, so novel and so startling, will meet with disapproval. But mark the way in which he encounters the anticipated opposition, as if he would beat it down beforehand, and stamp upon it if it should dare to raise its head against him: "Now, then, some of you hypocrites, get your piety ready, for I am going to shock it a little." Is it not daring in the extreme, language most repulsive to every right feeling, thus to brand all as pious hypocrites who will not and cannot receive his doctrine, and feel shocked at such God-dishonouring sentiments? What an attempt to beat down the timid and tender-hearted, and

hold them up to his congregation as hypocrites, if they would not at once, and without examination, receive the doctrine which he was about to advance. And what an invitation, what an encouragement to the daring part of his congregation, to all who would shun as a plague the imputation of pious hypocrisy, to receive at once whatever he might propound, lest the very suspicion of mock-holiness should be cast upon them. For what is the doctrine, thus introduced with a kind of popish anathema against all who would not at once receive it, or immediate subjection to all the pains and penalties due to hypocrites here and hereafter if they would not, without consideration or examination, fall down and worship the image—we cannot call it golden—which Mr. James Wells has set up? It is this, that under certain circumstances a lie is not a lie; that occasions of great urgency may arise when they are perfectly justifiable, and that he himself would tell ten thousand if he were placed in the same position, and had the same divine authority for it. Now, we admit that Rahab was placed in very trying circumstances, and that the lives of the spies, humanly speaking, depended on her lips. But no circumstances whatever can make a lie not to be a lie, and no power in heaven or in earth can alter the nature of falsehood and cause it not to be a sin; nor did God give her authority to tell a lie to save the spies. It is, we must say, awful* tampering with God's word, and a profanation of his holy name, to declare that he has ever commanded any man or woman, under any circumstances, to tell lies, and given falsehood his sanction. It is awful doctrine, hold it who may, be he Calvinist or Arminian, Baptist, Independent, or Churchman. We assert that Rahab sinned in telling falsehoods to save the lives of the spies, and that it is nothing but sophistry, vile sophistry, to say they were not sinful; in fact, it is a worse doctrine than that which Mr. Wells denounces, as we have seen in this very sermon, as "horrid and loathsome," viz., of doing evil that good may come; for to say that evil is not evil, and may, under certain circumstances, be good, is worse than doing evil as evil that good may come, for it more breaks up the distinction between good and evil. A man who says, "I am doing what is evil, but I do it that good may come from it," acknowledges that

* It is painful to see how Mr. Wells meets this expression "awful," which he must have heard frequently used in reference to his views upon the nature of truth and falsehood, and God's suspending his moral law. In his morning sermon, preached at the opening of the New Surrey Tabernacle, we find him thus speaking:

"Now-a days, if a minister say something that others cannot understand, they lift up their hands and say, 'How awful!' But that does not convince any one that he is wrong. You should bring the prophets and apostles, and show what they say, and not let your words be, 'How awful!' not lift up your hands and eyes and say, 'How awful!' Any old woman could say that. A minister ought to say what any one could not say. They should bring in the testimonies of the prophets and apostles, and bring them in quietly, and set them side by side with what they think to be wrong, and thus they would cleanse the visual ray, and on what they suppose to be the sightless eyeball they would pour the day. But instead of this they put themselves and others too into a storm, and make the fog thicker still."

he is doing evil; but a man who says, "The lie I have told in this particular case and under this peculiar circumstance is not evil but good, and has the sanction and approbation of the Almighty," actually denies that evil is evil, and pronounces evil to be good. This is the very language which Milton put into the mouth of Satan, as the ultimatum of all wickedness:

"Evil, be thou my good."

But Mr. Wells urges, "You should bring the prophets and apostles, and show what they say." Why has he not done this himself to prove, or at least support, his doctrine? He attempts, indeed, to bring in the authority of James, and actually says that he makes Rahab's lies to be the best part of her conduct. But as we shall have occasion to enter on this point, we shall for the present pass it by. Let, then, Mr. Wells show us where and when God bade Rahab tell lies to save the lives of the spies, or even declared that her falsehoods were not sinful. Mr. Wells argues as if Rahab's lies were so indispensable to the safety of the spies that in no other way could they have been preserved from immediate destruction. But is not this denying the power of God? Could not he have struck their pursuers with blindness, as the angels smote the men of Sodom, (Gen. xix. 11,) or consumed them with fire from heaven, as he burnt up the two captains and their companies that came to take Elijah? (2 Kings i. 9-12.) It almost seems as if Mr. Wells would so doubt the power of God to save the lives of the spies in any other way than by Rahab's lies,* that he actually sacrificed to that overwhelming necessity his own truth and holiness, or, to use Mr. Wells's expression, suspended his moral law. But it seems to us little better than sheer infidelity to think that the Almighty Lord of heaven and earth was so at a loss for means to save the lives of two men except by sin, that for that special occasion he turned sin into holiness, evil into good, and truth into falsehood. For do look at the words: "But were not the untruths she told sinful? No, I believe not. But mind, we must be placed in analogous circumstances to tell an untruth with divine sanction." What can be plainer than this declaration of Mr. Wells's faith that the untruths which Rahab told were not sinful, nay, had

* There are some very good remarks on this point by Keil, a German commentator on Joshua, as will be seen by the following extract:

"Though Rahab's subsequent conversation with the spies (v. 9) proves that she was both convinced of the omnipotence of Jehovah, and of the reality of the miracles he had performed for his people, and also that she firmly believed that this God was about to give them the land of Canaan, and that therefore all opposition to Israel would be futile, being, in fact, resistance to the Almighty God himself; yet this is no justification of her falsehood, which still remains nothing but a sinful expedient, by which she thought it necessary to contribute her part towards the accomplishment of the decrees of God and the safety of herself and family. The lie which Rahab told is a sin, notwithstanding that the feelings which dictated it had their root in faith in the true God; (Heb. xi. 31;) and the help she rendered from these motives to the spies, and therefore to the cause of the Lord, was accounted to her for righteousness, (James ii. 25,) and her sin was forgiven her as a sin of weakness."

This is sounder doctrine than Mr. Wells's.

the divine sanction? Mark those last words. Is not that an awful expression, "to tell an untruth with divine sanction," as if the God of truth, the Holy One of Israel, the God who cannot lie, may and does sometimes sanction a lie? And observe, also, the practical inference drawn from the doctrine that Rahab's lies were not sinful. That we may be placed in circumstances analogous to hers when we may tell lies which shall not be sinful, and even have the divine sanction, as, for instance, screening a fellow member of a church from disgrace by telling falsehoods, as Rahab screened the spies from death. As, however, we shall by and by more fully enter upon this point, we shall just now waive it. But suppose further that Rahab had confirmed her words by an oath. According to Mr. Wells's view, that would not have been perjury, for an oath is merely a stronger asseveration than a word; and if a lie under certain circumstances be no lie, then, under the same similar circumstances, perjury would be no perjury. One of the vilest doctrines of the Jesuits was, that under certain circumstances lying was not a sin, and that, for the good of the church, or even under other circumstances, theft, perjury, and murder ceased to be crimes, and indeed became virtues.* How does that doctrine differ from Mr. Wells's, that we may be placed under circumstances where untruths would be commanded, in other words, where God would bid us tell a lie. It will be observed, that Mr. Wells brings forward some show of argument to support his views, and as he bids those who say, "How awful!" and we are among them, to bring in the testimony of the prophets and apostles, and to bring them in quietly, we shall attempt to do so, and quietly begin with showing the fallacy of his arguments to defend the falsehoods of Rahab. We have called it a show, for it is nothing more than a show, and has in it neither truth nor substance. He brings forward the Lord's argument about David's eating the shewbread, and the priests in the temple profaning the Sabbath, and yet being blameless. But what a vast difference there is between an institution such as the Sabbath, or a mere ceremonial prohibition such as that none but the priests and their families might eat the shewbread, and the grand, immutable distinction between truth and falsehood, good and evil. The cases are not parallel, and have nothing in common with each other; and that being the case, all comparison between them is worthless, and every inference drawn from such a comparison is fallacious. The Sabbath was made for man,—not man for the Sabbath. Had no Sabbath ever been instituted, had no distinction been made by God between the six days of labour and the seventh day of rest, there would have been no violation of the eternal laws of truth and holiness. Whe-

* Bellarmine, the greatest champion of Popery, has these words: "If the Pope should err in commending vice or forbidding virtue, the Church is bound to believe vice to be good and virtue to be bad."—*Bellarmino de Pontifice*, Book iv. chap. 5. Extremes, they say, meet, and it would almost seem as if the minister of the New Surrey Tabernacle, and the priests of the new Roman Catholic Cathedral, might, after the example of Dr. Hugh Allen, meet and shake hands at the Elephant and Castle.

ther man rests or labours, it does not touch the eternal, unalterable distinction between truth and falsehood, right and wrong. God might or might not institute the Sabbath, or he might, if he so pleased, abrogate it when instituted, without its in the least affecting his righteous attributes; but he cannot, with all the might of omnipotence, make wrong to be right, evil to be good, or falsehood to be truth. As a perpetual memorial of his own resting from the six days' work, for the good of man and beast, and for the preservation of his worship upon earth, God instituted the Sabbath day. This was again repeated as the fourth commandment of the decalogue, and was thus made binding on the children of Israel by positive law. But the ceremonial law, which came from the same Lawgiver, commanded that two lambs of the first year, without spot, should be offered on the Sabbath day, (Num. xxviii. 9,) which of course involved the necessity of killing and flaying them, cutting them into pieces, putting fire on the altar, and laying the wood in order, (Lev. i. 6-9,) all which, unless so commanded, and done for holy uses and the worship of God, might be called "servile work," and a profanation of the Sabbath. But it is mere trifling with the question to adduce as an argument that God can occasionally sanction lies, make them to be truths, and suspend his moral law, because the priests in the temple offered sacrifices on the Sabbath. Mr. Wells speaks of "clearing the visual ray;" but where was his visual ray when he could see no distinction between the immutable laws of truth and holiness and a mere institution? His must have been a "sightless eye-ball" not to perceive so plain a distinction, and we almost fear, if we are to judge by the way in which he defends his views in his late sermons and addresses, even now so sightless that we shall not be able "to pour the day upon it!" But who, with purged eyesight, does not see that Sabbaths are for earth, for a time state, and cease with earth? There are no seventh-day Sabbaths in heaven, as there are no six days' work, but one eternal Sabbath of rest and peace. (Heb. iv. 9, *margin*.) But though there are no seventh-day Sabbaths in heaven, the throne of God is in heaven, (Ps. xi. 4,) and as justice and judgment are its habitation and establishment, (Ps. lxxxix. 14, *margin*,) so to all eternity will truth be truth, and holiness be holiness, and God must cease to be before he can cease to be the Holy One of Israel. The other argument about David's eating the shewbread, and drawing from that circumstance the inference that God sometimes sanctions falsehood, and suspends his moral law against it, is equally weak and fallacious. It was but a ceremonial institution that none but the priest and his family might eat the loaves of shewbread which were removed weekly from the table. It was, therefore, analogous to the prohibition of eating unclean meats, fat, or blood, and was but a breach of the ceremonial law. David's eating the shewbread was not a sin as telling a lie is a sin. The one was the infringement of a ceremonial institution, the other is a breach of the moral law. There was no curse attached to a man of the tribe of Judah eating, in a case of necessity, the shewbread, but there is a curse attached to the breach of the moral law. It is,

therefore, mere childish, not to say sophistical, trifling with the question to compare the two things together. A higher law might overrule a ceremonial law when there would be no positive sin involved in it, as Elijah offered sacrifice on Mount Carmel, which none but a priest could do under the penalty of death; (Num. xviii. 7;) and yet this act God himself openly sanctioned by sending fire down from heaven to consume the offering. Similarly, the Lord ordered Gideon, who was of the tribe of Manasseh, to offer a burnt sacrifice, which, but for the Lord's special command, would have been in Gideon a capital crime. (Judges vi. 15, 25, 26.) But who that possesses any degree of spiritual sight does not see the difference between God's sanctioning, nay, ordering a breach of the ceremonial law, and his ordering or sanctioning a breach of the moral law? The one touches a mere national, typical, and now abrogated ceremonial, and the other the eternal, immutable foundations of right and wrong, holiness and sin, good and evil, truth and falsehood. But as we are not "an old woman," though we believe many a gracious old woman might lift up her eyes and say, "How awful!" through the inward shrinking of her righteous soul from a God-dishonouring doctrine, who might not be able to argue the question with Mr. Wells—but as we are not an old woman, and yet may say, with a good conscience, "How awful!" we shall answer his challenge to bring in the testimonies of the prophets and apostles, and quietly set them side by side with his views on God's sanctioning lies.

We will begin with Moses when "the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." (Exod. xxxiv. 5-6.) "And will by no means clear the guilty." The Lord can and does "forgive iniquity and transgression and sin," and thus he graciously forgave Rahab her lies, as he forgave her all the past acts of her base life. But he will by no means clear the guilty, nor turn guilt into good, sin into holiness, or falsehood into truth. To forgive sin is one thing, to sanction it is another. Thus God pardons sin, but never sanctions it; mercifully forgives it through the blood of his dear Son, but never approves of it, never alters its nature, never changes its character, never does, never can do, anything but hate it with perfect hatred.

Our next testimony shall be Samuel's: "And also the Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent." (1 Sam. xv. 29.) If God "will not lie," he cannot approve of lies; if he do not "repent," that is, change his mind, he cannot one day condemn lies and another day sanction them.

Our next witness shall be that of Isaiah, when he saw the glory of the Lord in the Temple. Here he heard the voice of the seraphim: "And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory."

(Isa. vi. 3.) If the LORD of hosts is holy, holy, holy, how can he sanction unholiness and approve of falsehood? He must deny himself, abnegate his glorious perfections, cease to be the Holy One of Israel, if he can under any circumstances approve of what is inherently, intrinsically, unalterably sinful.

Our next testimony shall be that of Habakkuk: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." (Hab. i. 3.) But according to Mr. Wells, circumstances may arise when God ceases to be of purer eyes than to behold evil, that is, as evil, and can look on iniquity not as the prophet means, with abhorrence, but even with approbation. In the eyes of infinite purity evil must always be evil, and sin always be sin. What dim views must any man have of the infinite purity and spotless holiness of the great and glorious I AM to think he can ever approve of what is so abhorrent to his own eternal perfections.

The last authority we shall quote is that of James: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." (James i. 17.) If he is the Father of lights he cannot sanction darkness; and what is falsehood in any shape or under any circumstances but one of the works of darkness with which we are to have no fellowship, but rather reprove (not approve) them? (Eph. v. 11.) And if with him there is "no variableness, neither shadow of turning," how can he so vary from his infinite perfections of truth and holiness as to sanction sin, or turn from his eternal and immutable hatred of evil to countenance and approve of it?

Our limits do not allow us to work out at any length the testimonies we have brought forward of prophets and apostles, and set side by side with Mr. Wells's views and sentiments. We shall leave them, therefore, to the consideration of our readers, and must defer to our following number the further examination of views so novel, so startling, so unscriptural, and so pernicious.

MY name is blotted out of the earth, but still it is written in heaven. God hath taken my only son from me, but he hath given his only Son for me and to me. He hath broken off my hopes and expectations as to this world, but my hopes of heaven are fixed sure and immovable for ever. My house and heart are both in confusion and great disorder, but I have still an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure. I cannot say my son liveth, but I can still say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." "The grass withereth and the flower fadeth; but the word of the Lord abideth for ever." (Isa. xl. 8.)—*Flavel*.

THIS cuts the heart of self-pride, spiritual surfeiting, and slothfulness, when I live every moment at the mercy of another, even Jesus Christ, both for justifying righteousness, and every influence thereof, by the immediate breathings of his Spirit, according to his good pleasure; having not the power so much as to make one hair white or black; but I must wholly work by his hands, see by his eyes, and in his light behold the light. What more powerful inducement can there be to self-denial than this? Boasting is excluded, because Christ, in his own Person and by his own Spirit, doth whatsoever is done for me or in me.—*Dorney*.

Obituary.

JOHN MORRIS, LATE OF STAMFORD.

JOHN MORRIS was born at Syston, Lincolnshire, October 25, 1773, of poor but honest parents. Soon after his birth, his parents removed to Harrowby, a small hamlet about two miles from Grantham, where they continued for some years. The family having increased, the parents were not able to give John much schooling; but he went for a time to a day-school at Grantham, and from that to be farmer's boy at the farm where his father worked. After a year or so he was taken into the house, and for several years was with the family as ploughboy, &c. At about 16 years of age he left the farmer's employ, and went to live at Welby Warren, where he continued for two years; and it was during the time he was living there that he first felt convinced he was a sinner. His father and mother were God-fearing people, and had done their best to bring up their family in the fear of God; but it was not until he was frightened by a very heavy storm of thunder and lightning at Welby that he really prayed. The storm was in the night, after the family had retired to rest, and was so terrifying that he arose and dressed himself, for he durst not lie in bed. He came down stairs, and thought of escaping from the house, thinking it would fall every minute. When he reached the door he was too frightened to go and stand under some trees which were near, and where he had at first thought of seeking refuge, so stood just inside the step of the door, with the door open, ready to fly to the trees if the house fell. After some time the storm gradually abated, and it was during the time he stood at the door he first cried to God to save him, feeling convinced that, unless God had mercy on him, he must be lost for ever. After this change in his feelings came a desire for some better employment than being in farm service, and he accordingly put himself apprentice to a saddle-tree maker at Grantham, where he continued for about two years, and then went to London for improvement. He walked all the way to London, in company with a soldier, and the first night they slept at the Bull and Swan Inn, Stamford. He often spoke of it in after life, and was led to admire the goodness of God to him; for when he first went to London, not being a good workman, it seemed improbable he would ever be more than a journeyman. For some time he had to work under price, and endure the taunts of the other men for so doing, until the Lord put it into the heart of a fellow-workman to be kind to him, telling him not to mind what the others said, to sit next to him, and he would show him how to do the work, which he did. During the time he was in London he attended Mr. Huntington's ministry, and it was at chapel he first met with his future partner in life. He was married in the year 1799; and in 1800 he was so ill that the doctor's advice to him was to leave London, which he did; and coming down to his father's home for the benefit of his health, he thought he saw an opening in Stamford for the saddle-tree business, and accordingly they removed to that place.

For a very long time he found it almost more than he could manage, the want of capital being so much against him. But the Lord put it into the heart of first one customer and then another to pay him ready money, and by other means also, so that he was at length enabled to take the premises in St. Martin's, Stamford, where he lived for 54 years.

When Mr. Morris first came to Stamford, there was no place there where the truth was preached, so that they did not go to any place of worship; feeling it would be better to stay at home than go to the parish church after hearing such preaching as Mr. Huntington's. In course of time he found a few who were seekers of the truth, and they met on the Sabbath-day at his house for reading and prayer, until, at length, a room was engaged and licensed, and a weekly meeting formed, which they continued for some years. Before this room was used for preaching in, the late Mr. Hardy, of Leicester, was in the habit of visiting Stamford, and at such times he preached in Mr. Morris's house in St. Martin's. He was the guest of Mr. Morris, and on his periodical visits continued to be so, until his last visit to Stamford, when Mr. Morris, from affliction in his family, was unable to receive him, and he became the guest of Mr. De Mervilleux. A letter written by Mr. Morris to Mr. Oxenham, minister, dated Stamford, February 18th, 1815, will show the state of his mind at this time:

"Dear Sir,—I was at Grantham last Sunday, and saw Mr. B., who told me he was going to write to you, to request you to preach there when you came into the country. I was very glad to hear it, not only that I might have an opportunity of hearing you myself and family, but I have no doubt there are many in that town and neighbourhood who have heard you, and, like myself, have been grieved to think that you should come into Lincolnshire and not have an opportunity of hearing you. When you have appointed the time for coming I should be greatly obliged to you if you would drop me a line to inform us, as I should not like to be out of town when you come; and my wife and I would be very much obliged if you could make it convenient to stop a night at Stamford, and thank you very kindly for condescending to call upon us last summer. We still continue like the sparrow alone upon the house top; and I see but little in the professors at Stamford that can make us desire their acquaintance; for the most part they seem to be desirous of doctrines and to neglect the experimental part, without which I am certain none can be saved. A consideration of these things often humbles me in the dust to think that the Lord should take notice of such a poor illiterate creature as myself. About nineteen years ago, when employed in following the plough, the Lord made me to feel what a sinner I was; and, under your preaching, gave me faith in his dear Son, and has not suffered me to rest in a form of godliness without feeling and knowing the power. It is the Lord that has kept my soul alive until this present day, and has enabled me to say with the testimony of conscience, 'that I esteem all things but dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, by whom this world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.' What debtors are we to free grace! And the longer I live the greater debtor I am, as I daily must be receiving out of the Lord's fulness grace and strength, or I should be overcome. May the Lord ever keep me at his feet, sensible of my great obligations and littleness in my own eyes, as I am persuaded it is

most safe and most profitable, as God beholdeth the proud afar off, but giveth more grace to the humble. Excuse this scribble, as my heart got a little warm by looking back on the way that the Lord has led me these nineteen years. Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. I know that your goodness will excuse the liberty I have taken. My wife joins with me in undissembled love to you and all that love our Lord Jesus Christ; while I remain,

“Your obliged Servant,

“JOHN MORRIS.”

[The above account is supplied by a granddaughter of Mr. Morris's, and though no doubt substantially true, there are some little discrepancies in the dates which I cannot reconcile. These are, however, of little real moment. What I more feel is that there is so long a blank between his letter to Mr. Oxenham and the following account of his last days, which I can but most imperfectly attempt to supply in the note appended to this article. His granddaughter thus writes of his very last days, when old age had reduced his faculties almost to dotage.—J. C. P.]

On Sept. 29th, 1860, he said to his attendant, “I have had this morning such a blessed manifestation of the pardoning love and mercy of God to my soul that language fails to express the blessedness of it. I have been enabled to pray for all my friends, and I know the Lord will hear me. He has strengthened and supported me thus far, and I know that when I leave this world I shall be with him where he is. O the power I felt, and do still feel, is past description! I cannot tell you how happy I am.” He remained for some time in the same happy frame, the tears running down his cheeks when speaking to those around him of the love of Jesus to such a poor sinner as he felt himself to be. The loss of his sight, about six years before his death, was a great trial to him, but he still attended chapel until prevented from failing strength. He was always pleased to have the Bible read to him; also Mr. P.'s sermons, which he much enjoyed. Hart's hymns were especial favourites, although many others from the selection he much valued. He felt at times a sweet sense of pardoning mercy, and especially on Feb. 9th, 1863, when his housekeeper took him his breakfast. He was in such an ecstasy of joy that he could scarcely contain himself. He said, “O that I could thank God for his goodness to me! O that I could fly away and be with Jesus!” He said he could not feel more happy than he then felt, unless he was with Jesus in heaven. He was weeping and praising God all the time he was taking his breakfast. He said, “I could shout for joy. You may tell all that ask after me how happy I am.” In June, 1863, he was very poorly for several weeks, and from that time his mental faculties gradually gave way, and he frequently did not know us. Indeed from that time to his death he required constant attendance day and night; still there were times when he enjoyed a chapter from the Bible, or a portion of Mr. P.'s sermons; and he was frequently in a very prayerful frame of mind.

On the 1st of May, 1864, I was sleeping in my grandfather's room; he awoke me about half-past two o'clock to tell me how happy

he felt, having had, to use his own words, a "visit from the Lord." He was talking quite rationally for more than an hour. I repeated a part of that hymn of Berridge's:

"If Jesus kindly say;"

and when I came to the last line of the fourth verse he exclaimed, "Ah, that's it; that's what I do wonder at,—his grace to save such a poor creature as I am." He wept for joy, and said much more, which I cannot at this time remember. He was frequently talking of death, and on the 8th of November in particular, when talking to his housekeeper about dying, he said to her, "But I am not afraid; no, I am not afraid to die. The Lord called me when I was very young, and he has never left me." He frequently prayed to God to be with him to the last. We perceived a change in him on the 21st. He dozed very much for two or three days, and his speech was almost gone, but in his waking moments we perceived him much in prayer.

A few hours before his departure, seeing that he was evidently sinking fast, his housekeeper said to him, "Do you feel Jesus Christ precious to you, now you are in the valley?" He tried to say "Yes," and I believe that was the last word he spoke. He was sensible until shortly before his death; for, although not able to speak, he could make us understand that he knew when we spoke to him; and at one o'clock on the morning of the 25th November he quietly breathed his last, in the 92nd year of his age.

Stamford.

MARY ANN MORRIS.

[I much regret that I cannot present anything beyond what I must call the above meagre Obituary of one of the most God-fearing, upright, honest, gracious men that I ever knew in my life; and I knew much of him from more than twenty years' intercourse, as he was a member and a deacon of my church at Stamford. For more than half a century did he live in the same house at Stamford, and during all that time maintained a profession so upright, sincere, and unblemished that he was generally known in the town as "honest John Morris." But he was something more than honest. He was a man well taught and established in the truth of God, with a good discernment of men and things, and yet of very tender feelings in divine matters. Having been blessed, under Mr. Oxenham at Grantham, before he went to London, when there, he settled under the ministry of Mr. Huntington; and often has he spoken of the blessing it was made to him during the four years that he sat under him. Being compelled, however, as is stated above, by the state of his health to leave London, he was led, in the providence of God, to pitch his tent at Stamford. During more than twenty years of that time he appears, as regards attending any ministry, to have been as a sparrow on the housetop, except occasionally hearing Mr. Oxenham at Grantham. It must have been about the year 1833 that Mr. Hardy first visited Stamford, and preached at his house. I have heard that it arose from the circumstance of Mr. Hardy's being detained unexpectedly there by a very heavy flood, which prevented him from going on, as he had intended, to Boston or Sleaford. It becoming known that he was in the town, he was asked to preach, and his ministry was made so acceptable to the few who met together, that from that time forward he visited Stamford regularly, and always took up his abode at Mr. Morris's house, much mutual love and esteem existing between them. When under the preaching of my late dear friend, W. Tiptaft, Mr. de Merveilleux was wrought upon to come out from among the Independents, and to build a chapel at Stamford for the truth, Mr. Morris did all that he could to strengthen his heart and hands for the good work. When, in the providence of God, I was led to Stamford in the

year 1886. Mr. Morris warmly and cordially received both me and my ministry; and from that time till the infirmities of old age, combined with blindness and deafness, absolutely prevented him, was never absent I believe on a single occasion, if at home, when the chapel doors were open. When the church was formed a few years afterwards, Mr. Morris was one of the first who was baptized, and was, together with Mr. de Merveilleux, unanimously elected deacon. I am not speaking, therefore, at a peradventure when I bear my testimony to him as a Christian man. The Lord blessed him with remarkable health and vigour both of body and mind; and though of little education, he had excellent business qualities, and was as hard-working and industrious in his trade as he was honest and upright. His was a feeling religion. Much did he at times indeed complain of his barrenness and darkness; and yet when the right chord was touched, and his heart and mouth were opened, he could speak very sweetly and blessedly of the dealings of God with his soul, of the gracious visitations of the Lord in the night seasons, and what he had tasted, felt, and handled of the word of life. I had few better bearers in my congregation at Stamford than good old John Morris, and none whom I more respected and esteemed, or walked with in more unshaken union and friendship; for there was never a cloud between us, and we were, I believe, firmly knit together in the bonds of Christian affection and love. In his conversation there was always some weight, and often much savour, for he had at times felt much of the goodness and mercy of God in his own soul; and being possessed of a very humble, child-like spirit, with a deep and abiding sense of his own sinfulness and helplessness, there was a signal absence of all boasting and self-exaltation. Until the last year or two of his life, he may be said to have borne fruit in old age, for I have never seen him more melted and broken down under a sermon than once or twice, when, being wholly blind and half deaf, he could come to chapel only once in the day from growing infirmities; and even when his faculties on ordinary subjects were gone, and he could scarcely recollect names or persons, when the things of God were mentioned he seemed as if awakened up, and could for a short time speak upon them with his former unction and savour. He always struck me as a remarkable instance of the faithfulness of God to his own work of grace. Here was a man who had been in the way nearly 70 years, and during all that time maintained a most upright, unblemished conversation in the church and the world, still alive in his soul, still blessed with a child-like, humble spirit, still a man of sighs and cries, and at times still blessed with the presence and smiles of the Lord. He did not live to disgrace his religion or wear it out, to sink into carnality and death though pressed down with the infirmities of age, and even when natural faculties were almost gone, was still blessed with the manifestations of God's love to triumph in and over all nature's decay. "The memory of the just is blessed," and as long as life lasts I shall remember with esteem and affection good old honest John Morris.—J. C. P.]

If Christ be preached as all in all from heartfelt experience, the word spoken will not fall to the ground like water spilt; but the Spirit of truth will not bear testimony to free-will sentiments and Christ-dishonouring doctrines. A knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins is not much known. It is what Hart calls,

"This special grant of heaven."

They are highly favoured who have been blessed with such enjoyments. They are enabled to read Psalms ciii. and cxvi. as their own. Christ is their treasure, and very precious to their souls. They can beg of him to set them as a seal upon his heart, and as a seal upon his arm. Such a work wrought in the soul will surely be renewed:

"This pearl of price no works can claim;
He that finds this is rich indeed;
This pure white stone contains a name,
Which none but who receives can read."—*Tiptaft.*

DECEMBER 1, 1865.

THE
GOSPEL STANDARD.

DECEMBER, 1865.

MATT. V. 6; 2 TIM. I. 9; ROM. XI. 7; ACTS VIII. 37, 38; MATT. XXVIII. 19.

TRUE AND FALSE TRUST.

THE LORD JESUS CHRIST PROVED TO BE THE REAL OBJECT
OF A BELIEVER'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE.

BY THE LATE JOHN BUSK.

“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.”—MIC. vii. 5.

(Concluded from page 337.)

Having proved clearly my first proposition, let us come to the second thing proposed, which is, what are we to understand by *bosom*?

Now by “bosom” I understand the heart and affections of the church to Christ. When he is supreme in our affections, he lieth in our bosom. The English of it is the real mystical union betwixt Christ and his church. Wisdom, or Christ, lies in the bosom of the church, in the heart and affections of the church; and when this is enjoyed, all things go on well.

This shall bring me to the third thing proposed, with which I shall conclude; namely, treat a little of what we are to *tell to her* that lieth in our bosom, keeping nothing back, but telling all; and to encourage us to this, he says, “Let me hear thy voice, let me see thy face, for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely;” but it is through the comeliness which he has put upon us. Now it is certainly right to take all our confessions of sin to him, and tell him all that is wrong, keeping nothing back. We cannot nor have we a right to tell all to any creature. Let them be never such friends, and be as open as you may to them, there always will be a reserve; but here you may disclose all your heart; and indeed whether you do or not, he knows it better than you do. Hence you read that “he needeth not that any should testify of man, for he knows what is in man;” so that it is not to give him intelligence. By no means. David says, “There is not a word in my tongue but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether, and understandest my thoughts afar off.” He is God, the Searcher of hearts and trier of reins; but these confessions he requires; and it is to our spiritual advantage, “for he that confesseth and forsaketh his sin shall find mercy.” Therefore our confessions should be full, as David’s was: “Conceived in sin, shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.”

Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest;" and "Wisdom is justified of her children." The church also by the prophet Isaiah: "We are altogether as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags. We all do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away;" "From the sole of the foot to the crown of the head we are full of wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores." Now these are honest confessions; and when heart and mouth go together, we often feel a witness that we have done right; yes, and feel great ease at a throne of grace and the mercy seat. This is declaring the thing plentifully, as it is, which no hypocrite ever did; and that is true.

Now it is the Holy Spirit which leads us to this confession; for he shows us our wants, the evils of our heart and life, and applies the law to us.

But, secondly, we are to tell him all our hearts also, in petitioning, praying, or entreating; and here he says, "Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it;" not, "Keep the doors of thy mouth;" and James says, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." "Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened." Hence the disciples said to him, "Lord, tell us the parable of the tares of the field;" and he unfolded it all to them; and the poor woman of Canaan, though she had so many rebukes, yet she urged her plea, and got an answer from him in her favour without limitation: "O woman, great is thy faith. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The woman also with the bloody issue, the blind man, the centurion, and numbers more. Yes, and he is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." See Jacob, as before observed: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." Did king Ahasuerus say to queen Esther, "What is thy petition and what is thy request, and it shall be granted even to half of the kingdom?" This kingdom was but an earthly one; but King Jesus declares that we shall have all the kingdom; and his kingdom is spiritual, not of this world: "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" and the saints of God shall take the kingdom and possess it for ever and ever. Again. Did the Queen of Sheba come to King Solomon, or did she rest contented with hearsay? "O," say you, "she came." And what for? Why, to prove him with hard questions, and to commune with him of all that was in her heart; and Solomon told her all her questions; and there was nothing hid from Solomon which he told her not.

This is all very good; but a greater than Solomon is here. This King Jesus is wisdom itself; and there is no hard question but he can answer, for it was he that gave Solomon all the wisdom he had, in answer to prayer; and so he did to others. What wisdom he gave Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams as well as the butler's and baker's; also to Daniel, not only to interpret Nebuchadnezzar's dream, but even to tell the dream; and all this in answer to his

petition. Now all this wisdom that these men had come from Christ, the Fountain-head, in answer to prayer.

But as it respects the Queen of Sheba, you and I must differ from her in one thing. She came with presents in abundance; but you and I must come as beggars, without money and without price; and it is the Holy Spirit that must help our infirmities, or we never shall tell all our hearts to King Jesus. David tells us that he poured out his soul before the Lord, and showed him all his trouble; which shows us that he kept nothing back; and I don't know of a higher privilege that a poor tried soul can have than to be permitted to unbosom all his griefs and sorrows to One that has promised to deliver him, and has all power so to do. "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and he shall sustain thee," says David. "Casting all your cares upon him, for he careth for you," says Peter; and I am sure I don't know what I should do at this very time while writing, were it not for this privilege, circumstanced as I am, when everything, according to reason, of my temporal affairs appears to be going to destruction; and yet at this present time I feel my mind stayed on the Lord, knowing that he hath delivered, he doth deliver, and I trust that he will yet deliver. Bless his name for giving me such a hope; and I am so pleased when I feel a heart to tell him all my troubles, knowing that he can be touched with the feeling of my infirmities, and these various affections are brought upon me to cause me to keep up a constant trade with him, and to prove him to be faithful in his office and covenant characters which he sustains to us.

Thirdly. *Acknowledging past and present mercies*, both for soul and body, blessing, praising, and glorifying his name to himself and to others. These things are right and well pleasing, and we shall gain great ground at this blessed work; for he says, "in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thee;" that is, "while you are blessing me, I will increase your blessings in a manifest way; and while you are multiplying what I have done, I will add to your abundance." "Remember that thou magnify his work which men behold," says Elihu to Job. David felt a heart for this. Hence he says, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits." You and I are not to receive favours from the Lord, and go away thinking no more about them. No. How the Lord Jesus, in the days of his flesh, noticed this. "Were there not ten lepers cleansed," said he, "and where are the nine? There is none returned to give glory to God save this stranger." How many outward favours have I received from the Lord with a heart like stone, shut up against him and the instruments he has made use of! Say you, "That is very wrong?" Yes, I know it, and a sore burden and grief of soul it has been to me, for I have really concluded that after all my profession I hated God and his family, and was only a lover of my own self; and I well know that gratitude does not lie in the favour received, but is a sovereign power displayed by the Holy Ghost in the soul, drawing forth faith, love

&c., into lively act and exercise. This is all that the Lord gets at the best, and he condescends to be entertained with his own implanted grace. Hence he told the church in the song as follows: "How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! How much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices! Thy lips, O my spouse, drop as the honey-comb. Honey and milk are under thy tongue, and the smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." Thus you see how Christ delights in his people, and is pleased with their simple sacrifices.

Fourthly. It is right to tell wisdom, or her that lieth in our bosom, all the differences we have one amongst another. These differences wholly arise from the old man, or corrupt nature, either in the one or the other; for "only by pride cometh contention;" and there is plenty of it in this our day,—never more so, I believe. Sometimes it is about preachers, sometimes about professors, sometimes about church order; differences in experience also, and also in our situations in life. Various and innumerable are the things which Satan and our corrupt hearts make use of to cause strife, and to sow discord amongst brethren. And not only these outward things, with many more, but the evil workings within, stirred up by the devil, which is beyond all bound; but where are we to get relief? Are we to get redress from these grievances by running about talking from one to another? No, but by telling it all to her that lieth in our bosom, and keeping nothing back; a sweet account of which we have in Matt. xviii. 21–35, which I would wish my reader to carefully examine. It is about the merciless servant, who, "when his fellow servants had seen and heard, they went and told the whole affair to the Lord;" and whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our example. This is the very best conduct that can be pursued.

Fifthly. All our troubles and ill treatment from the world we must tell to her that lieth in our bosom. We shall be sure to find plenty of this from the ungodly, if we are staunch for Christ and his cause. We shall be reproached for the name of Christ, not merely for his bare name, or for a profession of the gospel, for this a hypocrite may do, and still the world will love its own; but it is that covenant name that God proclaimed to Moses, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. This name, felt and enjoyed in the heart under the blessed influence of the Holy Ghost, they hate, and hate us for it; yes, and it ever will be so, because God has put enmity between the seed of the serpent and the seed of Christ; and it matters not how nearly related in the ties of nature or in worldly concerns, this enmity will work. This you must expect, fellow traveller, more or less; and the more tried in providence and valiant for truth, the heavier it generally comes. Blessed be God, we do not live in days in which open persecution has taken place; we are not in continual danger of our lives; but I fear it will not be long so. God only knows; but things look very dark.

Seeing, then, that this rage and malice are in the hearts of the ungodly, reigning and ruling,—and we often feel them shooting

their arrows, even bitter words, laying baits, digging pits, &c., in order to injure us every way they can, either by fraud or force,—where are we to take all these troubles? I answer, to Wisdom, to Christ, to her that lieth in our bosom. No hope nor help is to be found but in the One way; and this was the conduct that the disciples pursued. Peter and John were both imprisoned for curing the lame man at the gate of the temple. The next day they were examined, and threatened, and charged not to teach in Christ's name; and they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them. After this they went to their own company and told them all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them; and when they heard that, they lifted up their voice unto God with one accord, and said, "Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven and earth and the sea. And now, Lord, behold their threatening, and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word by stretching forth thine hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of the holy Child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." But you may say, "This was not telling Christ, or Wisdom, but telling God the Father;" but I say there is no access to an absolute God; so that you must make use of Christ, the Mediator between God and man; and, therefore, it is all one: "I and my Father are one;" if you tell one, you tell both; and the psalmist David often addressed the Lord Jesus Christ, telling him of the cruel usage of his enemies. See Ps. xci., and many others. And whom did Jacob tell all his troubles to when Esau was coming with four hundred men against him? Truly to the Lord Christ.

But I come to the sixth and last place. We are to tell all our difficulties in providence, family, bodily afflictions, backslidings, weaknesses, and failings in leaning upon false props. The providence of God appears to us a very mysterious thing, and what makes it so is our carnal reason and unbelief, which is a sore plague and a pest to us. We cannot make out how God's dealings in providence (being so trying) can stand with his having so great love towards us; but though all this is dark and painful to the flesh, it is all clear enough when faith is in exercise; for the truth is, we are to be well humbled and brought down, yes, and often kept so, to teach us where all our supplies come from; for "who is he that saith and it cometh to pass, when the Lord commandeth it not?"

But say you, "Why should God's family (some of them) be tried so very much and so long a time?" To this I answer that the Judge of all the earth does right. He does not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men. He will not lay upon man more than is right, that he should not enter into judgment with God. It is for wise ends; and what we know not now we shall know hereafter. Submission to his will and telling it all to the Saviour is the best way we can take. I have travelled this painful path for years, and am now in it, and therefore know what I am writing about. Habakkuk was very much puzzled upon this head; but God told

him "the vision is for an appointed time; and though it tarry, wait for it;" and it amounts to this, "The just shall live by faith;" and faith is ever opposed to sight or to our carnal and fleshy reason. But why tell all these providential trials to Wisdom? Because he is tender-hearted and has all power, for he is heir of all things; all things are put under his feet. Hence he says "The silver and gold are mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills;" and "I have compassion upon the multitude, because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat; and if I send them away fasting, they will faint by the way;" and if such tender care is manifested to the multitude, will he turn a deaf ear to the purchase of his blood? No; for he is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. See how he provided for his disciples: "Children, have ye any meat? They answered, No, Lord. And he said, Come and dine." Christ had a fire and fish broiled, all ready for them to eat.

But again we are to tell him all our family afflictions and troubles. The centurion tells the Lord Jesus about his servant at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented, and he healed him with his word in the self-same-hour. A ruler also comes and tells him that his daughter is dead; "but come and lay thine hand on her, and she shall live;" and he restored her to life. A woman with an issue of blood twelve years; the woman of Canaan also; both had their desire. A man brings his son, who is a lunatic, to Christ. He is sore vexed, falling into the fire and water. He had tried an arm of flesh first, for he took him to Christ's disciples, but found it of no use. Just like us, running after this and that preacher. Jesus said to him, "How long shall I be with you," &c.? I am (as though he should say) the first you ought to have told about your sore; and he cured the child that very hour.

I remember when I was a boy, eight years old, I had the whooping cough very bad indeed and for a long while. My mother was going to meeting one Sunday, and I wished a note to be written for her to take to the minister about my cough, which, being done, I wished my father at the same time to go to prayer to the Saviour, for I used to read about the nobleman's son, and was very fond of it. He therefore kneeled down and I with him in the afternoon, and he prayed for me; but my cough still remained all that day very bad. At night I went to bed, sleeping in the same room with my father and mother; and in the night my mother awoke, and awoke my father, being quite frightened. Not hearing me cough, she supposed I was dead. She struck a light and found me in a sound and comfortable sleep; and I never coughed afterwards.

O what a blessing it is to have such a feeling, tender, and affectionate Friend, to tell all our troubles to. Martha and Mary told him about Lazarus, and he raised him from the dead. I might enlarge, but I forbear. Let what is written suffice.

But again. Let you and me tell him all our backslidings; but O! where shall we begin to do this? I am sure they are beyond everything that we can express. When I consider my daily slips and all; infirmities, shortcomings, indulging sin and nursing those devilish

lusts in my heart against light and love, I appear base to the last degree. If Christ were not long-suffering, he never would bear with such wretches. But he still encourages us to come, saying, "Return, ye backsliding children; I am married unto you;" "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool;" "Put me in remembrance" (of my promises that from all your filthiness, idols, and uncleannesses, I will save you). I will be inquired of, and, therefore, put me in remembrance. Let us plead together. Declare thou that thou mightest be justified;" but it is the work of Satan in all our troubles and afflictions, trials, temptations, cross providences, knotty experiences, backslidings, &c.; I say it is his work in conjunction with his allies in us to get us to pore over our hard fate and to try to get relief elsewhere. So we try what trusting to our own heart and own arm and the arm of another will do for us; and however the Lord for a time, while weak in faith, may suffer these props to stand, as we go on in our Christian race and faith gathers strength, he knocks them away. I remember once in particular trusting to three or four of these props in one day, and they all gave way. I am very often at it, and the Lord as often baffles me; for he says, "Upon my arm they shall trust." But, blessed be his name, he has put a principle in my soul that, under the influence of grace, heartily approves of it, and says, "Thy will be done," though at other times I feel a kicking, and think he uses me very hard; but this is the flesh, the old man. "They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water;" and this the church acknowledged, for she said, "I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." "Therefore," saith the Lord, "behold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths; and she shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them but shall not find them. Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now." (Hos. ii. 7.) Ephraim, after the Lord turned him, said, "What have I to do any more with idols?" This first Husband that the church says she will go to was Wisdom; and therefore Paul says, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Now I have gone through the subject, and would conclude with a little advice to my readers and myself. Let nothing prevent you from telling all your complaints to this very faithful Friend, this Wisdom, this Husband, this her that lieth in our bosom, however minute or trivial; for it is sweet work. Peter says, "Lord, to whom shall we go?" You will find great opposition to this from all quarters; nevertheless press on and run to him with every little thing. Don't try to manage it yourself, for of a mole hill you will make a mountain. He is wisdom itself, the wonderful Counsellor; and be sure to acknowledge his favours continually. It is for this very end, to carry on a trade with heaven, that you and I get into so many afflictions of all sorts as we do, that we may make use of Christ, live

upon Christ, trust in Christ, that he may be all to us and all in us, in his finished work and all his office and covenant characters. Don't expect a smooth path, for you will never have one; but expect changes. This is the way, and only way, to glorify the God of our salvation. Let our path be never so rough, it is the path that all the saints have travelled in all ages.

"Trials may press of every sort;
They may be sore, they must be short;
We now believe but soon shall view
The greatest glories God can show."

JOHN RUSK.

SOWING IN TEARS, REAPING IN JOY.

"When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy."—Ps. cxxvi. 1, 2, 3.

WHEN my captivity was turn'd,
I was like one that dream'd;
My heart with love to Jesus burn'd;
In a new world I seem'd.

I scarce believed the tidings true,
So long had I been sad;
My God created all things new,
And made my heart so glad.

"The Lord hath done great things for me,"
My tongue with gladness cried;
"The Lord hath done great things for thee,"
My kindred friends replied.

"O bless the Lord, my soul," was then
The burden of my song;
Then I could tell the sons of men
Of Jesus all day long.

My heart now teem'd with heavenly bliss,
For Christ was dear to me;
I said, "He's mine and I am his
To all eternity."

And now I say to those who sow
In tears, and sorely weep,
The time of love will come, I know,
When you in joy shall reap.

A. H.

"THAT NO man is justified by the works of the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith;" then all that is not done in faith is unlawful. When they that had been fed followed Christ over the Sea of Tiberias, because they had eaten of the loaves and fishes, he says to them, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you; for him hath God the Father sealed. They said unto him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." This is doing what is lawful.—*Beeman*.

“IT IS THE VOICE OF MY BELOVED.”

BY RICHARD SIBBES, PURITAN MINISTER.

OBSERVE, that a Christian soul knows and may discern the voice of Christ, yea, and that even in a lazy, sleepy state, but much more when in a good and lively frame. God's believers are Christ's sheep. (John x. 8.) Now, “My sheep,” saith Christ, “hear my voice.” It is the ear-mark, as it were, of a Christian, one of the characters of the new man, “to taste words by the ear,” as Job says. (Job xii. 11.) He has a spiritual taste, a discerning relish in the ear, because he has the Spirit of God, and, therefore, relishes what is connatural and suitable to the spirit. Now, the voice of Christ without in the ministry, and the Spirit of Christ within in the heart, are connatural and suitable to each other.

And surely so it is, that this is one way to discern a true Christian from others, even by a taste in hearing. For those who have a spiritual relish, they can hear with some delight things that are spiritual. As the heathen man said of a meadow, “Some creatures come to eat one sort of herbs, others another, such as are fit for them; and men walk thereon for delight; all for ends suitable to their nature.” So, in coming to hear the word of God, some come to observe the elegance of words and phrases, some to catch advantage perhaps against the speaker, men of devilish temper; and some to conform themselves to the customs of the places they live in, or to satisfy the clamours of a troubled conscience that will have some divine duty performed, else it goes on with much vexation. But every true Christian comes and relishes what is spiritual; and when outward things can convey in similitudes spiritual things aptly to the mind, he relishes this, not as elegant and pleasing his fancy so much as for conveying the voice of Christ unto his soul; so that a man may be much helped to know his state in grace, and what he is by his ear. “Itching ears” (2 Tim. iv. 3) usually are such as are “led with lust,” as the apostle says, whose mouth must be stopped. They are sick, and nothing will down with them. They quarrel with everything that is wholesome, as they did with the manna. No sermons will please them, no bread is fine and white enough; whereas, indeed, the fault is in their distemper. If Christ were here preaching, they would be sure to cavil at something, as these men did when he preached in his own person, because they labour with lusts which they resolve to feed and cherish.

And again, observe it against our adversaries. What say they? How shall we know that the word is the word of God? For this heretic says thus, and this interprets it thus. This is the common objection of the great rabbis among them in their writings, how we can know the word to be God's, considering there are such heresies in the churches, and such contrariety of opinions concerning the Scriptures. Even thus to object and ask is an argument and testimony that these men have not the Spirit of Christ, for “his sheep know his voice,” who, though they cannot interpret all places of Scripture, yet they can discern in the Scripture what is suitable food

for them, having a faculty to reject that which is not suited for nourishment, to let it go. As there are in nature provisions fit for concoction and digestion, so there is in the soul to work out of the word, even out of that which is hard, yet wholesome, what is fit for the soul and spirit. If it be cast down, it feeds upon the promises for direction and consolation. Therefore we answer them thus: "God's sheep hear his voice;" that is his word left in the church; when it is unfolded his Spirit goes together with it, breeding relish of the word in the hearts of people, whereby they are able to taste and relish it, and it has a supernatural power and majesty in it which carries its own evidence with it. How shall we know light to be light? It carries evidence in itself that it is light. How know we that the fire is hot? That it is so it carries evidence in itself. So if you ask how we know the word of God to be his word; it carries in itself inbred arguments and characters, such as the soul can say, "None but this word can be the word of God;" it has such a majesty and power to cast down, and to raise up, and to comfort, and to direct with such power and majesty that it carries with it its own evidence, and this is argument enough for it. (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25; 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.) And thus we answer them, which answer they meet only by cavils. "God's sheep hear the voice of Christ." He speaks, and the church understands him, and a stranger's voice they will not hear.

And, indeed, this is the only sure way of understanding the word to be of God, from an inbred principle of the majesty of the word, and a powerful work thereof on the soul. An assent so grounded is that which makes a sound Christian. If we should ask the reason there are so many who apostatise, fall away, grow profane, and are so unfruitful under the gospel, though they hear so much, the answer is, they were never established in this, that it is the word of God and divine truth, so as to say, "I have felt it by experience that it is the voice of Christ." These soon apostatise when Jesuit or other seducers set upon them, having never this divine persuasion wrought in them that the voice of Christ is the word of God. Others, once strict, become profane; they never were convinced by the power and majesty of the truth in itself. These end in despair, notwithstanding all the promises, because they were never convinced of the truth of them. They cannot say "Amen" to all the promises; but the church can say confidently, upon sound experience. "It is the voice of my Beloved."

A LETTER BY THE LATE JOHN KEYT.

To my Well-beloved, the Dove in the Cleft of the Rock,—Your kind and valuable present came safe to hand, together with your seasonable and well-seasoned epistle, which, when opened, was like your sister Mary's alabaster box of ointment,—it shed an odoriferous fragrance, which both cheered and revived my spirit. In the morning of the day (Friday) I was very low and depressed in mind, somewhat like the apostle Paul when he said, "We are

troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." In the afternoon your favour came to hand, which led me into another of the apostle's footsteps, viz., "Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted me by the coming of Titus," as your affectionate epistle completely scattered those fears that had vexed my mind; and not only so, but I found a sweet spring of consolation flowing in while pondering over your earnest desire and fervent mind towards unworthy me, insomuch that I rejoiced the more.

In remembering all the way the good Lord hath led me for more than forty years in this wilderness, many sweet and soul-humbling dispensations are often presented to my view. Preserving, protecting, supporting, supplying, and preventing mercies, appear and shine with peculiar energy and beauty upon the poor insignificant worm who is now addressing you. Indeed, they are more in number than the stars in the firmament or the sands upon the seashore; and what enhances their value beyond conception is, that they are sure mercies, sovereign mercies, and covenant mercies, all flowing from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, the Fountain of mercy unto us, the lost, ruined, sinful offspring of fallen Adam! When we are favoured with a heavenly ray upon the stupendous work of redeeming love, how sovereign, how wonderful, how glorious the building of mercy appears! But when the Almighty God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, condescends to shine into our hearts, and gives unto us the revelation and application of personal interest in the Lord's salvation, we sink down overpowered with the manifestation of such superabounding grace to us, the chiefest of all sinners! Well might Hart sing:

"What wondrous grace was this!
We sinn'd, and Jesus died;
He wrought the righteousness,
And we were justified.
We ran the score to lengths extreme,
And all the debt was charged on him."

Such blessed visitations, though short in duration, are more precious than all the treasures of Egypt or all the glories of this world; for what mere trifles are earthly diadems and thrones in the estimation of that soul who hath in the vision of faith beheld the King in his beauty, and the land that is very far off, attended with some blessed earnest of interest in the promised inheritance! This honour and this privilege, more or less, have all the saints in their pilgrimage through this waste wilderness; and your poor friend, though unknown, despised, and rejected by the men of this world, has been most assuredly blessed with some of these visions of God; and there are seasons, even when surrounded with manifest temptations and trials, when I would not exchange my lot with such as roll in affluence, or the most splendid professor who is at ease in Zion. I believe that when divine life and light first dart into a sinner's heart, discovering to him his polluted state, he then has a vision of

and from God; and, however long or trying his after distresses may be, such a poor sinner is an issue from death, and shall never sink into his natural darkness, nor into the insensible sleep of death again. He may long walk in darkness, and have no sensible comfort, but as sure as God once shines into his heart thus, so sure will he shine again and again, until the poor sinner experiences the light of the knowledge of the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ; and this will be attended with a transforming vision of God, or a being "changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

My beloved sister had no need to make any apology, as though she was a debtor to me. The fact is, I am by far the deepest in debt to you, and have nothing to pay; and were it not for the hope of frank forgiveness, I must remain your insolvent debtor to the end of my days. However, this is my comfort in the midst of my poverty, I have *One* who has undertaken gratuitously to be Surety for me; and, bless his dear name for evermore, he hath, according to my faith, paid my infinite debts, and showed me the receipt in full. The first sight I had of it was when he condescended to read it himself, and wrote the copy of it upon the fleshy table of my heart. You may, my dear friend, see it *verbatim* as it stands enrolled in the book of truth. (Heb. viii. 12.) It is true I cannot read it with comfort when the shadows of the night surround me, but there it stands engraved with his own hand; (Zech. iii. 9;) and when the sun arises and again shines upon my soul and upon my path, I can read it again as legibly as ever.

Now, seeing matters stand thus, I feel no fear of imprisonment for debt from my own sister in the faith, for my blessed Surety is her Surety also; and, having herself had much forgiven, she is sweetly constrained to love much, and she well knows "he that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of him."

As I was sitting alone last night, pondering over the contents of your epistle, and your request to have a sheet of savoury meat such as the heirs of promise love, I begged the Lord to give me somewhat to write to my dear friend that which would suit her taste, for I had nothing to send unless he was pleased to give it me; and while I was pleading my own poverty and his own infinite fulness, these words came with a dew-like sweetness into my mind: "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste." In the morning they came again to my mind, and I felt a desire spring up to venture upon writing a few lines to Downham, though it seemed as if I had nothing to say that could be worth the expense of postage. However, I am somehow constrained to present myself before you just as I am; and, seeing neither of us can live without food, let us sit down together under this blessed apple-tree, and thankfully accept whatever he may be pleased to drop into the mouth of faith.

The spouse, no doubt, like us, had long wandered about among the trees of the wood, and found neither rest nor food from them; for all that is in the wood of this world to a quickened hungry soul

is only "vanity and vexation of spirit." But as the good Lord well knows all our need and all our sorrows; as he telleth all our wanderings, bottleth our tears, and hath ever watched over us for good, so also, in the riches of his tender mercy, he hath led us about, and led us forth out of all self-confidence, out of all the ways of our own devising. He hath likewise stripped us of all confidence in an arm of flesh; and when our own "strength was hunger-bitten, and destruction was ready at our side," when every human refuge failed, when our heart was brought down with legal labour, when we fell down exhausted and there was none to help, when we could not feed upon the husks of human religion, when our souls abhorred all such kind of meat, and when in our own sensations we drew near to the gates of death, *then*, by the operations of divine power, the Most High took us by the hand, and led us poor destitutes to his dear Son. He brought us, when ready to perish, under the shadow of Christ Jesus, this blessed apple-tree; and here we found, by happy experience, that he satisfied our longing souls, and filled our hungry souls with goodness. Here our weary spirits found their desired rest, and here we have experienced that "his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed." The dear Lord all along kept us as the apple of his eye, and tenderly preserved us in our low estate; and when the set time to favour us was come, he brought us under the fruitful shadow of his dear Son; and here we have found our soul-satisfying rest and refreshing; for this blessed Tree of Life yields all manner of precious fruits, and they are all sweet to our taste.

When the Lord Jesus Christ condescended, according to covenant engagements, to assume our nature, when he spent three and thirty years to work out an everlasting righteousness, when he endured the contradiction of sinners against himself, when he suffered the wrath of God due to our sins, when he poured out his soul unto death on the cross, and was laid in Joseph's tomb, these are all fruits of his everlasting love, and we have found them exceedingly sweet to our taste. When he rose from the dead as the Almighty Conqueror over sin, death, and the devil, it was for our justification and salvation; and when the rich blessing of peace with God was procured by his spotless sacrifice, and when his rich atoning blood was first sprinkled upon our consciences, we then found that his fruit was sweet indeed to our taste. Whenever we are assaulted by Satan and oppressed with his temptations, how sweet we then find the fruit of our blessed Lord, as our great High Priest and Advocate, who "stands at the right hand of the poor, to save him from him that would condemn his soul;" and when we fall into sin, contract guilt, and feel self-condemned on account of it, we could not again lift up our face to God, had we not such a blessed High Priest and Advocate with the Father, who ever liveth to make intercession for us; and verily there is an inexpressible sweetness in all the rich fruits of this our blessed Apple-Tree! Moreover, every grace and fruit of the Holy Spirit implanted in our hearts flows from the fulness treasured up in Christ Jesus, "for it hath pleased the Father that in him all

fulness should dwell." Not a single blessing in providence do we enjoy but what is dispensed by his all-bountiful hand. By sin we have forfeited all the blessings both of grace and providence, and must have perished for evermore had not this dear Apple-Tree interposed between offended justice and rebellious sinners; but, blessed be his holy name, he appeared in the fulness of time to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and thus became our hiding-place, our shadow, our food, and our all in all! O that we could love him more and serve him better, cleave unto him with purpose of heart, and make up the whole of our happiness in him; for surely he is altogether lovely, and that which crowns the whole, notwithstanding all our helplessness, he is our beloved and our unchangeable Friend!

But I must now drop the subject. Whether my dear friend will find anything savoury or seasonable in it, it is not for me to decide; but if you can but pick out a morsel sufficient to make a plain meal of, the poor servitor will be highly gratified, as it is no small honour to be employed in waiting upon a royal princess. I shall be very happy to obtain a sheet full of your savoury meat, warm from the table, whenever the King of Zion condescends to make a feast in your tent; and as I believe he often visits your habitation, I entreat you to remember me in his presence, for I know you can at certain seasons speak well.

With this humble request, I close up this imperfect sheet, and subscribe myself in the best of all bonds,

Most affectionately yours,

London, October 16, 1828.

JOHN KEYT.

P.S.—I am requested by my esteemed friend, Mr. Ford, to beg your acceptance of his sincere thanks for your kind present and your invaluable epistle. He would willingly answer it, could he find language adequate to the feelings of his heart; but at present he is so pleased with his portion that I suppose you will not hear from him till the new moon feast is over. His wife also is quite delighted with your good tidings, and there are some hidden ones that I know, who are striving to enter in at the strait gate, who will also share in the contents of your choice epistle. I wish you could find in your heart to send me just such another kid, as I should then make merry with my friends and be thankful to the donors. Dear Mr. Chamberlain is expected in London to-night, and to preach next Lord's day.

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN SUFFERETH VIOLENCE, AND THE VIOLENT TAKE IT BY FORCE.

Dear Friend,—I received yours of the 12th instant, and was glad to hear of the gradual increase of your congregation, and that outward things continue to wear a favourable aspect.

I hope you are still favoured to speak with plainness and honesty to the people; and may the dear Lord enable you to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all authority. Paul's advice to his son was,

“Rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;” but, alas! I fear there are but very few faithful ministers in this awful day of rebuke and blasphemy; and the cry of most professors seems to be, “Prophecy smooth things. Don’t be too harsh. Deal tenderly with the little ones.” Thus many are daubed up with untempered mortar, and lulled to sleep in ease and carnal security; and almost all the professors love to have it so. But what will they do in the end thereof, when God ariseth to shake terribly the earth? I fear many will sink to hell who now think they are on the very threshold of heaven, and imagine they are all right and safe, because their iniquities are not discovered. They have not been brought into the fiery trial of which Paul speaks: “The fire shall try every man’s work, of what sort it is.” And Moses bears the like testimony; for he says, “From his right hand went a fiery law for them;” and the Lord, speaking by Zechariah, says, “I will bring the third part through the fire, and will try them as gold is tried.” Thus all God’s people, sooner or later, must pass through the fire; and sure I am there is no other way to the kingdom of eternal glory. The fire is to try, to purify, to make manifest; and this fire is the law of God, in its spirituality, applied by the Holy Spirit to the conscience, bringing the soul in guilty before God, and is applied, sooner or later, to all the elect in this time state. When thus applied, they will feel the truth of such scriptures as these: “By the law is the knowledge of sin;” “Thy commandment is exceeding broad;” “By the deeds of the law can no flesh living be justified in his sight.” Then they will begin to cry to God for mercy from necessity, feeling themselves guilty before him, and fearing they shall die in the pit; they will cry aloud, from their very souls, “God be merciful to me, a sinner;” “Lord, save, or I perish;” “Let not the pit shut her mouth upon me;” and these cries will surely be heard in God’s own time, for they will enter into the ears of the Lord of hosts. These violent souls “overcome heaven by prayer,” and “take the kingdom of heaven by force,” for the Lord will surely attend unto their cry, and will manifest his mercy to their souls, and speak comfortably unto them, in some such language as this: “Fear not; I have redeemed thee;” “Be of good cheer; thy sins are all forgiven thee;” and they shall feel the blessed effects, for “where the word of a king is there is power,” and this power will manifest itself by removing the burden of guilt from the conscience. The yoke shall be destroyed, because of the anointing, the blessed unction of the word of life and peace. Then the redeemed soul will go forth in the dances of those that make merry, praising, blessing, magnifying, and adoring the God of his salvation.

But as for all others, be they professors or profane, be they of what creed they may, or let them be ever so pure in their own eyes, or ever so high in the estimation of others, or ever such pious and consistent characters, the day that cometh shall burn them up. The fiery law will burn in them as a fire never to be quenched throughout the countless ages of eternity, for their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. The sins of the elect are manifest be-

forhand, going before to judgment; but the sins of the reprobate follow after, and they must lie under the curse of the fiery law for ever and ever. What a mercy of mercies, then, it is for you and me that we have our judgment in this life, that we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world, for "Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and teachest him out of thy law, that thou mayest give him rest from the days of adversity, till the pit be digged for the wicked."

And O what a precious rest have we found in Christ, at times, from all toil and from all adversity! We have found him to be a shelter from the storm of God's wrath, a shadow from the heat of his fiery law, and a very present help in times of trouble. We have proved him to be a Brother born for adversity, a Friend that loveth at all times, who hateth putting away; and although we, at times, believe not, he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself. He changeth not, therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed. O what debtors we are to sovereign grace! O that we could more exalt his precious name together, that we could talk more of the glory of his kingdom, and tell more of the exceeding greatness of his power to usward who believe. But, alas!

"Mortal tongues are dumb at best;
We must die to speak of Christ."

Tender my kind love to your wife. I find, by her letter to —, that the chastening hand of the Lord was upon her. May she not despise his chastening, for it is an evidence of his love, nor faint when she is rebuked of him; for though he cause grief, yet will he return again, according to the multitude of his tender mercies; and "though weeping may endure for a night, joy cometh in the morning."

With my love to all who are compelled to flee to the Rock of eternal ages, feeling their need of a shelter from the storms of Sinai's fiery law,

I remain, as ever, thine in the Bonds of Love and Affection,
East Hagbourne, 1847. G. P.

INQUIRY.

A CORRESPONDENT who signs himself "A Constant Reader," has asked us to explain the meaning of Rom. iii. 7: "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

ANSWER.

As the passage may seem to have a bearing on the Rahab controversy, and has for that reason, we believe, been sent to us as if opposed to our views, we will briefly examine it.

Though Paul is a keen, logical arguer, yet sometimes the nature and force of his arguments are somewhat obscure until thoroughly examined. It is so with this place. Paul is arguing with the Jew, and, as is his custom, puts objections into the mouth of his opponent that he may answer them more effectually. It is a kind of question and answer. The Jew objects to the conclusion of Paul, that he is

“a Jew, which is one inwardly,” and that “circumcision is that of the heart?” (Rom. ii. 29,) and says, “What advantage, then, hath the Jew, and what profit is there of circumcision?” This objection Paul answers thus: “Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if some did not believe; shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.” (Rom. iii. 2-4.) But the Jew is not satisfied. He objects again. “If my unrighteousness commend (that is, set off and heighten) the righteousness of God, which it must do, Paul, according to your argument, that God must be justified though every man be a liar, is not this making God act unrighteously to punish me for that which magnifies him?” Paul thus answers it: “Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance? God forbid; for then how shall God judge the world?” But the Jew—Jew like, is not satisfied. He will still press his objection. Thus we see that the words are not Paul’s words, but put by him into the mouth of an objector who argues thus: “If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory”—that is, if my lies, meaning my unbelief, which is giving God the lie, (verses 3, 4,) have given cause to glorify God more abundantly, he overruling them to his glory,—“why yet am I judged as a sinner? How hard to punish me for those sins by which God is glorified.” This is what the Jew says; and he adds, “If this doctrine be true, then let us do evil that good may come.” But Paul answers the whole objection by one brief, pithy sentence, bringing down upon him the broad sword of God: “Whose damnation is just.” He will not stay to argue the question; he cuts down the objection at a stroke. Such an arguer and such an objector is justly damned. Now just see the consequence, if it were Paul’s doctrine, and not the objecting Jew’s. It would be this, that God could not justly punish sin if he were glorified thereby. Then the greatest sin that was ever committed, the crucifixion of the Son of God was no sin at all, for by it God was glorified. Nay, it would lose all its heinous character, and be rather a merit than a sin. Peter judged otherwise; and though he preached the doctrine of God’s predestination, he charged home on their consciences their personal wickedness. “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” (Acts ii. 23.) We thus see that the doctrine laid down in the passage inquired of is not Paul’s doctrine, for it is awful Antinomianism, but the objection of an unbelieving Jew, which he puts into his mouth that he may more effectually answer it.

If the Son be equal with the Father, then is there of necessity an equality which Arius, that heretic, denieth; and if the Son be compared with the Father, then is there a distinction of persons, which S. bellius, that heretic, denieth.—*Old Bible.*

REVIEW.

The Faith of Rahab the Harlot. A Sermon Preached on Sunday Morning, June 18th, 1865, by Mr. James Wells, at the Surrey Tabernacle, Borough Road.

(Concluded from p. 355.)

WHEN a preacher or writer openly advances and firmly maintains doctrines which, by confounding good and evil, truth and falsehood, may be said to strike at the very foundations of morality, every man of common integrity is bound to protest, as occasion serves, against tenets not only so destructive of the ties which bind society itself together, but which shock the natural conscience of all honest and honourable men; for he not only thereby relieves his own mind, but lends his aid to check the progress of views so immoral and so pernicious. On such broad grounds, had we no other, we might well take our stand in publicly protesting against the doctrine lately broached by Mr. Wells, that to tell lies under certain circumstances is not only justifiable, but has divine authority and sanction; in other words, has the positive approbation of God. But we have other grounds of a more peculiar, and, if possible, stronger character on which to rest our public protest, and, therefore, we trust, amply sufficient to relieve us from any charge of personal hostility, unworthy motives, or unnecessary interference. Mr. Wells holds the doctrines of grace. So do we. Mr. Wells maintains and practises the ordinance of believers' baptism. So do we. Mr. Wells occupies a foremost place as a leader of a religious party. As far as a periodical can occupy a similar position, so do we. Are we not then not only individually, but as representing a large body of Christian men and women, and as speaking also in the name of many ministers and churches of similar views with ourselves, loudly called upon to protest against sentiments which have cast a reproach and a dishonour upon the whole body of the Particular Baptist churches through the land? Does the world generally, does the religious world in particular, know any difference or distinction between the Particular Baptist churches? Does it not class them all together as forming one religious sect or party? And do not the enemies of truth set them all down in a lump as maintaining exaggerated Calvinistic, if not positively Antinomian, sentiments? Are we not bound, therefore, to purge ourselves and the ministers and churches who cannot well speak for themselves, but may be considered to speak through us, of the dishonour and reproach cast upon the whole body by the views and sentiments advanced by Mr. Wells? For let it be specially observed, that it is not now a mere matter of private speculation on his part, or a hasty, unguarded expression, dropped in the heat of the moment but on due consideration, seen to be an error, repented of, acknowledged, and forsaken. Mr. Wells still firmly maintains it; his church and congregation may be said to maintain it too, for they have made no public protest against it; and several, if not many ministers in the same connection, have also given in their open adhesion to his views.

In resuming, then, the subject, to keep our pen within due bounds, for it is so wide a field, we shall aim chiefly at three points: First, to state, as plainly and fairly as we can, Mr. Wells's views; secondly, to review, and as far as we are favoured with divine wisdom and grace, to refute them; thirdly, to show their practical fruit and tendency.

Following out this plan, let us first state, in Mr. Wells's own words, his views concerning the falsehoods told by Rahab. We will, to save our readers the trouble of reference to our last Number, once more give his own words:

"Now here are two falsehoods. Now, then, some of you hypocrites, get your piety ready, for I am going to shock it a little. Was Rahab justified in those falsehoods? Certainly she was. Say you, would you have told them? Yes, Sir, I would tell ten thousand if I were placed in the same circumstances, and had the same divine authority for it that she had. She must either utter those falsehoods or else betray the spies, and their lives would have been lost."

Observe in this extract four leading points: 1. The admission that Rahab told two falsehoods. 2. That she was justified in telling them. 3. That he himself would tell ten thousand if he were placed in the same circumstances. And 4. That she had divine authority for telling them.

Of course no preacher or writer would venture upon making such extraordinary assertions unless he had some show of proof to substantiate them. Mr. Wells, therefore, felt himself compelled to bring forward some arguments to prove his points. As far as we can understand them, for they are rather confused, he rests his defence of Rahab on three main grounds: 1. The necessity of the case, "She must either utter those falsehoods or else betray the spies, and their lives would have been lost. 2. On the permitted violation of the ceremonial law by David in eating the shewbread, and by the priests in profaning the Sabbath in the temple. 3. On the power of God to suspend his moral law in particular cases, and thus "make that morally true which was literally false."

As we have already examined the two first of these arguments, and shown that the first is really founded on a disbelief of the power of God, and makes him, so to speak, obliged to give way to necessity; and that the second confounds together things so distinct as the transitory law of ceremony and the eternal law of truth and falsehood, we need not go over that ground again. We shall, therefore, address ourselves to the third point—the almighty power of God, and his consequent ability to suspend any law whether in the physical, moral, or spiritual world. This is the only argument which has a show of validity, and therefore we shall give it some lengthened consideration. Let us give the extract again:

"Now then, to be careful here for a moment, I will tell you a doctrine I hold, and I may as well bring it to light; a little open air will do it no harm. I hold this doctrine; that in the physical, in the moral, and in the spiritual world the great God can suspend for a time any law he chooses. When the sun stood still, some physical laws we do not understand were suspended; when the sea was divided, physical laws we do not understand were suspended; so when Jordan was divided. In

all the Saviour's miracles there were physical laws suspended, and other laws put into their place we cannot understand. The literal law of things was for the loaves and fishes to remain as they were; but to suspend that law, and by some other law we do not understand multiplied those loaves and fishes into what you read of. And just so in the moral world; God here suspended the law of falsehood, and by suspending that law did hereby take away the criminality of Rahab's falsehoods; that though she told two falsehoods, there was no sin in them, no crime in them; necessity demanded it; God suspended the usual law of truth, and made that morally true which was literally false; that is, Rahab did not *choose* to know whence the spies came, or whither they went, and in the exercise of this right she was justified; hereby suspended one law to make way for another. What cannot the great God do? 'Do to others as you would they should do to you' is a law existing among creatures of equality; but God has not his equal; he has no other to do to him as he is done to. Why, say some, you seem to rejoice in it. Of course I do. I would rather lose the last drop of my blood any day than give up one iota of Jehovah's right—absolute, original, and moral right—as the great original, inconceivable God, to do just what he pleases. There are some laws he will not suspend; the law of his love—never alter that; the law of salvation; not because he cannot—be careful how you attribute *cannots* to the great God. God cannot lie because he will not."

There is something very deliberate here. It is no hasty, unconsidered sentiment which dropped from him in a moment of excitement. Look at the words :

"Now then, to be careful here for a moment, I will tell you a doctrine I hold, and I may as well bring it to light; a little open air will do it no harm."

He has, then, it appears, long held the doctrine, only covered up, hidden in the dark room, without light or air. "But it shall be hidden," says he, "no longer. It will be stifled there. Let me bring it out and give it a little air." But who can tell what other similar views and sentiments may be also hidden in the same dark room, and when the fitting season comes may be brought out into the air? No very encouraging prospect, one would think, for his hearers to wait every Lord's Day with anxious expectation what new doctrine, what fresh error, is about to come forth to be aired for the first time in the new chapel.

But let us examine this argument drawn from the omnipotence of God. The doctrine is this, that as the power of God is infinite, if you deny that he can suspend the moral law, or change the character of truth and falsehood, you are setting bounds to his omnipotence. Observe the language: "What cannot the great God do?" "Be careful how you attribute *cannots* to the great God. God cannot lie because he will not." This argument has a show of strength, as we both naturally and spiritually shrink from setting bounds to the almighty power of God. And yet the omnipotence of God is a point on which mistakes are easily made,* from not taking into consideration other circumstances; and we shall therefore show that there is a limit even to omnipotence. The Scripture plainly and positively declares that "it is impossible for God to lie," (Heb. vi. 18,) and that "he cannot lie," (Tit. i. 2,) and thus sets bounds to the omnipotence of God. What are these bounds?

* Charnock justly observes: "The want of understanding the doctrine of the divine power hath caused many to run into mighty absurdities."

1. Some things are impossible from their *very nature*, as, for instance, that a fact which has taken place should not have taken place. Peter, for instance, denied his Master; this is a fact which once took place. Now, all the omnipotence of God cannot make that act not to have been done which was done. God mercifully pardoned it, overruled it for good, and brought a blessing out of it. But it having once occurred, omnipotence itself cannot make it not to have occurred.

2. Some things are impossible to the *nature and being of God*. Thus God cannot die, nor can he grow old or decay; he cannot change, lose, or part with any of his perfections, or, being a Spirit, perform bodily actions. These things are weakness, not power; whereas the perfection of his power is to abide for ever unchanged and unchangeable in his own eternal being. He cannot but be what he eternally is. Could he be otherwise, it would not be omnipotence, but impotence; not the perfection of power, but the presence of weakness.

3. Some things—and here we come to our present point—are impossible to the *glorious perfections of God*. All the perfections of God harmonise with each other. It is true that he can do whatsoever he can will; but he cannot *will* anything unrighteous, for that would be contrary to his essential holiness, and therefore he cannot *do* anything unrighteous. The power of God is not something distinct from his will, as if God by virtue of his omnipotence might act contrary to his will, for his will is infinitely pure; and thus it is impossible for God to lie, because it is impossible for him to will evil. He cannot do anything unbecoming his holiness, or contrary to the perfections of his nature. And all these perfections are not only infinite, but what is termed co-ordinate, that is, each maintains its equal place with the rest. As, then, all the perfections of God are infinite and co-ordinate, the infinity of one perfection cannot clash with, or be overpowered by the infinity of another. Mr. Wells says that "God cannot lie because he will not." That is to a certain extent true, because his will is as perfect as his power. But as Mr. Wells puts it, it almost sounds as if his idea was that God could lie if he would. Now, the Scripture expressly declares that "it is impossible for him to lie;" therefore he not only will not, but he cannot. As he cannot die, because he is the life itself; as he cannot err, because he is wisdom itself; as he cannot deceive, because he is goodness itself, so he cannot lie because he is truth itself. As God is infinitely powerful, so he is infinitely holy. Holiness is the essential glory of his nature, as necessary as his very being, as his omniscience, as his omnipresence. God is omnipotent because he cannot do evil, and would not be omnipotent if he could; for evil is weakness, not strength—a deficiency of righteousness, and therefore of power as well as goodness. It is, therefore, an utter misconception of the omnipotence of God to view it as distinct from his other glorious and infinite perfections, and to think that because all things are said to be possible with God, therefore it is possible for him to lie or do any evil.

And as his infinite purity and holiness make it impossible for God himself to lie, so they make it impossible for him to sanction or approve of lies in others. As essentially, infinitely holy, he cannot but look upon sin with intense abhorrence. He hates the very sight of it, (Hab. i. 13,) the first conception of it in the imagination; (Zech. viii. 17;) it is the abominable thing which he hates, (Jer. xlv. 4;) and all the workers of it he hates too. (Ps. v. 5.) He therefore cannot possibly approve of, authorise, or sanction it in any point, in any degree, in any person. To approve of sin in others is to partake of it, nay, as the Apostle argues, is in some respects worse than doing it ourselves, as showing that reprobate mind which loves evil for its own sake. (Rom. i. 32.) If God authorised or sanctioned Rahab's lies, he approved of them; and if he approved of them, he (how dreadful the thought!) would have been a partaker of Rahab's sin. It is, then, no common error that Mr. Wells has advanced, but a most awful insult to the majesty and holiness of the Lord God of heaven and earth. And all who hold him up in it, all the ministers who have wilfully and knowingly approved of it, have made themselves partakers of his sin. His friends are crying out as if it were some personal matter, as if there were some conspiracy to injure him. Such friends are, like his flatterers, his worst enemies; for they stand in the way of his seeing and acknowledging his fault. He might have seen the false step which he has made, and the dangerous path into which it was leading him, and returned; but, by siding with him and making it a party matter, his friends have almost blocked his return; for to acknowledge his error would involve them all in one common mortification.

But having, we hope, cleared up thus far the omnipotence of God, and shown that it is and ever must be in perfect harmony with all his other glorious perfections, let us examine Mr. Wells's views about God's suspending, in particular cases, his laws in what he calls "the physical, the moral, and the spiritual world." We have no wish to enter upon any scientific discussion, but as Mr. Wells has based his argument of God's suspending his moral law upon his suspending occasionally his physical or natural laws, and as he seems to misconceive the nature of a miracle, we will venture a few remarks upon the point.

Now, we have no reason to believe that God ever suspends any law in the physical, and certainly not in the moral and spiritual world. A miracle is not, as Mr. Wells seems to think, the suspension of a physical law, but the putting forth of a power which acts differently from it, or in defiance of it. When Peter walked upon the water, the Saviour did not suspend for him the law of gravity, but put forth a power which held him up in spite of gravity. Gravity was in full continuance all the time; for directly that the Saviour ceased to hold him up he began to sink. It was not, therefore, suspended, but overpowered. When the Lord multiplied the loaves and fishes, it was no suspension of the ordinary way in which bread and fish are made, but a making of them in a supernatural way. Mr. Wells does not seem fully to understand the meaning of

the word "law," or rather confounds its two meanings. The word law, in the expression "physical law," has two distinct meanings: 1. The rule of a positive agency; 2. The rule of a negative result. Thus, that a stone should fall to the ground is a law of positive agency, but that a stone should continue a stone is a mere negative result. The suspension of the law of gravitation would prevent the stone from falling; the suspension of the law that it should continue a stone would effect nothing, unless there came in another law, a positive law that it should become, say, a bird, or some other living organism. Thus, the law which causes flour and water, when baked, to become bread is a positive law, but that bread should continue bread is not a law at all, but a result. If there be a law, it is that the bread should become mouldy and perish. The multiplication, therefore, of the loaves was not from a suspension of any physical law, but from a special miraculous power. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, it was not a suspension of the law that a dead body should continue a dead body, for that is not a law, strictly speaking, but a mere negative result, but a putting forth of a supernatural power in the communication of life to the dead. So with healing disease. When the Lord healed the sick, it was not by suspending a physical law, as for instance that a paralysed man should always continue paralysed, but a putting forth of a miraculous power to heal the paralysis. When the Lord turned water into wine, what physical law was suspended? It is a physical law that oxygen and hydrogen, chemically combined in certain proportions, should form water. Was this law suspended? If so, could the suspension of that law have turned water into wine? Or say that the law was suspended that water at a certain temperature should continue to be water. Could the suspension of that law have changed the water into wine? Thus we see that a miracle is not, as Mr. Wells supposes, a suspension of a physical law, but an act of divine power which operates in spite of it. We are sorry to have to dwell upon this point, but as the assumed suspension of a physical law is made the groundwork of a similar suspension of a moral law, it seemed needful to show the fallacy of the analogy.

Assuming, then, as we consider erroneously, that God does sometimes suspend a physical or natural law, Mr. Wells argues from that analogy that he sometimes also suspends his moral law. This is a much more important point than the preceding, for the one merely touches a matter of science, but the other the very grounds of truth and morality. Let us once more look at his own words, that we may clearly gather up his meaning:

"And just so in the moral world; God here suspended the law of falsehood, and by suspending that law did hereby take away the criminality of Rahab's falsehoods; that though she told two falsehoods, there was no sin in them, no crime in them; necessity demanded it; God suspended the usual law of truth, and made that morally true which was literally false; that is, Rahab did not *choose* to know whence the spies came, or whither they went, and in the exercise of this right she was justified; hereby suspended one law to make way for another."

By suspending "the law of falsehood" he means, we suppose, the

law against falsehood. But what is meant by suspending a moral law? Does it mean disannulling it for the time, or altogether changing its character? For the two things are distinct. For instance, sometimes in seasons of great political commotion the *Habeas Corpus* Act is suspended. This law provides that a man put into prison may demand that the cause of his commitment should be examined and determined by the Court of Queen's Bench. Its suspension, therefore, leaves the man in prison without any legal remedy. But this suspension does not change the character of the law, and turn it into an enactment to feed him, and clothe him, and take good care of him. So when the law says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour," when interpreted and enlarged as the Lord interpreted the law against adultery and murder, it is a prohibition of all falsehood. Now if this law be said, under certain circumstances, to be suspended, does it mean that it is disannulled for those circumstances, so that we may, as placed under them, bear false witness and tell lies without sin? Or does it mean that it turns falsehood into truth? Mr. Wells seems to include both meanings, for he says that though Rahab told two falsehoods "there was no sin in them;" in other words, that God disannulled for the time his holy, strict, and righteous law, necessity demanding it; and not only so, but changed its very character, turning thereby truth into falsehood and "made that morally true which was literally false." Now is there any one scripture which warrants this daring assertion? The very express nature of the law is to be "holy, just, and good." (Rom. vii. 12.) As such it bears upon it the impress of the holiness and justice of God. It can, therefore, no more be suspended, disannulled, or changed than the holiness and justice of God can be suspended, disannulled, or changed. Its character and nature are as unalterable and unchangeable as the character and nature of God himself. It is as strict as his essential justice, as holy as his eternal holiness, and as inflexible as his unchangeable perfections. It was given on Mount Sinai with every accompaniment of terrible Majesty, and went forth from God's hand as a fiery law. (Exod. xix. 16—25; Heb. xii. 18—21; Deut. xxxiii. 2.) How then can it be suspended or altered? The Lord himself declares: "For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." (Matt. v. 18.) "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass than one tittle of the law to fail." (Luke xvi. 17.) Now if "one jot or tittle," that is, the smallest part,* can in no wise pass from the law, how is it possible that any one moral law can be suspended, that is, as we have shown, be for the time disannulled and its whole character changed? How unchangeable must that law be which must stand in all its original firmness and smallest minutæ, even were earth and heaven to pass away and be no more!

* The word "jot" is the Hebrew vowel i, which is the smallest of all the characters, and the word "tittle," or little horn, signifies a small turn of the character which if removed would change the letter n into g, and the letter t into h, &c.

But there is still another view of the matter which is of the deepest importance. If God can suspend, that is, for the time remove out of the way and disannul one law, why should he not all? If he can suspend for a time, he can disannul for ever; for the omnipotent power whereby he can do one can as easily do the other. It is so in earthly matters. Parliament, for instance, which can suspend the *Habeas Corpus* Act could disannul it, and make that permanent which has been, as yet, but temporary. What need was there, then, that the Son of God should come to fulfil the law when by a simple act of almighty power God could have disannulled it in the case of all the elect,* and not only so but have turned their disobedience of it into obedience, and given them heaven as their reward? Does not Mr. Wells say that "God made in Rahab's case that morally true which was literally false," in other words, turned her lies into truths? Now the same power which could turn a literal falsehood into a moral truth can turn an act of literal disobedience into an act of moral obedience, and convert sin into holiness, evil into good, and that which God hates into that which God loves. Where then was the need of Christ's active and passive obedience, of his dolorous sufferings in the garden and on the cross, of the agonies of his holy soul when he bare the curse of the law and all the wrath of God due to the election of grace, if the law could be suspended? The suspension of the law would suspend the curse of the law; and if necessity demanded in the case of Rahab, that the law should be suspended in her favour, how much more would necessity demand that it should be suspended in favour of the Son of God? For bear in mind these two things, that the same power which could suspend a part could suspend the whole; and that the same power which could suspend could abrogate and disannul. Observe, further, that suspending a law and disannulling it merely differ in point of time; for as a temporary suspension is for the time a disannulling, so a permanent suspension is a virtual abrogation. If parliament were to suspend the Income Tax for a year, it would for that time be disannulled; if the suspension were made permanent, it would be virtually abrogated. Why then need Christ have fulfilled the law, or borne its curse? So bitter was the cup, that the blessed Lord cried out, "O Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. xxvi. 42.) But it was not possible. The law could not be suspended, disannulled, or changed. He came not to destroy the law but to fulfil it, and to fulfil it so completely that not one jot or tittle should pass away before he fulfilled every one. He was made under the law to redeem them that were under the law, (Gal. iv. 4, 5,) and he redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us. (Gal. iii. 13). We see, therefore, that it is a thorough misconception of the nature of the law to think that it can be suspended, changed, or altered; and that such a doctrine, if it do not altogether set aside the atonement, virtually renders it

* One of Mr. Wells's followers has publicly declared his opinion that God suspends the moral law for all the elect.

useless and needless. We read that "God spared not his own Son;" (Rom. viii. 32;) but he might have spared him and all his sufferings if the law could have been disannulled by a simple act of divine omnipotence. Why need he, then, have come to fulfil the law by his active obedience, and endure its penalty by his sufferings, bloodshedding, and death, if by an act of simple volition, or of omnipotent power, all the sins of God's people in transgressing the law could have been passed by, or, according to Mr. Wells's view of Rahab's lies, been the best part of their conduct? "What?" our readers will ask, "does Mr. Wells say that?" He is of age; ask him; let him speak for himself.

"I am going further yet. The apostle James makes that part of her conduct the best part of her conduct. I told you to get your piety ready, you hypocrites, for that I was going to shock it. The apostle James makes that the best part of her conduct. I look back with pleasure upon some of the favours I have done some of the people of God, and would again, and will to-morrow too, if I am so placed. James says, 'Was not Rahab justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?' How did she do that? Why, by saying they were not there, and by saying they were gone. The apostle makes that the best part of her conduct. Here, then, were two falsehoods, with no sin in them, as I have said; they did no one any harm. To tell a truth that would injure the people of God is infinitely worse than telling a lie that would not injure them; no question about that."

Is not this daring language? Some think that we have been hard upon Mr. Wells and his flatterers; but does he not deserve it, and they too, for holding him up when he is so manifestly wrong? Read again the words, "I told you to get your piety ready, you hypocrites, for that I was going to shock it." We would appeal to any right-minded man, whether he see with us in other points or not, if it is not taking a most unbounded pulpit licence thus before a large congregation to stamp upon every rising opposition to his views, and try to crush it as it arose, as an act of hypocrisy, almost as a man would crush a snail in his garden.

But let us examine whether James does make Rahab's lies, "the best part of her conduct," as that is really worse than the sentence we have quoted, for to tamper with the word of God is much worse than to tamper with the feelings of man. James Wells and James the Apostle may bear the same names, but they are very different persons. James Wells speaks his own words, and by them will have to stand or fall; James the Apostle speaks the words of God. His words are: "Likewise was not Rahab justified by works when she had received the messengers, and sent them out another way?" James speaks of two good works of Rahab: 1. She received the spies. There was no lie there; 2. She sent them out another way. There was no lie there. We deny that she sent them out of the

* To show the influence of example, one of the ministers at the public meeting on Wednesday evening, September 20th, at the New Surrey Tabernacle, actually said, "Now we do feel that we would take all the world and all the devils in hell to heaven, if God would save them by his victorious grace." What are we to think about grace reaching and saving devils?

way by telling two lies, by saying they were not there, and by saying they were gone. The Holy Ghost by James does not once touch upon her conversation with the king's messengers. All the intermediate part between her receiving the spies and her sending them away is not alluded to by the inspired Apostle. If Joshua ii. be carefully read, it will be seen that the sending away of the spies was quite a distinct action from the lies which she told about them: "And she said, according unto your words, so be it. And she sent them away, and they departed; and she bound the scarlet line in the window." (Joshua ii., 21.) The series of events narrated is this: 1. The spies come to her house; 2. She receives and lodges them; 3. The king sends the messengers; 4. Rahab hides the spies; 5. She deceives by falsehood the king's messengers; 6. Before the men were laid down she comes to them, and the conversation takes place, recorded verses 9-20; 7. She sends the spies away.

Now James mentions merely the first act and the last: 1. That "she received the spies;" and 2. "sent them out another way." Her sending them away was quite distinct from her lies about them. We deny, therefore, that she sent away the spies by saying they were not there, and by saying they were gone, for she sent them away *after* she had deceived the king's messengers; nor does it appear that she even told the spies how she had preserved their lives by her deception. We thus see that there is not the least shadow of a foundation for the awful assertion—for it is an awful assertion, that "James makes Rahab's lies the best part of her conduct." James does no such thing. James Wells may do so, but not James the Apostle. Read for yourselves, if you have any doubt on the point, Joshua ii. in connection with James ii. 25, and then judge whether our interpretation be correct or not.

Having thus shown on what a baseless foundation Mr. Wells rests his views of sinless lies, let us now see what *practical* conclusions flow from his doctrine; for this, after all, is the grand test; for "if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings; perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness; from such withdraw thyself." (1 Timothy vi. 3-5.) If a doctrine, then, is not "according to godliness," it is not of God, but is to be rejected as a "perverse disputing."

What fruit, then, grows upon Mr. Wells's new tree? Is it good or evil? He lays down this broad principle: "To tell a truth that would injure the people of God is infinitely worse than telling a lie that would not injure them; no question about that." We are not so sure that there is no question about that; for it seems to us a very questionable doctrine, whether it regards religion or morality. But let us assume a case to exemplify the fruit of this doctrine. One of Mr. Wells's members, or say a deacon, is

seen some evening coming out of a low pot-house intoxicated, or is picked up in the streets by the police drunk and incapable.* Such things have occurred even to ministers, and may occur again. A fellow-member passing by sees the whole transaction. The matter gets wind, is brought before the church, and it becomes known that this fellow-member can bear decisive evidence one way or the other. He is placed in a trying position; but the doctrine of his pastor comes strongly to his mind. "To tell a truth that would injure the people of God is infinitely worse than telling a lie that would not injure them," rings in his ear, and decides the question. If he tell the truth, he will injure a child of God, as he believes his fellow-member, in spite of his fall, to be, and the church as well as him. He therefore tells a lie, and declares that the man was perfectly sober, or that it is a case of mistaken identity, and that he was not the person picked up by the police, or that he and the accused member were spending a quiet evening together at his own house, or any other falsehood which will best screen the accused. But you will cry out, "This is monstrous! Why, no man could or would tell such barefaced lies." If he did, he would have Mr. Wells's authority for it. Does he not expressly say that "he would tell ten thousand" if he were placed in the same circumstances as Rahab? And is not a lie a lie, whether a little one or a big one? Must we have a kind of sliding scale of lies, as we once had for the importation of corn? or a tariff of circumstances when, as analogous, lies are admissible, and when, as not analogous, they are contraband? Mr. Wells, indeed, clearly denounces *common* lying as "a dreadful vice." It is only *uncommon* lying that he approves of,—lying as Rahab lied; that is, lies in which there is "no sin, no crime," lies which are "morally true, though literally false." We must mind, then, that if we do tell lies it must be only when we are placed in analogous circumstances with Rahab. But who is to be the judge of these analogous circumstances? You cry out, and that justly, against the instance that we have given of sinless lies as "monstrous;" but are not the circumstances analogous to Rahab's? The man might argue thus: "Rahab, by two falsehoods, saved the life of the spies. I shall, by my falsehoods, save the character of the deacon and the credit of the church. He is a good man, though he was this time overtaken with drink. If I tell the truth, I shall ruin him for life; if I tell a lie, I shall save him. I will tell the lie. My pastor preaches that there is no sin in lies of this kind, and that "to tell a truth that would injure a child of God is infinitely worse than telling a lie that would not injure him, there being on that point no question." But my lie, so far from not injuring him, will benefit him; and as Mr. Wells is my pastor and teacher, whose lips keep knowledge, and at whose mouth I should seek the law, (Mal. ii. 7), I will act according to his doctrine." But you will say: "Where is common honesty, decent morality, gone if this be the principle and

* This is, of course, a mere supposition; for we do not know one of his deacons even by name, nor have we the slightest intention to make more than an assumption of a possible case.

practice advocated in the pulpit and acted on in the pew?" Gone! To the winds; there is no question of that.

It is this consideration which has so startled all but those who, blinded by the spirit of party, uphold Mr. Wells even where he is so manifestly wrong. Were not Mr. Foreman and Mr. Collins fully justified in refusing to open the new chapel after such doctrine as this, when we consider its fruits and consequences?

But look at the question in another point of view. Mr. Wells must have in his congregation men of business, commercial travellers, drapers' assistants, and others of a similar class, who every day are tempted to tell lies.* Now how careful should a minister be not to break down in any way what we may call the sacredness of truth. Truthfulness in man is like modesty in woman. In neither is the least breach permissible; for as the least deviation from modesty is in a woman the first step to disgrace and ruin and the casting away of her best, her surest safeguard, so the least deviation from truth robs a man both of his honour and of his shield. Many a woman has preferred death to dishonour; many a man, many a martyr, has died rather than save life by a lie. As, then, it is criminally base to sap the foundations of modesty, so it is morally culpable to sap the foundations of truthfulness. These men of business, these young men, surrounded by every temptation and the example of their fellows to tell falsehoods behind the counter or the desk, hear that, under certain circumstances, lies are allowable and sinless. Will they attend to Mr. Wells's caution about being placed in analogous circumstances with Rahab? or will they not rather stretch the license far beyond his meaning and intention? If they may lie to benefit others, why may they not lie to benefit themselves? If lies are permissible in religion, why should they not be permissible in business? Mr. Wells would doubtless shrink from such conclusions, and lift up his voice loudly against them. But letting out a false doctrine is like letting out of water. Where will it stop? What course will it take? How much will burst out when once the dam is broken down? For the human heart, like the Holmfirth or Sheffield reservoir, can, if a breach be made, pour forth a flood that shall sweep away all before it. Our children, too! should we not, do we not, impress upon them the sacredness of truth? They have to go into a wicked, lying world; and if we cannot give them much of this world's goods, we can at least, with our prayers for them, give them the earnest admonition and the beneficial example of undeviating truthfulness. But how can we do this, except by insisting upon the necessity of truth at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances?

The fact is simply this. Mr. Wells has made a sad mistake, and advanced a doctrine radically unsound. He has two courses before him, either to acknowledge his error, which would at once put an end to the whole dispute, or persevere in maintaining a doctrine

* A good man, a draper, used to say that, with all his attempts to restrain them, he could not keep his assistants from telling lies to the customers.

which is so opposed to Scripture, to the experience of all the family of God, and to the feeling of every right-minded man, that nothing can await him but failure in his attempt to defend it. But whatever course he may take, may grace be given to us and to our readers ever to stand by the sacred cause of undeviating truthfulness both in word and work, doctrine, experience, and practice. And as the Lord "has given a banner to them that fear him, that it may be displayed because of the truth," may our STANDARD ever be from the beginning of the year to the end of the year,

"LET GOD BE TRUE, BUT EVERY MAN A LIAR."

CHRIST LIGHTLY ESTEEMED.

"He forsook God that made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his Salvation."—DEUT. xxxii. 15.

Few in very deed they are,
 Who for Jesus truly care;
 Few, I venture to aver,
 Christ to silver now prefer.

Few who know the plague within;
 Few who feel the state they're in;
 Few who know and feel they're lost;
 Few who are much tried and toss'd;

Few who have a heart to pray;
 Few who nothing have to pay;
 Few who after Christ inquire;
 Few who heavenly things desire;

Few who hate their sinful heart;
 Few who do from sin depart;
 Few who choose the fear of God;
 Few who love His chastening rod;

Few who pleasures here forego;
 Few who hunger Christ to know;
 Few who from destruction flee;
 Few who Christ the Refuge see.

Gracious Lord, of Thee I'd sue,
 Make me one, however few,
 Who the dear Redeemer prize
 More than all beneath the skies.

Sept. 14.

ALFRED.

WHENCE ariseth this, that I find it harder to rely on Christ for power against daily infirmities than against the power of condemning guilt? Daily infirmities are the lesser enemies; but yet they are present enemies, and seeming smaller in stature than the great bulk of universal human guilt. The soul of a Christian is to step forth against them in his own strength and resolution, and so returns many times with shame; whereas the same covenant which takes away the stony heart and state of guilt is that only which gives a heart of flesh, and cleanseth the soul from all unrighteousness. I cannot, therefore, mortify one foolish, filthy, or distracted thought, without the application of the whole power of the same Christ who has removed my great and condemning guilt, and cast it into the sea.—*Dorney.*

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