

“...faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things...”

ZION'S PILGRIM

THE WAY TO THE HEAVENLY CANAAN



ROBERT HAWKER

*“An Evangelical that preaches the Bible
and proclaims the love of God”*

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ZION'S PILGRIM

ZION'S PILGRIM

OR

THE WAY TO THE HEAVENLY CANAAN

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

ZION'S PILGRIM, FROM THE AGE OF SEVENTY & ZION'S PILGRIM PAST SEVENTY

WRITTEN A SHORT TIME BEFORE HIS DEATH

~

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

Jeremiah 50:5

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

Hebrews 11:13

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**BY ROBERT HAWKER, D. D.
VICAR of CHARLES, PLYMOUTH.**

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ZION'S PILGRIM

PREFACE

The “Zion's Pilgrim” hath not come within my view for many years. Indeed from the time it first made its appearance, in the little periodical work, called “Zion's Trumpet,” I have seldom seen it; and most probably, but for the request of my bookseller, in wishing me to introduce the present new edition with a short preface, it would not have fallen under my inspection now.

Upon the revision of it, I see much, very much to be humbled for before God; and had I the service to perform again, many pages might be added of improvement, and not a few of correction take place; but these would make it a new work; for which the purchasers of the former editions would not be pleased; and my advanced life and daily labours would not well admit.

It hath been told me of the Lord's gracious smiles over it in several instances; for which I bow with thankfulness before his footstool; and under this impression, I am led to hope, the Lord's future blessings may go before, and follow it; for which I look up with humble supplication. They who condescend to read the “Zion's Pilgrim,” will kindly remember the early date of its first publication; and if comparing it with my later labours, will find cause I hope therefrom, with me, to bless God who giveth the increase of divine knowledge. In every instance of the Lord's people, the testimony of his holy word is proved: “the path of the just is

as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

R. H.

ZION'S PILGRIM

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

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

Dread Power! awful even in thy mercies! Do I now stand secure on the edge, upheld by a strength not my own, no longer within the reach of the tide, and beholding the solemn prospect of thousands still engulfed? Can I call to mind the

past danger and the present deliverance, unmoved with pity over the unthinking throng, and untouched with gratitude to thee the sole Author of every mercy? I feel (blessed be the grace that inspires it!) the rising hymn of thankfulness in my heart, while the tear drops from my eye: “Lord, how is it that thou hast manifested thyself unto me, and not unto the world?”

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

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

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

corresponding to his own song of praise; and to him they will not be uninteresting.

One reflection, I think, cannot fail to strike the gracious mind with force, in the review of a long period of unawakened nature, when once brought out of it; and that is, the distinguishing properties of preserving grace. I never knew, until grace taught it me, how much I owed, and was continually accumulating the debt, during the season of my unregeneracy, to this one principle: but now, under divine teaching, I have learned somewhat of this spiritual arithmetic, and can enter into the full apprehension of what the apostle means, when he says, “Preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.” (Jude 1:1.)

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

watched over, in all its helpless, defenceless hours, by the sedulous tenderness and care of its anxious parent? Such, and infinitely higher, must be his preservation of his people, who not only watches over them “every moment, lest any hurt them,” (Isaiah 27:3.) but, what peculiarly endears his loving-kindness to the heart, he watches over them for good, in those moments also, in the days of their unregeneracy, when they are “making Him to serve with their sins, and wearying Him with their iniquities.” (Isaiah 43:24.) Is this view of the subject wholly unprofitable to the soul not in the actual possession of grace? I trust not. Is not every one a monument of sparing mercy, while continuing on praying ground? And if preserved in Christ Jesus, why not hope there may be yet a calling to Christ Jesus? I have often thought that if the most senseless mind could be but brought to stop in the mad career of folly, and put the questions to the heart, “For what purpose am I preserved to this hour? — and why is the morning light again vouchsafed [granted] to one who but lives to abuse it?” — such a solemn appeal to the heart, in the cool moment of reflection, if awakened by grace, would be blessed by grace, and induce a new train of thought, and new principles of conduct in the mind. “How doth the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you? and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you; for the Lord is a God of judgment. Blessed are all they that wait for him!” (Isaiah 30:18.)

I hardly know at what period to commence my history. All that part of life which I spent prior to my conversion, I cannot reckon in the estimate of really living. He only lives, who lives to God's glory; — all else is but a blank in creation. And were the sum total of my days to be made up under this numeration, it could only correspond to the character of him, who, being regenerated after he had attained the age of threescore, ordered for the inscription of his tomb-stone — “Here lieth an old man of four years old.”

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

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

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

Awakened to a concern which I had never before experienced, and called upon continually by a voice from within, which neither the engagements of pleasure nor the clamour of business could wholly stifle, I found myself, insensibly as it were, entered upon the road to Zion, eagerly disposed to ask every one by the way, "Who will shew me any good?" though unconscious at that time what that good meant, or whether there were any means of attaining it.

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

THE MORAL MAN

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

I had long known him, and not infrequently been witness to some striking instances of the benevolence of his mind. He was well known indeed to all around for the extensiveness of his charity. The poor man never went from his door with his tale of misery unheard, or his wants unrelieved; and it was said of him, almost to a proverb, by the pensioners of his bounty, that if ever any man went to heaven, it would be him. I considered myself particularly fortunate in the recollection of such a character, to whom I might unbosom myself on the subject which lay so near my heart; so that, calling upon him with that kind of freedom which necessity begets, and which a confidence in the person you address will always excite, I communicated to him, without reserve, the state of my mind.

He heard me with great attention; — now and then only, as I stated my distress, expressing much pity for my concern on a subject which he considered to be perfectly unnecessary; wondering, as he said, that there should be a single person upon earth weak enough to interrupt the enjoyment of his own happiness with an anxiety so ill-founded; and which

according to his ideas, tended to reflect so greatly upon the goodness of the Deity. "For my part," says he, "I have too high notions of God, to imagine that he ever made any creature to be miserable; neither can I fancy the possibility of what some gloomy minds are so much alarmed about — of the doctrine of future punishments. It appears to me altogether inconsistent with the benevolence of the Divine Character."

"Hold, Sir," I interrupted him, "and pray satisfy my mind on this point, before you go farther. I readily join issue with you in the highest acknowledgments of the goodness of God; and am most fully persuaded that all praise must fall infinitely short in the description of what it really is; but I see as plainly as though written with a sun-beam, that much misery may, and in fact doth, consist with the Divine goodness in the present life; and, as I suppose, no one will venture to impeach God's goodness in the permission of evil here — I cannot form the vestige of an argument, why that goodness may not be as consistent with the existence of evil hereafter; especially, when Revelation comes in to the aid of my feeble reason, declaring, in a tone of the most determined and unalterable decision, that 'the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord!' (2 Thessalonians 1:9.) Can you explain to me how I am to reconcile these things with your opinion? And do you not imagine that there is great danger in entertaining such unqualified notions of the divine character — of

complimenting God's goodness at the expense of God's truth?"

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

*“For God is paid when man receives;
To enjoy is to obey.”*

“These are my sentiments,” added my neighbour; “and in the discharge of moral duties, I rest satisfied for the event.”

“It would be very unbecoming in me,” I replied, “to controvert your opinion, having called upon you for instruction, and not to instruct. But forgive me if I err in the apprehension, that what you have advanced in the eulogy of moral virtues, relates more to earthly concerns than heavenly — more to the present well-being of man, than to the future enjoyment of God. There is, unquestionably, a loveliness in moral virtue, which cannot fail to gain the esteem of every beholder; and happy would it be for the circumstances of mankind, if its influences were far more general than they are. And while a proper distinction is made between the

duties connected with the present world, and the preparations suitable for another, too much cannot be said in praise of morality. But if, in the sight of God, an imperfect obedience to a moral system could have answered the purposes of futurity, (I say *imperfect obedience*, because no one upon earth will venture, I imagine, to think higher of his practical attainments in this science, than that they come short of perfection) the religion of Christianity would have been an unnecessary revelation. What nation ever exceeded, in point of morals, the Roman and the Lacedaemonian commonwealths? — and yet, after all, we can only place them in the class of unenlightened heathens in respect to religion. Is there not some grand deficiency in that system which totally shuts out, or at least throws far into the background of the piece, the acknowledgment of Him who, one should suppose, would form the first and principal character?

“Permit me to place the argument in a point of view which may, in some measure, tend to decide it. If I mistake not, you have a large family of children, all branched out in life, and you have already made for them a most ample provision, and it is by your liberality that they are enabled to move in a sphere suited to their rank and circumstances. Put the case now, that these children of yours live in the greatest love and harmony with each other; and not content with the bare practice of moral honesty and justice, are kind, affectionate, friendly, tender, even to the anticipation of what one

conceives may promote the other's happiness. But suppose, that in the midst of all this attention to the mutual and general felicity of each other, they are never heard to express an affection towards the person of a father, from whom as the source they had derived all their enjoyments, — would not any man consider them as deficient in the first and best of all possible obligations? And is not this the very state of those who, priding themselves in the discharge of moral duties to their neighbour, pass by the reverence, the love, the gratitude, and obedience they owe to God?”

“Bear with me, I beseech you, Sir, and correct me if I am wrong. I merely state the objections to what you have advanced, as they appear to me, in order that your better judgment may remove them. — But, indeed, it hath often struck my mind very forcibly, that there must be some latent principle of evil lurking under a fair form, when I have beheld characters of the greatest respectability, who appear to be every thing which is amiable to their fellowcreatures — generous, noble, affectionate; but at the same time totally dead to devout sentiments. Often it hath been my lot, in times past, to have been introduced to their tables, where the plentiful provision of all the bounties of God's providence seemed to be continually inviting the conversation to some remarks on the goodness of the great Provider. But, alas! during the many hours which I have sometimes spent at one meal, not a word hath dropped in honour of the Almighty Master of the feast. The gifts have been enjoyed, but the

Giver totally forgotten. It hath been frequently my reproach I assure you, Sir, when returning from such tables in the days while I attended them (for I have long since given them up) that there must be some baleful principle in the human mind to produce such effects. Will you help me to account for it?"

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

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

THE MORAL PREACHER

HE took his text from the prophecies of Micah, chapter, 6 verse 8 “*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*” — I felt much pleasure in the very idea of the subject proposed from this text of scripture, the moment it was mentioned; and therefore listened with the more attention, in order to discover some leading points, which might be brought forward to give me comfort. The substance of the preacher's sermon, when separated from the flowery ornaments of it, was directed to show that the path to happiness was set before every one; that God had shown man what was good; and that it was man's own fault if he did not follow it; that what the Lord required was nothing harsh, or unreasonable, or difficult; but the plain, easy, self-rewarding virtues of moral obligation; and that, if, in addition to the line of *doing justly*, the circumstances favoured *the love of mercy*, in relieving the wants of the wretched, where ability reached, and dropping over them the tear of sympathy where it did not, and instead of studying to be wise above what is written, respecting divine things, *to walk humbly with God*; — these made up the sum and substance of all moral and religious concerns.

“Well, Sir,” — cried my neighbour, who had attended also the church that morning, and was coming out of the porch at

the same moment with myself, — “well, Sir, what are your sentiments now? I hope our worthy vicar has fully satisfied your mind.” — And this he said loud enough to be heard by those around, and with that kind of triumph which a man feels when he fancies he has fully established an opinion long disputed.

“It is my mercy,” replied a poor man, who overheard my neighbour's observation, “that I have not so learned Christ. God hath indeed shown me what is good; and could I look up and say that I have followed it, all might be well. But alas! ‘I have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.’ I know not what others feel; but I am free to confess, that in many instances which my recollection now reproaches me with, and others, no doubt, which my treacherous heart hath long since forgotten, I have neither ‘done justly, loved mercy, nor walked humbly with my God.’

“Though I have reason to be very thankful that God's preventing and restraining grace hath kept me from the more open and flagrant acts of injustice, yet I am conscious that self-love and self-interest have betrayed me into the *doing* of many things which would not bear to be ascertained by the strict equilibrium of a standard of justice, which admits no partiality. I am no less convinced also that in *speaking*, I have committed, on numberless occasions, a breach of that golden rule of justice which forbids reporting to another's injury, what in similar circumstances, I should have thought wrong to have had spoken of myself. And from the imagination of

man's heart, which scripture declares to be 'only evil continually,' I am persuaded that, in *thinking*, many unkind thoughts have arisen in my mind against my neighbour, which become a violation of that law of charity which *thinketh no evil*. I dare not, therefore, whatever others may do — I dare not risk the final decision of my everlasting welfare on the point of 'doing justly'.

“Neither under the condition of ‘loving mercy,’ can I find greater confidence; for I discover in my nature anger, resentment, pride, and the like corrupt passions; which, in spite of all my endeavours to suppress them, like the eruptions of a volcano, which plainly bespeak [speak] the heat within from the lava thrown without, too clearly testify that the love of mercy is not the ruling passion; and therefore never to be estimated by the few casual acts of alms-giving, which, if the heart would be faithful to acknowledge, are sometimes more the result of pride than the pure effect of real love and charity.”

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

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

"The morality of the Christian Religion," replied the poor man, "stands, where it ever stood, upon its own fixed and immoveable basis; and, sooner shall Heaven and earth pass, than one jot or tittle of the law shall fail. God doth not lose his authority to command, because man hath lost his power to obey. — The creditor forgoes not the right to his just due, because the debtor is become insolvent. By 'the Law is the knowledge of sin.' (Romans 3:20.) Hence the great Author of the Christian system opened his commission with the promulgation [proclamation] of this law, that its unalterable, unaccommodating terms might ever stand in the front of his gospel; and 'the man that doeth them shall live in them.' (Galatians 3:12.) If, therefore, any man can appeal to this standard of decision; can look up with an uncovered, undaunted front, and challenge the strictest scrutiny over every thought, and word, and action; if there be such an obedience found as can give life, 'verily righteousness should have been by the law.' (Galatians 3:21.) But if both scripture and experience have concluded all under sin; if all

have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and by 'the deeds of the law, no flesh can be justified in his sight;' then it will be found that the moral sermon of the great Author of Christianity on the mount, as well as the moral system of the great Jewish lawgiver in the wilderness, were both designed to act as 'the school-master to bring unto Christ' (Galatians 3:24.) and, that 'He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.' (Romans 10:4.)

“Pause therefore one moment, and examine how the account stands between God and your conscience. In the present season of lightness and inattention, a multitude of occurrences of frailty, and sometimes what deserves a harsher name, pass away in the stream of time, noiseless and inaudible, and are soon swallowed up in the gulf of oblivion. But in that hour, when the Lord will lay 'judgment to the line, and righteousness to the plummet' if you and I have no better righteousness than our own to trust in, no Surety to stand in our stead, no Advocate to plead our cause, — an effect infinitely more awful than that which loosed the loins of the impious monarch we read of will take place, when 'weighed in the balance and found wanting.'” (Daniel 5:27.)

I knew not what to reply, and therefore remained silent. The poor man, bidding me farewell, left me to ruminate on the solemn inquiry, “How should man be just with God?” (Job 9:2.)

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

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

Milton.

I felt the same force, but not the same sweetness from what he said. It was a harsh sound; and the vibration long dwelt upon my ear, “How shall man be just with God?” It followed me to what Job calls the “visions of the night;” (Job 4:13) and even then, like the spectre which he saw, the same expostulating [disagreeing] voice seemed to cry, “How shall man be just with God?”

The stern demand rang through all the chambers of the conscience, as if a thousand voices had concurred to proclaim the utter impossibility of answering the question in the very moment of proposing it; and as an echo reverberates from broken walls, so the sound of conviction returned from my broken heart. “By the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight.” (Romans 3:20.)

It is with some degree of grateful recollection that I look back upon this part of my history; and bless God, while I

trace his divine hand graciously interposing by the instrumentality of this poor man, to rescue me from the dangerous path of delusion into which I had turned, when seeking justification by the deeds of the law. I can now enter into the participation of David's experience upon a similar occasion, and feel somewhat of that spirit which he felt in the instance of the wife of the Carmelite, when under a deep conviction of that sin-preventing providence, he cried out, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me; and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou." (1 Samuel 25:32-33) In like manner I find cause to bless God in the review of this instance as the *Author*, the poor man as the *instrument*, and his advice as the *means*, which the Lord was pleased to commission, for the emancipation of my mind from a self-confidence which, if cherished, must have ultimately ended in my eternal ruin.

And my reader will, I hope, forgive me if I interrupt the progress of the history for a moment, only to remind him, that unless the mind be brought under similar conclusions respecting the unalterable and unaccommodating right of God's demands, "woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!" We may fancy what we please, and frame a standard of our own for God to go by, according to *our* notions of the fitness of things; as if an arraigned culprit at the bar should stand up and prescribe laws to his judge! but it would be well to consider, before it be too late, the very solemn tone of decision in which scripture hath settled the point, which

leaves the subject at once determined and without appeal. “Behold he putteth no trust in his saints, even his angels he chargeth with folly. — What then is man, that he should be clean? and he which is born of a woman that he should be righteous?” (Job 4:18, 15:14.)

The reader will forgive me if I introduce an anecdote in this place, which will serve under divine teaching to explain this memorable scripture of the Lord by the prophet, and throw a light upon it, in perfect analogy to the whole tenor of the gospel.

When I was in Gloucestershire, some two years since, a clergyman, whose views of divine things did not then perfectly quadrate with mine, but who kindly called upon me to propose certain questions, on those passages of scripture in which he supposed we very much differed; and began his interrogations by proposing this portion in the prophecy of Micah. “Suppose” said he, “I was to preach tomorrow among my people on this text, how would you recommend me to comment upon it?” I said, “As soon as you have read before them the sacred words themselves, you might very safely say, I take for granted, that every one who hears me is desirous to follow up the footsteps of the prophet in those acts of holy obedience. And as the highest instance of every other must be to do justice to God; are you every one of you so convinced of sin, and the natural state in which every one of you was born in the Adam-fall transgression, that both by original, and actual iniquity, you justly merit the present, and

everlasting displeasure and punishment of Almighty God? And that in yourself, as you stand alone before God, you cannot escape the damnation of hell? This conviction wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost, and unreservedly acknowledged by the mouth before God; is doing justice to Almighty God.”

“And where this conviction is deeply wrought in the soul, what the prophet adds will immediately follow, namely, to love mercy; that is to know, and love, and delight in the glorious Person who is mercy itself, and whose glorious work, of the incommunicable salvation, wrought out by the Lord Jesus Christ, brought in mercy and peace and all covenant blessings. And where those two leading principles are inwrought in the regenerated heart by the divine unction of God the Holy Ghost; that self-convinced, self-condemned, self-loathing sinner will indeed walk every day, and all the day, humbly with God.” (Deuteronomy 8:2,3; Ezekiel 16:63.)

My visitor expressed himself so much satisfied with this view of the subject, that he said, he would certainly preach upon it according to this statement the following Lord's day. What took place afterward, I know not: but the reader will forgive this statement.

THE FAMILY AT PRAYERS

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

There lived a family of long reputed piety, whose place of residence lay not far out of my way, from whom it struck me that some information might be obtained; I instantly directed my steps towards the house: and I was led to consider it as a very peculiar coincidence of circumstances, and not unfavourable to my purpose, that the household were engaged at their morning devotions, just in the moment that I entered their dwelling.

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

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

“It is my uniform custom, Sir,” said he, “to begin and end the day in prayer — I consider it to be my duty. I know it exposes me to the sneer of the fashionable world; but I cannot help that. It appears to me to be the obligation of every master of a family to set up the form of religion in his house; and for example's sake, to lead his household to the church on Sundays. For the same reason I make it a point that all the elder branches of my family, after they have been confirmed, should attend the monthly sacrament; and it is my wish, that my wife and daughters should go to prayers on the week days and festivals; and I believe they are pretty constant in their attendance. And, Sir, we all find the good effects of it. We are prosperous in the world, cheerful and happy, as you see. Religion has nothing gloomy with us. No family, I persuade myself, is more comfortable than ours.”

The master of the house said this with so much complacency and satisfaction, and there seemed to be so much cheerfulness appearing in every countenance of this household, that I began to hope the object of my visit was answered without farther inquiry. I concluded with myself, that if the observance of religious duties was capable of inducing so much happiness in their instance, it would have the same tendency in mine. I only remained therefore long

enough among this apparently happy family to present my congratulations on what I had seen, and then took my leave, to put into practice the lesson which I had learned from them.

It is impossible to tell my reader what a round of duties I laboured through, of reading, hearing, fasting, watching, praying; and to the constant routine of this kind, when the monthly sacraments came about in their periodical returns, I added every page which is prescribed in the weekly preparations. I could not have ventured in those days to the Lord's table with any of the appointed forms unfulfilled, for the world; and as this path in the trammels of devotion opened a continual feast to feed the pride of my heart upon, I soon began to feel the sweet effects of it in the gratification it afforded me; for finding greater confidence from the supposed rectitude of my life and dutiful obedience towards God than heretofore, I concluded that I stood on much safer ground for acceptance with him: not that I then thought that my goodness *alone* and without the merits of Jesus Christ would be sufficient to salvation (for by this time I had learned somewhat of the nature of the Christian religion) but I took it for granted, that what I did would be the sure method of recommending me to God for it: so that, upon the whole, I was well pleased with myself. There were indeed certain seasons, now and then, when upon the omission of any duty, or the commission of any sin, my mind would misgive me, and for the moment induce fear. But these were but transient impressions, which I endeavoured to efface

[expunge] as fast as possible, in atoning for the evil, by increasing diligence in the path of what I thought good; — and thus by carrying on a communication with God, I strove to make up what was remiss or offensive in one instance, by an over-attention in another.

How long I should have gone on under a delusion so fatal, I know not: but a circumstance occurred which at once threw to the ground the whole edifice I had been building up for myself with so much labour, and levelled all my fancied goodness in the dust. I had been reading a chapter in Paul's second epistle to Timothy, when those words arrested my attention so forcibly, that I could not help dwelling upon them: “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:6.) What if this should be my case, I thought with myself; and after all, I am taking up with the *form*, while destitute of the *power* of godliness? The very idea made me tremble; and the bare possibility of the thing itself induced me to bring the matter to an instant issue by examination; and the result terminated to my confusion. That single appeal of the apostle, which I found I could not make, convinced me all was wrong. “God is my witness” said he, “whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.” (Romans 1:5.) “Alas,” I cried out, “I am no *spiritual* worshipper. I have the *form* indeed, but not the *power* of godliness. Mine is the shell, the carcass, the shadow only of piety.”

Under this renewed conviction and distress of mind, I sat down pensive and melancholy. I considered now that all hopes of salvation were over; and was in a state little short of despair. I knew not at this time that these were the blessed effects of divine teaching; and that God the Holy Spirit was thus, one by one, removing all the props of self-confidence, and emptying the soul, in order to prepare it for receiving out of the fulness of the Saviour. Oh! it is a gracious process of mercy. We must become poor in order to be made rich; and the apostle's paradoxes must be literally verified, to be “dying, that we may live; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” (2 Corinthians 6:9,10.)

Oh! ye mourning saints, be not astonished at your afflictions. Be they ever so heavy, or of ever so long continuance, there is a *needs be* for every one of them; *your* God is faithful in sending the affliction; and your God will be equally faithful in carrying you through it. Settle this in your mind as an everlasting maxim, every one of them shall terminate to your benefit. The Lord appoints it for the exercise of your faith; and if your faith gives glory to God, God will confirm and honour your faith. This is among the *all things* which must work together for good to them that love God.

THE TRAVELLER

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

“Sir, I ought to congratulate you,” the man answered, “on this discovery. The knowledge of our misery is the first step towards a cure. There is a striking analogy between the diseases of the mind and those of the body. The man in supposed health will reprobate the application of medicine; it will be grateful only to the sick; and our Lord says, that ‘the whole need not a physician.’ It is one of the sweetest and most affectionate recommendations of his character, that he came not to heal the healthy, but to cure the diseased. If you know your malady, depend upon it you are not far from obtaining relief. It hath been long my complaint, that ‘in me dwelleth no good thing.’ And though I have been some years in the school of self-knowledge, I have made but small proficiency in the science. A science indeed so general, which comprises the whole of man, is not easily acquired. The deepest investigations do not reach to the bottom; for we are told by an authority not to be questioned, that ‘the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;’ and that ‘none can know it’ but he who ‘trieth the heart and searcheth the reins;’ (Jeremiah 17:9, 10.) for it is not this or

that particular instance of sin only, but our whole nature which is virtually *all sin*; and not a member or faculty of the body but what is tainted by it. Ask the most devout saint the earth ever produced: can you restrain the *mind* from wandering in seasons of worship? even if you close your eyes from all the objects around, will not rude and impertinent thoughts rush into the mind like unbidden and unwelcome visitors? Do you always find freedom for the *affections* to mount on the wings of faith and prayer, when you draw nigh the mercy-seat? Alas! there is not a single sense but what is in confederacy to promote sin in the soul! Our eyes are continual purveyors of evil, and our ears inlets to bring home subjects of defilement. What a train of filthy and impure ideas will sometimes pass over the chastest breast, which no education can restrain, but which a man would blush to unbosom to his nearest friend!”

“And what makes this awful view of man's total depravity still more awful is, that there is no exemption from it, but it is universal. Corrupt nature is the same in all. This hand of mine is as capable of perpetrating any one act of sin, and the heart, which gives birth to the action, of devising it, as that of the vilest wretch that ever lived; for the only distinction of character between man and man, is in what God's grace effects, not what man's merit deserves. You seem to be surprised; but such is the fact. Look here,” he cried, taking a handful of seeds out of his pocket, “here are a number of seeds, all taken from one and the same stock: if I were to put

all of them into the earth in the same soil, the same situations, under the same aspect of sun, and rain, and dew, they would as certainly produce the same in equal fruitfulness. But if I put *apart* only into the earth, and reserve the remainder in my pocket, is it not equally as certain that the part reserved will remain inert and unproductive; and *that* which is cast into the ground be alone fruitful? The human heart, like those seeds, being from one and the same stock, and in its genus, species, and kind, in all instances the same, must invariably in all cases be alike, if all other circumstances concur; so that if this be not induced, it arises not from a diversity of character, but from other causes. It is grace which prevents the sun, and rain, and dew (if I may be allowed the figure) of temptation and opportunity, from exerting their influence; and then, like the seeds in the pocket, in the absence of those causes, they remain barren and unfruitful.”

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

“It is this very state of our nature,” the traveller answered, “which made way for salvation by grace. Because man is fallen, Christ died. If you were not a sinner, what necessity would there have been for a Saviour?”

“Tell me,” I cried with great earnestness, “is that Saviour for me?”

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

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

“The thing speaks for itself,” replied the traveller. “In a state of unawakened, unregenerated nature, the carnal security and blindness of the mind induces this false joy, and prevents a real concern for ‘the one thing needful.’ False reasonings, presumptuous hopes, and views of religion different from those of the openly profane; these act as mighty persuasives on the imagination, and speak ‘Peace, peace, when there is no peace.’ Like children amused with the rattle, such persons take up with the carcass and shell of religion, and are ignorant of the vital principle within. An outward form of godliness satisfies for the inward *power* of it. And thus resting upon the means, and unconscious of the end, their forms and ceremonies of devotion, instead of leading the heart *to* God, tend to carry the heart *from* God; and they know nothing more of religion than the name; and herewith their conduct uniformly corresponds. You will find

such characters as well at the play-house as at the church. They can sit both at the Lord's table and the card-table, and are as well known at the one as the other. Thus they live in the vanity and ignorance of the mind; and thus not infrequently they die; ignorant of themselves, ignorant of their own corruptions, strangers to all the principles of grace, without God, and without Christ. The portrait of these persons is accurately drawn by the pencil of God in holy Scripture; and you may view two correct outlines of it in the 21st chapter of the book of Job, and the 73rd Psalm of David. Very different is that which the blessed Spirit hath given us in sweet miniatures of his people, throughout his whole word. But come, Sir, as you have seen the gaiety of the *formal* worshipper, let me lead you into the assembly of the *real*. I am just going to a *prayer-meeting*, where you will be introduced, if you think proper, among that 'poor and afflicted people' which the Lord said he would leave in Zion."

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

THE PRAYER MEETING

My guide led me into a room upon the first floor of a dwelling, in which every thing around indicated the humble circumstances of the owner, where we found several persons assembled for the purpose of devotion. They had just began their evening service, and were engaged in singing an hymn as we entered; the words of the hymn were interesting, and, as I thought, not inapplicable to my state and circumstances:

*Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched.
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity join'd with power,*

— The hymn was followed up by prayer, which issued from a voice that I thought I had heard before. And it was an agreeable surprise to me, at the close of it, to recognise in the person praying, the countenance of the *poor man*, whose observations at the church-porch had made such impressions upon me. He noticed me also, and with that kind of regard which seemed to say “I am glad to see you here.” But the purport of the meeting so occupied his whole attention, that he appeared to have no leisure for other objects. By what followed I was led to conclude that, if any place of pre-eminence was found in this humble circle, it was his province; for as soon as prayer was ended, and the company seated, he took up the Bible, which lay upon the table before him, and read from the part where it happened to open, the

16th Psalm. I could not be mistaken as to the number of the Psalm, by what followed in his observations upon it.

THE POOR MAN'S EXPERIENCE

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

that 'the Lord's portion is his people, Jacob is the lot of his inheritance,' my heart can make reply to the sweet sound, from the persuasion of a reciprocal interest in the Redeemer: 'The Lord is the portion of Mine inheritance, and of My cup. Thou maintainest my lot.' (Compare Deuteronomy 32:9, with Psalm 16:5, for a precious evidence of this doctrine.)

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

renewal of my old lesson soon sets all to rights again, and makes me bless his holy name, that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own. By carrying my forgetful heart back to the first principles of learning in the divine science, and by calling to mind my *original* stock and *present* measure of indwelling corruption, I learn the peculiar blessedness of having ‘all my fresh springs in Him;’ and the sweetness of this life, when grace is in exercise, is inexpressible. While I am enabled to see that Jesus is my portion, every dispensation comes in a way of mercy. When my heart is under the assurance that my Lord is in it, it matters not what it is. His presence alone hath the wonderful property of converting crosses and pains into enjoyments and pleasures. Every affliction which comes directed by his hand, hath the sure mark of affection folded up within the cover; and while I sit down with tenfold pleasure to the enjoyment of the thousands of mercies which my God is continually giving me, because I behold with the eye of faith his presence at the table smiling graciously upon all, I no less am enabled, in the hour of calamity to await the issue, because I can and do hear with the ear of faith that soul-sustaining voice, ‘What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.’ Oh, the sweetness of having ‘Jesus for our portion!’ and ‘of living a life of faith upon the Son of God, who hath loved me, and given himself for me!’”

I was musing upon the happiness of a frame of mind like this, as the Poor Man ended his relation, and reflecting on the

little probability that I should ever arrive at such a state of blessedness, when a deep sigh, accompanied with a voice of complaint from a person near me, roused me from my meditation, and at once spoke my feelings and his own.

THE MOURNFUL BELIEVER

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

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

up the subject, to answer the doubts and remove the fears of the mournful believer; and in doing this, he added to my obligation to him tenfold.

“Your case, my friend,” cried the poor man, addressing himself to the mourner, “is by no means singular; it is the uniform complaint of the faithful in all ages. What *one* ancient servant of the Lord groaned under, *all* of them have found, that when ‘we would do good, evil is present with us;’ and the reason is obvious. It ariseth from the workings within of the different principles, grace and corruption. There are in every regenerated person two principles; a body of sin and a spirit of grace: ‘the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things which ye would.’ In the renewed nature, the understanding is enlightened, the affections spiritualized, the will inclined to God: while in the unrenewed nature still remaining, there is darkness in the understanding; carnal and earthly affections still continuing in the heart; and the will stubborn, rebellious, and frequently inclining to disobedience. In short, the mind is like the region of the earth while twilight is upon it; it is neither dark nor light, but a mixture of both: no portion of the hemisphere being so light, but the shades of darkness are blended with it; and none so dark, but the tints of light are beautifully incorporated; and this is perfectly accountable. A state of grace is a middle state, between that of nature and glory. In a state of nature unawakened, unregenerated, unrenewed, sin

reigns with unrivalled sway. In a state of glory, grace reigns uninterrupted, and without any opposition; but the intermediate state is a state of warfare; every one in this state feels and experiences the conflict; and as it is said, in allusion to this very circumstance, in the allegory of the bondwoman's son and the heir of promise, so believers find it: 'As then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.' (Galatians 4:29.)

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

love is? And if you visit not a mercy-seat so often as you wish, say, are are not these things your continual burden? Do you not groan under such marks of a dead and lifeless heart? And are not these sorrows of the soul, for the unhallowed sins of the body, very plain evidences of the spiritual warfare? *They* never groan at *sin*, though they may in the prospect of the *punishment* of it, who have no renewed nature. It is the believer only who dreads the sin, more than the penalty due to it; and if grace be thus in exercise to endear the person of the Lord Jesus, still more in proportion as we see our daily want of him, to long for the time to come when sin shall be rooted out, and to cause a sense of our weakness to prompt the soul to a greater dependance upon divine strength, by thus over-ruling all dispensations to his glory and his people's welfare, we see a *needs-be* in every dispensation, and discover the beauty and tendency of that Scripture, which says, 'After that ye were illuminated (not *before*, but *after*) ye endured a great fight of affliction.' (Hebrews 10:32.) In a word, however we may long for an exemption from all sin, and would purchase it, were it possible, with the price of a thousand worlds, however we may and do groan under this body of sin and death, which we carry about with us, yet, while Jesus, who could, if he saw it right, deliver his tried ones, whom he hath chosen in the furnace of affliction, with a word speaking, sees it not fit, let us not despond. If your sense of sin and unhallowed infirmities leads you to a more firm reliance upon him; if it make his promises dearer, his faithfulness

more evident, and his presence more desirable—depend upon it, by and by, your groans will be changed into songs of rejoicing, and your language will be like that of the Apostle, ‘Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!’”

THE CRIES OF UNBELIEF

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

"Alas!" replied the other, "my language must be much the same as you have often heard. I still groan under the burthen of unbelief, and know not when I shall obtain deliverance from it. It will be a long time, I fear, before I shall be able 'to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith I myself long to be comforted of God.' I frequently compare myself to the unworthy spies whom Moses sent to view the promised land; and fear that, like them, I shall never attain the possession of it, through the same besetting sin of unbelief. If I attend the means of grace, I return, for the most part, unbenefited, through the suggestions of this evil heart of unbelief. If I hear the word of a preached gospel, though I know the truth as it is in Jesus, and love to sit under the sound of it, yet too often, like the Israelites, it doth not profit me, *not being mixed with*

faith. If at any time I read the Bible, and turn to those 'exceeding great and precious promises,' which belong to the Lord's people, their sweetness is lost in me, through a fear that I have no interest in them; and how many of the providences of my God, which I well know to be every one of them fraught with a sure blessing in their final issue to his people, are perverted in their effects on me, by the impatience and distrust of my unbelieving heart! And can such a creature say any thing by way of encouragement to the Lord's exercised family, when he himself is so faithless and unbelieving?"

"I confess," rejoined the poor man, "that such a state as you describe cannot afford much assistance to the cause of Christ; but blessed be our God, this is the Christian's character: that 'if we believe not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.' Your want of faith indeed is injurious to your peace, but not to his cause. Unbelief, like a worm of the bud, cankers the bloom and fragrancy of the sweetest flowers of grace; and had our fathers of the church in the wilderness been in this frame of mind, instead of surrounding the Christian pilgrim as they now do, with such a glorious *cloud of witnesses*, they would have stood in the highway only as so many *pillars of salt*; but let me tell you, my drooping brother, that I am too well acquainted with your real character, as well from an insight into your experience as from my own, (long exercised as I have been by unbelief, both in times past — even now too frequently feeling its

influence) not to know that the very sorrow which you express, on account of the supposed want of faith, carries with it an evidence that you must have some faith thus to complain. That your faith is not equal to your wishes, I will readily allow; — for indeed whose is? But that you differ most essentially from those that are shut up in total unbelief, is most evident. In proof of what I say, compare your situation now with what it was in the days of your unregeneracy. You were then, not only ‘without Christ and without God in the world,’ but absolutely unconscious of the want; — whereas now, your most earnest desires are, that ‘Christ might dwell in your heart by faith,’ and be fully formed there ‘the hope of glory.’ If there were no faith in your heart, whence arise these desires for more? It is the preciousness of the gift which makes you long for greater manifestations of the giver; and it is a consciousness of this shameful unbelief that makes you apprehensive that you have no faith at all. While, therefore, you groan under those fears, every sigh proves that they are but effects from which the merciful goodness of our God will, in his own time, deliver you. Carry your complaints to Him who is both the ‘Author and Finisher of faith.’ Let us copy the apostle's prayer, ‘Lord increase our faith!’ — and depend upon it, that if our faith be but as a grain of mustard seed, however small and inconsiderable it may be, still it is not of nature's growth, nor of nature's production. That small portion which you possess, is the gift of the same Almighty power who created

the faith of Abraham. Receive it, I entreat you, as ‘the earnest of the promised inheritance, to the praise of his glory.’”

“And while I say thus much, by way of convincing you that, in the midst of all your complainings, you have great cause of thankfulness before God, let me remind you also, that what you complain of forms a part of the complaints of all the Lord's people. Nay, more; the greatest instances of faith we meet with in scripture, afford at the same time the greatest examples of unbelief; as if the dear Lord of his people intended to teach *all* this important lesson, — that man is nothing in himself; but that all his sufficiency is of Him. Abraham, who is handed down to us in the church's history, as the great pattern of faith, and who could and did exercise such unparalleled confidence in the Lord, in the instance of his intended sacrifice of Isaac, yet even this man could not, upon another occasion, trust in God's faithfulness to extricate Sarah from danger. (Genesis 20.) Job, under the influence of faith, could confidently say of the Lord, ‘Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him;’ yet so much, at another time, was he borne down, under the pressure of trouble, that he impatiently cried out, ‘O that I might have my request, even that it would please God to destroy me!’ (Job 6:8,9.) And David's whole life, as it may be gathered from his book of Psalms, was made up of conflicts between believing and doubting. I need not mention Peter's case as an additional proof of the fluctuating state of the human mind; who, in the mount of transfiguration, gave so glorious a testimony; and

in the hall of Pilate, uttered so shameful a denial of his Lord's character. (Compare Matthew 16:16, with Matthew 26:69.) All these and ten thousand lesser instances, serve to show what man is in himself, and what the same man may be when supported by the grace of God. Let me beg of you then, in the estimate of your spiritual state, as it stands before God, never to lose sight of these things; and while a deep sense of the unbelief of your heart makes you humble, and is continually leading you to a mercy-seat for an increase of faith, from Him whose gift alone it is; do not overlook that portion of the blessing which the bountiful Lord hath already bestowed upon you. Never forget that the smallest degree of faith is faith; perfectly distinct from all the operations of nature, and far above all human power to produce. Forget not also, that it is not the quantity, but the quality, which constitutes the principle. 'By Him,' says the apostle, 'all that believe are justified from all things.' Observe the expression, *All that believe*. He doth not say believers of such a description and character, or that come up to such a standard; but *All that believe*. While, therefore, you possess the smallest degree of faith, bless God for *that*. The smallest measure indicates from whom it comes; and declares whose you are, and to whom you belong. It is the one uniform family-feature of the Lord's household of faith; for 'as many as believe are ordained to eternal life.' Large portions of so precious a grace are, no doubt, highly desirable; but to poor, timid, *unbelieving*, believers (if I may be allowed the expression) it is a refreshing thought, that the Great Shepherd

‘gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom,’ and they are as dear and precious in his sight as the strong of his fold.

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

A BELIEVER UNDER THE HIDINGS OF GOD'S COURTENANCE

“YOUR observations, my dear brother,” said another, who sat at the corner of the room, “are truly refreshing to my soul. I have been long exercised under the hidings of the divine countenance, and sometimes tempted to cry out, with the church of old, ‘My hope is perished from the Lord.’ But I perceive, from what you have been saying to our friend, mourning under the unbelief of his heart, that the same arguments, by a parity of reasoning, are applicable to my case also. Spiritual darkness and spiritual doubtings are but too nearly allied, and proceed from the corruption that dwells within. It may be said of both, ‘It is your iniquities which have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you;’ and when this is the case — when, as in Paul's voyage, ‘neither sun nor stars for many days appeared, and no small tempest’ is added to the darkness of the horizon, faith will be at a low ebb, and all hope that the soul is then in a state of safety, will for a time be taken away; but blessed be God, when I can find no comfort in myself, I know that Christ is the same. I still see a loveliness in his person, and a suitableness and all-sufficiency in his power to save, when I cannot say that I see my interest in him to be clear. ‘When wilt thou come unto

me?’ is frequently the language of my heart, though I cannot always call him mine; and the recollection of past experiences is sometimes a lift to me during the passing cloud. I call to mind the time and place, and the gracious manner and means, when, where, and by which the Lord hath heretofore comforted and refreshed my soul; so that, like the wife of Manoah, I am led to conclude, 'if the Lord had not intended mercy, he would not have shewed me all these things;' and I always find that sweet text of the prophet to be consolatory during the heaviest night of this kind of trial: — ‘Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, and walketh in darkness, and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.’”

“I rejoice, truly, my dear brother,” replied the poor man, “in the testimony you bear to the faithfulness of your God under your sufferings. It is an easy thing to speak a word for God's goodness, when the Lord is surrounding us with the sunshine of his blessings; but it must be a gracious soul indeed to rejoice in God, when he hath nothing but his word to trust in; and when God hides his face from his people — stands at a distance from their prayers — seemingly thwarts all their desires — gives no answer by *Urim* and *Thummim*, *then* to hold fast by God, and to lie passive before him. This is what the Prophet felt, and what none but those who are taught of God the Holy Ghost can say with with him, ‘Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be

in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the field shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

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

*No more, my God, I boast no more
Of all the duties I have done
I put the hopes I held before,
To trust the merits of thy Son.*

*Now, for the love I bear his name,
What was my gain I count my loss;
My former pride I call my shame,
And nail my glory to his cross.*

*Yes, and I must and will esteem
All things but loss for Jesus' sake:
O may my soul be found in Him,
And of his righteousness partake!*

*The best obedience of my hands
Dares not appear before thy throne;*

*But faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord hath done!*

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

After withdrawing from the room, and taking leave of the friend who had conducted me thither, I retired to my closet to meditate upon what I had seen and heard; and the conclusion I formed upon the whole was this: — I had discovered in the Scriptures of truth, that in all ages of the church, the Lord has had a seed which served him. I no less discovered also that this seed were distinguished from the rest of mankind by certain marks and characters. I observed very clearly in the little circle to which I had now been introduced, that its members were widely distinguished from the unawakened world, in all their pursuits, complaints, and desires. I remarked yet farther, that although their complaints and desires differed in their degree of earnestness, yet, like a family feature, there was a sufficient similarity in all to

manifest their relationship to each other; but what became my highest gratification, was the discovery that, however unconscious of it before, their situation was my own; and I felt that union of soul which the mind feels in a state of nature on the discovery of affinity, so as to be drawn towards them in the warmth of a lasting love and affection. I resolved therefore to cast in my lot among them, and to have the same portion. The sweet language of *Ruth* to *Naomi* exactly speaks the feelings of my heart: "Intreat me not to leave thee, nor to return from following after thee; for whither thou goest I will go, and where thou lodgest I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God. Where thou diest I will die and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."

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

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

Milton.

I felt the influence, and having "bowed the knee before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," I entered upon the

meditation of the subject which had engaged my attention so much the preceding evening. The more I considered it, the more I stood convinced that there is a seed in the earth which the Lord hath distinguished from the world; and I felt no less conviction also, that it is divine grace alone which makes all the difference between “him that serveth the Lord, and him that serveth him not.” But that I should be the object of his grace when I sought it not, nor was even conscious of the want of it — here appeared the greatest mystery!

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

I very frankly opened my whole heart to him upon the subject, and hesitated not to tell him how much I felt interested in what I had heard, and particularly in the case of *one* who had spoken, from the similarity of his experience to my own. “How, or when,” I said, “or by what means, the Lord hath begun the work of grace in my heart, I know not; but, like the poor man we read of in the Gospel, I trust I can say that ‘whereas I was blind, now I see.’ It is, indeed, but a confused and ill formed view of things which I have at present, in looking at the bright objects of divine truth. I see

but indistinctly *men as trees walking*; yet, I cannot but hope that He who hath graciously touched mine eyes will touch them again, and make me see clearly.”

“Doubt not,” replied the traveller, “the divine faithfulness. The ‘earnest of the Spirit’ becomes no less the ‘earnest of the promised inheritance;’ (Compare 2 Corinthians 5:5, with Ephesians 1:13,14.) and an Apostle says, ‘We may be confident of this very thing, that He who hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.’ As nothing under divine grace will tend to open your apprehensions more clearly to ‘the truth as it is in Jesus’ than the possessing right notions of the covenant of grace, on which the whole system of the Gospel is founded, I have brought with me a sermon, written upon the subject, and which, according to my conception, places the doctrine in the plainest point of view possible. If it be agreeable,” he added, “I will read it to you.”

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

THE SERMON

*“Incline your ear, and come unto me:
hear, and your soul shall live;
and I will make an everlasting covenant with you,
even the sure mercies of David.”*

— Isaiah 55:3

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

Tell me, my brother, do you not feel a very high gratification in the consciousness that salvation is not a work of yesterday, but founded on that “everlasting love wherewith the Lord hath saved his people?”

Besides, an everlasting covenant naturally connects with itself all those properties which are necessary to its completion and design. There must be included in it everlasting wisdom to guide, everlasting Counsel to direct, everlasting strength to secure, and everlasting faithfulness to make good all its promises. Every attribute stands engaged in its establishment, and it is the consolation of the true believer

in Christ, that all the perfections of Jehovah are pledged for the accomplishment of that purpose “which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began.” The “sure mercies of David” imply as much, to make them *sure*. Nothing new to God can ever arise to counteract the divine purposes concerning them. Neither can any one circumstance occur for which provision is not already made. In the *everlasting* covenant, God himself is the only contracting party. Jehovah answers both for himself and for his people, ‘I will, and they shall.’ Such is the language of it.

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

The subject opened to our meditation in these words of the Prophet, leads to the most delightful view with which the human mind is capable of being exercised in the present unripe state of our faculties. The text indeed contains but *five* words, but it would furnish a sufficient subject for as many volumes. It is a text in which, as we say, every word *tells*. I consider it a perfectly unnecessary service to lose time by way of pointing to His person, who is here called *David*. No one for a moment can imagine that it means David the son of Jesse; or, as an Apostle hath observed, this David, “after he had served his generation by the will of God, fell asleep, and

was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption.” But he of whom the prophet speaks in the text, who is David's Lord, “saw no corruption:” but when God the Father raised Him from the dead, as if in confirmation of this very subject, and to show its personal application to him, He expressed himself in these very words, “I will give you the sure mercies of David.” (Acts 13:33, 34.)

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

My first intention is to show, that the redemption by the Lord Jesus Christ is a system of grace and mercy from beginning to end; and nothing can more decidedly manifest the truth of the observation than the character in which the prophet was commissioned to promulgate it; for when it is distinguished by the property of an *everlasting* covenant, the

very term carries with it a most positive testimony that it must be founded in grace, unconnected with any human power, not depending upon any human merit; for what first originated in the free and unmerited mercy of God, confirmed as it was by covenant-engagements between the Father and the Son, before man was created, and is promised to be carried on in all its purposes and effects, by the same divine power, independency of man's agency after his being brought into being, can come under no other description surely than that of grace. Whatever God hath done, or is doing, in the accomplishment of his designs concerning it, must all be referred back into the eternal counsel of his own mind, by virtue of its everlasting nature. To this, most evidently, it is that believers owe their being chosen, called and regenerated; and their establishment in grace, their dependance upon the promises, and their hopes of eternal glory, all are founded on that *everlasting* love wherewith God had loved his people before the foundations of the world were laid. "I have said," the language of God is "mercy shall be set up for ever;" and the reason follows: "I have made a covenant with my chosen."

Look, my brother, into yourself, and into your own experience, for a confirmation of this doctrine. A covenant founded in grace can derive no aid from works. You can have nothing to give but what you have first received; and what you have first received is not in fact yours, but the great Giver's; and what he hath given, may, without any

impeachment of his justice, be again recalled. Neither can you have any thing to offer but what God hath a right, as his own, to demand. Even all those sweet effusions of the soul, which appear in the worship of the faithful, when drawing near the mercy-seat; as these are wholly the result of the blessed Spirit's work, who brings them forth into exercise, as the sun by his warm beams draws forth a fragrant smell from the flower, and have their origin in God's grace, and not in man's merit, — so there can be nothing of claim in them before God. The language of such a creature as man, even in his highest attainment, and among the first order of the glorified spirits of “just men made perfect,” must still be the same: “By the grace of God, I am what I am.” Every thing that has a reference to salvation centers in Jesus Christ; and may be clearly traced up to its origin in that *everlasting* covenant which God made with him before this world had being.

Nay, I will advance yet one step farther in the argument; and in ascribing the “sure mercies of David” wholly to grace, observe that it was most unmerited grace which admitted the Lord Jesus to be man's surety and sponsor, to fulfill in our stead the law which we had broken, and in his sacred person to endure the penalty due to the breach of it. There could have been no impeachment of the divine justice if God had insisted on the sinner's suffering it himself. “The soul that sinneth shall die;” and was it not then an act of free,

spontaneous mercy and grace in our God to admit the substitute?

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

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

But while it thus becomes delightful to the soul, under divine teachings, to be able to see that redemption's work from beginning to end is wholly a system of grace, it becomes doubly sweet at the same time, to have a clear apprehension, that this *grace* worketh and “reigneth through righteousness;” that these mercies of David become *sure mercies*, being made so by virtue of that everlasting covenant of righteousness in Christ Jesus; by which “God can be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus,” and the sinner, though in himself nothing but sin and iniquity, can look up and plead the righteousness of Christ as the foundation of his acceptance before God, because in that covenant “God made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

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

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

inflicting it on the person of the Lord Jesus, as the sinner's surety; and then to entitle the sinner, by virtue of the Redeemer's righteousness, to everlasting life. These were the terms by which each party guaranteed to the other the sure fulfillment of the covenant. Jesus therefore was to assume at a certain period, called "The fulness of time," our nature, and in that nature to repair God's broken law, and sustain the penalty due to the breach of it. Moved with unbounded love to our fallen race, all this the Lord Jesus actually performed when, leaving "that glory which He had with the Father before all worlds," he came into this world, and accomplished all those great events which we read of in the history of his life; and when, by *doing* and *dying*, he had wrought out and brought in an everlasting righteousness, he returned to the bosom of the Father, to make efficient the whole process of his redemption, by sending down his Holy Spirit to apply his merits to his people's necessities, while he himself is exercised in the high character of our Intercessor to plead the efficacy of his death, and continually to appear "in the presence of God for us." These are the great outlines of the *everlasting* covenant, as referring to the engagement of God the Son; and the promises, on the part of God the Father, were, that he would anoint Christ to the work, and accept of him in lieu of the sinner; and that when the Redeemer had made his soul an offering for sin, "he should see his seed, he should prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand." "My righteous servant," saith God, "shall justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. As for

me, this is my covenant with him, saith Jehovah, my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, saith Jehovah, from henceforth and for ever." Such then being the stipulated terms between the high contracting parties, and having been fulfilled on the part of the Lord Jesus, the mercies promised on the part of God become *sure* mercies to all the Lord's people. "Grace reigneth through righteousness;" and the positive assurance of pardon and salvation is brought home to the heart by a conviction founded on the veracity of that God "which cannot lie."

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

The application of this doctrine, though of all other considerations the most interesting, may be brought within

the narrowest compass, — the whole terminating as it respects every individual, in this single question: — ‘Am I, or am I not, the highly-favoured object of these sure mercies of David?’

If it be said, How shall this point be ascertained? and by what marks or characters is it to be known? — the answer is direct: God hath not left himself without the witness of his Holy Spirit in the hearts and minds of his people; and although it is with the children of God in grace as it is with the children of men by nature, — in the infancy of life, while the faculties of the mind remain unopened, the child is unconscious of the inheritance to which he is born, — so they to whom “he hath given power to become sons of God,” will frequently remain a long time unassured of the incorruptible inheritance to which they are begotten by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; but as the spiritual apprehension is unfolded by the heavenly Teacher, they are brought, by little and little as children under education, to see their interest in “the sure mercies of David,” from the characters in which they find themselves distinguished in the everlasting covenant.

See, my brother, see whether you do not possess what Jehovah promised, by virtue of this covenant, to give to Jesus' people. Have you not the *new heart* and the *new mind*, which God, by his covenant, is engaged to bestow? Do you not feel those covenant impressions, which are common to his people? Is not the “Messenger of this covenant” whom

God hath chosen, become the object of your choice also? If God the Spirit be promised to certify your interest, in this covenant, “have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?” In a word, if these, and these only, are the sure mercies of David, are you seeking salvation in no other way? — and do you say as David did, “This is all my salvation and all my desire” These are precious tokens of being interested in the sure mercies of David, when pardon, mercy, grace, righteousness, sanctification, and strength, equal to our day, are sought for in nothing else but God's everlasting covenant.

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

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

THE REMARKS

WHEN my friend had ended this discourse, he waited as I perceived by his looks, for my observations upon it. I anticipated his enquiry for my opinion, by giving it unasked. It appeared indeed to me very plain, that the sermon comprised the leading principles of the covenant of grace; which, though certainly a subject of all others the most interesting, is perhaps the least understood. For my part, I am free to confess that, previous to this explanation, I had very imperfect conceptions of it, My first object, as soon as he had finished reading the manuscript, was to thank him for his “labour of love,” in bringing me acquainted by this means with a doctrine so highly important. How sweet and consolatory [comforting] is the view, that redemption-work originated in grace! — is carried on and completed in grace I and yet, as if to remove all fears and apprehensions from the believer's mind, it is “grace reigneth through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord;” so that, though founded solely in mercy, it calls in to its assurance to fulfill the covenant-engagements and covenant-faithfulness of Jehovah. Well might one of old, in the contemplation of it, say “Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other!”

One branch of this subject particularly arrested my attention; to which, on account of my imperfect conceptions of it, I ventured to communicate to my friend my objection.

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

“No, never,” replied my friend, “is there the least interruption in the unchanging mercies of God in Christ Jesus; and however dark and seemingly mysterious at times the dispensation may appear to us, yet there is but one and the same purpose of mercy invariably pursued by a faithful God to his people; and the difficulty of apprehending this would be soon removed, by only taking into the account the *whole* process of the divine administration towards believers, and not forming a judgment upon every single and detached part of it. As men regulate their opinion of some admirably well-constructed machine, from a contemplation of the whole when complete, and not of its several constituent parts in a state of separation, so God's divine ordination respecting the government of his people, must be viewed upon the whole, — causes with effects; and then all is grace, mercy, and lovingkindness. An earthly parent considers it as no diminution [diminishment] of his tenderness to a beloved child, that he sends him abroad for education, or that he

himself instructs and disciplines him at home; because his future prospects in life are best promoted by this process; and why should our heavenly Father be supposed to have lost sight of ‘the sure mercies of David,’ to his children, because absence and discipline are made use of by him to forward his gracious designs of greater tenderness towards them? But when we call in question the evidences of divine love, we forget where we are, and the reasons for which we are here; and hence it is not among the smallest testimonies of those very mercies of David that the Lord makes use of the ministry of affliction to proclaim that ‘this is not our rest, because it is polluted.’ Had Jesus intended this world for the enjoyment of his people in a state of worldly prosperity, very different would have been their accommodations: but they are ‘strangers and pilgrims upon earth,’ and are going home to their Father's house; and what does ever make home more desirable to the traveller than the ill reception he frequently meets with on the road?”

“Sir, look at the subject again, and see whether it doth not challenge your highest admiration and praise, when you discover that the afflictions of the Lord's people are among his tenderest mercies? — in that they are so admirably contrived, that not a single trouble shall ultimately do them *harm*; but, on the contrary, shall as positively work for their *good*. Set down this as an everlasting maxim, and compare with it either your own experience or your observation of others: — let us suppose now, for example's sake, that in the

great mass of characters in the Lord's tried family, some are labouring under heavy afflictions of body, and some under anguish of mind, — some impoverished in worldly circumstances, — some smarting under the lash of false tongues, — some groaning under the pains of sickness in their own persons, — some bitterly bewailing the effects of it in others; yet, be the trial what it may (and wisely ordered it is, exactly suited to every one's necessities) look only forward to its final issue, and you will find that not a single individual of the Lord's household is injured by it. Each affliction becomes to them a messenger of sanctification and wisdom, and acts medicinally on the mind, as much as physic on the body; and can those things be properly called *evils* which minister good? Will any man blame the physician of approved judgment, when inducing a state of convalescence, because the medicine he administers is found somewhat nauseous to the taste, and operates roughly?”

“But it is not enough to say that afflictions do no harm; they must also do good. The promise else would be lost; ‘All things work together for good to them that love God;’ so that, unless in every single instance good is wrought to the lovers of God, the truth of Scripture would become questionable: but of the perpetual occurrences which are going on through life, in attestation to this precious assurance, a volume would only give the mere outlines; — and who is competent to describe them? Generally speaking, all afflictions which tend to bring the soul to God, keep up a life of communion with

the Redeemer, — make us sensible of the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, — spiritualize our affections, — wean our hearts from a world from which we must soon part, and promote a more intimate acquaintance with that in which we are shortly for ever to dwell; whatever things induce these blessed principles, are undeserving the name of afflictions: they are among the sweetest mercies of David! — and when God removes every earthly comfort, in order to make room for heavenly, empties the soul of all creature-comforts, that he may fill it from all the fulness of Creator-mercies, can there remain a question but that the believer is a gainer by the exchange? Nay, I am fully persuaded, that if grace were in full exercise, we should embrace our afflictions, as affording the choicest proofs of divine love: and how refreshing would it be to a by-stander near the bed of some suffering saint, to hear him say, Praise my God with me for the pains I now endure! for the dearest friend which I have upon earth, if his affection for me and his wisdom were equal to those of my heavenly Father, would inflict every pain and trial which I now feel from *His* gracious appointment.”

THE DEAD CHILD

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

"See here, my brother," cried my companion, taking me by the arm, and leading me, as he said it, involuntarily down the street, "see here an exemplification of our subject: Let us only suppose that this afflicted mother is a *gracious* woman, and her history I will venture to assert, shall sooner or later prove the truth of all that I have been saying. In the first paroxysm [wave] of grief she is perhaps insensible of it; for nature is nature, and is allowed to express, if without murmuring, her sorrows; but suppose that you or I were permitted to call in upon her at some future period, — how different should we find her sentiments! A plain proof this, that it is the state of the mind, and not the affliction itself, which constitutes the difference; and when the appointment comes, as it must come to every *gracious soul*, in a covenant

way, the united wisdom of men and angels could not have ordered an event equally suitable, so as to have answered the purpose of God in his merciful dispensations towards her. However painful, it could not be spared. Let us consider it for a few moments, as it concerns herself, and as it refers to the child.”

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

“And as it refers to the sweet babe. Supposing the most favourable thing that can be supposed, — that it was a child of grace, a child of many prayers, are “the sure mercies of David” altered in their property, because those prayers are answered, and Jesus has housed a lamb of his fold beyond the reach of the prowling lion or the raging bear? Say, ye long tried, long exercised soldiers in the Redeemer's army,

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

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

THE SUICIDE

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

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

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

Blair's Grave.

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

I found these, and the like distrustful questions involuntarily arising in my mind, and inducing much anxiety, when my friend, as if privy to what passed within me, broke silence: “How gracious,” he exclaimed “is our God, in the midst of such awful judgments as are walking by our side through the world to keep us unhurt! Do you not perceive the evidence of that Scripture, ‘A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee: only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked.’ (Psalm 91:7,8.) Oh, it is a blessed, soul-reviving thought, amidst all the melancholy proofs around us, that we are passing through the enemy's territories, that there is a gracious *nevertheless* in the covenant which screens us from his malice! ‘Nevertheless,’ says the Apostle, ‘the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.’ (2 Timothy 2:19.) ‘Let mine outcasts dwell within thee, Moab: be thou a covert to them from the face of the spoiler.’ (Isaiah 16:4.) This is enough. *Outcasts*, and sometimes considered as the ‘offscouring of all things,’ they are; but still they are God's outcasts. Tempted they may be, and certainly will, but conquered they shall not; and could a looker-on but see objects spiritually, he would discover, as the impious monarch of old did, *One* walking with his people in the hottest furnace, that even the smell of the fire may not pass upon them.” (Daniel 3:25, 27.)

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

“That,” answered my companion hastily “is impossible to a child of God. The promise is absolute. ‘No weapon formed against thee shall prosper.’ (Isaiah 54:17.) And ‘God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.’”

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

“Yes,” rejoined my companion, “but none of those so spoken of were ever children of God, or ‘born again of that incorruptible seed which liveth and abideth for ever.’ Only observe the vast distinction of character by which those enlightened persons whom the apostle speaks of are marked, from the Scripture features of the truly regenerate, and the contrast will immediately appear. They are said to be ‘once enlightened,’ that is, with head-knowledge; not renewed in *heart-affection*. They are described as those who have tasted of the heavenly gift; tasted but not approved, like persons whose stomachs nauseate what the taste rejects, and digest it not. They are said to ‘have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost;’ that is, in his common operations upon the understanding, not in his quickening and regenerating grace

in the soul. In all these and the like instances, there is not a single syllable said of the Spirit's work in the great and essential points of faith and repentance, and the renewed life; but the whole account is confined to the common operations of nature, as distinguished from grace, in which natural men frequently excel, and sometimes indeed to such a degree, as to surpass in head-knowledge children of grace; and God the Holy Ghost is pleased to work by their instrumentality, while they themselves remain unconscious of his power. He blesses his people *by* them; but they feel not his power *in* them; for rather than his household should want supply, he will feed them even from the table of their enemies. They become therefore like channels of conveyance, which conduct to others, but retain nothing themselves; or like the direction posts on the road, which point the traveller to the right path, but never stir themselves a step towards it. These things may be done, and perhaps very often are done by men perfectly strangers to vital godliness; and therefore when they cease to appear in their assumed character, they are said by the world to have fallen away from grace; whereas the fact is, they were never in grace. Every thing in such persons is derived from natural causes, is supported by natural means, and adopted for natural purposes: and thus beginning in nature, they end in the same; and if a proper attention was paid to these things, to discriminate between nature and grace, it would, under the divine blessing, very much tend to diminish the apprehensions of the humble and fearful believer, respecting the danger of apostatizing from the faith.”

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

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

“Men, from the awakenings of conscience, and from the dread of divine displeasure, in the recollection of a mis-spent life, may be driven to despair; and, if there be no grace given to them of God, to make application of the sweet promises of the gospel in the hour of temptation, but left to themselves, may be prompted to do an act at which nature shudders! But who would presume, but a fool, to put this down to the score of religion, when every circumstance tends but to prove the very reverse, in the total want of all religion? Let us only suppose a case in point, which is enough at once to answer all the childish observations which the world hath made on a subject of this nature. Let us suppose a man under the immediate pressure and alarms of a guilty conscience, in the prospect of the wrath to come, feels the rising temptation to make away with himself. Let us suppose further, that in this distressed state of mind, some precious revelation and promise of the gospel is, through divine grace, revealed to his heart; that he hears and believes what the gospel

graciously proclaims, that 'Though his sins are as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though red as crimson, they shall be as wool; that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin:' is it not evident, that if the mind of such a man is brought to believe in this precious promise, there can be no despair, and consequently there can be no self-murder? And will prejudice itself, even the grossest prejudice, venture to say, or even believe, that a single instance of suicide was ever committed under such circumstances? —"

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

THE PLOUGHMAN

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

*Arise, my soul, my joyful pow'rs.
And triumph in my God;
Awake, my voice, and loud proclaim
His glorious grace abroad.*

My friend whispered in my ear, — “Do you recollect what the prophet predicted of the last gospel-days? ‘In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness Unto The Lord!’ (Zechariah 14:20,21.) Such shall be the gracious prelude to that day, when there shall be no more the *Canaanite* in the land, that the *highway* and the *way of holiness* shall be so plain, that ‘the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.’” (Isaiah 35:8.) The farmer still sung:

*He raised me from the depths of sin,
The gates of gaping hell;
And fixed my standing more secure
Than 'twas before I fell.*

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

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

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

“Does this seem strange to you, Sir?” continued the
countryman: “surely you ought to know better than I: but for
my part, I thank God, I know enough to know that they are
safer that are kept by grace than they who never fell. The

angels who kept not their first estate fell, from having no security but their own strength; and our unhappy first father, who had more strength of his own than ever any since of his fallen race have had, soon manifested what that strength was when left alone. I do therefore desire to bless God that my strength is in another, and not in myself. Oh, it is a sweet morsel to my soul which says ‘O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help!’ (Hosea 13:9.) Besides, Sir, had Adam continued in his original state of uprightness, and all his children have partaken in the same, this would have been no other, after all, but the righteousness of the creature; whereas now ‘the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord. — He is the Lord our righteousness, and therefore he is himself our strength in the time of trouble,’ (Psalm 37:39.) and while the soul whom divine grace hath snatched, as the Lord hath *me*, from the gates of destruction, can take up that scripture, ‘Surely, shall one say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.’ — God the Holy Ghost applies that other precious *assurance* of his word, ‘Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation; ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end.’” (Isaiah 45:17.)

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

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

Happy soul, thought I, thou hast *that* which empires cannot purchase: God for thy Father, Jesus for thy portion, and the Holy Ghost for thy Comforter!

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

‘My salvation shall be for ever, and my righteousness shall not be abolished!’” (Isaiah 51:8.)

THE STRAYED SHEEP

AT that instant a sheep leaped over the hedge, just where my companion and I stood, as if pursued by some enemy. The poor animal seemed much distressed and affrighted. He looked at us, but appeared disappointed. As he stood still I called to him; but he knew not my voice. At length a man appeared at the fence, over which the sheep had broken, and calling in a particular tone which the poor animal understood, he turned and looked upon him. The shepherd then came over the hedge, and advancing gently towards him, still continuing his call as he approached him, the sheep came to meet him, and seemed rejoiced at his presence; and they went away both of them together. — “Ah!” I cried, “I think I could spiritualize this occurrence.” “Do so then,” replied my friend, “for such should be the custom of Zion's pilgrims, to extract improvement from every thing which they see or hear.”

“I would suppose,” I said, “this poor strayed sheep to be the emblem of the wandering sinner; and the man pursuing it as a friend, which the silly animal fancied an enemy, to personate the man Christ Jesus; and under those images, if I mistake not, several very sweet doctrines of the gospel may be discovered. As for example, that the Lord Jesus had a fold before the foundation of the world, is evident; for in the close of his ministry he thanks the Father for them which he had given him, and of which 'he had lost none.' This fold, by the

entrance of the prowling wolf into paradise, wandered, and was scattered abroad in the wide wilderness of the world: for so the Lord speaks of them: 'My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth.' (Ezekiel 34:6.) But though wandering and scattered, they were the Lord's sheep still. That little foolish wanderer we just now saw, was never altered in his nature, though wayward and perverse in his track. Though he left the sheepfold, yet he was still the sheep, and not the goat. In like manner, Christ's spiritual sheep did not lose their relation to him when they left his fold. This character of Jesus's sheep should never be forgotten by us, for it is plain that Jesus himself never loses sight of it. In the moment he speaks of them as wandering and scattered, as diseased and weak, he calls them still *my* sheep; and hence, in the recovery of every one of them, the same idea is carefully preserved: — 'I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick.' (Ezekiel 34:16.)

“And what can there be more refreshing and encouraging to a poor sinner than the consideration, that if of the fold of Jesus, originally given by the Father, however scattered over the face of the earth; however pent up in the den of beasts by the accursed enemy of souls; still he is the sheep of Jesus; concerning whom the promise is made and passed, 'My sheep shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of

my hand!' (John 10:28.) The eye of the good Shepherd is ever over them; he beholds them as *his* sheep while they appear among wolves; and when the hour is come, according to his blessed promise, like that poor animal we just now beheld, they shall hear his voice and follow *him*, though they flee the voice of strangers. How expressive to this purpose are the words of God by the prophet: 'Thus saith the Lord God, behold I, even I, will both search my sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.'" (Ezekiel 34:11,12.)

"And if this doctrine be well founded," I continued, "what a volume of consolation it holds forth to the sheepfold of Jesus, under their own diseases, weaknesses, and wanderings; and the long wanderings and wayward obstinacies and rebellions of their unrecovered relations and friends, for which they mourn so frequently at the mercy-seat! The lion and the bear may have taken the tender lamb from the fold; but our David will in *his* time, and not ours, and the properest time too, go out after him, and deliver him from his devouring mouth. 'My sheep,' saith Jesus, 'shall never perish.' That's enough! — 'Fear not then, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.' (Luke 12:32.) And how eternally secure must be every one of the fold, when the final presentation of them

before the throne of glory is to be expressed in these words: 'Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me!'" (Isaiah 8:18.)

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

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

brought home any of his wanderers to his fold 'on his shoulders rejoicing!'"

"If you and I, my brother," he added, "had the faculty of discerning objects spiritually, we should discover many in this situation now, who appear to every eye but His who knows his own under all disguises, as *goats*, from their behaviour, — but yet are the real *sheep* of Jesus, which, by and by, he will gather out, and say to them, as he did to the church of old, 'Come with me, my spouse, from the lions' dens, and from the mountains of the leopards.'

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

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

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

"Alas!" I replied, "I fear I do not grow at all. I cannot perceive in myself any progress." — "Do not say so," he answered, "for this borders on unthankfulness. In our desires

after greater measures of knowledge and grace, let us never overlook the less; nor, while we earnestly beg the Lord to bestow more, unthankfully forget what he hath already given. It is very true, as the apostle observes, that our highest attainments in the present state are only as the attainments of children; and that 'if any man think he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know.' Nevertheless, an apprehension of the very first principles in grace, nay, the circumstance of being matriculated in the school of Jesus, is an unspeakable mercy, which a whole life of thankfulness is not sufficient to acknowledge."

"Look back, my brother," he added, "from the first traces you can discover of God's manifestations in your mind, to the present period, and compare your situation then with now, and you will at once perceive what rapid advances you have been making in the divine life, under the teachings of God the Holy Ghost. And this is, in fact, the only method whereby to form a true estimate of ourselves; for when we draw conclusions for the present only, or when we erect as a standard, whereby to judge ourselves, the excellency of others more advanced; all these models being ill-constructed and ill-chosen, must invariably induce mortifying views of ourselves by the comparison. This is not, therefore, the right plan by which we are to ascertain our state. But if we so judge of our progress in grace, as we estimate proficiency in the works of nature, the method will be more accurate. In the vegetable kingdom, for instance, however certain an advance

in growth may be, yet the most intense eye can never discern any one plant actually growing: but, by the comparative observation of a few days, every one is enabled to discover that a progression has taken place.”

“And while I am speaking of this subject of growth in grace, I would desire to add another observation, which is intimately connected with it. The apostle says, ‘Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.’ Now, if I really grow in grace (as increasing grace humbles more and more the soul) I shall grow more sensible of my own worthlessness and Christ's all-sufficiency; deeper views of sin in my fallen nature will induce all those gracious effects which tend to enhance the Saviour; a conscious sense of want will awaken as conscious a desire of having those wants supplied; and every day's experience will make self more lowly and Christ more exalted. This is to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord together. The progress of grace therefore, connected with the progress of the knowledge of the Lord, must ever produce those effects. A little grace, like the dawn of day, when shining in the heart, enables the believer to discover by this twilight, somewhat of the darkness around. In proportion as the light advances he sees the objects clearer; but he then only becomes sensible of all the evils lurking within, when the meridian brightness is completed. Grace, in like manner shining in its full luster, discovers to us more clearly the corruptions of our nature; and while it accomplished this

purpose, it answereth the other blessed purpose also, which the apostle connects with it, of giving us ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’”

AN INN

IT became a matter of much satisfaction, I believe, to my fellow-traveller as well as to myself, to behold the appearance of an inn on the road; for we both needed rest and refreshment; so that without any deliberation we entered the door.

“Can you accommodate us?” said my friend to the host, who happened to be near the passage as we approached the house. “Certainly,” answered the man; and showed us into a room.

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

“There is something in the very nature of an inn,” continued my friend, “which serves, as it appears to me, to promote the sacred purposes of a pilgrimage like ours, more effectually than almost any other situation; and had I my choice on this point, I should like it, of all others, for my abode in the dying hour; for every one is so taken up with his

own concerns, that there is neither time nor inclination to attend to the affairs of others; so that here a man might be free from the troublesome importunity of attendants, which sometimes becomes a sad interruption to the soul, in her preparations for her journey into the invisible world, while the carriage is at the door.”

Our refreshment, consisting of a little tea and bread, was soon served up; which, my friend having first implored the divine blessing to sanctify the use of we really enjoyed. “Tea is a very pleasant beverage,” said my friend, “to my taste; and I should find some difficulty to get any thing as a substitute, were I to be deprived of the use of it. I have heard many speak of it as pernicious; but I verily believe, that one great reason why it proves so is, because it is *a graceless* meal. If we do not beg God's blessing over our food, how can we be surprised if, instead of being wholesome, it proves hurtful?”

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

THE JEW

THE instant we arose from the table, as before observed, there crossed the court-yard of the inn, opposite to the room where we were sitting, a Jew (as he appeared to be) with a basket of pens. My friend seeing him, hastily ran to the door, to inquire of him whether he knew a man of the name of Abraham Levi, one of their people. "Yes," he said, "I know him very well; but he is not one of my people." "How is that?" replied my friend; "are you not a Jew?" "No" the poor man said, "I thank the Lord I am not! I was once indeed; but, I trust, I am now a lover of the Lord Jesus." The effect wrought upon my mind by this short conversation, was like that of electricity. "Pray, my friend do us the favour," continued my companion, "to walk into this room. We are both lovers and humble followers, like yourself, if you are so, of the Lord Jesus; and we shall much rejoice if you will communicate to us the pleasing information how this change was wrought." "That I will, most readily," replied the man; "for if it will afford you pleasure to hear, much more will it delight me to relate, a change to which I owe such unspeakable mercies."

"Without going over the whole of my history from my childhood," he said, "which hath very little interesting in it, and is unconnected with the circumstances of my conversion, it will be sufficient to begin it at that part which alone is worth your hearing. It is about two years since that I first

began to feel my mind much exercised with considerations on the deplorable state of our people. I discovered, from reading the scriptures, the ancient love of God to our nation. In our history, as a people, I saw the many wonderful and distinguishing mercies with which, from age to age, the Lord had blessed us. I remarked also, how, for the disobedience and ingratitude of our people the Lord had punished us; but what struck me most forcibly was, that prophecy of Scripture ‘That the sceptre should not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until the *Shiloh* should come,’ (Genesis 49:10.) — whereas I saw very plainly that our nation was without a sceptre, without government, without temple. I remarked, moreover, that our people were a light, vain, and worldly-minded people, who took it not to heart; and if the Lord had punished our fathers for their sins, our's deserved his displeasure more. Added to all these considerations, which very powerfully operated on my mind, I saw a great mass of people living around me who professed themselves to be followers of the true God; and who asserted, in confirmation of their faith, the *Shiloh* was come, and to him was the gathering of the people. Distressed and perplexed in my mind, by reason of these various considerations, I knew not what to do, and could hardly find power or inclination to prosecute my daily labour.”

“It happened one day, while walking over the bridge of the city, that, my mind being more than usually affected, I could not refrain from pouring out my heart in prayer to God. I

paused as I stood on the bridge, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I cried out 'O God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who hast declared thyself as keeping covenant mercy for thousands, look down upon me, a poor Jew! vouchsafe [grant] to teach me what I must do! Thou knowest my desire is to serve thee, if I knew the way! Thou art justly displeased with our nation and with our people; for we have broken thy commandments. But oh, Lord, direct me!'

"It was with words somewhat like these," continued the poor man, "that I prayed; in which I wept much. At length I walked on; and passing by a place of worship, where I saw many assembled, I found my heart inclined to go in. Who knows, I thought within myself, but the Lord may have directed me hither! I went in; and near the door finding a seat unoccupied, I entered into it, and sat down. The minister was discoursing on the mercies of God, in sending his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If this Saviour was my Saviour, I thought, how happy should I be! I felt myself considerably affected, and frequently turned my face to the wall and wept; and many times, during the continuance of the service, so much was my heart interested by what I heard, that I wept aloud, and could not refrain."

"I had disturbed some of the congregation, it appeared, by my behaviour; so that as soon as the service was finished, two or three of the men came towards me with much anger, asking me what I meant by coming there to interrupt their

worship with my drunkenness; but when they discovered the real state of the case, and I had told them the whole desires of my mind, they almost devoured me with kindness. This served very much also, under God, to convince me that their religion must be the true religion, which produced such effects.”

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

“One little event more,” he added, “I will, if you please, relate, which happened soon after my going into this church. My business of selling my pens obliged me to go to another city, about twelve miles distant from the one where I dwelt; and calling at a pastry-cook's shop, who occasionally dealt with me, a circumstance occurred which became highly serviceable to me in my new path of life. There sat in the shop a venerable gentleman, dressed in black; the mistress of the house stood behind the counter; and I was just within the door. A poor beggar, looking miserably ill, came in for a tart. “Ah! John,” cried the old gentleman, “what, have you left the infirmary! Is your disorder declared to be incurable?” “Yes, Sir,” replied the poor man, “they say they can do nothing

more for me.” “Well, John,” answered the old gentleman, “there is one Physician more which I would have you try; and he never fails to cure; — and he doth it also ‘without money and without price.’” The poor man's countenance brightened at this; and he said “Who is he?” “It is the Lord Jesus Christ,” said the gentleman. “Pray go to him, John and if he be pleased to heal your body, it will be a blessed recovery for you indeed; and if not, he can and will heal your soul!” The poor man did not relish the advice; for he went away looking angrily. As for me, I cried out (for I could not refrain) May the Lord bless you, Sir, for what you have said in your recommendations of my Master and Saviour! He is indeed all you have described him; for he hath cured both my body and soul. Astonished at what I said, the gentleman expressed his surprize, in observing “I thought you were a Jew!” “I was, sir,” I answered, “once; but by grace I am now a Christian.” He caught me by the hand and entreated me to go with him to his house; where I related to him, as I have to you, the means under God, of my conversion; and when I had finished my story, at his request, we dropped on our knees in prayer; and oh! Sirs, the fervour and earnestness with which he prayed, and the thanksgivings which he expressed for the Lord's mercy to my soul, never shall I forget! The recollection even at this distance, continues to warm my heart.”

When the poor man had finished his narrative, my friend and I looked at each other, then at him, and then upwards.

One sentiment, I am persuaded, pervaded both hearts; and this was the language, “Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!”

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

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

The town-clock struck five, just after I awoke from a state of sleep much refreshed. I called to mind that sweet promise of God to his people, and found cause to bless him, in that it had been again verified to my experience: “When thou liest

down thou shall not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down and thy sleep shall be sweet.” (Proverbs 3:24.)

I recollected also, that many of the Lord's children were at that moment in a state of pain and suffering, and, like Job, complaining that “wearisome nights were appointed unto them.” (Job 7:3.) I felt my heart drawn out, under the fulness of the impression, to adopt the language of the sorrowful sisters, and to tell the Lord “Many whom thou lovest are sick.” (John 11:3.)

When we consider the defenceless state of sleep, and the many dangers to which our poor fallen nature is then peculiarly exposed, — not merely to the ravages of *enemies*, against which bolts and bars might cast up some little security, but the carelessness of *friends*, from which none but His watchful eye, “who never slumbers nor sleeps,” can guard us, — how suitable is that sentiment of the church of old, to form the first impression of the mind at the dawn of day: — “It is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not; they are new every morning.” (Lamentations 3:22.)

I have often thought, when looking upon some dear child of my affection, in its unconscious state of sleep, what creature of all God's works is so truly helpless, and so much exposed to danger, as man in that season! But I have not infrequently found relief therefrom, in the assurance that this very state, in the necessity of it, implies the existence of a

peculiar superintendence; and indeed the eventual experience of thousands is continually bearing testimony to the truth of that precious promise: “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings and in quiet resting-places.” (Isaiah 32:18.)

THE DIARY

ACCORDING to my constant custom, since the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, I opened my Diary, in my little Pocket Companion, to enquire what is the word of the Lord recommended to my serious consideration to-day? for it is a favourite maxim of mine, with the first dawn of day, to seek a morning-blessing from the Lord in this way, in one of his sweet promises. The promises of God are the present heritage of his people: they are evidently intended to be their support and stay in the house of their pilgrimage. In a little book which I always keep by me for this purpose, to have recourse to as occasion may require, and which I call my Pocket Companion, I have also a Diary, containing some refreshing portion of Scripture for every day in the year; and though it cannot be supposed (neither will any one I should hope imagine) that by a selection of this kind a preference is given to one gracious promise to the exclusion of the rest, "which in Christ Jesus are all yea and amen," yet, as the mind is not sufficiently capacious, nor sufficiently alive to exercise itself in the meditation of them all, it should seem to be no unpromising plan of usefulness to have recourse to one or more of them in this manner.

I shall be exempt, I trust, from the charge of presumption, if I add that I have found at times, the promise in my Diary so strikingly suited to my then circumstances, as if a voice

had accompanied it, like that of the apostle to the men of Antioch: “To you is the word of this salvation sent.”

The promise for this day I have found to be, Psalm 121:5. “The Lord is thy keeper.” Sweet and precious indeed to all his people is this assurance! My mind, as I lay upon my bed, was much exercised in the contemplation of God as a covenant-God, in keeping his people. It is he which keeps them in the faith; keeps them in the hour of temptation; keeps them from the power of the enemy, — from a thousand unseen, and as many visible evils, — from finally falling, and from eternal death! — and though he hath no where promised to keep his people from tribulation, or persecution, or the strife and slander of tongues,—from sickness, or sorrow or the like, — yet he hath promised, that “no weapon formed against them shall prosper, — no temptation shall take them, from which he will not make a way for them to escape. He will bruise Satan under their feet shortly.” Oh, the blessed privilege of those who have the Lord for their keeper!

MARKET-DAY

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

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

The apostle of the gentiles desired the church of Corinth to consider him and his faithful companions under this character. "Let a man," saith he, "so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God." A steward is an upper servant in a family, one whose office (according to our Lord's own explanation of the Jewish householder) is to provide for the family, &c. whom "his

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

Imagination can hardly form a character more truly valuable than the man who ministers in holy things; who spends his time, his gifts, his talents, — in short, his all, to this one purpose; who becomes indeed the “faithful and wise steward,” to feed the babes of Christ's household with the “sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby;” and them that are of “full age, with strong meat, when by reason of use their spiritual senses are exercised to discern both

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

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

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

THE GRACE

“BOUNTIFUL Father of mercies, who art supplying the daily wants of the millions which are looking up to thee from all parts of the universe, we desire grace to praise thee for this seasonable and suitable portion of food, which thou hast spread before us for the support of our perishing bodies; and we intreat thee for grace from thy Holy Spirit in the use of it, that we may receive this and every other blessing, as coming from our Covenant Father and God in Christ Jesus. Vouchsafe [Grant], dearest Saviour, to sit at the table “which thou hast furnished, and may we be among those which shall sit at thy table in thy kingdom;” and while, as thy children going home to thine house, thou art refreshing us thus by the way, though all the benefit be ours, let thine be all the glory. Amen.”

THE PARALYTIC

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

When we came to the poor man's room, though every thing manifested the indigence of his circumstances, yet it was that kind of poverty which recommended itself by its cleanliness. There stood a lady at the foot of his bed in conversation with the sick man. “How do you live?” I heard her say as I entered the chamber. “Live, madam!” replied the poor man, “I am in very good circumstances; I am not only rich by reason of present possessions, but I am heir to a large estate.” — “Astonishing!” said she, “you were pointed out to me as a very poor man; and I came to give you some relief.” — “That you may still do, madam, if you please,” answered he, “for the riches I possess, and the inheritance to which I am born, do not at present make me above charity. I am only ‘rich in faith, and an heir of the kingdom.’” — “Oh,” replied the lady, “is that all? but in the mean time, how do you manage for this world?” “My God,” cried the poor man,

“supplies all my need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. ‘I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. I am instructed both to be full, and to be hungry; both to abound, and to suffer need.’ When my worldly stock is reduced low, and I have ‘neither scrip, nor bread, nor money in the purse,’ I make use of bank-notes.” “Bank-notes!” exclaimed the lady. “Yes, madam,” he answered, “here is a book full of them;” taking up a Bible which lay upon the bed, and opening it; “and oftentimes I find many folded up together in the same place to which I open. Look here, madam,” he continued; “see here is a promise suited to every man’s case. ‘When the poor and needy seek for water, and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the Lord will hear them. I, the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of valleys.’ (Isaiah 41:17, 18.) And the high value of those promises is, that they are sure and certain. Faith draws upon the Almighty banker, and his is all prompt payment.” While the poor sick man said this, he opened the Bible to another part, and he exclaimed again, “See, madam, here is another promise to a soul under doubts and fears: ‘I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way wherein thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye;’ (Psalm 32:8.) and thus, madam, in every state and every circumstance of life, in this blessed book, are assurances exactly suited to the wants both of my body and soul. Promises of provision for the way; deliverances under danger; preservation in seasons of affliction; support under trouble; direction in times of

difficulty; and the Lord's assured presence in every time of need. 'Fear thou not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God. I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.'" (Isaiah 41:10.)

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

"Oh, dear Sir," the poor man answered, "no; very frequently, through unbelief, I am tempted to exclaim with the church of old, 'My hope is perished from the Lord.' (Lamentations 3:18.) I have seasons of darkness, and times of temptation; notwithstanding I can and do say, through grace strengthening me, sometimes under both, 'Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy; for though I fall I shall arise; though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me.' (Micah 7:8.) Yes, in my haste, I cry out, "All are liars;" but blessed be the Lord under all, my God is faithful. He is better to me than all my fears."

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

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

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

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

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

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

He used to say, that in his opinion, no order of beings whatever stood in a situation more pitiable. Formed as their society is, for the most part, of the children of the poor, they are introduced from their earliest days into this path of life without the smallest education, or the least idea of its usefulness; and as they advance in years, though advancing

at the same time in all the phraseology and corrupted manners of the stable, they remain totally destitute of any apprehension of divine truths. Perhaps without a breach of charity it may be said, that very few of the whole body of this order, whether considered as postillions, chaise-drivers, stage-coachmen, or others, have any more consciousness of “the things which accompany salvation,” than the cattle with whom they herd.

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

divine,) a set of sabbath-breakers like themselves, in their several journeys of business, and journeys of pleasure. The number which the various inns of the kingdom pour forth upon those occasions every Lord's day is incalculable.

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

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

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

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

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

THE STABLE BOY

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

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

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

THE DISASTER

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

As soon as he had recovered from his fainting, I ventured to approach his bed side, and taking him by the hand expressed my great concern for what had happened. “How unfortunate (I exclaimed) is it, that you should have gone to the stable! How sad a thing that you should have stood so near this horse; If one could but have foreseen.” “Be patient, my kind friend, I beg of you,” he interrupted me, with saying, “and in your affection for me, do not forget the first principles of your holy faith. You are looking wholly to *second* causes, to the mere instrument, and totally shutting out our gracious God from the government of his own world, and all his tender concern and gracious watching over the persons, and interests of his people! Alas, my dear

brother, .he continued, “by this method you increase every trouble, and rob yourself of a thousand comforts. Would you have me to be angry with myself for going into the stable, or displeased with a senseless horse, for acting according to his nature as a horse? As well might we take offence at the winter's cold or summer's heat. Mere instruments are nothing, but as they are acted upon; and what folly it would be to ascribe to them a power with which they have no connection! No, no, my good friend,” he continued, “never lose sight of that gracious and Almighty Being, who ‘ordereth all things according to the counsel of his own will,’ and then you will discover wisdom, and faithfulness, and love in every providence. It is not enough,” said he, “in my apprehension, merely to acquiesce in the divine will — every true believer in Jesus ought to do more; he should approve of it. It is one thing to say ‘The Lord's will be done;’ and another to say ‘Good is the will of the Lord concerning me;’ and this is no more, after all, than what is frequently observed in the common circumstances of the world. If, for example, I see an artist of esteemed excellence in his profession, constructing his machine upon various principles of a complicated nature, though the whole appears to *my* view intricate and confused, yet I take it for granted that he knows how the several parts will harmonize together, and I yield an implicit obedience to his superior judgment; and shall we so readily ascribe such sagacity to men, and yet venture to question wisdom in the arrangements of God?”

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

“With respect to the present providence,” he added, “I know not what is the will of my God concerning me, but one thing I know, that ‘all the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies,’ (Psalm 25:10.) and lifting up his eyes he cried out, “It is my mercy, thou dearest Lord of thy people, that my times are in thy hands! I have long been enabled, by thy blessed Spirit's grace, to commit my *soul* into thy keeping. Well may I then leave this *body* of sin and death to thy care!”

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

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

For my part, my concern was so great, that I seldom, unless from necessity, left his chamber. He had been a father to me; and I felt all that tender affection for him which a kind father might be supposed to excite in the mind of his son; and indeed independent of all personal attachment, my small services, during his confinement, were abundantly recompensed by the spiritual good that I had gathered from the many precious observations which dropped from his lips: and although I had so highly profited from the great lessons

on religion which he had endeavoured to teach me while *living*, — yet in his *dying* hours he favoured me with the sweetest instructions I had ever received. He had been a kind of taper, burning with much brightness, to lighten me on in the path of grace: but, like a taper, the most vivid rays were those which were emitted while expiring in the socket.

The reader will forgive me once more if I pause to remark how exceedingly mistaken, in their calculation of the means of happiness, are the children of the world, who seek it in the various haunts of what is called *Pleasure*, notwithstanding the constant and uniform experience of thousands, in every age, has determined that it is not there to be found. If my reader will give me credit for the assertion (and I do most solemnly assure him of the fact) never, till the hour of my friend's confinement, when *living* in his chamber, did I know what that pleasure of the heart is, which arises from all those solemn but infinitely interesting reflections which engage the mind under sorrowful dispensations; such, I mean, as considerations of the awful government of God, — the rich discoveries of the importance of salvation, — the littleness of the earthly pursuits, — the sweetness of the sympathetic feelings; and, in short, all that train of thought, connected with those ideas which a sick-chamber is so admirably calculated to induce. Circumstances of this kind, no doubt, are solemn; but if solemn, they are only the more congenial to the soul's purest enjoyments. The “countenance may be saddened, but the heart is made better.” (Ecclesiastes 7:3.)

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

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

It was seemingly a long season of uncertainty for the exercise of my mind, in waiting the Lord's will respecting the

final issue of my friend's state. Sometimes my hopes were high, and at others low, according as the symptoms appeared to vary;—but having acquired a little portion of that precious lesson in the school of grace, that the Lord's mercies are nearest unfolding when our expectations of them are nearest closing, I felt, I thought, much sweetness in that scripture, “It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.”

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

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

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

“With respect to myself,” he continued, “and my views concerning the awful state about to open before me, blessed be God, from the security I possess in him ‘who is the resurrection and the life,’ I have no fears. I have been

enabled again and again, during my confinement on this bed of sickness, to take the most deliberate reviews of the faithfulness of a covenant God in Christ; and the result of the whole enables me to rejoice in the finished salvation of my God. It is indeed a solemn idea that, in a few hours, I am to appear before 'God, the Judge of all.' But it is my mercy that I am come also to 'Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant.' While therefore I look at him, who is 'fellow to the Lord of Hosts,' I find holy confidence; for I discover in him and his redemption, a full, complete, and all-sufficient righteousness, adequate to every want, and answerable to every demand, to satisfy the law of God."

"Under the influence of this well-grounded persuasion which God the Eternal Spirit (I trust) hath graciously wrought in my soul, I have more than once since this illness, been refreshed by the same comfortable promise with which the Lord favoured the Patriarch of old, to encourage him in his journey: 'Fear not to go down into Egypt; I will go down with thee.' So, methinks, the Lord encourageth me; and I know indeed, that Jesus will go down with me to the chambers of the grave. 'He hath the keys of hell and the grave — he openeth, and no man shutteth, he shutteth, and no man openeth.' Oh, it is a rapturous consideration to my soul, that in all places, and in all states, my Redeemer is with me. The covenant holds as firm as ever in the grave; and death, which dissolves all other bonds, looseth not the bonds of the everlasting covenant. Our union, my brother," he

proceeded, “with our great mystical Head, is as perfect when in the dust of the grave as when that dust is animated in the body. When Jesus from the bush proclaimed himself the ‘God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,’ this blessed distinction of character was carefully marked and preserved: ‘God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him.’

“Those patriarchs, though mouldered at that time for many years into dust, were still as much *living* to God, in all the purposes of covenant connexions, in their dust, as when in an animated body; and hence the apostle observes, ‘Whether we live, we live to the Lord; or whether we die, we die to the Lord: whether we live therefore or die, we are the Lord’s.’”

My friend paused a moment to recover strength, and then proceeded: “This body of mine, my dear brother, will very shortly be fit only for worms and corruption; and when in this state the tenderest hearted friend, the fondest lover, would say of such a carcass, however engaging before it might have been, as Abraham did of Sarah, ‘Bury my dead out of my sight.’ But as these sensations are not *his* with whom we have to do; as Jesus never set his affection at first upon his people for the comeliness of their persons; so neither doth that affection lessen when their comeliness is turned into corruption. Neither is their union with his person, even for a moment only, interrupted by death; for as the divine and human nature of the Lord Jesus received not the smallest separation when he died upon the cross, so of that

union between Jesus and the members of his mystical body, there is no dissolution when their bodies are gathered unto their fathers, and they see corruption; for their souls are received into his bosom; and with respect to their bodies also, they still live to him. 'Because I live' saith Jesus, 'ye live also.' Every particle of their dust, is the same to their great spiritual head, when dust, as before that change; for as the union in Jesus with their whole persons, that is, their bodies as well as their souls, is indissoluble, it is evident that the same must continue with the dust of their bodies; and hence when Jesus saith, 'Fear not to go down into the grave, I will go with thee,' it explains in what a tender and consoling sense we are to understand this; and indeed, as in death so in the resurrection, the certainty of this glorious event ariseth from the same consideration; 'for if,' saith the Apostle, 'the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.' (Romans 8:11.) And thus the resurrection of the just is certified to them, not simply by the power of God, but from the indwelling residence of the same Spirit of God, by which they are first awakened in grace to a new and spiritual life, and then finally quickened to eternal glory, by virtue of their union to the person of Jesus, from the operations of the Holy Ghost.'"

My friend would have proceeded, but his strength did not admit of it. He took occasion, however, at every interval

possible, to say somewhat suited to the circumstances of a dying saint. The poor stable-boy was indulged by his master to spend much of his time in the sick chamber; and the many precious sayings, which fell from my friend by way of caution, encouragement, advice, and entreaty, became truly edifying and refreshing both to him and to every attendant around.

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

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

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

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

*Some nat'ral tears they dropp'd, but wiped them soon.
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.*

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

I have been often led since to reflect, with peculiar pleasure, on the wisdom as well as the mercy of that process of grace through which the Lord is leading his people. Like Israel of old, in their emancipation from Egypt, of whom it is said that “God led them not through the land of the Philistines although that was near, lest when they should see war, their minds should be tempted to return; but God led the people about through the way of the wilderness” (Exodus 13:17.) Similar to this now is the first opening of the spiritual path; the difficulties and discouragements are by no means like those which believers meet in the after stages of their

pilgrimage. Thousands there are who, like Israel, have sung the song of triumph, as they did at the Red Sea, when a forty years travelling through a dreary wilderness lay still between them and Canaan; and many, no doubt, like Israel too, afterwards, in the midst of some heavy unlooked-for trial, have been prompted to exclaim in the bitterness of their soul, "Is the Lord among us or no?"

The reader will indulge me again to pause over this remark, and ask him if his experience hath nothing of a correspondence with it? I am persuaded the case is very general. The gracious leader of his little flock, who feeds them, as it is said, like a shepherd, "gathers (we are told) the lambs with his arms, and carries them in his bosom; and gently leads those that are with young." He always suits the strength to the day, — he proportions the burthen to the back. Hence the earliest manifestations of divine love are generally the most pleasing, and, according to our conception of things, in that period the most powerful. It is in grace as it is in nature, first impressions are most affecting. When the eye of the body suddenly emergeth from darkness into light, the transition is most strongly felt; and in like manner, when the eye of the soul is first opened to see the wondrous things of God's law, the effect is proportionably greater than when accustomed to their view.

I could wish the reader of long experience would consider this more than I am persuaded is generally done, and mark it down in the diary of his pilgrimage. These things formed

many hard problems in David's life, until frequent experiments, aided by frequent visits to the sanctuary, explained them. It was not in the first trials that he adopted that sentiment, "I know that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." (Psalm 119:75.) It becomes a very blessed proof of advances in grace, when the tried soul can use such language.

But to return.—The season was come when my exercises were to be given me; and for the better opportunity of trial, all human aid was to be first withdrawn, that, like the pelican in the wilderness, being solitary, Jesus might be my sole resource. My faithful friend and companion, the Lord had removed out of my sight. He had sent the worm to destroy this highly prized gourd; and now the storm began.

MY RELATIONS

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

Among the number there was *one* more intimately wrapped about my heart, whose influence in every thing but religion I have ever found it to be both my interest and happiness to feel; for whom there needs no other claim than nature's feelings to call forth every energy of the mind in the promotion of *her* welfare; and in grace, my earliest and latest prayers for her salvation will cease but with my breath.

Perhaps some reader, circumstanced in the same peculiarity of situation and of sentiment, may feel his mind

drawn out in a similar affection. “As in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.” (Proverbs 27:19.)

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

But all these were trifling, compared to the solicitations, the remonstrances, the jealousies, displeasure, and a long train of other persuasions, with which that very near and

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

It was much about the same period, while thus deeply exercised with the unceasing importunity and persecutions of my relations, that I received a more formidable assault from another quarter. While I was seeking consolation from retirement and reading, in the intervals of a more important engagement, a circumstance arose, in consequence of the latter, which very much affected me.

THE BOOK

I FOUND an author, whose writings were particularly directed to the subject of divine grace. The title first attracted my notice, and invited me to the perusal; but the trial it afterwards proved to me, will be, I hope, thus far useful, to caution me against curiosity in future. “It is a good thing (the apostle saith) that the heart be established with grace.” (Hebrews 13:9.) But it is dangerous in the unexperienced and the unestablished, to be running about in quest of novelty. The leading doctrine of this writer's creed, founded on what hath been generally distinguished by the *Five points* of the *Dort* Assembly, from being originally formed there, were to this purpose: “That grace is equally free, and equally offered to all; the acceptance or refusal of it depended upon ourselves: and hence, that the improvement or mis-improvement rests upon the will of man. That the regeneration of the Holy Ghost doth not so operate as to be irresistibly effectual, but that a man's own conduct may frustrate the life-giving power; and lastly, the final perdition of the people of God is very possible, notwithstanding all that the everlasting love of the Father, and the infinite merits of the Redeemer, and the operation of the Holy Ghost, hath wrought, in order to prevent it.”

The reader, who hath accompanied me thus far in my pilgrimage, hath seen enough of my weakness not to know that such a train of doctrine was sufficient for a time to throw

a damp upon all my confidence. I am like the sensitive plant in these things; the least touch makes me recoil. To hear, therefore, of the bare possibility of falling from grace in the close of life, and apostatising from “Him whom my soul loveth,” (and apostatise I certainly should, if the perseverance depended on myself,) what a distressing apprehension!

Neither did my trials end here. There was yet another in reserve for this season of temptation. What David remarks of the *natural* world, is equally applicable to the *spiritual*: “Thou makest darkness, and it is night, wherein all the beasts of the forest do creep forth.” When the Lord withdraws his shining on the soul, the *enemy*, who knows the time of darkness to be the most favourable for his work, “goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour;” and never till the “sun ariseth again, will he lay him down in his den.” (Psalm 104:20-22.)

THE BROTHERS

IT happened of an evening, while my mind was reeking under all these united attacks, that I walked forth into the way. My path lay through a field in which were two men, who, from the congeniality of their sentiments, more than from the tie of consanguinity, I considered to be brothers. They were so engaged in conversation as they walked before me, that I escaped their notice, so that I had an opportunity of hearing the whole of their discourse unperceived.

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

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

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

I had heard enough not to covet more; and therefore withdrew from the brothers as unperceived as I came. The words of Job struck my mind with great force as I left them: — “Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty, instruct him? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.” (Job 40:2.)

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

But my distress, induced by the conversation which I had heard, sprung from another source. There is in every man's heart, even when in a renewed state, a much stronger propensity to evil than good. Hence nothing is more easy than the introduction of a train of corrupt thoughts into the mind, which the greatest exertions, void of divine aid, cannot afterwards expel; while, on the contrary, the chaste and pure images of grace, tending as they do, in every instance, to mortify and subdue the corrupt desires of our nature, nothing but an higher influence than what is human can gain admission for them at the first, or cause them to be cherished when received; and this explains why it is that false impressions, from being more congenial to our nature, are more easy of access, and more permanent in their duration, than the true.

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

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

I stop the reader one moment again to remark, (and what I humbly conceive, if closely adopted, will not prove an unprofitable remark) how little they consult their own happiness who mix indiscriminately with the world, and who are not sensible of the dreadful consequences of seeing and hearing the corruptions which are going on in life! What from the lightness and indifference to divine things with which some treat the truths of God, and what from the open contempt poured upon them by others, it is really like running into the midst of pestilence, to come within the circle of their society. Our eyes are the purveyors of the evil, and our ears inlets of the corruption; and never was that aphorism of Solomon more easy to be observed than in the present moment: "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away." (Proverbs 4:14.) For my own part, I have never found my peace of mind so unbroken, as since I have totally withdrawn myself from all but the necessary and unavoidable intercourse with men of the world; by ceasing from their communion, we live *out* of the reach of the contagion of their principles, and we live *above* the influence

of their good or bad opinion; and it is a maxim of as much salutary consequence to the mind as it is to the body, to breathe a pure atmosphere. You cannot come within the region of any thing filthy and corrupt, but its poisonous effluvia will attach themselves to you.

I have often thought what a peculiar providence it was, that while my mind was under the impression of such accumulating trials, God should direct my steps towards the means of relief; but so it was, that in prosecuting the path of my pilgrimage, as I passed the road, there stood an house on my right hand with this inscription in the front of it:

THE HOUSE OF THE INTERPRETER

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

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

conversation of the infidel *brothers*, which all conspired to give me such distress, became the very foundation under God, of my establishment in grace, who will but conclude that such a peculiar coincidence of circumstances cannot be the result of any thing fortuitous, but “cometh forth (as the prophet speaks) from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working.” (Isaiah 28:29.)

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

The house of the Interpreter.—I have read of such a house, and of such a character, as being in the pilgrim's path, when in my days of childhood; but I knew not at that time that I should myself live to behold either of them realized. A thought, however struck me, as I read the inscription: “Perhaps I may find here some help to explain to me the difficulties under which I am at present exercised! I recollected what Job had said, that “if there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him.” (Job 33:23.) Encouraged by these considerations, I drew near to the house. The door was wide open. Jesus hath said “Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” (Revelation 3:8.) I found that it opened into a spacious

vestibule; in one of the compartments of which there was written in large characters as follows:

THE RULES OF THIS FAMILY

First. It is expected that every one who comes under this roof fail not to be present at Family-prayer, and the Reading of the Scriptures.

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

Thirdly. The apostle's maxim is to be invariably followed, under the divine blessing: “in all things having conversation as becometh the gospel of Christ:” that “no corrupt communication may proceed out of the mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Ephesians 4:29.)

Lastly. “Whatsoever is done in word or deed, all is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.” (Colossians 3:17.)

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To every one who, looking up for grace to render it effectual, sincerely desires to act in conformity to these rules, the good man of the house saith, “Come in thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?” (Genesis 24:31.)

Thus invited, I entered the door, and found that it led into a large room like a hall. There were several persons seated

round a table, at the head of which a venerable old man appeared to preside. Having taken my place at the bottom, to which the kind looks of the master at the top seemed to invite me, I soon discovered by what dropped from his lips in discourse, that the characters around me were Zion's Pilgrims, like myself; and that the Lord of the way had directed them in his providence hither, for refreshment and counsel.

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

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

I found my mind much relieved under one part of my burden (I mean under the sorrows induced from the persecutions of my *relations*) by what the Interpreter said to a woman in the company under similar circumstances. “My best advice to you,” he said, “will be to recommend you to seek grace, in order to adopt the prophet's example; for when he found no favour from man, he recollected that he had the favour of God; — so that however wicked the times were in which he lived, yet the righteousness of Jehovah was unchangeable. The best of them, (he said was as a briar, — the most upright is sharper than a thornhedge. Who, therefore, could venture to come near either? Your case, you see, is not singular, in the unkindness you sustain from your relations on account of your religion. In all ages it hath been the same; and hence the prophet saith, ‘Trust ye not in a friend, — put ye not confidence in a guide, — keep the doors of thy mouth from her that lieth in thy bosom; for the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man’s enemies are the men of his own house.’ But what was the prophet's conduct under these heavy troubles? ‘Therefore, saith he, I will look unto the Lord: I will wait for the God of my salvation, — my God will hear me.’ (Micah 7:4,5,6,7.) The more the world frowns the sweeter will be the smiles of Jesus; and the greater unkindness you meet with from your relations, the greater will be your esteem of the affection of the Redeemer. What though all your earthly connections fail, and their friendship is continually

fluctuating and changeable, — yet in Jesus you find an unchanging friend ‘at all times, — one born for adversity, and who sticketh closer than a brother.’

“And it should very evidently seem that God overrules those very events which tend to loosen our attachment to every thing here below, on purpose to raise our affections, and to fasten them on the great objects which are above. By *tinging* our most innocent enjoyments in this mortal state with vanity and disappointment, what is it but in effect saying, ‘Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted?’ There is much meaning in that word of the prophet, *Therefore*; when he says *Therefore* I will look unto the Lord; that is as much as to say, because all things else are dissatisfying, I will look where I am sure not to be disappointed. Though all creatures leave me, my Creator is the same; and though every earthly friend fail me, my heavenly Friend never will! O, depend upon it, let a child of God be persecuted, forsaken, slighted, or despised ever so much by man, yet while he hath a God to look up to, and a Covenant-God to trust in, — while he can say, *my God*, he may at the same time, with full assurance, say, *He will hear me*. And I believe it possible, nay more than possible, even frequently induced by divine grace, that where the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, in its fulness and strength, it drives out all lesser considerations, — as the effulgent brightness of the sun puts out the fire of the hearth; and it is in this sense we must accept that otherwise seemingly harsh

doctrine to flesh and blood, where the Redeemer saith 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his life also, he cannot be my disciple.' That the apostle Paul felt the influence of this hating his own life, no one will question who attends to the holy saint's groaning under 'the body of sin and death,' which he tells us he carried about with him; and that a believer in the present hour, who knows what it is at times to loathe, and even hate his own flesh from the corruptions of it, may, without violence to the purest affections, be well supposed to feel something of obedience to the Redeemer's precept, in hating every tie which tends to separate the soul from the great and unrivalled object of his love, will not be doubted. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee,' is an appeal which many besides David have been enabled to make."

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

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

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

“To suppose that the gift of God's grace depends upon man's merit, is to invert the very order of things, and make the creature the first mover in his salvation; which is in direct opposition to the whole tenor of scripture. This, if true, would destroy God's *foreknowledge*.

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

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

“And to believe, after what God the Father hath given, and God the Son hath accomplished for the salvation of his

people in a covenant way, that souls renewed by God the Holy Ghost, and called with an holy calling may yet finally perish, — this is bringing down redemption-work to so precarious and uncertain an issue, as must leave it altogether undetermined whether a single believer shall be saved or not; and this throws to the ground the distinguishing character of God's *immutability*.”

“I will very readily grant,” continued the Interpreter, “that grace is brought forward into many sharp and trying dispensations in the lives of the faithful. God is certainly exercising the gifts of his holy Spirit which he bestows upon them, by temptations and troubles, and a variety of providences; and in fact, such must be the case; for unexercised grace would otherwise find no scope to manifest itself; but for any one to imagine from hence, that our acceptance with God depends upon the event of those exercises, would be to make the present life a life of probation and trial, as some injudicious teachers have taught their people, and to render the Redeemer's merits and death still questionable, whether it would become available for the sinner's justification before God.”

“Blessed be the divine benignity, things are not so! It is our mercy that the finished and complete salvation of the Lord Jesus doth not rest upon so uncertain a tenure. An ‘everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure,’ can never leave the issue of it doubtful. What Paul saith, when resting the whole stress of the sinner's hope for acceptance

before God upon the justifying merits of Christ Jesus, may be equally applied to the case of every believer: 'I do not,' says he, 'frustrate the grace of God, for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.'"

My heart rejoiced in the consolation. "God be adored," I cried, "who hath brought me to this place, and hath given you" (taking the Interpreter by the hand as I said it) "the tongue of the learned, to know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. (Isaiah 50:4.) I see now the fallacy of those arguments in that *book*, by which my mind hath been exercised with distress."

THE PICTURE ROOM

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

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

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

“But it is not enough to deliver from the wrath to come, if that had been all that the Lord Jesus had accomplished by redemption; our nature, though rescued from merited punishment, would still have continued polluted and defiled, without an expiation; and, consequently, incapable of drawing nigh to God. See here, therefore,” cried the

Interpreter, pointing to the *second* compartment in the painting, “the great doctrine of Atonement, represented in the death of the Lamb; and this doctrine is again more fully typified by the sin-offering on the day of atonement. (Leviticus 4.)

“Neither is that all. Our deliverance from wrath, and the expiation of our souls from sin, though exempting from merited punishment, and cleansing away the guilt of our nature, yet could not qualify for the enjoyment of happiness, without a change of heart. Hence, therefore, the regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, as essential to prepare the mind for divine communications here and glory hereafter, became an interesting point in the doctrine of salvation; and this was represented in the Jewish church by the typical purifications enjoined under the law. Here,” cried the Interpreter, pointing to a *third* division of the painting, “is a cluster of them sketched together. In the passover, ‘the leaven was put away;’ implying the regeneration of the heart maketh all things new; and the cleansing of the *leper*, and the *living bird* dipped in the blood of the slain over running water, and causing it to fly away in the open field. These all shadowed it out. (Leviticus 14.)

“And, finally, you see,” said the Interpreter, “in order to confirm all the new covenant promises, Moses is hereby described as sprinkling the people with the blood, to intimate, that, in the conveyance of those mercies in Christ Jesus, it is not enough that the blood of Christ is *shed*; but it

must be personally *applied*. This office of the Holy Ghost is therefore here represented in the *fourth* compartment of the picture, to testify that ‘Christ is made God unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.’”

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

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

MONUMENTS

In this solemn spot, the first thing that caught my attention was the tomb of *The Author of the Leviathan*. “Alas!” said I, “is that the memento of that celebrated infidel of the last age?” “The very same,” answered the Interpreter; “that is the man whose writings poisoned the mind of the Earl of Rochester, as that nobleman himself declared, after his conversion. The author of the *Leviathan* lived to be an old sinner; for he was upwards of ninety when he died. His life was rendered remarkable for the many blasphemous expressions he uttered against God and his holy word. He was always bold in impiety when in company; but very timid when alone. If he awoke in the night and found his candle extinguished, he was full of terrors. His last words, as related of him, were, “I shall be glad to find a hole to creep out of the world!”

“And pray whose monument is that,” said I to the Interpreter, “which hath a bust on the tablet of it, looking so pensive?” “Read the inscription it bears,” replied the Interpreter; “and from his latest confessions, which are there recorded, you will recollect whose it is.” I looked with attention, and read as follows: — “I have run the silly round of business and of pleasure, and have done with them all. I have enjoyed all the felicities of the world, and consequently know their futility, and do not regret their loss. I appraise them at their real value, which is, in truth, very low. Shall I

tell you that I bear this melancholy situation with that meritorious constancy and resignation which most people boast of? No; for I really cannot help it. I bear it, because I must bear it, whether I will or no. I think of nothing now but killing time the best way I can. It is my resolution to sleep in the carriage during the remainder of my journey.”

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

“I think,” answered I, “my situation is like that of David, when he went into the sanctuary of God, — I now understand the end of these men. How truly awful!”

Turning myself round, by way of passing from the contemplation of a sight so very distressing, I beheld in one *niche* two sculptured figures together, on one column. “Who are these?” I cried. “This, on your right hand,” answered the Interpreter, “is the great *Apostle of Infidelity*, as he affected to be called, of a neighbouring nation; and him on your left is a *celebrated historian* of our own.”

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

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

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

What impressions the rest of the company felt I know not; but, for my part, never shall I forget the awfulness of the scene. “Is this the sure termination,” I said to myself, “of Infidelity? Oh, for that warning-voice, and that more powerful grace to make the voice effectual, which the man of God uttered in the holy mountain, to be sounded in every infidel's ears:—‘Be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong!’”

My mind acquired great strength and greater knowledge in divine things during my abode in the house of the Interpreter. I was with him somewhat more than three months, and the time seemed to me but a few days, — like the seven years of the Patriarch's labour in the service of the Syrian, for the

reward in expectation which sweetened the whole. At length it became necessary to depart; and the morning arrived in which I was to bid him farewell.

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

MOTTOS

“It is my uniform custom,” said the Interpreter, “when Christian friends are about to leave my house, to give them, by way of token, a written motto; consisting of some particular passage of God's word, which, by wearing it in their bosoms, may serve at once, through divine grace, to bring to their remembrance the instructions which they have received from me; and also furnish them with somewhat of consolation suited to the peculiar frame and constitution of their own minds.” In saying this, he presented to a poor man who stood near me, and whose appearance indicated that the glass of his life was nearly run to the last sand, a piece of paper on which was written (Jeremiah 49:11.) “Leave thy fatherless children: I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me;” — and within this paper, there was *another* folded piece, bearing this inscription (Isaiah 54:5.) “For thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of Hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel: the God of the whole Earth shall he be called;” — and within this also a *third*, with this motto (Psalm 27:10.) “When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up.” As the Interpreter presented this paper to the poor man, he said, “You have heard all that I have said to you, my brother, on the subject of your own everlasting welfare; and I am much pleased to see, from the evidences which appear in your experience of the renewed life, that a work of grace is

wrought in your heart, and that your hopes are well founded; but as I know that the several claims of nature in your family have a strong hold upon your feelings, I beg you frequently to have recourse to these sweet covenant-promises. The *first* is for yourself; the *second* for the beloved partner of your heart; and the *third* for your children.”

To another, who stood also near me, and whose anxiety had been very greatly exercised respecting the deceitfulness of his heart, and who feared lest, after all, his religion should be found to be nothing more than a cloak of hypocrisy, the Interpreter presented a paper with this motto: — “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” (Psalm 139:23, 24.) And, as he presented it, he said, “Take this, my friend, and make it the subject of your daily enquiry before God. See whether you can pray with the same earnest desire as David did; or appeal to the great Searcher of hearts, as Paul did: ‘God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son.’ (Romans 1:9.) If the approbation of God, and not the applause of man, be the desire of the heart, — if the mind hates sin as sin, and not for its consequences, — if you can bless a taking God, as well as a giving God, — if you feel your soul humbled with a sense of unworthiness, while God is showering down upon you the abundance of his grace, — if Jesus be loved for his own sake, more than for his gifts, — these are all so many marks and touchstones of character

which never can belong to hypocrisy, and therefore may be considered by you as evidences of a well founded hope.”

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

“And as for you, my brother” the good man said, addressing himself to me, “there is no passage of Scripture more suited to *your* case and circumstances than that which is contained in the prayer of the Lord Jesus, in the conclusion of his ministry upon earth, (John 17:11.) ‘Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.’ Originally *given*, as all the faithful are, by the Father to the Lord Jesus, *before* the Redeemer manifests the Father's name unto them; evidently the *property* of the Father at the time of

the donation, 'for thine they were, and thou gavest them to me;' fully proved to be *redeemed* by Jesus, by having the Father's name *manifested* unto them, and having *kept his word*; strongly and powerfully recommended to the Father's keeping by one whom the Father heareth always, and whose joint interest in the believer is one and the same with the Father's, for 'all mine are thine, and thine are mine:' how is it possible that such can ever perish or that any should pluck them out of his almighty hand?' Keep this sweet scripture therefore, I charge you, always in your bosom, and carry it about with you whithersoever you go, — that its influence may be perpetual, and that the *will of* the Redeemer, corresponding with the *gift and grace* of the Father, may never escape your recollection. 'Father I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold the glory which thou hast given me.'" (John 17:24.)

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

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

But it was an event which the coincidence of circumstances in a Pilgrim's life, like mine, could only produce, that soon after I left the house of the Interpreter, I met the *poor man*, of whom such honourable testimony is made by me in the former part of these Memoirs, accompanied with my *moral neighbour*, at whose instance I attended the elegant preacher's sermon, who is also mentioned in the first days of my enquiry for the way to Zion. Struck with astonishment at what I saw, that such an one should come on pilgrimage, I was going to express my surprise, when he anticipated all my enquiries, by accounting for the change. "To this dear friend," he cried, taking the poor man by the hand, "I am indebted, under God, for the gracious conversion of my mind from the error of its ways. I felt no small confusion from the strength of *your* observations respecting the ineffectual tendency of morality to justify before God; and particularly from the manner in which you stated it in your conversation, as instanced in the conduct of brethren towards another, while deficient in love and obedience towards their Father: but the remarks of this poor man at the church-porch, after the sermon we had heard, were such as threw to the ground, through God's grace, all the building of self-confidence which I had been rearing up from the supposed rectitude of my life; and since that time, I have been so thoroughly convinced, from the frequent instructions of this dear friend, whom I have made my constant companion, of the utter impossibility of man's being justified by any thing of his own before God, that all

my astonishment now is, not that I have for ever relinquished the vain pretension, but that I ever should have imbibed it. I am now most fully satisfied, I bless God, that so far is the highest moral virtue from affording any ground of justification before God, that unless divine grace keep the soul humble under all its attainments, it is apt to produce pride in our hearts, and thereby to subject us to the greater condemnation. It may very safely be granted, that all moral excellencies will be the necessary result of true religion, as good fruit will be the natural production of a good tree; and that after the greatest pretensions, we have no authority to call that man religious who is immoral; but it must at the same time be insisted upon as strenuously, that so far detached is morality from religion in a great variety of instances, that nothing is more common in life than to see persons who are truly irreproachable in their conduct towards man, who are totally remiss and even profane as to their demeanour before God. Hence, therefore, there are a thousand cases to which the best and most extensive laws of morality cannot reach; but yet they are all cognizable before Him who trieth the heart. I discovered these truths by this poor man's instruction, through divine grace, and immediately found the fallacy under which I had been living; and, blessed be God, I have now learnt, that 'without repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,' the most punctual and diligent discharge of the moral obligations I owe my neighbour, cannot justify me before God."

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

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

To tell him of my present feelings, amidst a mingled state of many precious assurances, tempered with many trying dispensations, would be to relate the uniform history of every pilgrim to Zion. These are the "spots of God's children;" and they all prove a family-likeness. I am frequently exercised with deep and sharp trials, and sometimes feel a heart disposed to tell my heavenly Teacher, that I think I might be spared many such lessons; but the upshot of the instruction generally brings me to this conclusion: "How happy is it for me that I am placed under a wiser and better direction than my own!"

I am now waiting the Master's call, rather I persuade myself (if I know any thing of my own heart) with a pleasing than an anxious expectation. My desire is, "to die daily to the

world, and to crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." I wish to sit as detached as possible from every thing here below, that, when the carriage to fetch me stops at my door, I may rise up instantly and depart, "to meet the Lord in the air." Under this view, my heart is weaning more and more, I hope, from all things beneath the sun. Little of this world can I speak, for I know but little of its employments. I am seeking "a better country, that is, an heavenly." And what is it to the man under sentence of death in Newgate, what is transacting on the Royal Exchange?

And as to the *full assurance of faith*, respecting the possession of those immortal objects which open before me, I can and do say, with the humblest, but at the same time, with the best grounded confidence, "I know in whom I have believed; being confident in this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in me, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." That "crown of righteousness," which the apostle declared was not only laid up for *him*, but for all them that "love the appearing of the Lord," is laid up for me also. I have examined myself by this standard, as well as by every other which I know of. Do I love the Lord's appearing? — Yes! I love his appearing in the conversion of every poor sinner whom God the Holy Ghost makes "willing in the day of his power;" I love his appearing in the gracious, seasonable, and suitable relief of all his tried family; I love his appearing in the defence of his oppressed ones from sin and Satan, in the ten thousand instances with which they are

exercised here below; and, I trust, I am of that happy number who are said to be “looking for and hastening unto, the coming of that great day of his appearing, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.”

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

ZION'S PILGRIM, FROM THE AGE OF SEVENTY

The day in which I finished my *seventieth year* was rendered doubly memorable to call forth praise, in that it was also *the Lord's day*. And in the first moment of recollection, after a night of sweet sleep given me by the Lord; when I had blessed him for the same, and for all his mercies; the thought crossed my mind, that the Lord having added another year to my eventful life, had now, according to his own measurement, by his standard of scripture, completed in me the age of man, appointed upon earth, and numbered my days of “threescore years and ten.” And the idea involuntarily arose therefrom, that if the same gracious God, which had borne me, as on eagle's wings thus far, were now to close my pilgrimage, the inscription on the stone which marked the spot of my burial-place, (if peradventure any tablet were given me,) would have engraven on it, *Seventy years!* To what a length of time hath my life been extended! The very consideration called up a train of thoughts, which in quick succession, like the coming tide, wave after wave, rushed in upon my mind with overwhelming power. My heart melted within me as the several images passed and re-passed before my imagination. The grave-stone which covers my dust, may indeed tell the number of my days; but who can count the number of the Lord's mercies towards me? What arithmetic can be found competent to enumerate, and

sum up in all the multiplied instances, the aggregate of the Lord's goodness, and my undeservings? How incalculable the one! how immeasurable the other!

I now stand as upon an isthmus. I am arrived to the stated boundary of time marked in scripture; and the eternal world is opening before me. I feel, I know the seeds of death are ripening within me. The pins of my earthly tabernacle are daily loosening; and the whole fabric, if the Lord appoints it not to fall in at once, is gradually taking down from continual dilapidations. Is it not high time for me to be on the look out for my Lord's coming? and while the Lord is thus undressing me for the grave, I may behold him no less dressing my spirit, with "his garments of salvation, and his robe of righteousness." (Isaiah 61:10.) It is true, indeed, that during the long lease I have already had, by the divine grant, I have held it solely on the pleasure of him "in whose hand my breath is, and whose are all my ways." And had the bountiful Lord, at any one period of the term, withdrawn the principle of life he first in his free grace gave, and from the same cause hath ever since continued; and had the Lord issued an ejection, and without a moment's warning, I could not justly have complained of wrong; neither would the Lord's goodness have been thereby rendered, in the smallest degree, impeachable. Nevertheless, from indwelling corruption, nature is too apt to murmur at divine dispensations, when at any time the Lord's appointments run counter to flesh and blood. It is very blessed, therefore, when the redeemed and

regenerated people of God, are brought not only into a full submission to the Lord's sovereignty, but into somewhat more than this; namely, to know that that sovereignty is everlastingly exercised for their welfare. Such views lead the mind, when taught of God, how to appreciate divine mercies; yea, and to discern mercies, where mere natural minds would discover nothing but evil. Death is in the believer's inventory of good as truly as life; neither can he enter into the joy of his Lord, but by passing through the same valley of the grave as his Lord hath passed before him. And the voice from heaven, which declared those blessed dead, "which die in the Lord," could not be mistaken. (Revelation 14:13.) Do I not know, that until the Lord brings my *body* down to the grave, I shall never be freed from the being and indwelling of sin? Until I sleep in Jesus, the inherency of original sin, which is the very core, the very elixir of my fallen nature, will never dry up. And in relation to my *soul*, until I am unembodied, never shall I enjoy uninterrupted communion with the Lord; neither those longings and desires of my mind after Christ, in all their vast capaciousness be filled, until that "I see him as he is, and dwell with him for ever!"

To return therefore to the original idea, which first opened to my mind on having finished my *seventy years*: the prospect now of an early departure tended, under grace, to awaken suitable and becoming apprehensions for the remaining days of my pilgrimage, whether many, or few, as to be found in a waiting frame when the time should come.

Having long *known the Lord*, or rather (as the apostle renders it,) “been known of the Lord,” methinks I should desire to do, as he said he did, and from the same well-grounded security as he had, “to die daily.” (1 Corinthians 15:31.) And seeing that my life hath been so long extended, and laden with so many and great mercies, it is but just, that as I am shortly to enter another world, all attachment should be lessening to this. And I have thought also, it might be profitable, under divine teaching, to make frequent visits by meditation, “to the house appointed for all living,” before that the hour arrives when I shall be carried down to dwell there. I would desire to anticipate sometimes in imagination, the solemnity of that scene which will take place at my death, when my breathless corpse will lay in the view of others; and now ask my own heart, what would be my sentiments then, were it possible that I could be a looker on myself? And these, with similar contemplations on an event, which, through every period of life could not fail, under divine teaching, to be rendered salutary to the people of God, but in my advanced years become more immediately pressing, I should like to familiarise, as one perfectly satisfied with this unquestionable truth, — that when I cease to breathe, I cease not to be! Oh thou, who art “the resurrection and the life!” do I not know, since thou wert graciously pleased to reveal the glorious truth to my soul, and gave me faith to depend upon it, that “he that believeth in thee, though he were dead yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in thee, shall never die!” Precious Lord

Jesus! In the full assurance of this faith, through the blessed manifestations of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to my soul, have I long lived; and through the same upholding love shall I assuredly die. Ere long, the well known voice I shall hear, though never so heard before, "Behold, I come quickly!" To which, whether "at midnight, or cock-crowing, or in the morning," sure I am, the response of my soul will be, "Even so: come Lord Jesus!"

I have before observed, that the day was rendered doubly memorable, in that also it was the Lord's day, on which I commenced this epoch of my renewed lease of life. Let men of mere natural and graceless minds say what they will concerning this holy day of the Lord, there is a certain somewhat indescribably sweet and precious in the Sabbath. There seems a general consent in the very constitution of man to venerate the day. And nature hath an innate propensity to the reverence of it, notwithstanding all the ruins of the fall. True, the delinquency of our fallen state puts forth all the workings of corruption to disregard it; yet in the most hardened, the regular return of this holy day makes an appeal in a manner so imperative, that the conscience of the unawakened revolts at the profanation of it. A plain proof that the ordination of the Sabbath originated in an higher authority than any human institution. But be this as it may, among the Lord's people the regular return of this sacred day brings with it a persuasiveness of peculiar endearment. Sweet day of rest! What can sound with more melody to the ear,

than the call of the church-going bell? — And what can be a more lively emblem in calling sinners from the unsatisfying toils of the world, to come unto him who is the very sabbath of his people, and the day of everlasting rest unto their souls!

It was specially marked out by God the Holy Ghost, that the latter day of the gospel state should bear with it this striking feature: the Lord's rest for his people. For Canaan was but a *shadow* of it: Christ alone is the *substance*. And the Holy Ghost by Paul, defining the vast difference, thus states it: "For if Joshua (who led the people into Canaan) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God;" (Hebrews 4:9.) that is, under the gospel dispensation. *Remaining* unto the coming of Christ; not *remaining* to the future state of another world; but *remaining* until the Lord Jesus Christ, the true Joshua of his people, should come, and to be enjoyed in him here. Hence, uniformly, with one voice, the whole Scriptures of God declare: "This is the rest (saith one of them) wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest, and this is the refreshing." (Isaiah 28:22.) And Christ himself calls his people to him, to this very end, — "that they may find rest unto their souls." (Matthew 11:28-30.) And hence the church, having found Christ, repositeth herself in Christ, saying, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." (Psalm 116:7.) And this of the Lord Jesus Christ, was in the first ages of the church set forth under the same similitude of *rest*. At the offering of Noah,

the Lord is said to have “smelled a sweet savour of rest.” (See margin of the Bible, Genesis 8:21; and again Ezekiel 20:41.)

I know not what the views of other men are, but to my apprehension, this view of Christ as the sum and substance of all spiritual life, is the very design of the Sabbath. And the Lord's day becomes an emblem or pledge of Christ himself as giving rest; yea, doing more than giving rest, being himself the rest of his people. And faith in this view of Christ, is the real, true, and spiritual enjoyment. For faith gives a present apprehension of it; a certain fixedness to its truth. It substantiates, and realizes, and gives a being to it in the mind. It acts like those glasses which magnify distant objects to the view, and brings them home to our perception as if they were near. So the glorious object Christ Jesus, by faith is thus brought home to the heart, and formed in the heart the hope of glory. There is no suspense in relation to the thing itself. Christ is as truly our's *now*, as he will be in the upper and brighter *world*. Our enjoyment of him indeed will differ in degrees, but not in the object. Change of worlds makes no change in his person, neither of our interest in him. And all that is in Christ — and all that is connected with Christ — and all right in what belongs to Christ — is as much the believer's portion now, while on earth, as it will be when in heaven. Sweet day of Christ, the Sabbath! — And blessed they that know him as the very Sabbath of Sabbaths! For this is not the rest of another day, it is now. Hence the

precious testimony given by the Holy Ghost: “for we which have believed do enter into rest.” (Hebrews 4:3.)

It was under the gracious impressions received from the Lord, that the Lord was pleased to usher in the first morning of my *seventy-first year*. I pause at the entrance upon it. Perhaps it might be gratifying to some of my readers, were I to give in before them a statement of what is called *experiences*. I know that in histories of this kind, it forms a prominent part. But had I the power of recollection, and could marshal to my remembrance all that has passed and repassed, through the long period of my eventful life; much I fear that the recital would disappoint, rather than satisfy. My experience of the work of grace upon my soul, hath totally differed from what for the most part is made the standard of religion among the great mass of professors in the present day. All that I know, in relation to myself, are discoveries of my fallen nature, which have been daily unfolding themselves, under divine teaching, more and more to my apprehension. From the first dawn of the day-spring which from on high visited me, when the Lord was pleased to bring me into acquaintance with myself, and to make me know “the plague of my own heart,” I have been unlearning (if the term be warrantable) what I had before been studying, with so much care, how to recommend myself by human merit to divine favour. But when the Lord in mercy took me under his pupilage, he inverted this order of teaching. I was then led to see more of *his* ways, and to think less of my *own*. And from

that hour of matriculation in his school, to the present, I have been learning to get daily out of love with myself, and in love with Christ. And so it hath proved, that in the exact ratio in which I have advanced in the knowledge and love of the Lord, and in the ways of his grace, I have been going back in my estimation of all creature excellency, and creature attainments; until at length I have arrived at the same conclusion with Job; “to abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6.)

The Lord, my condescending instructor, hath done by me as by the prophet. He hath been leading me into those *chambers of imagery*, which are in the heart not explorable by natural researches. And the result has been with me, as with him. Every door the Lord hath opened before me hath led to some new discoveries, which before had been concealed from my view. And as the gracious Lord led me through the several chambers of imagery, one by one, he gently admonished me, as I passed, in words like the prophet: “Hast thou seen this, O son of man? turn thee yet again, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these!” (Ezekiel 8:15.) My God hath also done the part of a spiritual anatomist; — he hath dissected and laid open to my view my heart. He made in it deep incisions. He hath brought to my observation corruptions, which, unknown to me, were festering there. And while performing this merciful office, he hath accompanied his divine operations with the most instructive lectures. And the consequence hath been, I have

found his word, (as the apostle described it) “quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword; piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12.) Nevertheless, though every operation hath been humbling and painful, I have found the effects salutary. For thereby I have been brought into a better knowledge, both of myself and of the Lord. Indeed, had any hand but his Almighty hand proposed the work, I should have revolted at it. Neither could any human eloquence have persuaded me that such depths of rottenness were lurking within me. I should have felt indignant at the bare suggestion; and like him of old, had any charged me with it, have replied as he did to the prophet: “But what! is thy servant a dog, that he should do such things?” (2 Kings 8:12, 13.) But before him “who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins,” I fall prostrate, and lay in silence in the dust. Yea, even more than these. Convinced from such discoveries, that “the half hath not been told me,” I can, and do, though with shame and confusion of face, most readily subscribe to that solemn decision of scripture, in which the Lord himself is the almighty speaker, when he saith, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (Jeremiah 17:9, 10.)

True indeed, (and in the moment of recollection I desire to bless the Lord for his distinguishing mercy over me,) I have been kept by his restraining grace from the more outward

acts of sin into which some (and great professors too of inherent holiness in the creature) have fallen. And from the Lord's mercy, I have not been made (as the scripture expresseth it) "the reproach of the foolish." (Psalm 39:8.) Yet notwithstanding these things, I am now too well acquainted, from long experience with the workings of inbred and indwelling corruptions, not to know and as thankfully to acknowledge, that such preservations are wholly the result of God's grace, and not the effect of my merit. For sure I am, that somewhat of my fallen *sinful* nature, is mingled with all I say, and all I do. Even in the most solemn seasons, when engaged in divine employments, "who shall say how oft he offendeth?" If I pray, my very prayer sins would be my condemnation; did not He, my Almighty High Priest, as Aaron his type shadowed, bear away the iniquity of my holy things. (Exodus 28:38.) If I attend ordinances, or any of the several means of grace, how often may I detect myself in the vacant mind, and the absent affection, while in body presenting myself before the Lord. And what a train of thought sometimes rush in upon me, to carry off my attention, like what Job calls "troops from Tema." (Job 6:19.) I should blush, if conscious that what passeth within me was open to the view of those about me. And yet do I not know, that however noiseless and inaudible such things are before men, they all come up and appear open before God! How solemn is that scripture to this amount: "Thou hast set our iniquities before thee: our secret sins in the light of thy countenance!" (Psalm 90:8.) If my salvation depended upon

one good thought of my own, untainted with the tang of inherent pollution which is in me, and rotten at the very core, I could not command it. Under such circumstances therefore, is it possible that I, or indeed any man, of the same Adam-stock transgression with myself, can find any comfort from what are called *experiences*? Can a nature which in its best moments is tinged with evil, do any thing to recommend itself to him “who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity?” Is it not a truth solemnly declared in holy scripture, and confirmed by the universal experience of all mankind, that every descendant from Adam as he is himself, and without an eye to Christ, is friendless, helpless, hopeless? In what a solemn strain of the most artless, and yet of the most powerful eloquence, doth “the man of Uz,” taught by inspiration, vent his complaints of self-condemnation before God? “If God (saith he) will not withdraw his anger, the proud helpers do stoop under him. How much less shall I answer him, and choose out my words to reason with him. Whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer, but I would make supplication to my Judge. If I had called and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he had hearkened unto my voice. If I speak of strength, lo! he is strong! And if of judgment, who shall set a time to plead? If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me. If I say I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Though I were perfect, yet would I not know my soul; I would despise my life.” (Job 9:13-21.)

The reader will not wonder, therefore, if with such views, and under such self-reproaches, and self-condemnation, that I have nothing to bring before him of *experiences*, of any thing in a way of comfort in myself to appear in before God. What some men talk of, (but which, if we take the decision of scripture for our standard, none in themselves can know) of inherent holiness in the creature, forms no part in my creed. My hope and assurance is founded, not from a “righteousness wrought in me,” but from “a righteousness wrought for me;” and this in the incommunicable work, and solely accomplished by the glorious person of our most glorious Christ. Here indeed is an *experience*, which as an apostle hath defined it, “that worketh hope, and hope that maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” (Romans 5:4, 5.) As the spiritual and scriptural apprehension of those everlasting realities are among the highest attainments in the divine life, it will not be deemed an unseasonable service, if in this era of my advanced years, I give in before the church the statement which, under an unction from the Lord, hath long been, now is, and until faith is lost in sight will be with me, “the pillar and ground of the truth.”

I begin with taking my datum from holy scripture. Faith hath for its object the person of our most glorious Christ. His person is the great *object*; and his finished salvation the great *subject* of faith. There is, indeed there can be no other: for

“salvation is in no other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12.) Hence as such, all the revelations which Jehovah in his trinity of Persons hath been pleased to make of himself, hath been solely in him. He is, therefore, the visible Jehovah. For so we read: “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory.” (John 1:14.) “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;” that is, all that is capable of being manifested of Godhead, is in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Colossians 2:9.) “No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” (John 1:18.) Here again, the same sublime truth is expressed. For Jehovah, in his trinity of Persons, and unity of the divine essence, necessarily is, and must be, invisible; it is his distinguishing attribute. But the Son of God, one of those glorious Persons, assuming into union with himself that holy portion of our nature, becomes visible through that medium, and tangible. (1 John 1:1, 2.) And our Lord's own statement is to the same amount. “If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth, ye know him and have seen him. He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” (John 14:7-9.) “I and my Father are one.” (John 10:30.) The undeniable conclusion from all which is, that Christ is the only visible Jehovah; and consequently the person of our most glorious Christ, the great *object* of faith.

But we must not stop here. The person of our most glorious Christ being the great object of faith, it follows that *in* him, and *by* him, and *through* him, we are to look for all revelations of Jehovah in his trinity of Persons. There can be no knowledge of either of the persons of the Godhead, but as known *in* him. There can be no revelation made of either, but as *by* him. There can be no communion with either, but *through* him. And this is so plain and palpable, according to the scripture statement; and at the same time, so highly interesting to be spiritually known, and brought into daily practice, for the spiritual enjoyment of the people of God, that I persuade myself I shall not be considered as trespassing unnecessarily, if I detain the reader with a brief scripture testimony of it.

It is too well known to require more than merely the observation, that to each glorious person in the Godhead, is ascribed in scripture certain special and distinct acts, in the covenant of grace. And very blessed is it for the highly favoured objects of divine love, that the Lord *hath* been pleased thus to make so gracious and condescending a revelation of himself. For while the church is hereby taught, and established, in the fundamental truths of our most holy faith of the unity of the divine essence existing in a trinity of Persons; every redeemed and regenerated child of God is enabled, under divine teaching, from the persons being thus defined by special distinct acts of grace, to have special and distinct acts of love, and praise, for such manifestations of

favour! But while stopping to make this observation by the way, the particular object I have now in view, is to show that our most glorious Christ is the only visible Jehovah; his person the great *object* of faith; and his incommunicable salvation, the only *subject* of faith. For all, and every revelation Jehovah in his trinity of Persons hath been pleased to make of himself, is only in him. A few references to scripture will be sufficient in proof, to set this sublime doctrine on its own immoveable basis.

To the Father is peculiarly and personally ascribed the gracious sovereignty of the whole election of grace. "Of Him, the whole family in heaven and earth is named." (Ephesians 3:15.) But are they chosen by the Father? It is in Christ. (Ephesians 1:4.) Are they predestinated to the adoption of children? It is by Christ. (Ephesians 1:5.) Is there a gracious acceptation given to their persons? This also is in Christ. (Ephesians 1:6.) Is eternal life given unto them? Here no less we discover it is in Christ. (1 John 5:11.) Was grace given unto them before the world began? This also was in Christ. (2 Timothy 1:9) Are they now blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places? These are all in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3.) Is death abolished, and life and immortality brought to light through the gospel? Here also the whole accomplishment is by Christ. (2 Timothy 1:10.) Is there the promise given of a resurrection to everlasting life? This also is in Christ, (1 Thessalonians 4:14,

16; John 11:25, 26.) Is the church finally to be brought home to glory? This is in Christ. (John 17:22, 24.)

And as all the manifestations of the Father to the church are in the person of Christ; so all that the church can know of the Father, is in and by Christ. The Lord Jesus stated this divine doctrine in his own unequalled manner when he said, "No man knoweth who the Son is but the Father; neither doth any know who the Father is but the Son; and he to whom the Son will reveal him." (Luke 10:22.) And I pray the reader not to overlook on this sublime subject, the sweet and gracious promise made by our most glorious Christ, in reference to his revelation of the Father, with which the latter day of the church should be distinguished. He had hitherto, he said, spoken to his disciples in proverbs; but, added the Lord, "the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs; but I shall shew you plainly of the Father. (John 16:25.)

And if the people of God, the truly redeemed and regenerated people, were to talk of *experiences*; here are indeed such as are worth talking of. For in the instances of the Lord's called ones *now*, as well as in times that are past, the same that revealed his Son in Paul, and that called the church "to the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord," is the same mighty God, and Father in all ages. (Galatians 1:15. 1 Corinthians 1:9.) For my own part, when I first came to Christ, or rather, more properly speaking, was first led to Christ for salvation, I did not know my Almighty Leader. But

when those words of Christ, of “shewing his people plainly of the Father,” were opened to my spiritual understanding then I learnt to discover the gracious manifestation of Christ to me concerning the Father. Oh! what a ray of light, since that blessed commencement of divine teaching, hath broken in upon my soul? Am I *come* to Christ? Jesus said I could not, except given to him by the Father! (John 6:37.) And *drawn* to Christ? This neither could have been done but by the Father. (John 6:44.) Am I beholding the glorious person of my most glorious Christ as the great *object* of faith? This never could I have done, had I not “heard and learned of the Father!” (John 6:45.) Here then I find the same blessed truth confirmed at every step I am led over the sacred inclosure of Scripture; it is in the Son I learn to know the Father; and all the revelations of the Father are made in the Son.

And in relation to all the gracious acts and revelations of the Holy Ghost, all are in Christ. Are the children given by the Father to Christ before all worlds, and in this time-state, “dead in trespasses and sins,” until regenerated by the Holy Ghost? They are quickened; they are “raised up together;” they are made “to sit together in heavenly places;” but all in Christ. (Ephesians 2:1-6.) Are they gifted with the light of the knowledge of the glory of God? “It is in the face of Jesus Christ!” (2 Corinthians 4:6.) Are they blessed with manifestations of the preciousness of grace? All these are shown, when as Christ saith of the Holy Ghost, “He shall glorify me; for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it

unto you.” (John 16:14.) And in short, not to multiply quotations from holy Scripture of what is in itself most palpable and evident, all that blessed communion, which is in the merciful operations of the Holy Ghost, all are brought home, and made known to the Lord's people in Christ. He it is which opens, and keeps open, a perpetual source of communion, in manifesting the divine love, flowing from Christ's heart into ours. And very sure I am, that if I had but grace to watch the tendencies of the Comforter, in the love of the Spirit, (Romans 15:30.) towards my spirit, as the Lord is watching me, I should have a thousand enjoyments which my poor inattentive heart is continually losing through negligence, in which the Lord “waits to be gracious; and to direct my heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 3:5; Isaiah 30:18.)

From this statement on scripture authority, of beholding, and knowing, our most glorious Christ as the great *object* of faith; the immediate consequence which necessarily follows, is, that his incommunicable work in salvation becomes the great *subject* of faith. And this is so obvious, as to supersede the necessity of argument. For the eternal power and Godhead of Christ once admitted and established in the heart, brings up after it a complete confirmation of the infinite perfection of all he did, and suffered, in the redemption of his church and people. The fall of man had introduced ruin, and disorder, among the works of God. Nothing short of an infinite satisfaction could make

restoration. And here in the person of Christ, and the work of Christ, and the blood-shedding, and death of Christ, an adequate remedy is discovered; yea more than adequate; for the blessedness and happiness of the church as finite creatures, through the eternal ages, can be no equal remuneration for the humiliation and sufferings of Him, whose infinite dignity of person gave infinite value to the almighty salvation which he wrought, “when he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26.) And when the redeemed and regenerated child of God is enabled by that “unction from the Holy One,” John speaks of, “by which he knoweth all things,” (John 2:20.) to receive spiritually and scripturally into the heart, and mind, and conscience, an apprehension both of the person of Christ, and the salvation by Christ, this realizeth the whole; and is what another apostle speaks of when he said, “that I may win Christ, and be found in him. That I may know him (said he) and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings.” (Philippians 3:8-10.)

If I were to indulge myself on the subject of experiences, this would be the ground I should desire to walk over, in the examination by the Scripture standard, of what apprehension I had received herein. And indeed, there can be here no liability to error, as long as the sacred word of God is opened and explained by the Spirit of God; and all conclusions uniformly are found to quadrate to those principles. (Isaiah 8:20.) If it be asked, how shall any child of God know when

in his own instance the Scriptures of God, and the Spirit of God, bear testimony together to his own personal right in those great truths which belong to salvation? how shall the fact be clearly ascertained? I answer, the decision is easily obtained. One or two illustrations will serve for every other.

Suppose, for example, on the interesting subject of the forgiveness of sins. A subject of general, yea, universal concern, to every redeemed and regenerated child of God. How am I to know this, so as *to have no more conscience of sins*? I apprehend the way and manner is this: I hear read, or I read myself, or there is brought to my recollection, some of those divine assurances of the pardon of sin, in and by Christ, with which the word of God abounds; such as Psalm 103:2-12; Isaiah 12:1, 2; Jeremiah 1:20; Micah 7:18, 19. Now the way by which my mind receives the conviction of these divine proclamations, (and I am made to believe in them to the full assurance of faith) is by a divine and powerful manifestation accompanying the word; that I see, and feel, and know, my own personal interest in the same; my conscience is relieved, and unburdened from all guilt; pardon, mercy, and peace, are enjoyed; and I believe, to the salvation of my soul, that I have redemption through Christ's blood, "the forgiveness of all my sins, according to the riches of his grace!"

In like manner on the subject of communion and fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. How is this known; how is it enjoyed and preserved, and

kept alive in the mind of the redeemed, and regenerated child of God, by the daily influence of the Holy Ghost? I answer; by the self-same process as the former. It is by the holy word, and by the Holy Spirit. And it is received into the heart, and mind, and conscience, precisely in the same way. I cannot express this in any form of words equal to what the Lord Jesus himself hath done in his answer to Jude on the same subject. "Lord how is it (said Jude) that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said, 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." Here is an infallible standard. Do you keep the words of Jesus? Do you delight in them; esteem them more than your necessary food? Doth the word of Christ "dwell in you richly in all wisdom?" And do you not find at times your "heart burn within you," while the several sweet promises of Christ occur to your remembrance? What is this but from the sure drawings nigh of Jesus by his Holy Spirit, as he did in person to the disciples in their way to Emmaus? Is it not now thus that the Lord talketh to us by the way, and openeth to us the Scriptures? (Luke 24:32.) And on the other hand, can there be a more decisive state of a reverse of circumstances among all the carnal, the unregenerate, and ungodly, than what the Lord Jesus hath drawn, when in the same Scripture the Lord adds, "he that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me." (John 14:23, 24.) These meltings of the soul in the Lord's people, and this

hardened and insensible state of the carnal, draw an everlasting line of distinction; and while to the natural mind the word of God proves “the savour of death unto death;” to the renewed heart it is “the savour of life unto life;” so that to the soul of the truly redeemed and regenerated, “the God of hope fills their minds with all joy and peace in believing, abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

It is my mercy that the infirmities of age, which most men, even in perspective, shrink from, and in the earlier periods of life are apt to paint to their imagination as brooding with numberless evils, have dwindled into nothing, comparatively speaking, in my view. Now I am arrived in the midst of them; softened as they are, and more than softened, with the grace of God. True-indeed, it is winter with me, but it is a kindly winter. Like the tree of the forest long rooted, many a year in the succession of cold and heat have passed over me. I cannot expect, neither do I desire, any of the foliage of nature's buddings, in Vernal seasons; for little more is now left, either stem or branch, than the mere trunk. Nevertheless, the Lord that tempers all states, and all events, to his people, will graciously order all that remains to be filled in here below, in my eventful life; and as the prophet describes it, “will stay his rough wind, in the day of the east wind.” (Isaiah 27:8.) I can and do enter into all the enjoyment of that precious scripture, in which the Lord calls upon his redeemed ones, to notice his unremitting care and watchfulness over them. “Hearken unto me, O house of

Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb. And even to your old age I am he; and even to hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry, and I will deliver you.” (Isaiah 46:3, 4.) What an everlasting security is here for the aged ones of the Lord’s family! What shall arise to counteract divine bearings? What shall break down the security of them who have “the eternal God for their refuge, and underneath whom are the everlasting arms?” Borne by the Lord from the womb, and carried from the belly, when in themselves they had not even the consciousness of their wants, much less the ability to help themselves! and in the experience of past mercies, what confidence is thereby induced for all that is to come, when the same power which hath hitherto done all that was needful, hath engaged to the close of life, and said, “I will deliver you:” neither is it the smallest consideration in this charter of grace, when we take into the account the *distinguishing* nature of it. For when I look round, to seek for the contemporaries with whom I spent my youthful days, and find them for the most part gone, scarce one remains, distinguishing grace marks the mercy in double characters. Their images, whose faces and manners were once so familiar to me, and are now no more, seem to arise to my imagination; and having long since been gone to rest, express their surprise that my candle of life is still allowed to burn, and that I am left behind.

But in the right appreciation of the privilege of the Lord's ancient ones, we must not stop here. Old age, and with the kindest winter, in *natural* things, if these were all, would be but a negative kind of happiness. It is in *grace*, personal, distinguishing grace, where are discoverable the highest manifestations of divine love. Here, in a vastly superior sense, it is that the Lord carries his redeemed from the womb, to hoar hairs and the grave. And as the Lord adopts the tender and affectionate similitude of the mother, to represent upon numberless occasions the solicitude he is for ever manifesting to his people; so we may in a very particular manner make application of it to his aged children. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you!" (Isaiah 66:13.) And as the infirmities of old age are second childhood; here that blessed scripture meets the hoary believer with special signification. And how is the tender affection of a fond mother marked to her little one! Surely, in causing her babe to lay all night on her breast; to soothe him, in all his sorrows; to guard and keep off all approaches of evil from him; to watch, night and day, that nothing hurt him. And such, in an infinitely higher degree, doth the Lord by his, in their infirm seasons. And by causing the sense and apprehension they have of their own imbecility, from a consciousness of creature weakness, to lean the more on divine strength, and to rest wholly on the Lord, as the infant hangs upon his mother's breast.

The multitude of years beheld in this point of view, is not more venerable than it is blessed. It hath very many and peculiar privileges, which the younger, and less experienced, even in the same life of grace, cannot have attained. They that have counted long and wearisome marches in the spiritual warfare, can best tell what kind of feeling in the soul that is, which groans under the consciousness of inherent sin; and the infinite preciousness of that sovereign relief which is found only in Christ Like disbanded soldiers coming out of the battle, which have stood out many a campaign, they are calculated to relate what passed there; so the veteran in the army of our most glorious Lord, when retreating into winter quarters, and viewing and reviewing the many perils the Lord hath carried him through, he it is which will make the truest estimate of the Lord's faithfulness. It is not until that the redeemed and regenerated child of God hath been brought into a true spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the person of our most glorious Christ, that we can have a true spiritual and scriptural apprehension of the completeness of his salvation. His essential right of Godhead, in common with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, in all that constitutes the unity of the divine nature, and in the possession of all divine attributes, must from the basis of our faith in Christ, or we shall never have true spiritual and scriptural apprehensions of the infinite value of that Almighty work, when, as the head and surety of his church and people, "he finished the transgression; made an end of sins; made reconciliation for iniquity; and brought in everlasting righteousness." (Daniel

9:24.) Now the soldier of long standing in the camp of Jesus, in every conflict with the enemy, learning more and more his own nothingness; and thereby discovering deeper views of the divine strength, made perfect in his weakness; at length is led, under the teaching of the Lord, to the unerring conclusion, that salvation is wholly, and solely, the incommunicable work of Christ; that it was his own arm which brought salvation unto him; and of the people there was none with him. The infinite dignity of his person gave an infinite value to all he did, and suffered, for his people; and such was, and is, the eternal work of his sacrifice, and the everlasting perfection of his righteousness; which can admit of no addition, and makes his church, which is his body, "complete in him." (Colossians 2:10.) A few leading particulars, as it concerns myself, and as my soul for many a year past hath lived in the enjoyment of, will form the scripture statement of the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3.)

The ground-work and bottom of all revelation, in which God hath been pleased to make himself known in the invisibility of his nature, and in his trinity of Persons, is in Christ. This I need not here again enlarge upon; having before stated it. But the personal love of the Holy Three in One, to each individual of Christ's mystical body, as they are in Christ; this is most essential to be received into the redeemed and regenerated mind, in order to enjoy what the apostle so blessedly speaks of, and for which he wrote to the

church; “fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3.) Now the spiritual and scriptural apprehension of this great and leading truth, once conveyed into the conscience and understanding by divine teaching, and formed there, opens, and keeps open, a daily fellowship and communion with all the Persons in the Godhead, as manifested in Christ. We have fellowship in all the actings of faith with the Father, by virtue of our union with Christ. For we are beheld by him in Christ; adopted by him in Christ; accepted by him in Christ. What Christ is, as the head of his body the church, such are his members. Hence the voice from heaven, in open declaration of it: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matthew 3:17.) Not only *with* whom; which, had the voice of approbation been limited to the person of Christ only, without respect to his people, might have been said, but *in* whom; well pleased with all *in him*; for Christ, as Christ, is never considered as a private person, but the public head of his body, the church; and the church, “members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” (Ephesians 5:30.) And our fellowship with our most glorious Christ, is, or ought to be, on our part unceasing; for sure I am, such is his fellowship with the whole of his church. The personal knowledge, and fellow-feeling, he hath of our nature, inducing that sympathy, that sense of our necessities and weaknesses, and infirmities, makes him to take part in all that is ours. And no less God the Holy Ghost, who is the author and almighty worker of all communion; his is the daily, and not infrequently, the hourly, act of grace, “to take

of Christ, and shew to us; to direct the heart into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.” (John 16:14, 15; 2 Thessalonians 3:5.) And hence the prayer for the church: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.” (Romans 15:13.)

Now when these divine truths are received into the spiritual mind, lived upon, acted upon, and made the spring, through sovereign grace of the believer's daily walk of life; there can be nothing higher, or better, for the exercise of faith. By divine teachings, and divine manifestations, I know all I can know, and have received all I can receive, while in the present wilderness state. To know more, faith must be lost in sight, and belief done away in open vision. -- I have all that faith can rest upon for confidence and joy. Sin is for ever done away; for Christ hath put away sin “by the sacrifice of himself.” (Hebrews 9:26.) Death is done away; for Christ “hath abolished death.” (2 Timothy 1:10.) Life and immortality are brought to light through the gospel. “For this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life; and this life is to his Son. He that hath the Son hath life.” (1 John 5:11,12.) And these glorious and momentous truths are incorporated in my very nature, spiritually, and scripturally. Neither can I for a moment call their reality in question. For they are founded in the word of God, and confirmed to my understanding and conscience by the Spirit of God. And what need I more? Nay, what can be added more? My God will

daily refresh my soul with the repetitions of the same; and I shall have continual Recessions, in a way of accumulation for faith to pile up one upon another, as misers hoard their gold, their chief treasure; so shall I find refreshments from this “righteousness of God my Saviour, (as the apostle speaks) revealed from faith to faith;” from one degree of faith to another; but always one and the same object; one and the same salvation; in which all spiritual life is found, and by which it is added, “the just shall live.” (Romans 1:17.) Very blessedly the apostle assumes the confidence of everlasting salvation in Christ, from those well grounded scriptural statements which confirm the truth; and all truly redeemed and regenerated believers in Christ may adopt the same. “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers; nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:35, &c.)

The occupation of my mind hath been more than usually exercised of late, in contemplating a subject of peculiar, special, and personal interest; I mean, on the change which immediately takes place at death, in the separation of soul and body. In the earlier parts of my pilgrimage, and even since that I was brought to know the Lord, I confess that the subject had not engaged more than the transient thought. It hath indeed, in common with others of a like solemn nature,

passed and repassed in my mind. But grounded in the full assurance of faith in Christ, and that all was well for eternity, here I rested; leaving the disposal of every connected event with Him, whose everlasting covenant is “ordered in all things, and sure.” But since the Lord was pleased in mercy to lengthen my life to the age of man, and turned over the leaf of a new page, and marked it *seventy*, I have found my heart directed, with increasing earnestness, to the meditation of the subjects of the upper world, while knowing myself departing from all the concerns of this; and I hope, through his grace, that I have been growing more familiar with the *one*, and less attached to the *other*. And among the several studies of a divine and spiritual nature, which open to the view of the redeemed and regenerated children of the kingdom, when passing the boundary of the present time-state and entering eternity; this of the immediate separation of soul and body, hath of late very earnestly occupied my attention. Indeed I have found in it (under what John calls the unction of the Holy One, 1 John 2:20.) much savour of Christ. I behold the dispensation itself fraught with great blessedness; yea, as it now appears to me, there are in it several special love tokens of divine favour, as could not have been manifested to the church without it. So that the very aspect, which appeared in the first view of the separation of soul and body, as alarmingly painful, is now become pleasant. It is not merely consolatory, but more than consolatory, even affording much cause for rejoicing. Beheld in Christ, and connected with our union and interest in Christ, it may be said looking at it

through this medium, as the Psalmist said of our most glorious Christ himself, “my meditation of him shall be sweet.” (Psalm 104:34.)

If the reader will indulge me with giving in before him my statement of the subject, according to the views I have formed of it from scripture; and if the minds of both are brought under divine teaching, while in the contemplation; it is possible that our apprehensions of the doctrine may be similar. I do not overstretch the subject when I say, that as it now appears to my spiritual perception, the temporary separation of soul and body at death hath several peculiar blessings in it; yea, if I may speak the real convictions of my heart upon it, (and as an old man going out of life, so much credit methinks might be given me, that I am too anxious not to deceive others, and too highly interested not willingly to deceive myself,) I would say, that the more I study the subject, the more satisfactory it becomes to me on this ground. And deriving all my confidence from him, and in him, who is alone my salvation; very sure I am, that whensoever, or wheresoever, the Lord comes to receive me to himself, “at even, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning,” like Mary, I shall arise quickly at the well known voice, though never so heard before, and rejoice when it is said, “The Master is come, and calleth for thee!” (John 14:3; Mark 13:35; John 11:28.)

I will beg permission, in prosecuting the subject, to state the views as they appear to me, which under divine teaching

(as I hope) I have gathered from holy Scripture. And I will crave the further indulgence, that I may be allowed to give in the statement of each, separately and distinctly. First, I shall begin with that which hath respect to the *body*, in the separation from the soul. And then *secondly*, follow it up with that which hath reference to the *soul*, in her separation from the body. And when I have gone over what I wish to offer on *both*, the reader will make his own comment, only premising (what hardly seems necessary to premise) that this, and all other subjects of a spiritual nature, can only be apprehended spiritually; the natural man, in his highest attainments, can know nothing of the things of God. Blessed will it be, if both him that writes, and him that reads, can say, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God!" (1 Corinthians 2:12.)

I begin, as was proposed, in first considering the subject, as it relates to the *body* being for a time separated from the *soul*. And here, not to go over the ground of the general observations, (though they are very sweet, and of all others the most interesting,) I mean that everlasting union, which the redeemed and regenerated members of Christ's mystical body have with their glorious head, which nothing in death can separate from; this, which is the basis and security of every other blessing, in time, or eternity, is too obvious to require upon the present occasion being dwelt upon. My subject hath special reference to the events connected with

the separation of soul and body; and it will be sufficient for my present purpose only to observe, and from the authority of holy scripture, that the separation in ourselves for awhile between soul and body, makes no separation in either with the Lord Jesus Christ. His people are as truly his people in death as in life. Their union with him is the same; neither is their interest in Christ lessened. The covenant rots not in the grave, however their bodies moulder into dust. That very mouldering into dust, (as will be shown hereafter, when we come to that part of the subject) is intended for the greater manifestation of the Lord's glory, and their happiness. In the meantime, it will be well always to remember this; and also never to lose sight of the divine truth, that the separation we sustain, of soul and body, how dear soever *now*, is but for a space, and among other blessings with which it is accompanied, will be amply compensated in an everlasting union, never more to part *then*, when the glorious Head shall come, to raise them from the dust, and to take them home to himself, that "where he is, there they shall be also." (Romans 14:8. 1 Corinthians hi. 22.) And it is worthy observation, how very early from the first forming of the church, our God and Saviour was graciously pleased to make proclamation of this glorious truth, when, from the bush, he called himself "the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob;" and again in the days of his flesh, condescended to explain the meaning; "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him." (Exodus 3:6; Luke 20:37, 38.) The patriarchs had been dead for several generations, when at the

bush, the Lord declared himself their God. And ages had followed when our Lord again confirmed, and explained the same. Hence the conclusion is undeniable. The separation of soul and body at death makes no separation from Christ. The bodies of his saints “sleep in Jesus!” (1 Thessalonians 4:14; Romans 8:11.)

But we must not stop here. It is not enough to say, that if in death, the union with Christ holds the same, there is no *evil* in the dispensation; we must go further, and say, that it hath in it much positive *good*: yea, an unspeakable good. For until death; near and dear as the body and soul of a believer in Christ are to each other; and both equally the objects of Christ's love, and the subjects of Christ's redemption; yet the conflicts between them are such as produce an unceasing warfare. From the moment of the new birth unto the moment the Lord undresseth the body for death, “the flesh lusteth against the spirit; and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other: so-that ye cannot do the things that ye would!” (Gal. v. 17.) And the whole analogy of Scripture explains the same. For the spiritual eye, being opened by regeneration, beholds sin in every one that is the subject of it with horror and detestation. But the leprosy of his own body the renewed child of God views with the utmost self-loathing and abhorrence. (Job 42:6; Isaiah 6:5; Romans 7 throughout.) It is not therefore, until at death, the separation of soul and body takes place, that the regenerated spirit is freed from the body of inbred, indwelling corruption;

and those groans of the soul which are the effects of being so burdened. (2 Corinthians 5:4.) But at death, the very being of sin in the body is over. For that being dead in which it burrowed, no hiding place is found for indwelling sin, from whence to send forth its baleful irruptions from day to day. The wall of mortality fallen down, the root of sin, as ivy on a similar removal, falls out with it, and can bud no more. The very sink of iniquity, both of original and actual corruption is dried up, and will never again send forth any of its puddle. I feel the blessedness I am speaking of, in the moment I am writing. By anticipation I already enjoy it. Yes! gracious God of all my mercies, the hour is hastening when I shall never more speak an idle word; never more think an improper thought; never again be the subject of those corrupt affections, which now like the scum of the pot, too often rise up and bubble, but which thy grace restrains from running over! These, with every other evil of my unrenewed body will at once cease. And although I know that the whole troop of evils, like the army of Egypt, will pursue me as it did Israel to the borders of the sea; yet I know also, that the new and living way the Lord there opened for his people hath been, and is, and will be opened for my salvation. Death ends the warfare. The Lord saith to me as to them; “The Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever!” (Exodus 14:13.) Oh! *the* inconceivable blessedness which immediately opens at death, to every redeemed and regenerated child of God! in the temporary separation of soul and body!

But the highest, and best, and the most blessed of all events, which, as a means in the Lord's hand, ariseth out of the temporary separation of soul and body at death, to the Lord's people, remains yet to be considered: namely, for the personal glory, and personal triumph of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the culminating point to crown all. And it is in the dust of his saints, the Lord hath laid the foundation for manifesting the special conquests of his Almighty arm, in raising them to glory. It is not now remaining as a subject for inquiry, for the Scriptures of God have, from generation to generation, proclaimed and confirmed it; namely, that the divine glory is the first, and ultimate end of all things. The whole purpose, counsel, will, and pleasure, of Jehovah in his trinity of persons, for which the Lord called any of his creatures into being, we are taught was, and is, for “the manifestation of the glory of his grace.” (Ephesians 2:7.) I stay not to quote the many parts of the word of God which are express to this amount: it will be sufficient to refer the reader to a few, (Proverbs 16:4; Isaiah 43:21; Romans 11:35, 36; Ephesians 1:5, 6; Revelation 4:11.) The reader, if supernaturally taught of God from these and the like Scriptures, will discover that far higher ends, than what concerns the church, are in the plan of that infinitely sublime administration, in one of the Divine Persons in the Godhead, taking into union with himself our nature, to render him visible to his creatures through that medium. (Colossians 2:9.) And what more can our imagination furnish to our view, equal for the display of the divine glory, than that he, “who

being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” (Philippians 2:6-8.) And what more can our imagination furnish, as the suitable and rightful glory of this Almighty personage, than that he, who was (as the Scripture terms it) “crucified through weakness:” should alone possess that supreme glory, of raising the dead? Both the cross and the crown are his own personal right. And it requires no more, to the full exercise of faith upon this occasion, than the preserving in remembrance the essential, underived, eternity of Godhead which Christ possessed in common with the Father, and the Holy Ghost; and then to connect with it, both those personal transactions as peculiarly his own; to discover the vast design intended, over and above the interest the church hath in both, as in the first and highest instance, for the express aggrandisement and exaltation of our Lord Jesus Christ!

I know not whether I explain myself to the reader. But what I mean to express from all that I have said on this part of the subject is this; that the temporary separation of soul and body, at death of the Lord's people, was, and is, in the appointment of Jehovah, primarily, and above every other consideration, for the *personal glory of Christ*; and secondarily, and subordinate for the happiness of his people.

And let the reader figure to himself the vast, and marvellous acts of Almighty power, to be executed by our most glorious Christ, in this great day of God! Let him represent to his imagination the nations sleeping in the dust; and the sea, which at his call shall then give up her dead. Let him, (if he hath the well grounded hope, in redemption and regeneration, that he is of the election of grace) form to himself the assurance, that at that glorious day, when Christ shall come “to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all that believe;” he shall be found one of the blessed “dead which die in the Lord;” and then let him say, with what holy joy ought he now to wait the hour of the Lord's appointment, when by death, the separation between soul and body takes place to be in readiness for the Lord's coming? Are the personal triumphs of Christ to be manifested before the congregated world, in that day? Is the dust of Christ's saints the preparatory means for the greater display of Christ's power? Doth this temporary separation of my soul and body give occasion for my God and Saviour to get glory by me? Oh! then the blessedness of the dispensation, when events so incalculably great and glorious are included in it. Surely salvation in Christ is worth living for; and the personal glory of Christ in raising me from the dust is worth dying for. Methinks I shall hail the night of death from henceforth, with increasing rapture, since it is but dropping asleep in Jesus's arms at night to be awakened by him in the morning. Children of this world, who have been looking forward to some gaudy day promised them, will go to bed the preceding

night with unusual delight, because the morning that succeeds that sleep, is to bring them the long proposed pleasure. And shall not God's children, who are heirs of his kingdom, lay down in like manner in the sleep which is to be followed by the resurrection morn, which will open into endless glory? And the interval between the one and the other is but as the sound rest of a night. For if any of the patriarchs were to awake this moment, as far as relates to their bodies, they would be alike unconscious, whether their repose had been a single night or a thousand years.

Such among other considerations, that no doubt the interesting subject affords, which if needful might be added, are scripturally taught us of the doctrine, in relation to the separation as it concerns the *body* when taken from the soul. By inverting the general view, which the world at large (and too many it is to be apprehended, by what we behold in life, even of the Lord's people) are taking of this subject, we see how different the perspective is rendered. Behold through the telescope of Scripture, and the divine light shining upon the horizon, the several objects assume their proper characters. Well might Paul declare that the looking for this great day of our God in his glorious appearing, is a "blessed hope;" and the fulfilment of it will abundantly prove it so, for he will "change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." (Philippians 3:21.)

I now proceed as was proposed, to the consideration of the subject, under the *second* point of view, and having as I persuade myself, fully demonstrated, that much blessedness results from the temporary separation of soul and body in relation to the *latter*; I would wish to call the reader's attention to some of the many auspicious effects, which immediately follow the same event, to the *former*.

Little as we are acquainted with the other world, and impossible as it should seem, with our present unripe faculties, to form adequate apprehensions of it; yet the Lord, in marvellous grace to his redeemed and regenerated ones, hath made such discoveries in his holy word of himself, and of the glory that shall be revealed, as are enough to call up all the awakened affections of the soul, in unceasing contemplation. Brought by the new birth into a capability of having fellowship with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ, faith finds a continual source for exercise on those divine and eternal subjects, being enabled by supernatural instruction to discern them spiritually. In relation to the immediate effect resulting to the soul, when at the death of the body there is a temporary separation made between them, the holy Scriptures have given some very precious and blessed information, which, under the unction of the Holy Ghost, tends to open and keep open, sweet spiritual communion by faith, until faith is lost in open vision.

In following up the subject under this *second* part of it as I did the *first*, I begin with observing, that there is a total

dissimilarity of the effect wrought by death on the soul and body. The Holy Ghost himself hath given this statement, when saying, “the body without the spirit is dead.” (James 2:26.) As long as the soul remaineth in the body, the body is animated. But when “the breath goeth forth, the body returneth to his earth: and in that very day his thoughts perish.” (Psalm 146:4.) In confirmation, look at a man at a time when soul and body are united. What life, what energy and animation! Look at the same man again, when the breath of his nostrils is departed, and what a carcass of corruption is - he instantly become! Hence our adorable Lord thus speaks. “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28.) The immediate consequence of death therefore in the separation of soul and body, from each other, hath very different operations: the body returns to his earth; the soul lives, though for a while, no longer with the body. Let this be first marked down according to the authority of Scripture: and then let us by the same unerring guide go further in our enquiry in relation to the departed spirit.

That this life of the soul, separated from the body, is substance, though not materially substantial, as the body is of gross materials, becomes unquestionable, from numberless proofs, but very eminently so from that expression of our most glorious Christ in which the Lord directly confirms both truths, namely, that a spirit is substantially spiritual, and

hath life; and yet totally distinct from corporeal life: “Handle me (said Christ) and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as you see me have.” (Luke 24:39.) We have no authority to form conclusions of what substance this spirituality is. We cannot say, that it is of the same kind as that of angels. But we are warranted to say, and that from Scripture, that it is of a nature similar in this respect to angels, as truly immaterial, and as truly spiritual. It equally defies all the “powers of nature and of art, to procure its destruction. The sword, or the fire-arms, can no more hurt it, than the air. It may be said of the spirit of man, as the Lord said of the leviathan: “the sword of him that layeth at him cannot hold; the spear, the dart, nor the habergeon.” (Job 41:26.)

Advancing, step by step, in this sublime contemplation, and taking the holy scriptures as our sole *cynosura*, for our guide, we hesitate not to say, that as the soul dies not with the body, but is spiritual, and vital, being substantially both; in the moment of separation from the body the spirit of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, is with the Lord, and dwells with him for ever. The Holy Ghost directed the wise man so to instruct the church, when in the early ages he thus expressed the divine truth: “Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken; or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern: then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 12:6, 7.) Hence, the Lord Jesus said to the dying thief on the cross: “Today shalt

thou be with me in paradise.” (Luke 23:43.) Hence, the apostle Paul, taught by the Holy Ghost, declared the separation from the body, to be the very door by which the soul should find access to the Lord. “We know (said he) that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.” And he added, “we are willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:6-8.) And Stephen had the same views, in his dying moments, when beholding with an eye of faith our most glorious Christ on the right hand of the throne, he cried out, “Lord Jesus receive my spirit!” (Acts 7:55-58.) These are firm and unanswerable proofs, and from an authority not to be questioned, that the temporary separation of soul and body at death, in the instance of every redeemed and regenerated child of God, is blessed; for while the body sweetly sleeps in Jesus, until the resurrection morn, the soul is with the Lord. And the conscious assurance of this made Paul with holy longings cry out; “For to me to live is Christ: and to die is gain.” (Philippians 1:22; 2 Corinthians 5:1-4.)

But we must not stop here. For though the Lord hath thrown a vail over the world to come, and decidedly (while most graciously) shown, that such are the felicities of the church in Christ, in eternity, that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him:” (1 Corinthians 2:9.) yet delivered from the body of corruption, we know one thing — we shall at once get rid of all that self,

and selfishness of character, which even the regeneration of our spirits while cased in flesh can never subdue. Every thing we now enjoy, though even of a spiritual nature, is tinged with self. If we contemplate the glories of God in his Trinity of persons, as revealed to us in Christ; if we feel our souls going forth, under the divine leadings of the Holy Ghost, in sweet communion with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, from some renewed revelation from Him; if the soul be led to bless God, when at any time receiving love tokens of pardon, consolation, strength, or any of the ten thousand times ten thousand marks of grace which are for ever, like the dew from heaven, coming to us from the Lord; in all these self and self-interest is mingled with all. There is an infinitely higher source, of pure unmixed felicity, which the disembodied spirit will immediately enter upon, when all selfishness is lost in the love of God, for what God is in himself independent of all that He is *to* us, and all that He hath done *for* us. This is what Paul expresseth, when having stated the unspeakable blessedness of being reconciled to God by the death of his Son; and much more being reconciled and saved by his life; he adds, “and not only so, but we also joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Romans 5:10, 11.) Joy in God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,) through our Lord Jesus Christ is a far more transcendent degree of blessedness than all the gifts we can receive from him. For here it is joy *in Him*, the source of all joy. Here, self is lost and done away in *Him*. And this is the

immediate effect, which results to the spirit, from the temporary separation of soul and body.

Neither is this all, for above every other, the personal view, and contemplation, of our most glorious Christ in open vision, without an intervening medium, sums up all in one, every thing that we can conceive of blessedness. John was directed to teach the church this rapturous truth: “It doth not yet appear (said he) what we shall be: but we know that when, he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.” (1 John 3:2.) The Son of God hath also himself so graciously made declaration of this, as for ever to remove every question of doubt I “Father, (said Jesus, as he was about to close his ministry on earth) I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory!” (1 John xvii. 24.) It is the contemplation of this personal glory, of our most glorious Christ, which will constitute the holiness- and happiness of eternity. In beholding him, and contemplating him, in all the beauties and glories of his person is infinitely more than all the benefits we derive from him. We shall be swallowed up, and all our intellectual faculties, spiritual and refined in eternity, will be absorbed, to the losing sight of self, and all that belongs to self. In him we shall behold the manifestation of Father, Son and Holy Ghost, as far as the invisibility of the divine essence can admit of revelation. And while our spirits are thus everlastingly, and unremittingly engaged, in being fixed on his person; all other considerations will occupy our

thoughts no more. If, in the present state of being, the Lord was to hang out in the heavens, as was done to the view of the wise men led by the star to seek Christ, such a bright luminous body, as should arrest all the inhabitants of the earth to behold, that none could for a moment take his eyes from the object; what must it be to behold Christ himself, “the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person?” (Hebrews 1:3.) And such will be the immediate effect when the body of the redeemed and regenerated child of God drops asleep in Jesus; and the spirit enters “into the joy of his Lord.” Not as the star the wise men saw to *lead* to Christ; but Christ himself “our God, our glory!” (Matthew 2:10. Isaiah 60:19.)

Let me only for the present add that as the separation of soul and body at death is but temporary, while the body sleeps in Jesus; and the soul lives during that separation in the unceasing enjoyment of the presence of the Lord; so when the morning of the resurrection shall come, and the Son of God “shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God,” then shall the re-union of soul, and body, of the whole election of grace take place, being united to the glorious head, and now to be united, without the possibility of separating any more, to each other for ever. Oh! what will be the joy of the whole mystical body of our most glorious Christ, in that hour! And what will be the triumphs of our most glorious Christ himself, when he shall thus come, “to be glorified in his

saints, and admired in all that believe!” Imagination fails to form the least idea of what must be the feeling in that re-union of soul and body. The two parts of self (if I may so express it) which separated in a moment of sorrow, now their meeting is in joy. The cold clammy sweat of death on the body, in which the soul left it, is now changed into all the warmth of affection. The body, sunk in weakness, is now raised in power. It was sown a natural body: it is raised a spiritual body! The soul comes down from above in the power of Christ, and with Christ, perfumed out of the ivory palaces; and the body riseth to meet the soul, now through Christ changed from a vile body to a glorified body, as much prepared, and as fully qualified, for the everlasting enjoyment of Christ, as the soul, from the moment of regeneration in time, and since the separation of soul and body, when the soul entered eternity; and both, equally prepared for the glory of Jehovah, in his Trinity of persons, for evermore!

The occupation of my mind hath been much exercised of late, and often will be exercised, in the contemplation of this subject; until realized in absolute enjoyment. Oh! for grace to say continually, in the language of the church, to the Lord Jesus: “Until the day break, and the shadows flee away, turn my beloved, and be thou like a roe, or a young hart, upon the mountains of Bether!” (Song 2:17.)

Time had hastened so fast, since I began to sketch those outlines of my advanced pilgrimage, that another year had

imperceptibly stolen upon me, and I found, in the arithmetic of days, the hand-hour of my life now pointing to *seventy-one*. The fragments therefore which remain to be filled in, whether few, or many, as the Wisdom which cannot err hath appointed, must henceforth commence from this period.

Will the reader of my journal pause to question, what attainments I have made in the life of grace during the past year? Truly the ledger of every day, as it concerns my improvement, if it were added together, would leave but a cypher at the bottom. Amidst innumerable mercies, with which my bountiful Lord hath strewed my path, and manifested his loving kindness to me, on the right hand, and on the left, I can discover nothing, on my part, but continued cause of humiliation before God. My daily walk of barrenness too nearly resembles the prophet's description of the heath in the desert, "which doth not see when good cometh." (Jeremiah 17:6.) And let some men say what they will of a progression of holiness in the creature, I am free to confess that I know it not. It forms no part in my creed: neither do I find it in my experience. How the Lord deals by others, is not for me to judge. But in relation to myself, since the Lord was pleased to call me by his grace, and to reveal his Son in me, I have been led into deeper discoveries of my own creature-corruption; as through divine teaching I have been brought into the further knowledge of the Lord. And the result to this hour is, that in proportion, as I have found the fullness, and suitableness, and all-sufficiency, of the Lord

Jesus Christ to my state and circumstances; when I myself “am weighed in the balances; I am found wanting.”

Indeed I venture to believe, that such is the case of every man by nature when ascertained in the scripture sanctuary. For the statement there given by God the Holy Ghost, to the character of the Lord's redeemed and regenerate ones, “unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,” favours no other view. (Romans 4:6.) And the contrary doctrine necessarily leads, to bolster up the mind in a somewhat pharisaical of its own, and can only tend to beget pride in the creature. Solomon hath left upon record, that “the path of the just is a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” (Proverbs 4:18.) But let it be observed, that according to this statement, it is the *path*, and not the *person*; the *way*, and not the *traveller* in the way; which maketh this advance. And who is this way, but Christ? (John 14:6.) And who are the just spoken of, but they that are “justified freely by grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus?” (Romans 3:24.) Of this path, this way, this most glorious person, our most glorious Christ, he may be truly said, to shine more and more in our view unto the perfect day, when by growing in grace we grow out of love, more and more, with ourselves; and increase more and more “in the knowledge (and love) of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18.) And the blessed effect of this shining of the sun of righteousness, on the *spiritual* mind, is not unsimilar to what is induced by the rays of light from the sun

of the firmament in the *natural* world. When at any time a refulgent beam of that great luminary of the day darts by a more pointed direction into a room, than in his ordinary shining, we discover numberless floating atoms of dust, which though they were as much in the room before, yet are now only made visible by the sun's shining. It is the same by divine manifestations shining more and more in the hearts of the Lord's people. The floating mists of indwelling sin then appear, which were before obscured. Discoveries are then made of the inherency of our corrupt old man of nature, which, though not daily seen, are daily there. And the blessed effect, under the gracious unction of the Holy Ghost, induced thereby, leads the regenerated child of God to be more distrustful of himself, and to learn the greater needs-be of the complete righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. And here indeed it is that the path of the just shineth more and more unto the perfect day; when, as the apostle states it, "we present every man (said he) perfect in Christ Jesus." (Colossians 1:28.) "With thee (said one of old, that could not be mistaken) is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light." (Psalm 36:9.) Here, as in a mirror, we behold by reflection what we are, in seeing somewhat of what he is. Here, as in a true *panorama*; not of fiction, to amuse; not of illusion, to deceive; not of imaginary representations of men, or things, such as gratify the carnal, and by carrying off their thoughts to others, tempt them to a forgetfulness of themselves; but in the divine light of the Lord, to hold up to our spiritual view, the deformity of fallen

man; and from the same rays of light, which at the old creation caused the light to shine out of darkness, now in the new creation, by grace, to shine in our hearts, “to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

I know not before whom these lines of my memoirs may appear. But this I know, if peradventure they are read by any of the Lord's redeemed and regenerated ones, however diversified they may be by age or character; by greater or less degrees of apprehension in the divine life; one family feature marks all. They must all have one and the same object of pursuit, one and the same affection. The magnet points not with more exactness to the beloved pole, than do the persons whose hearts the Lord hath touched, being attracted to him, who “is the desire of all nations.” And very blessed it is when Christ is so known and discovered; not through the medium of our carnal conceptions; not by the interpretation of our natural understanding; neither by any glossary of human learning; but from the pure Scriptures of eternal truth. And in all these instances where the word of God is opened and explained by the Spirit of God, and the testimony of God the Holy Ghost to the person and finished salvation of Christ is brought home to the heart of any of the Lord's people, and received into the spiritual mind, and conscience, and understanding; and lived upon as the hope of glory; the different ages of standing in the church will form no difference “in the highway and the way of holiness; for the

way faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.” (Isaiah 35:8.)

And I cannot for my own part divest myself of the idea, that neither the person of Christ, nor the salvation of Christ, are ever truly known, or ever truly enjoyed; until sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin, are truly felt, and as truly acknowledged. For in proportion as we know more of him, we learn the more our need of him. And the corresponding affections arising therefrom will be in the same degrees, we shall love him more, and ourselves less. The beggar's rags are never so glaringly beheld tattered to the view, as when walking by the side of a prince in his robes. And our personal poverty is never equally conspicuous, as when we are at any time led by the Spirit, to contemplate the Lord in his righteousness! And if I do not greatly err, the Lord the Spirit hath designed to make manifest this great truth by various illustrations in his holy word; and in none more so, than in that long and beautiful chapter, by his servant the prophet Ezekiel, in the sixteenth of his prophecy. Under the similitude of an infant, which as soon as born was cast out to perish, the Lord represented the church in her utterly lost, helpless, and hopeless state by the fall. And by the Lord himself passing by, and bidding her live, when there was no eye to pity her, or to have compassion upon her, manifesting not only the exceeding riches of his grace, but the total inability of any other relief.

The Lord prosecutes the church's history through the whole of what follows in the chapter: and after stating her continued provocations of backsliding and departure, and his unwearied goodness in pardons; the Lord traceth up the cause of his mercy to its source, and closeth the marvellous relation in declaring, that it was to establish *his* covenant; and that the church might know the Lord. And the effect, as might be supposed, then follows: “that thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee, for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.” (see Ezekiel 36. throughout.)

It hath been a very favourite study of mine since the Lord brought me under those humblings of soul, to trace all mercies to their source: and in this divine science I do find, (when grace and faith are in lively exercise) an (indescribable sweetness), even in the smallest of my mercies, from discerning the Lords hand in every one of them. Before that the Lord matriculated me in this his university, the numberless bounties he showered upon me were for the most part undiscovered from what quarter they arose. The blessings came, but the hand which dispensed them was hidden from my short sighted view, in the cloud of the Lord's own gifts. Neither was this all: for in the un-humbled pride of my fallen nature, like Israel of old, I was tempted to suppose, that much of my own deservings might be traceable in my mercies. (Deuteronomy 8:17.) But in the

divine school, at the very first trammels of education, the axe is at once laid at the root of the tree of all creature attainments, and creature confidences. The study differs altogether from what is observed among men, in their pursuits of human learning. The very order of things is inverted. "Knowledge puffeth up: but charity edifieth." In the Lord's college, the highest degree is the lowest station; when by divine teaching we are brought to the simplicity of little children, according to the Lord's own statement of it; and as one of old, highly taught, and highly favoured, expressed; we can, and do, say with him; "My soul is even as a weaned child." (Matthew 18:1-4. Psalm 131:2.)

In this favourite study of mine in tracing all things to their source, I have found much sweetness. Humbling indeed have been the lessons from the Lord; but highly profitable. And perhaps nothing can more effectually tend under the unction of the Holy One, (1 John 2:20.) to lay the soul low in the dust before God, than when we meditate on all the interesting subjects of the divine word, on this ground. I find it good when, on scripture authority, I look back into eternity, and trace the marvellous grace of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, towards his chosen, in those ancient settlements from everlasting. Here I am taught that what the church was in Christ before all time, such she will be in Christ when time shall be no more. By beholding this origin of things in their first cause; and connecting the whole, according to the statement given in scripture, with their final end; a discovery

is made that the supreme glory, and not man's deservings, is the sole purpose in the dispensation. And as the church had her being in Christ, without any act of her's, before there were any worlds; so her union and interest in Christ will continue, without any act of her's, when there shall be no worlds. It is true indeed, by the sunken, wretched, degraded apostasy, into which she is fallen by sin, in this time-state of her being, she has justly forfeited that sweet communion with the Lord for which she was originally intended, and to which again she will be ultimately restored; yet even now in her lowest and most abject state, her relation to Christ remains and everlastingly must remain the same. Here indeed is opened a stupendous part in the mystery of the kingdom; whereby we learn that he who was, and is, her head and husband, should be also her Surety and Redeemer! (Isaiah 54:5.) Here was unfolded somewhat to call up all the intellectual faculties of the spiritual mind! Here the Lord took occasion to display the riches of his grace, in his trinity of persons, towards the church in Christ! And here in this one view of the subject is comprehended the fullness and completeness of the whole in him. And when the redeemed and regenerated child of God is scripturally and spiritually brought into the proper apprehension of these divine truths, the whole fabric of any supposed attainments in man falls to the ground. His, who hath the sole work, must be the sole glory. And all that the church hath in time, and all that the church will have to all eternity; every thing of holiness, and of blessedness, and of happiness; can only be derivative, and

all in, and from, him, our most glorious Christ. Very blessedly the Holy Ghost hath taught this to the church, when by the apostle he saith: “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; that according as it is written, he that glorieth let him glory in the Lord!” (1 Corinthians 1:30, 31; Isaiah 54:17.)

But in this study of mine, I stop not here. Coming down to the time-state of the church, and at the opening of the Bible, in this *Magna Carta* of grace; I find a blessed continuation of the same divine subject, in tracing the everlasting love of Jehovah, in his trinity of persons, to his church in Christ. I often figure to myself as if I were present in the garden of Eden, when the Lord God had finished the works of creation, and declared them all “to be very good.” I hear with the ear of faith the voice of the joyful throng, when as it is said; “the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy!” (Job 38:7.) Pre-eminent among all created excellency, I picture to my imagination the first father of all mankind. I behold him in all that holiness and innocency in which the scriptures have drawn him! Formed as he was in the divine image, and constituted lord over all the inferior creation; I see him in idea, as standing up before the presence of his Maker in all that dignity of character, becoming the high rank in which the Lord God had placed him: the first fair, the first lovely, the most noble and majestic, of all creatures in this lower world. And while in imagination mine

eyes are feasting themselves in contemplating the beauties of his person, I call to remembrance what the Holy Scriptures have related, concerning the endowments of his mind. He had a capacity, while in his original state of holiness, of enjoying communion with the Lord. He possessed also an innate, untaught intellect, of knowing the nature, and physical abilities, of all inferior creatures. This is plainly stated, in the account given, when it is said: “that the Lord God brought them to Adam, to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.” (Genesis 2:19.) And to sum up all, his whole nature was so perfect, that no blemish, either within or without, marked a single feature of mind or body. How descriptive of our first father are the words recorded by the prophet, as spoken by the Lord in after ages concerning Tyrus; and probably in allusion to what Tyrus and all mankind, (however degenerate now in themselves) once were, in the original purity of the Lord's creation of them in Adam. “Thus saith the Lord God; thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering; the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee, in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of

fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” (Ezekiel 28:12-15; compared with Revelation 21.)

But when for the moment I have turned from this view of our first father, and have returned to behold him again, immediately after his foul apostasy from God; how horrible the change! and especially, when connecting with the disgusting sight my own personal guilt, implicated as I most justly am, both in the sin, and condemnation. My heart sickens as I behold him; and were it not, that through grace, I am enabled to contemplate the deliverance by Christ, I should sink with terror in the apprehension of impending judgement! Surely the baleful malignity of human transgression, induced by the fall, hath never been fully known. The depth of iniquity in our depraved nature is unfathomable by men or angels! It baffles the utmost grasp of all created intellect to - conceive. And it is only the Lord himself that can know, in its full bearings, the deceitfulness, and desperately wicked state of the heart. (Jeremiah 17:9, 10.) Beholding Adam in his guilt, and necessarily considering myself in his loins when he fell, the arrow of conviction enters my heart, and wounds as it enters, that both himself and all his posterity, are involved in one common ruin. For a creature so debased, so lost in himself, the reverse of what was once good, and now the object and subject of all that is evil, cannot produce a single act of his own but what must be in correspondence with the inherent corruption of

his nature. And what a trembling decision is that of the Lord to this amount, when it is said, that “God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually!” (Genesis 6:5.) The words of the mournful prophet, over the miseries of Zion, pass over my mind in the pathos of feeling, as I behold the first father of mankind, in the garden of Eden, immediately on his apostasy. “How is the gold become dim! how is the fine gold changed! Her Nazarites were purer than snow; they were whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies; their polishing was of sapphire. Their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets ; their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick.” (Lamentations 4:1-8.)

But in the prosecution of this subject, when leaving the garden of Eden, to go further on Scripture ground, the prospect brightens again to the view, when under divine teaching, we are led to see, that what the church forfeited in Adam is abundantly compensated, and more than compensated, in the glorious undertaking and the full accomplishment of salvation, by the Lord Jesus Christ. That as the present degraded sunken state of the church is not her original state, so neither is it her final state. The Scriptures with one consent, through all the intermediate ages from Adam to Christ, make proclamation of this soul reviving truth. The charming sound is framed in a vast variety of modulations to captivate the ear, and to win the affections of

the church supernaturally taught of God. The Holy Ghost as the voice of the turtle, when heard in the land after the long wintry season of the church's desolation, declares that “as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.” (Romans 5:18, 19.) Hence, in the prospect of this mighty act of one, the prophet was bidden, when looking into gospel times, to hail the church with the assured deliverance. And as if the man of God had stood himself on the very spot where deliverance was to be wrought by our most glorious Christ; and had seen him as John did, in after days, with his vesture dipped in blood, coming up from the victory over sin, death, hell, and the grave; he exclaimed, “And they that shall be of thee, shall build the old waste places, thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach; the restorer of paths to dwell in.” (Isaiah 58:12; Revelation 14:13.)

Had not the Holy Scriptures of God thus furnished divine records concerning “the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh” I could not so confidently have called the subject a favourite study of mine. But what study, what pursuit, what science, can equal that science, which “maketh wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus?” By running up the subject to the fountain head of all

revelation, to the original state of the church, in the ancient settlements of eternity; beholding her first purity in Christ; and contemplating her final purity in Christ, unaided by any act of her own; here becomes the fullest, the most palpable demonstration, that the church, in every individual member of Christ's mystical body, is wholly passive: and whether patriarchs, prophets, or apostles, simply receivers only of the manifold gifts of God. The Holy Ghost hath stated this, in terms impossible to be mistaken by any taught of God. "What! if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory!" (Romans 9:22, 23.) Observe in both: the Holy Ghost denominates them only *vessels!*

But let me add one observation more. I have figured to my imagination our first father in the garden of Eden, as if I had beheld him there, in all that strength of intellect, in holiness, and purity; and yet being left to himself, falling a prey to the temptations of the enemy. Contrasted to this; I would now look to the veriest babe in Christ, renewed by grace, which the church of God can furnish upon earth. I behold Adam possessed with such energies, as were in themselves sufficient to have repelled a thousand foes, had he preserved in remembrance, the love, and obedience, which he owed God. I see the suckling in Christ possessed of nothing in himself, but a mere feather to be blown upon, and blown

about, by every wind, having no power to resist the smallest temptation, unless held up by a strength not his own. In the *former*, I can discover no motives whatever, neither were there any, which ought to have biassed his mind, even for a moment, from the love, and affection, he owed Him, who had given him all things, richly to enjoy; and over and above all, had even given himself to him, to be “his guide, his companion, and his own familiar friend.” In the *latter*, I behold, in his whole walk of life, numberless propensities to *lead him* to the pursuit of other objects, and a perpetual inclination of nature to carry off his attention from the God of his mercies. The whole nature of Adam was perfect; both in body and in mind. The nature of the regenerated child of God is renewed but in part: he still carries about with him a body of sin and death. Adam had no corruptions within to strengthen the temptations from without. The babe in Christ, though regenerated in spirit, is unrenewed in flesh. He hath numberless corruptions within, and finds continually, to his cost, an unceasing warfare without, and that “when he would do good, evil is present with him.” The strong man armed, in Eden, dwelt in the paradise of God, and had no occupation with men, or things; for there were no human beings from without, nor things from within, to operate upon his mind, to lead him to evil. The weak line: i" Christ dwells in the midst " of a world that lieth in wickedness:" must necessarily have to do with men, and things, hostile to a state of grace, and “hath his righteous soul vexed from day to day, with their unlawful deeds.” And did Adam fall, amidst those vast

advantages? Yes! And is the child of God preserved amidst such an host of opposition? Yes! Oh! how loudly are the glorious truths of the blessed God proclaimed by these events? Were I to see a small taper of the night, carried open, and exposed, over the heath of the field, and not extinguished in the moment that trees were torn up by the roots, and the oldest tenants of the forest could not withstand the mighty storm; or were I to see a small pinnacle rising above the waves, and outliving the storm, when the hurricane had covered our shores with wrecks, and mighty ships were foundering all around; should I not stand amazed at the sight? And is it less marvellous in the world of grace, than in the world of nature, when babes in Christ live, while Adam the strong man dies? No I if the whole be ascribed, where alone it can be ascribed, to the sovereignty of God. Oh! with what a strength of unanswerable persuasion do the words of God the Holy Ghost come home to the heart, when explained by himself; “For who maketh thee to differ from another, and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive —from God?” (1 Corinthians 4:7.) Precious Jesus! if there be any, among thy redeemed and regenerated ones, who are tempted to fancy that in them, that is, in their flesh dwelleth any good thing; O Lord! bring them acquainted with the plague of their own heart. “As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness. I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness!”

The reader of these my Memoirs, who hath condescended to accompany me thus far, and hath particularly noticed that

part of them, to which I last adverted; namely, in what I call one of my favourite studies in divine things, will not, I hope be offended, if, in the prosecution of my history, I request his attention to another. It is the infirmity of age to be garrulous [excessively trivial]; or what is tantamount to the same, to have the *cacoethes scribendi*, or itch of scribbling. But to younger years, such things may well be considered venial. They will call to mind, that they are fast hastening after; and in their turn, will have to claim the same privilege. And from the consciousness of general feeling, the common urbanity of life imperatively demands, that every one should do to another, what, in like circumstances, he would wish to have done to himself. It is therefore no more than decorous [keeping with good taste] to listen with becoming indulgence to the tale of the hoary sojourner, “before that he goes hence, and is no more seen.”

But the subject which I have now to bring before the reader, is what both young and old, of the Lord's redeemed and regenerated family, are alike interested in; namely, of the Lord's recovery of his people from the woful effects of the fall, by the sovereign operations of his grace. It is confessed, that God the Holy Ghost hath not, in his sacred word, (as far as I can discover,) given a regular statement of it, in the lives of his people. So far, therefore, there is, what may be considered, somewhat of novelty in the subject. Yet, the numberless relations to the thing itself, which the Lord hath recorded in the holy volume, seem to invite the church to the

study of it, and which promiseth to reward the most ardent attention of the truly regenerated in the divine science. And there is somewhat so very blessed in the display of the Lord's administration on the occasion; so marvellous and condescending on the part of God; so wholly unasked, unexpected, unlooked for; yea, unthought of on the part of man; and the methods adopted, for the accomplishment of the sacred purpose, in every instance, so mysterious and supernatural; so multiform and diversified ; that though our researches go but a very little way in the discovery, (and indeed not a step can we go without divine leadings,) yet when “the pillar of the cloud” goeth before us, we have a perpetual day-light, and the subject becomes more captivating to the mind, and delights more and more, as the Lord opens it to our view. And very sure I am that he who studieth it most will be the most gratified. It is indeed (what Job elegantly calls it) a place “which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen.” (Job 28:7.) Nevertheless, in it we have the pleasing contemplation of following Him, “whose goings forth, (for the salvation of his people,) have been from of old, from everlasting;” and “whose way is in the sea, and whose path in the great waters, and whose footsteps are not known.”

In the prosecution of this study, we must take our stand on Scripture ground; and looking for that wisdom which is from above, watch the Spirit's leadings, in order to know “the things which are freely given to us of God.” And in

endeavouring to explore the soul-reviving contemplation of the Lord's recovery of his people, from the woeful effects of the fall; we are met at the very entrance of the subject with the Lord's own statement, of the tremendous consequence of that fall, alike implicating all men in the same universal condemnation. The church of God, as well as the world, involved in one common ruin. The proclamation from the court of heaven sounds in the same tenour, and delivers the same trembling sentence to every heart: "sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

It is to the want of conviction of this great truth, — and none, untaught of God can be convinced of it — (Romans 8:7; 1 Corinthians 2:14; John 16:8.) that the mightiness of salvation in the Lord's recovery of his chosen, is so little understood; yea, and even by the chosen themselves, so little appreciated. Slight and superficial views of sin all men may have; all men *will have*, when, from the workings of corruption within, effects, like the volcano of burning mountains, appear without. But a natural, unregenerated man, whether professor, or profane, can have no spiritual knowledge, for he hath no spiritual life to feel the nature of sin. Hence, one uniform feature marks the whole of this description. They form their ideas of sin, not from original, but actual transgression; not from inherent delinquency, but from casual infirmities; not from secret evil, but from open violation. And their estimate of mankind is taken from the

judgment of men, and not by His decision “who readeth the heart.” To have, therefore, true scriptural apprehensions of the infinite greatness of our subject, in the Lord's recovery of his people from the ruined state of nature, (which in all instances is the same,) to a state of grace, we must invert the order observed by men of the world, and instead of calculating by effects, judge of effects by their cause. Sin, in every descendant of Adam, is inherent in his nature. It is seated within. It is rooted in the heart. Man is rotten at the core. The very essence, the very elixir of his nature, is “only evil and that continually.” (Genesis 6:5.) It is here that is the source, the fountain, the corrupt spring, from whence issue the various streams of the poisoned well. Here is the stock, which hath its polypus, sending forth shoots of deadly culture, in every direction. For it is not in this or that breaking out, in single acts of transgression, that we are thereby to make conclusions of human depravity; but we must form the *data* of all evil from original corruption. The scriptures of God therefore, have given the full length portrait, when saying, “the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot, even to the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrifying sores.” (Isaiah 1:5, 6.) And carrying on the same similitude, most sweetly doth the Lord, by the same prophet, describe the divine properties of healing, when in his recovery by grace, he useth the figure of a city, delivered from a pestilential disease. “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.”

(Isaiah 33:24.) Not from being brought into some more salubrious air, conducive to the temporary health of the people: not the change of climate, but the change of heart; not the restoration of the body, but the salvation of the soul. The inhabitant being forgiven his iniquity, hath lost all disease, both in original and actual transgression; and is *no longer sick*.

If we begin our subject, concerning the Lord's recovery of his people from the woful effects of the fall, from the period in which the Lord began to make known the riches of his distinguishing grace, in those acts of sovereignty whereby that grace was manifested, we must commence from the very opening of the Bible. And the first volume of revelation, on this momentous doctrine, not only opens and extends through the whole, in both Testaments of Scripture; but the history itself reacheth to the present hour, being illustrated in the instance of every individual, in the election of grace; and must reach through all the generations yet to come, until time is lost in eternity. The hand that now writes, and the eye that now reads, if happily “of the house and lineage of (the spiritual) David,” being equally included with all the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, gone before. I stay not upon the present occasion, to observe any thing more respecting the divine operation itself, in the Lord's recovery of his chosen from sin to salvation, than that the whole persons in the Godhead concur, and co-operate, in the case of every individual. It is God the Father of whom the church

speaks, when she saith by James, “Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18.) It is of God the Son he himself graciously speaks, when saying, “For as the Father raiseth up the dead and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.” (John 5:21.) And it is of God the Holy Ghost, the Lord himself in like manner bears witness, when by his servant Paul, having enumerated manifold gifts of his own eternal power and Godhead bestowed upon the church, he adds, “all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (1 Corinthians 12:11.) So that the *will* of each glorious person in the Godhead is, in every act of grace, manifested to the church in Christ; and from this authority we are warranted to say, that in the Lord's recovery of his chosen from darkness to light, and in every instance, by whatever means or instrumentality the sovereign act is wrought; whether in the Lord's house, or a man's own house; whether in the church or the city; the Lord's table or our own table; the Holy Trinity is there! (Ezekiel 48:35.)

But assuming this for a principle unquestionable, and not necessary, among the Lord's recovered family, to be at this time enlarged upon: the present object I have in view, is to direct the reader's attention to the subject of the Lord's calling his people, by the sovereignty of his grace, in relation to the many and various operations of his Almighty will and pleasure, as manifested in the successive generations of the

church. This branch of the doctrine hath not been (as far as my observation hath extended) considered in terms proportioned to its importance. And although, (as was before remarked,) the Holy Ghost hath not given regular series of history concerning the church, in this particular; yet hath the Lord the Spirit, in his sacred word, in a great variety of parts, afforded numberless and beautiful illustrations of it, as if to invite his redeemed and regenerated people to the study of it. And sure I am, under his divine unction, the pursuit of it cannot but be sweet and blessed.

And here, the first feature which strikes my mind in the contemplation, is the wonderful arrangement in the counsel of infinite wisdom, respecting the time, When each member of Christ's mystical body should come forth in the time-state of the church; be involved in the guilt of the Adam-transgression; and after a greater or less continuance therein, should be “called with an holy calling; delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son.” Numberless, nameless considerations arise on this ground to the regenerated mind, when awakened by grace, to open large scope for the most animated meditation. Yea, for somewhat more than mere meditation, even for calling up the faculties of the soul to communion with the Lord; when the word of the Lord, and the Spirit of the Lord, cause the divine testimony to come home personally to the heart, and is received into the heart “with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.”

If on this ground we commence our enquiry, and begin with the opening of the Bible, in the instance of Abel; and if we trace the marvellous subject all the way through, down to the days of the gospel; yea, and beyond the first days of the gospel, even to the present hour, as far as the subject is traceable in the history of every individual of the Lord's people: and if we humbly ask the question as we go, — Wherefore the several characters of the Lord's chosen appeared at that particular period, in which they did appear, rather than in any other? Wherefore Abel preceded Noah; and Noah Abraham; and Abraham Moses; and thus, in like manner, all the church's history through, succeeding one another like troops of pilgrims on a journey? If we prosecute the whole chain of events, as far as the ability is given, until we come to our own, and pause over the wondrous story; wherefore he that now writes, and he that now reads, are appointed to form a part in the *nineteenth* century, rather than before, or after, to accomplish their day and generation? What a train of the most edifying thoughts arise in the mind, when under the quickenings of the Spirit, to induce humble and becoming reflections before God! The reader will not fail to observe the tendency of these observations. I am not now making any reference to the special distinctions of grace. I am not speaking at present of the election of grace. My object is to consider, among the partakers of grace, whether there are not very many, and very blessed love-tokens from the Lord, discoverable in the history of each and every individual of Christ's mystical body, from the precise period

of their destination? There can be no question but that every child of God had that period fixed, from everlasting, by unerring wisdom; neither could it have been otherwise timed than as it was timed; being appointed by “the Lord of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.” (Isaiah 28:29.) It is said of Galen, that on surveying the curious mechanism of the human frame, the man, though he knew not God, stood for awhile aghast, as if beholding a divine hand in the formation; concluding, that not a single fibre could be otherwise placed than as it was placed, in the wonderful construction! And what shall those that are taught of God say, in contemplating, like the prophet, the wheel within wheel of the Lord's ordination, in the disposal of his spiritual body the church, while beholding as he did Him above, regulating the whole, and causing every minute movement in the whole to minister to his glory? (Ezekiel 1:26.) Such a subject is opened to the church, in the contemplation of the special time When; in the particular and special instance of grace to the Lord's people. And if the Lord opens the door to the study of it, under the Lord's teachings such discoveries will be made, not only of the grace itself, but of the timing of that grace, as shall manifest to every redeemed and regenerated child of God, that “there is a set time to favour Zion.”

I detain the reader only to remark, how very gratifying it will be to his feelings, if, from an unction on the word, he himself is led to trace his own personal interest in it. Many

centuries have run out since the Lord brought forth, in their respective ages and generations, the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, to partake in the Lord's recovery of his people, from the woful effects of the fall. But -the regenerated child of God, in the present hour, hath the same testimony as they had, and from the same cause. The When now is the same as it was then, and as it hath ever been. And the Lord by the prophet, in that charming Scripture, (little read as it ought, and less cherished than its infinite importance demands,) most blessedly sets forth: when “the Lord hath removed men far away, (as in the present awful day of rebuke and blasphemy is fully shewn,) and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land; yet in it shall he a tenth; and it shall return and shall be eaten; as a teil tree and as an oak, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves; so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.” (Isaiah 6:11-13.) Yes, blessed promise of our most blessed God! there is a tenth. There is, even at this present time, a “remnant according to the election of grace.” And however professors or profane, natural, unregenerate, unrenewed, know nothing of this source of recovery; the Lord's people, like the teil tree, or the oak, have their substance in the Lord himself, when in themselves leafless: “the holy seed is the substance thereof.” Here is the way by which “they return.” And as the Lord by the same prophet, said an another occasion, the same doctrine is confirmed: “As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not for a blessing is in it; so will I do for my servant's sake, that I may not destroy them

all.” (Isaiah 65:8.) The Lord Jesus here, as in the Scripture before, is the *substance* in the vine, as in the teil tree, and the oak. It was by him as the substance, which preserved the total destruction of our whole nature at the fall. It is by him as the promised seed, from age to age, the church in all her individual members, are preserved. Under all our blasted and withered circumstances, there is One who looketh on, and saith concerning each and all of his people, “Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it.” Jesus is in it! Oh! what a subject is opened to the contemplation of the child of God, had we spiritual faculties to trace it, in all the multiform and diversified modes of the Lord's operations, towards the whole election of grace, in that one branch of it, as in relation to the time When: and most sweetly doth it make appeal to the Lord's people, in the present hour, and with increasing earnestness, seeing we are they “upon whom the ends of the world are come!”

But we must not stop here: for *secondly*, we go on to observe, that the interesting subject not only claims attention under the first great branch of it, in relation to the time When; but no less also in respect to the place Where. Here is equally manifested, in all the vast variety of cases, included in this high administration, the same almighty hand in “the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure.” For there cannot be the pause of a moment in the conviction, that in the individual instance of every child of God, chosen in the election of grace before all worlds; but that the

destination for his time-state being was appointed *where*, as well as *when*; where to be born, and where to dwell, and where to be found, when in the sovereignty of almighty grace, the time came to deliver him “from the power of darkness, and to translate him into the kingdom of God's dear Son!” Very beautifully and blessedly did Moses, the man of God, state this doctrine to Israel, in his ministry: “Remember (said he) the days of old: consider the years of many generations. Ask thy father, and he will shew thee: thy elders and they will tell thee. When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance; when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of his people, according to the number of the children of Israel.” (Deuteronomy 32:7, 8.) What a light doth this one Scripture throw over the whole subject! If, according to this statement, which is unquestionable, the Most High, when dividing to *others* where they should be placed, made a special designation to his *chosen* of their habitation; then will it follow, by an undeniable consequence, that not only the very age of the church *when*, but the very place *where*, each should be born; *where* live, during the whole days of their unregeneracy; and in *what spot* be found, when called to the knowledge of salvation: the whole, and every minute circumstance, which had a tendency to this great event, was all arranged and determined by Him, “who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.” And, however, in the vanity of our minds we form, as we imagine, our plans of operation, moving here or there, as the seeming bias of our inclination

leads; yet the whole is under an higher regulation, who hath taught his people always to have this in view, in that not a sparrow falls to the ground without his appointment, and in whose sight the very “hairs of our head are all numbered.” And this doctrine explains the Scripture statement, in the lives of the people of God, in all ages. Hence, Abram must be called out of Ur of the Chaldees; hence, Lot sent out of Sodom before the overthrow; hence, Rahab shall be in Jericho, to be preserved there; Samuel must be given by his mother to the Lord, to minister before Eli in the temple, because God had appointed that in this place the visions of God are there to begin with him; Elisha shall be at the plough; Matthew at the receipt of custom; Zacchaeus in a tree; the woman of Samaria at a well. And to come nearer home: where was the place of birth; the place of trainment from that birth; the place which first became a *Bethel*, where he who now writes, and any of the Lord's people that shall hereafter read, first *found* the Lord; or more properly speaking, are found *of* the Lord! Nay, where was, and to this hour, where is, the whole church of God, in whatever spot of the universe an individual is found of Christ's mystical body, but in the personal history of each, like the infant (which is a lively similitude of all), cast out in the day of her birth, in the open field, to the loathing of her person, to perish, when Jesus “passed by and bid her live?” (Ezekiel 16 throughout.) Oh! what matter for endless meditation doth this one branch of the subject furnish to every redeemed and regenerated child of God! And in his own personal history, (the sweetest

of all histories, when engraven in a man's own heart by the Holy Ghost,) what a source of the most edifying, and soul-refreshing nature, to call forth unceasing thanksgivings to the Lord! And were it possible to be brought (as upon another occasion Paul was,) "to visions and revelations of the Lord," so as to form judgment on this one ordination only of the Lord's government; of the incalculable millions, in the several ages of the church, and from all the various parts of the earth, which have been, and which now are, and which will be, through the whole time-state of the Lord's people, until all are brought home to glory; what apprehensions would be excited of the watchful care of the Lord over his people, in his infinite wisdom and love, as to the place Where the Lord fixeth the bounds of his people's habitation! Let not the reader pass away from this part of the subject without folding up the remembrance of it in his bosom, for the consolation of many an hour in life. And let him not fail to connect with it that sweet promise of the Lord: "For thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered, in the cloudy and dark day." (Ezekiel 34:11, 12.)

Neither should we stop here. For in the *third* branch of discourse on this subject, an equally marvellous and astonishing matter for contemplation ariseth to our view,

which hath not even been glanced at in the former observations; namely, in addition to to the time When, and the places Where, the Lord hath appointed for the present time-state of his chosen; the manner How be taken into the account, and which becomes a new scene to call up the intellectual and spiritual faculties of his people, in endless admiration and praise.

In entering upon this field of contemplation, like one leaving the ground already trodden below, and now ascending to the summit of the hill; new objects present themselves before us as we gain the top, and the country in every direction around, look which way we may, appears as a vast champaign, the prospect widening every step we take, and extending, as far as the eye can reach, to the utmost boundary of the horizon. To speak without a figure: the whole history of the church forms but one great subject, when we attempt to analyse the several parts in showing How the Lord hath manifested the riches of his grace towards his people, in accomplishing “the purposes of his will.” For although the cases are as diversified as their persons, yet so minutely are the whole attended to, and regarded in the instance of every one, as if that one had been the only object of divine affection. (Isaiah 27:3.) And while this is traceable through all the departments of nature, providence, and grace, in the lives of Old Testament saints, and New Testament believers; it is very blessed to have in view the promise, that no less the same unremitting attention

is shown to the whole election of grace, and will continue through the whole time-state of the church, until time is lost in eternity. (Matthew 28:20.)

In this view of our subject, How the Lord manifests himself to his people, we are met at the very entrance upon it in the discovery of the total dissimilarity between the children of this world, and the children of the kingdom. For while our corrupt nature, derived from Adam, invariably produceth its like in endless succession, from father to son, there is an entire disconnection with every earthly affinity in the heirs of grace. "They are born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God." Hence, it is no uncommon thing in life, for godly parents to have ungodly children; and so *vice versa*, many, that by regeneration are made godly, have sprung after the flesh from ungodly parents. Grace is not hereditary. Abraham might, and indeed did *wish* for his son Ishmael to have grace; but Abraham, no more than any other earthly father, could *will* it to him. *Some* of the Lord's chosen have been the children of many prayers from the womb; while *others* have been brought forth in the very sty of sensuality, and nursed amidst the prayerless and profane. (Ezekiel 16:3.) And what trophies of grace hath the Lord raised to himself in all ages, when from such haunts of licentiousness he hath gathered, and still gathers his children, to people his kingdom!

And when from the diversities of birth, we pass on to the consideration of the diversities of character, and contemplate

the multiform appearances in the thousand, and ten thousand instances, in which they are all shapen and designated; what a complicated state of things doth the whole exhibit, to perplex the mind in endless conjectures; and such as are impossible for any to unravel but the Lord himself. We behold *some* poor, miserably poor indeed. *Others* having “the good things of the life that now is, and the promise of that which is to come.” Some high in rank; others of low estate: some endowed with great intellect; others of shallow capacity: some deformed in body; others comely in person: some of meek minds by nature; others constitutionally froward: some drenched in deep waters of affliction; others gliding through life with few sorrows: some with habitual frames of morbid diseases; others which, through life, hardly know in themselves what sickness means! And while in the aggregate we behold the whole, and consider them all alike the objects and subjects of divine love in Christ; what a view doth the vast mass furnish to the contemplation, like the whirlwind in the prophet's vision, wheel within wheel, to display the marvellous work How; from such-a diversity, the whole is rendered subservient, in every individual instance, as shall best administer to the Lord's purposes, and his people's happiness. (Ezekiel 1:4, 16.) Here, in this world, during the time-state of the church, the Lord placeth his chosen as in a school for education. Here they are to be recovered by sovereign grace from the ruins of the fall. Here they are to be brought, by divine teaching, to the knowledge of the Lord, and to the knowledge of themselves. Hence

every individual is put into the precise situations and circumstances, for the accomplishment of this end, exactly suited to his own case; and such, as in no other state could be found for him, in ministering to the Lord's glory and his personal welfare. All are where they are, and where they ought to be. And if a synod of angels were to be convened day by day, to form any other arrangement for the promotion of good, they would be baffled in the attempt! What a subject to awaken the most profound meditation! What an idea to induce the most humble reverence, and godly fear! And what a train of reflection ariseth from the whole, when taught of God, for calling up all the energies of the regenerated soul, in unceasing thanksgiving, adoration, and love! And what is everlastingly to be kept in view, and never for a moment forgotten, — namely, that they are all one in Christ; equally near, equally dear, and equally united to Christ, as branches in the vine. And (to use our Lord's own beautiful similitude of illustration,) as branches the lowest, as truly as the loftiest, deriving all life, and sap, and fruitfulness from the vine. (John 15:1-5.) Often have I seen upon the trunk of a majestic tree, like the cedar in Lebanon, a single leaf as full of beauty and of verdure as the higher boughs. And I have said to myself as I beheld it, Now is this leaf as much a part of this tree, and as fully nourished by the tree, as the whole; neither could it be plucked from the tree without suspending and cutting off the source by which it lives. Similar is the mystical body of Christ: all alike derive their being, whether branches, or leaves, or fruit, from Christ; and the greatest

hath nothing to boast of, nor the least to be humbled for. Nay, when at any time, according to our view of things, in the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, the withered circumstances seem to indicate no prospect of new wine in the cluster; he that looketh on, and knoweth all, and giveth life and faithfulness to all. saith, "Destroy it not, for a blessing is in it!" How, then, the Almighty framer and mover of all is carrying on and accomplishing the sacred purposes of his will, by the arrangement of this incalculable diversity, becomes a subject of the most sublime meditation, while hidden in the depths of infinite mystery. At every step we take in the contemplation, we are constrained to adopt the same language as did the man of Uz: "Lo! these are parts of his ways; but how little a portion is heard of him!" (Job. 26:14.)

But we must not stop here. In contemplating the wonderful subject, How the Lord is accomplishing the holy purposes of his will, in the arrangement of diversities of birth and character, for the gathering of his chosen; that forms as mysterious a part as any, when, as the Lord declared by the prophet, "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family; and I will bring you to Zion." (Jeremiah 3:14.) To be singled and separated from among the many; yea, and when, according to all human appearances, numbers, whether in the city or neighbourhood, in the house or family, seemed more promising than those called; these are problems which are solvable only by the word of God. (Exodus 33:19.) And who

shall say the numberless instances of the kind, where this distinguishing grace is manifested, day by day, throughout the world? Who shall trace his footsteps in the path which no vulture's eye hath seen, when in the loathsome state of our common nature by the fall, all were alike cast out to perish, "he hath passed by and bid us live?" (Ezekiel 16:6.) What a beautiful illustration hath God the Holy Ghost given of this doctrine in the life of David? When Samuel the man of God was sent to anoint one of the sons of Jesse to the kingdom of Israel, the father made all his elder sons pass in succession before the prophet. And when Eliab the first-born appeared, Samuel was so struck with his majestic form, that he instantly concluded this was the Lord's chosen. But when he found his mistake, and to all that followed a secret intimation from the Lord said, "Neither hath the Lord chosen these;" the prophet said unto Jesse, "Are here all thy children?" the question brought to the father's recollection, what for the moment seemed to have been lost sight of, that he had another, even the youngest in the field, watching over a few sheep. The father, when commanded to bring his sons before the prophet, brought not David, neither was he sanctified by the prophet as Jesse, and the others were; for who should have thought that a poor youth, in the drudgery of the sheepcote, was the very one to be raised to the kingdom of Israel? but so it was: for as soon as he came, the Lord said to Samuel, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." (1 Samuel 16:1-13.) What a soul-melting contemplation, even in the mere recital of it, and at this distance of time from the

transaction itself, is the subject, when considered in connection with the doctrine! And were it possible to have our spiritual faculties enlightened, to behold what is going on in the anointings of the Lord's chosen by the Lord himself, in his Trinity of persons, in the assemblies of his people, in his house of prayer, in the habitations where his redeemed dwell, and in the numberless nameless methods How the Lord is accomplishing his Almighty pleasure in the call of his chosen; what spiritual apprehension would be excited in the mind concerning those divine, but at present invisible realities; and how trifling and contemptible, like the toys of children, would appear after this all the pursuits and worldly employments of men!

Intimately connected with this view of the subject, How the Lord appears in the hour of his calling his chosen, by his discriminating grace, is that part also How the Lord watches over them from the womb of nature to the birth of the new life; and, as the Holy Ghost is pleased to express it by his servant Jude, they are preserved "in Jesus Christ," until called "to Jesus Christ." (Jude 1.) This leads to a most gracious and endearing contemplation; and were it traceable in all its bearings, enough to animate every heart; when by regeneration the child of God is brought into a spiritual review of his past eventful life, which the Lord had preserved him through; while all the while he himself, from the blindness and ignorance of his mind, had been utterly unconscious. We are very sweetly led to this conclusion,

from the direction the Lord Jesus gave to his apostles, when sending them forth to teach and to preach: “Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the Son of Peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall turn to you again!” (Luke 10:5,6.) Most expressly and blessedly hereby teaching, that if Christ himself, the Son of Peace be in that house, in the person of one of his elect family, the highly favoured chosen one, whether at that time called or not, whether conscious of it or not, became interested in that peace, and the house thereby sanctified. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump!” What matter of unceasing thankfulness ariseth herefrom, both for the comfort of the Lord's hidden ones, who have their dwelling in ungodly families, and for the encouragement of godly parents, in relation to their little ones arising around them! I pause to observe, that this gracious direction of our most glorious Christ to his sent servants, of the manner of salutation with which they were to enter houses, in speaking peace, though I fear but little practised in the present day, even by the Lord's people, was very generally used, by our godly fathers, after the Reformation. And I am not ashamed to confess, that however exploded by others, I sometimes, and not infrequently, feel a certain pleasure in the hope, while beholding the little ones of a house or family, as if with them is deposited this incalculable blessing of our God. It was but at a late ordinance of the Lord's Supper that my mind was highly refreshed in an occurrence of this kind. One of the communicants presented herself before the Lord with an

infant at her breast. The sight was unusual, but most interesting. It instantly arose to my recollection the precept of the Lord by the prophet: "Gather the children, and those that suck the breasts!" It may be, I said, as I ruminated on the subject, here is one of the Lord's chosen ones on whom the Lord's peace resteth. And if so, however unconscious the babe in the present moment is of his high privileges; yet is he as truly interested in all the gracious properties of the holy Supper, as any of the Lord's family of riper years, who are the partakers of it. For my own part, I love to see the house of God completely filled, with both elders and youngers. And I make a point to recommend all parents to bring their children with them, and from the earliest age. We know not how soon "the day dawn, and the day star, may arise in their hearts:" there is no limitation of time for the first impressions of grace. And of all the animating sights upon the earth this, in my view, is the highest and the best, when we behold amidst the Lord's regenerated family in the congregation, a multitude of the younger branches, and babes in arms, like the Jewish children in the temple brought before the Lord. And however passive they are, from their helpless state, to offer an offering to the Lord, yet if among the chosen of the Lord, sure I am they are equally accepted by him in the Beloved, "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named!" And we know who it is that said, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise."

One more view of the subject, under the *fourth* branch of it, shall finish for the present what I have to offer, and relieve my reader's attention. And this, though last, is not the least; and is enveloped in equal obscurity with either of the former; namely, of the Ways and Means the Lord diversified his gracious operations in the recovery of his chosen from the rubbish of our fallen nature, under which the church, as well as the world, are found by original and actual delinquency, being “dead in trespasses and sins.” We have here what may be considered in a great measure, as a new volume in this history, and leading to a distinct meditation from what we have already gone over; and yet, in its eventful consequences, becoming as extensive and as interesting as any.

What a marvellous consideration to call up all the awakened faculties of the redeemed and regenerated child of God, in unceasing wonder and praise; to behold what the Lord himself calls, “the house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, to hearken to and remember, how the Lord hath borne them from the belly, and carried them from the womb; even to old age, even to hoary hairs.” (Isaiah 46:3, 4.) There can be no question, according to this divine statement, as well as from the whole tenour of Scripture, but that every individual of the chosen in Christ hath been the object and subject of everlasting love from first to last; and yet how diversified the manner of the conversion of their heart to God! Some we read of whom the Lord brought near

to himself from very early periods in life. (2 Chronicles 34:3; Jeremiah 2:2; 2 Timothy 3:15.) Others, like the labourers called at the *eleventh* hour, who had been idle in the marketplace all the day. (Matthew 20:6.) And yet all alike made equal by the Lord of the vineyard, and all equally regarded in the divine favour. And who shall account for the Ways and Means of the Lord, in this department of his holy government, when we read of little children made the subjects of grace, and riper years possessed by evil spirits; and yet, as the sequel of their history proved, both found at length among the Lord's chosen? That babes from their very birth in nature, yea, and before their birth in nature, are capable in their spiritual faculties, (as is shown in the instance of Jeremiah 1:4, 5.) of being born in grace, we know; and yet that multitudes given by the Father to the Son, should not, for years together, have any spiritual life, "to know whether there be any Holy Ghost!" Who shall unravel this? Was Daniel, was John, more beloved of the Lord (the *former* endued with distinguished gifts of the Holy Spirit; and the *latter* lay in Christ's bosom) than the man in the country of the Gadarenes, who, when rescued by the Lord from the dominion of Satan, "sat at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind or Mary Magdalene, "out of whom the Lord cast seven devils?" (Luke 8:35; Mark 16:9.) What a "mystery of iniquity" is that, which worketh for years together in the hearts of the Lord's people *before* their call by grace! And what a "mystery of godliness" in effecting the mighty change *after!* Who that beheld Paul, while breathing

out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, could have conceived that he was “a chosen vessel of the Lord,” and would himself soon “preach the faith which once he destroyed.” And who that hath known the history of the thief on the cross, through his whole life of flagrancy, would have supposed his last hour to have proved him a child of grace? Nay, what is yet more abundantly marvellous, the awful falls of the most eminent servants of the Lord; and which could only be exceeded by the greater aboundings of grace! Was it the same man, whose heart and flesh cried out for the living God, that afterwards fell most foully into crimes of the deepest malignity? And was it the self-same apostle, who, by a revelation from the Father, was enabled to proclaim the Godhead of Christ, shortly after alarmed with fear at the bare suspicion of a servant maid, with oaths and asseverations denying all knowledge of Christ! And are these, and millions of like circumstances, in the history of the church? How wonderful the Ways and Means then by which the Lord hath diversified his gracious operations in the recovery of his chosen! If the life of a single individual of the Lord's family could be brought forward to view, and traced through all the meanderings and windings of his progress through the departments of nature and grace, until grace had brought him to glory; there would be matter enough to cause the whole realms of heaven to sing with the loudest joy, for endless ages. And what will it be, when the history of the whole church, taken in the aggregate, of every member of Christ's mystical body comes to be laid open to the

astonished contemplation of men and angels; and every minute transaction traced to its source, in the everlasting counsel, purpose, and decree of Jehovah in his Trinity of persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, made manifest in Christ; and all shown to have been from him, and through him, and by him, and for him; surely then, finally and fully, the acclamation will burst from every heart, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints!"

In order to give the finishing representation to the wonders of grace, in the recovery of our nature from the ruins of the fall, there is one observation more to be included; namely, the opposition made to it, in every stage of our pilgrimage, by the great enemy of souls, "who walketh about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter 5:8.) Hence we have to contend, "not only with flesh and blood, but against principalities, and against powers: against the rulers of the darkness of this world; against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Ephesians 6:12.) Here we have opened to us a subject of high interest to regard. Here *the mysteries of the kingdom*, appear yet more mysterious, in the contemplation of the *mysteries of iniquity*. Here we are admonished of a tremendous adversary that we have to resist, whose enmity is implacable; whose insidiousness is beyond all calculation; and whose subtlety, from his not being visible, renders him too formidable, in our own strength, to subdue. Well is it for the church, that we are warned of our danger, and at the same

time shown in whom alone our strength is; and commanded “to put on the whole armour of God, that we may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.” (Ephesians 6:11-18.)

It will form a very proper sequel to what was proposed to our consideration under the preceding particulars; namely, of the When, and Where: the How, and Means, the Lord hath been pleased to adopt, for the bringing home to himself his chosen; if we connect with it a view of some few of the scripture information, (for the whole cannot be brought within the grasp of our present unripe faculties,) both of the fence Satan hath thrown up to impede our path in the way of salvation, and the grace of the Lord in the removal of all his obstacles. Great love is manifested by the Lord to his church in the dispensation; and every part of it, however painful in the process, becomes ultimately productive of numberless blessings, from the occasion thereby afforded for the greater manifestation of the Lord's endearments. I will request indulgence to state a few. But before I do so, I beg to premise, that the issue of all the devices of Satan hath one invariable termination; namely, the divine glory, the church's happiness, and the foe's discomfiture. Amidst all the artifices of the accursed enemy to God and man; the covenant of grace remains the same, for it is “ordered in all things, and sure.” (2 Samuel 23:6.) And as the ark, with the priests which bare it, stood firm on dry ground, in the midst of Jordan, until all the people were clean passed over; so that Almighty Him,

which that ark typified, stands with his chosen in the midst of the most tribulated waters of sin and Satan; until all are passed over the Jordan of death, — and not even a little one left behind. (Joshua 3:7-17; Exodus 10:26.) It is indeed a soul refreshing consideration, and could the child of God but have recourse to it, in the hour of Satan's temptation, through sovereign grace, it would break the spell; namely, that the issue of the holy warfare is not doubtful. The love of God is an everlasting love, which admits of no ellipses, no chasms, no parentheses. That love, which is the source of all covenant-engagements towards the church in the persons of the Godhead, as a mighty river which hath neither bottom nor shore, hath been running from all eternity; and will continue to run to all eternity. Hence, the Lord being always with his people, becomes always the security of his people. And the Lord, in infinite condescension, hath adopted some of the most magnificent, as well as the most beautiful images in nature, to represent himself by, in order to their unceasing comfort and joy. He sometimes describes his security and suitableness under the similitude of an “hiding place to his people from the wind; a covert from the tempest, rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” (Isaiah 32:2.) At other times in allusion to travellers, who, when their path lays through the forest where wild beasts dwell, encircle themselves with fire, (which is the dread of those animals) through the night; the Lord graciously accommodating himself to the wants of his people, in their exposure to the great adversary, as a roaring

lion, in a similar situation for their security adopts this figure: “For I, saith the Lord, will be unto Jerusalem a wall of fire round about, and will be a glory in the midst of her.” (Zechariah 2:5.) And had we the faculty of spiritual discernment as the prophet's servant had when the Lord opened his eyes for that purpose, while before this supernatural sight he saw nothing but destruction from being encompassed by the army of Syria; we should then see ourselves, as he did, surrounded “with horses and chariots of fire,” and invulnerable. Well might the prophet say then, and well may the Lord's people say now; “they who be with us are more than they that be with them.” (2 Kings 6:13-18.)

Under these impressions, we will now enter upon the subject, and behold from the Scripture statement some few of the machinations of Satan, which he exerciseth over the Lord's people while “they are in a state of unrenewed nature, and before that they are brought to the knowledge of the Lord.” And here, what a field of the most pungent distress, did we but know all, should we have to go over, in tracing the paths of sin and sensuality into which he leads them! Strangers to themselves, and to the deceitful and desperately wicked state of their own hearts; strangers to all true knowledge of God; to the Person, and salvation of Christ; and in respect to any saving apprehension of divine things, “they have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost!” Into what an awful situation hath the original condition by the fall brought our whole nature! Every

individual son and daughter of Adam, while in this state, may be said, not only to be living, as without God and without Christ in the world, but are led as willing captives by Satan; wearing his livery, doing his drudgery, and expecting in the end, his wages; which, as “the wages of sin is death.” (Romans 6:23.) The apostle Paul, using a figure of speech, calls Satan, the god of this world: who having, as a jealous prince, blinded the eyes of his subjects, to keep them in his vassalage, endeavours to obscure “the light of the glorious gospel of Christ from shining upon them.” (2 Corinthians 4:4.)

And the tyranny of his despotism is universal. What numberless examples we meet in Scripture, to show the extensiveness of his empire; both on the bodies and souls of the Lord's people. And although we have strong reason to believe, that he is ignorant of the persons of the chosen, until the work of grace hath taken place in their hearts; yet that he may not overlook, or pass by one of them, he rules with an iron rod over the whole human race. I stay not to collect the many instances recorded in the word of God, of his unbounded cruelty; but we have the fullest proof to the doctrine in those histories which the Holy Ghost hath stated, in his sacred word. The man among the tombs is in point, who under the influence of demoniac possession, became a source of wretchedness to himself, and a terror to the whole country around. (Mark 5:1-20.) And the woman in the Jewish synagogue, whom Jesus healed, is another. Who would have

known, that the curvature of her body was from the agency of Satan, had not Jesus, when he healed her, given information that Satan had bound her for eighteen years; and that she was all the while within the covenant, being “a daughter of Abraham?” (Luke 13:12-17.) I pass by the several cases brought to Christ, of the *dumb*, and *blind*, and *deaf*, possessed with the devil and unclean spirits: (see Matthew 9:32 and 12:22; Mark 7:24 and 9:17; Luke 8:2.) I am simply stating the facts themselves, namely, that by reason of our whole nature being in bondage to Satan, he hath power, and doth exercise- it, with an awful tyranny on the bodies and souls of men; both over the church, as well as the world. (2 Peter 2:19.) And it is a solemn consideration with me, I confess, that nothing but restraining grace in the Lord prevents his diabolical malice from reeking itself, with equal fury on the people of God, to the perpetration of the same acts of self-murder, into which he hurries others, where no grace controls, to deeds so appalling to our very nature. Let those preserved souls which in the tremendous hours of Satan's temptation, have been kept (they then knew not how) from suicide, say, what their feelings now are, since the Lord called them by his grace; and in looking back, can and do discover his Almighty hand, in their deliverance! Let them tell if they be able, what but distinguishing mercy stopped the horrid deed? Yea, let them say further, what renewed sensations of the soul now arise within them, when at any time they hear, or read, of those atrocious acts of self-murder, so common in the present day in our land? To what a

desperate state doth the arch fiend extend his baleful influence over mankind! And to what but the being sheltered by an Almighty power, not our own, can be ascribed the salvation of the Lord's people under similar temptations, and while they remain in a state of unrenewed nature; before that they are brought to the knowledge of the Lord! But if such be the wiles of Satan, and the despotism he exerciseth over the people of God, while in a state of unrenewed nature; what shall we say of the awful falls into which he brings the chosen, after the work of grace hath been wrought in their hearts? I need not here, no more than in the former statement, stay to quote instances, in proof to this doctrine. Very sadly for the confirmation of it, Holy scripture hath on record too many proofs to make it questionable. Indeed, in a great variety of cases, the extent of Satan's malice is not made to appear, while the objects of his hatred are the willing subjects of his kingdom, and are led captive by him at his will. But no sooner doth he discover whose they are, and to whom they belong, (the Lord by regeneration, having put cry into their hearts for salvation;) then all hell is up in arms, to bring them back under his dominion. Then every artifice that his diabolical stratagem can devise, is put in practice; *sometimes* by open seduction; at *others* by private intrigue: *then* by false friends; and *then* by avowed enemies: and as the master-piece of his art, the tempter not infrequently “transforms himself into an angel of light.” (2 Corinthians 6:14.) It were to amplify our pages, to a great extent, even to enumerate the several particulars of the enemy's artillery,

used by him on these occasions, and too often with success. For it is a truth that cannot be kept back, being in numberless instances made manifest; namely, that many of the Lord's people, have been known to live, in a more loose and careless manner at times, *after* regeneration, then they did *before*: and not a few have fallen into foul and deliberate acts of sin, deeply wounding to their own feelings, and grievously afflicting to the people of God. All such events are among the mysteries of iniquity: as their recovery is among the mysteries of the kingdom.

Instead of making reference to the Holy Scriptures, by way of illustrating this sad truth, (and which the reader can easily do for himself,) I would rather call upon him to notice in those histories, what the word of God hath recorded of the soul-agonies the Lord's people sustained, sooner, or later, in consequence of their transgressions. (Jeremiah 2:19.) It is an unspeakable mercy from the Lord, not only that he hath published the infirmities of his chosen; but hath brought us by his blessed word into the retirements of those men, (of like passions with ourselves,) where we hear their self-reproaches, and self-abhorrings, when from the deeps of their sins they were calling to the deeps of divine mercy. (Jeremiah 14:19-21.) Here we discover, through grace, the falls of the faithful, (through the infirmity of the flesh, and the temptation of the enemy,) as distinguished from the transgressions of the ungodly; and by which we are led to discern “between the righteous and the wicked; between him

that serveth God, and him that serveth him not” The anguish of spirit which follows the commission of sin, among the people of God, plainly testifies their sense of having justly incurred the divine displeasure; so that with Job, they are constrained to say: “Thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth!” (Job 13:26.) Whereas the unrenewed sinner, if any time galled by the effect of his transgressions, feels not for the sin, but from the dreaded apprehension of the consequence.

But while I refer the reader to the Holy Scriptures for the divine testimony concerning the ascendancy of the great enemy of souls by his insidious wiles practised over the Lord's chosen ones, in those times of old; it may be not less profitable, to consider his awful influence in more modern periods of the church, even of our own. I have before me a letter, which I received some few months since, from an unknown quarter, (except the post mark,) which contains in its bosom a full illustration of the doctrine. I have thought it advisable to introduce it in this place. It is possible, the writer of it may see it in this form; and what he then wrote, under an anguish of spirit not describable, will now lead him to trace back his own history, and to discern the gracious interposition of the Lord, in such a tremendous season, watching over him then, when he least perceived it, for good. I hope also the perusal may prove profitable to others; and that every regenerated child of God, into whose hands it may come may have a spiritual refreshment by it from the Lord.

For myself, I can truly say, it hath, ever since I received it, been very highly beneficial. Oft hath it been spread by me before the Lord: and scarce a visit have I made in private to court, without again and again mentioning the case to the king. And it is a maxim, which through a long life I have closely observed, and never seen to fail; namely, that whenever the Lord gives the spirit of prayer, the Lord answers the petition of his own teaching in mercy. The following is the copy—

“Sir, A very unhappy person, *desolate in mind*, once applied to you to implore your prayers through Christ for peace and pardon. I was then quitting England for another clime; but no clime can heal a wounded spirit. I am now returning to my miserable home, for I can know no other but that which is misery, and I once more write to you, to implore your prayers that God would look with pity on the being whom for eighteen years he has pursued with his fiercest wrath, and save and restore me to the fold. As my years decline my sorrows increase, and I see only self-destruction before me, in spite of struggles and fervent prayers. And now again, I cannot pray, the power is worn out — a sort of inanity overwhelms me that proceeds from despair — I write this in the fields — I cannot bear observation — I am gone — pray for me, and hold sacred my” — And here the letter ended. It should seem, as if the writer intended to have added his name, but did not. I could wish to have given a *facsimile* of the letter: for no other

copying can convey the idea of the original. It is written on miserable, jagged, and torn paper, which not only being written in the fields, but from the whole taken together, fully portrays the desolated state of the mind, when the letter was formed from the author's pen.

But it is time to relieve both the reader's attention, as well as my own, from a subject so tremblingly affecting, by turning to the counterpart of the doctrine; and to do as I proposed in the former opening of it, namely, to show the Lord's watchful care over his people during the dark and horrible seasons of Satan's temptations. The reader will recollect the statement which I then made, and the provision with which I begged of him to enter upon the view of the awful scenes of the arch-friend's tyranny; namely that the final issue of all his oppressions had no doubtful termination: —the divine glory, the church's happiness, and the enemy's ruin, being in the “covenant ordered in all things and sure.” And a short reference to Holy Scripture in proof, will amply confirm my statement, and manifest the reality of that gracious promise: “when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.” (Isaiah 58:19.)

In order to have a full contemplation of this soul reviving subject, we must take our stand upon Scripture ground: and if spiritually taught by the Almighty author of Scripture, to enter into a spiritual apprehension of the same, though in the present twilight of existence our faculties are not sufficiently

enlarged to grasp it in all its bearings; yet we shall see enough to admire, and in that admiration to adore the God of all our mercies, in his unremitting watchfulness over us. And though we know not the modes of his divine government on those occasions, yet we are taught that “the Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished.” (2 Peter 2:9.)

And the commencement of the view on this ground must be begun where God himself began; namely, when he was pleased in his Trinity of persons to go forth in covenant transactions respecting his church, even from everlasting. For as Christ the glorious Head of his church, was named in “the womb of eternity,” so his members were then “chosen in him.” (Isaiah 49:1; Proverbs 8:22, 23; Ephesians 1:4) And it is blessed also to behold how the Lord speaks of his people, when forming them in the womb of time. The same Almighty God that sanctified and ordained Jeremiah, to the ministry of a prophet, before he formed him in the belly; hath formed no less the people when from the womb of their mothers they are brought forth in the nature of the Adam-fall transgression. (Jeremiah 1:5.) For thus the Lord speaks: “Hearken unto me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel, which are borne by me from the belly, which are carried from the womb.” And to note the Lord's unremitting preservation of them, from their birth to their death, the Lord instantly added in the same Scripture: “and

even to your old age I am he; and even to your hoar hairs will I carry you: I have made, and I will bear; even I will carry and will deliver you.” (Isaiah 46:3, 4.) What can arise then, from the temptations of Satan without God's knowledge? or what devices of the enemy shall circumvent the Lord's upholding preservation, while carrying them from the womb to the grave? Yea, as if to clench the business, and show the litter impossibility of any thing from without, or within, baffling the Lord's care, the Lord saith in another Scripture: “I the Lord do keep it: I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day!” (Isaiah 27:3.)

But there is one point, in the tyranny which Satan exerciseth over our whole nature, which merits our particular attention; namely, that since by his triumph over that nature at the fall, the church, as well as the world, are to all intents and purposes the lawful captives of the conqueror: (2 Peter 2:19.) What provision hath the Lord made for this? Happily for the church, the Lord himself hath both asked and answered the question. “Shall the prey be taken from the mighty, or the lawful captive delivered? but thus saith the Lord: even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered; for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children. And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh; and they shall be drunken with their own blood as with sweet wine; and all flesh shall know that I the

Lord am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer the mighty One of Jacob!” (Isaiah 49:24-26.) And most graciously hath God the Holy Ghost shown the church how “this mighty One of Jacob,” by redemption, accomplished this stupendous deliverance and led captivity captive. “For as much as the children are partakers of flesh and blood; he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.” (Hebrews 2:14.) Here then is displayed the blessedness of the Lord's triumphs, over sin, and Satan, death, hell, and the grave. The enemy's strong holds are broken down; and Satan himself vanquished. Hence the Lord gives one great and consoling assurance for the ultimate victory of all his people in the complete conquest of their glorious Head. “Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer. Behold! the devil shall cast some of you into prison that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” (Revelation 2:10.) Observe, Satan would, if he could, cast the whole of the Lord's people into hell, but it shall be only some; and that but in *prison*. And he would keep them there for ever; but it shall be only *ten days!* Oh! what a world of wonders are we in! Oh! what a world of wonders is every redeemed and regenerated child of God to himself. (Isaiah 54:14-17; Romans 16:20.)

The train of occurrences which have taken place, during another year of my eventful life, (for I have now past the boundary of *seventy-two*) hath only tended, in the operation, to wean more from earth, and to endear heaven. Communing through grace with the everlasting realities of the *one*, effectually develops the hollow, unsubstantial, and unsatisfying nature of all things belonging to the *other*. And thrown now, as I am, into the background of the piece, in which the busy world is so eagerly engaged; to my declining years, and consequent imbecility all the pursuits and anxieties of men appear but as the toys of children of a day. Every object, and subject of creatures, and creature dependencies, hath an increased tastelessness, and all is tinged with wormwood, even of my innocent enjoyments, which have not Christ in them to sweeten. I am arrived at the same standard, though not equally the same in years, with him of old, who when invited to a court preferred bis own home; gratefully thanking for the boon, but assigning a sufficient reason for the refusal. “How long (said he) have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? I am this day, four-score years old: and can I discern between good and evil? Can thy servant taste what I eat and what I drink? Can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women?” (2 Samuel 19:34, 35.) It is not all the dainties of lordly dishes will give relish, where the appetite is gone. And music is out of tune when desire fails.

I pause to observe, (and if these lines should pass under the eye of any one of hoary hairs, where grace hath entered the heart, it may be profitable to consider,) how very blessedly are ordered the circumstances of the declining years of the Lord's redeemed ones, when even “the grasshopper becomes a burden.” Job hath elegantly expressed it, when saying, “My days are past, my purposes are broken off: even the thoughts of my heart!” (Job 17:11.) For a state of second childhood cannot fail to engage the special tokens of his love, as well for the body as the soul, who hath said, “Even to your old age, I am he; and even to hoar hairs, will I carry you!” (Isaiah 46:4.) And very sure I am the promise never fails. For while the Lord enables his aged people to hang upon him, and the breasts of his consolation; the Lord takes them in his arms with more sensible manifestations of his love; as the weaker, and more helpless infants are closer embraced in the bosom of their mother. (Isaiah 66:13.)

And while I say thus much for the special comfort of the aged, like myself, who know, and at times enjoy, the light of God's countenance, in seasons of providences as well as grace; I would no less recommend similar considerations to the old disciples of the Lord, whose infirmities of body, are sometimes connected with weakness of mind; and too often complain of “walking in darkness,” when their privileges are the same, “to trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God.” (Isaiah 1:10.) Every regenerated child of God, by

that sovereign act of grace, is alike brought into communion with God. To all such the Lord the Spirit speaks, by the apostle, when saying “your life is hid with Christ in God.” (Colossians 3:3.) A life hid in Christ, is an “everlasting life:” for the Lord Jesus hath so declared, when he said, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” (John 14:19.) It is indeed wholly hidden from the world; “for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.” (1 Corinthians 2:14.) It is frequently hidden from the child of God himself: for the Lord's presence is sometimes obscured, even in a cloud of his own gifts. And too great acquaintance with the world often tends to damp spiritual things, by temporals. Nevertheless the hidden life in Christ is a secure life in Christ and incapable of being lost. And in old age, when the faculties are blunted with infirmity, whether of body, or mind, or both; the consciousness of what we are in Christ should induce the same effect, as it did in Paul; whatever we feel in ourselves, to say as he did: “Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ; and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place!” (1 Corinthians 2:14.) The spouse in the Canticles felt all this, though it was not always with her, sunshine in the soul, when she said: “Until the day-break, and the shadows flee away: I will get me to the mountain of myrrh, and to the hill of frankincense.” (Song 4:6.)

And there is another very blessed thing, the concomitant of old age, to the Lord's people; namely, that the long intercourse they must necessarily have had with the world, hath tended to wean from things of the world, and to detach them from all creature confidences, and the opinion of men. Lessons of this kind are not soon learned. We unavoidably retain the early impressions received in our early years. And from the common propensity, which we all feel, to have the good opinion of our fellow-creatures in the meridian of life; it is not till old age, and then only through grace, that we can rise above it. Nature cleaves to nature: and we are glued by our carnal affections to things of time and sense. The hoary saint begins to see things as they really are. Withering in himself, the objects around are withering also; and while enjoying daily, and sometimes hourly, fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ; the reproach, or approbation of men, are in his esteem no more than the noise of a distant multitude, with whom he hath no concern.

It will excite no wonder when I say, that having finished my *seventy-second* year, I am precisely in this very state. Indeed, I was matriculated into this divine science, for some time before; when for a while, I considered myself as called upon to contravene the contumely cast upon me. But the Lord hath taught me better. I now feel the sweetness of that Holy Scripture of our God, when he said: "In your patience possess ye your souls." (Luke 21:19.) Hence I have ceased to answer the numerous attacks of my opponents. Indeed it

were impossible I should; for I read none of them. I am told that, amidst their displeasure at my doctrine, they ascribe nothing immoral, or reproachful to my person or conduct. The arrows in their several quivers are levelled at my preaching and writings: — All is well. I have read of some, who have found a peculiar sweetness in those words concerning our most glorious Christ: “for neither did his brethren believe in him.” (John 7:5.) — Well may I be satisfied, therefore, under reproaches! Moreover, it is in the exercise of such things, the person and salvation of Christ become the more endeared. And if the Lord graciously overrules such dispensations to his glory, and our happiness; it matters not, the frowns of men, while we have the smiles of God. If some have found a sweetness in contemplating the Lord Jesus, as held in unbelief by his brethren; (as no doubt the circumstance itself hath much cause for encouragement, to all our lesser conflicts,) all the Lord's people should do the same. And what can be so endearing as the consideration, that hereby we are in some measure brought into a situation like himself, “whose image we are to be conformed to in all things, that he might be the first-born among many brethren.” (Romans 8:29.)

But we must not stop here, in the view of this subject. It is not enough to say, that in every providence, if Jesus be in it, and his footsteps are traced in going before us in the path, the issue must be well: we are taught to discover somewhat more than this; namely, the very thing itself is of the Lord's

appointment; and this renders it most blessed indeed. When the Israelites were under the oppressions of the Egyptians, and we are told that the Lord commiserated the sorrows of his people; who could have supposed it possible, had not the Lord himself in after ages declared it; that it was the Lord's own appointment, that the Egyptians should thus deal with Israel? That one precious Scripture folds in its bosom a volume in proof: “the Lord turned- their hearts to hate his people.” (Psalm 105:25.) So then, the Lord's hand was at the bottom of this dispensation; which however grievous for a short space, manifested, in the close, the Lord's love by the appointment; in the deliverance of his people, and the destruction of their enemies. Such, in their smaller concerns of life, are the oppositions made to the people of God now, when not only the profane, but the professor, come forward against the distinguishing truths of the gospel; yea, when even as the church of old complained, “my mother's children are angry with me.” (Song 1:6.) And is it so, that the dispensation is of the Lord? Is it by such a process of grace, that the Lord deadens our affections to the approbation of men, the more effectually to bring home the whole heart to God: and dashes the cup with bitterness like the waters of Marah, where we had proposed to ourselves much sweetness; henceforth would I learn the blessedness of that Scripture in this as well as a thousand other instances: “cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to be accounted of?” (Isaiah 2:22.)

It was my mercy, that the Lord had brought me into his school, and taught me those salutary lessons, or the events of the past year would have opened so many, and so various occasions for polemics, as could not have afforded me space to have defended myself from the several assailants, during the campaign of the annual course, “when kings go forth to battle.” (2 Samuel 11:1.) But independent of these things, and indeed wholly unconnected with them, the Lord in his providence had appointed the greater part of my *seventy-second year* to a very different employment. In the infinite ordination of his wisdom, combined with his infinite love, the Lord called me aside to attend to the long sickness of my youngest daughter: and which, his holy will was pleased to terminate in death.

Here I found, what nothing short of divine teaching could impart; that the Lord's people, when brought by regeneration into communion with the Lord, can, and do, daily, more or less, scripturally, and spiritually, enjoy the visits of the Holy Three in one, and realise the sweet promises of the Lord, when both the Spirit of the Lord, and the word of the Lord, open to the redeemed and regenerated heart a consciousness of divine favour. But added to these *habitual* privileges, which alike belong to the whole election of grace, when brought forth into spiritual life; there are actual enjoyments also of a special, and peculiar nature, which the Lord seems to have reserved, for more than ordinary occasions, for his people: and that of the sympathy of our most glorious Lord is

eminently shown at such seasons. Over and above the knowledge the Lord of life and glory hath of our frame as God, he hath a fellow-feeling as *man*: and most blessedly manifests himself as such, by imparting gracious impressions of the kind. He hath, as God, an everlasting fullness, both in himself, and for what we need. And as man, that fullness is displayed to us, in and by a nature as our own: hence, in sickness, it is the soothing of one that feels; the hand that turns our pillow; that wipes away the tear, and that makes all “our bed in our languishing.” (Psalm 41:3.) I know something of this in myself; and I trust I beheld somewhat of the same to my child. It is blessed when such things the Lord comes to impart, when called aside by him, “to the house of mourning.” (Ecclesiastes 7:2.)

But when the bereavement came, and the eye that had seen her was to see her no more, did not nature feel? Yes. It is an ease to grief, when the full charged bosom can give vent by tears to the sorrow. True, the Lord, by this appointment, had inverted the general plan of his administration, which for the most part is shown in children burying their parents; and where the younger survives the elder. But in the instance of my child's departure, she is gone before me; and the same Lord, who ordereth all things in wisdom, and after the counsel of his own will, and who had appointed her my junior in time, had, in a moment, made her my elder in eternity. Solemnly, but sweetly, the Lord's word accompanied

the Lord's bereaving dispensation: "Be still, and know that I am God!" (Psalm 46:10.)

It is an alleviation of the highest, and most consolatory nature, when in the loss of those who are dear and near to us, we can and do say with one of old: "the righteous hath hope in his death." (Proverbs 14:32.) An *alleviation* did I say? that is too little upon the occasion, when the believer falls asleep in Jesus. The voice John heard in vision from heaven declared all such "blessed, who die in the Lord." (Revelation 14:13.) And beyond all doubt, they are *blessed*: for they die in union with Christ, and are part with himself. In relation to my child, there were many precious tokens to this assurance. She knew the Lord. She loved the people of the Lord. She loved the word of the Lord, and the ordinances of the Lord. True, all these were but *effects*. But such effects could not be without a *cause*. And God the Holy Ghost hath most blessedly shown the cause, when saying by his servant John: "We love him, because he first loved us." (1 John 4:19.) Oh! delightful consolation, under all bereavements, in separation by death!

But while I have all the comfort, in respect to the departed, that can be needed; I feel the void, in the chasm made by her flight into the world of spirits. Blessed be God, she is gone beyond "the lion's dens, and the mountains of the leopards." Her conflicts with sin are all over. Her anxieties are for ever ceased. Her body will sleep, till the resurrection morn, in the dust, undisturbed by any of those exercises which those are

warring with who survive; and her spirit is for ever with the Lord. For myself, I had one less attraction than I had before, to things below; and by so much I have my affections to things below brought into a narrower circle. Such are among the events of my *seventy-second year*: and if the Lord hath other bereavements to call me into, in the *seventy-third*, sure I am, the trial his wisdom may think proper to send, his grace will be sufficient for. Take what the Lord may, all he takes was and is his own. In fact, all I have are merely the boons of his bounty, and not given, but lent. One gift indeed is given, namely Christ; and that for ever. And having him, in him I have all things. The Lord hath given, and will give me grace, as I am now daily walking on the confines of the other world, to be loosening connection with this. And while His wisdom is withering my gourds, and breaking my cisterns; and the props of all earthly comforts are taking down; I shall find strength from the Lord, to look off from the unsatisfying objects of sight; and realise the glorious objects of faith: and to be endowed with the same spirit as those holy men of old, who by “always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus: the life also of Jesus was manifest in their mortal body. For which cause (said they) we faint not: but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are

temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” (2 Corinthians 4:10 to the end.)

There is so much sameness in the lives of the Lord's people, and especially his aged ones, whose short days, like the winter of life, do not furnish much variety, that I had intended not to have added more when giving the church the outlines of my *seventy-second year*. But an event hath taken place, since writing the former, in the removal of one of my contemporaries from the church militant to the church triumphant, which opens to subjects so truly blessed in the departments both of providence and grace, as hath compelled me to re-assume the aged pilgrim's history. And although I propose to mingle nothing of my own with it, yet it may well form a part by way of episode in the page which hath but one and the same object, namely, the divine glory in the statement of the church's welfare.

I might, indeed, occupy many a page in reciting somewhat of myself among the occurrences of my *seventy-third year*, just closed in; for the Lord hath done by me as by his servant the prophet Isaiah, — “spoken to me by a strong hand.” (Isaiah 8:11.) He hath taken me aside from ordinances and the society of men, to withdraw with him for communion with God. And as a man in friendship, when having some special thing to communicate to one he loves, takes him by the hand, and leads him apart from all others, that he may make a stronger impression of what he hath to say upon his mind; so the Lord, by laying me down upon a

bed of sickness, and opening to my view nearer apprehensions of the invisible world, and his watchfulness over me, hath indeed spoken to me as to the prophet, by a strong hand, and left such tokens of his love, as through the remainder of my pilgrimage, whether long or short, will, through his grace, never be effaced [erased].

But it is not of myself I propose at this time to speak; it is one of his chosen ones, whom I have known many a year in the way to Zion, whose exercises have been very singular and trying; but whose help from the Lord hath been like the blessing of Asher, whose “foot the Lord dipped in oil; whose shoes were iron and brass; and as his days, so was his strength.” (Deuteronomy 33:25.) The Lord hath taken him home, and he is no longer the subject of indwelling corruption; neither within the reach of the fiery darts of the wicked! I shall bring the reader into a better acquaintance with his history, by giving here and there the fragments of his life, than by the general method adopted by biographers, in stating *where* and *when* he was born; with whom connected, and by whom brought up. Indeed, these are circumstances I myself know not. I shall begin his history at the weary end of it, and from hence leave the reader to form his opinion of the man. In a letter I received from him, but a short space before his death, he thus wrote: —

“I have now begun the *fifteenth* year of my confinement; and have also entered the grand climacteric. I begin to feel much more of bodily weakness, and hope that the time is not

far distant, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life. I know whom I have believed; and I find Jesus increasingly precious to my soul: after *seven and thirty years* acquaintance with him, in which I have been indulged at seasons with such views of him, and such delightful intercourse and holy supping with him, that I am led to anticipate the joys of the upper and better world. I have tasted Eshcol grapes; and often say with the church, 'Thy loves are better than wine.' Therefore I have fully proved the truth of his word, that 'though the outward man decayeth, the inward man is renewed day by day!' '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.'"

Perhaps I cannot give the reader a more lively idea of his conversance with the Holy Scriptures than from his own statement on the subject in the letter of which the former is a part. "The parts of Scripture (saith he) that I have lately read and studied, are the Pentateuch and the Canticles. Here I have seen Jesus. Mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. I was very forcibly struck with the latter part of the sixth chapter of the book of Numbers, and thought on you. How earnestly should we contend for the faith of the Eternal Three, in the undivided essence, 'once delivered to the saints.' Every word is of vast importance here. 'And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto Aaron and his sons

saying, On this wise ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them:

‘The Lord bless thee, and keep thee;

‘The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee.

‘The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. And they shall put my name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.’

“Here are the three distinct personalities, and each called upon to act according to their economical engagements. And I think that whosoever is taught of God will discover, not only the distinction of person, but the distinct act of each, as stated in other parts of Scripture.”

“‘And they shall put my Name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them.’ ‘Glory to God in the highest.’ This requires no comment. The Lord Jehovah three times repeated, and *my name*: I have also ventured to give credit to those of our translators who divided the Scriptures into chapters and verses; and have thought that they meant to convey their idea of a Trinity here, by giving the blessing in three distinct verses; when, as there is only a colon at the end of the first two, the whole might otherwise have been with equal propriety contained in one.”

“You encourage me, my dearest friend, to be very free with you, otherwise I am sure I should never write thus; and I know that it is in the simplicity of my heart, and the Lord

knows it. Now as to the reading of the Song of Songs, it hath been a most delightful Scripture to me for many years: indeed I have read it over so often, that, without design at first, I have committed it all to memory, with very little exception, and I believe that I understand the greater part. That sacred key, called prayer, opens many a lock. ‘My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my fair one, my love, and come away; for lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear in the earth, and the time of the singing of birds is come; and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell: rise up, my fair one, my love, and come away.’ One day I had a most solemn view of that great transaction which caused God, manifest in our flesh, to say, ‘Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.’ On reading this part of the Song that day, I saw him emerge from this tremendous state; his resurrection, the joyful singing of the birds — and the voice of the turtle, the Holy Ghost — heard by the church.”

I presume the reader by this time takes so much interest in this narrative, (and if he be a spiritual reader it is impossible but that he should,) as to long to know the name of my late correspondent, and numberless other things connected with his history. But on these points he cannot be indulged. The whole information he can at present receive, (indeed concerning the early part of his life I myself possess no

more) is simply this: he had a very liberal education, and was trained to the science of medicine. He settled in one of the principal towns in Cornwall; and after graduating, and receiving his diploma, he practised with great success in his profession. His views, at this time, of divine things were largely tinctured [infused] with infidelity. His call of God, according to his own statement in his letter to me of knowing the Lord *seven and thirty years*, when entering his grand climacteric, it should seem to have been about his twenty-sixth year. The manner of it was awfully alarming, as he used to relate. Passing over a down at night, when visiting a patient, a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning overtook him. Like Paul, it unhorsed him, and brought him to his knees. And from that *datum* a change of system followed. His favourite Horace gave way to the Bible; the society of the gay [light hearted] for the congregation of the faithful. And although the prosecution of his profession still was followed by him, (for necessity constrained him to the duty) yet to all that beheld him he was an altered man. To his *Christian* friends, he was very communicative on the grace of God; but a man of reserve on the subject, among such as could not appreciate divine truths.

It hath been my happiness to have known him for more than thirty years; and that not in the general way of friendship, but in spiritual intercourse, and on the best things which marked all our correspondence. Distant from each other, his profession confining him to one town, and mine for

the most part to another, we seldom saw each other's face in the flesh. Nevertheless, the Lord in his providence, so ordered, that some *seven* years since, I was led to the town of my friend's habitation. In the morning of the Lord's day, (for I remained there two or three days) I was allowed to preach in the parish church. But my friend could not attend. However in the afternoon, no service being in the church, I availed myself of it, and sat down with my dear friend at his house at the ordinance of the Holy Supper. And the King being at his table like the spouse, "the spikenard of his grace sent forth the smell thereof." We parted — and I saw him no more. Our correspondence continued by letter until within a short time of his death.

Having given the reader some few outlines of his history, it will gratify him if I add some few more:

The Lord, who called him by grace, had a school of discipline to bring him into, for which in himself he was totally unprepared. He related in his letter to me of *fifteen years* confinement; but long before the Lord thus shut him up, the Lord humbled him in many providences. As long as he was able to visit patients, (as he stood high in esteem for medical knowledge) he contrived to live by his fees. But when he could no longer attend to *acute* diseases, his practice became limited to a few *chronic* complaints; and such as personally or by letter could consult him. A state of poverty opened before him; and some few friends who loved the man, and lamented that abilities so splendid should have to

combat with difficulty, privately contributed to his support. Added to these, it was proposed to him to take a few pupils in the classics, for which he was highly competent. And although his nervous affections very greatly suffered by the employment, yet most cheerfully did he enter upon the service. It would have been an humbling sight to some of our great scholars and physicians to have seen one, inferior to few, if any of them, in the close of life at the drudgery of teaching the first rudiments of grammar. But I prosecute his history on this part no farther.

From my very particular acquaintance and correspondence with him, I was made privy to all his embarrassments. A little space before his death, among other statements, he sent me the following: “You will expect, my dearest friend, now, after the expiration of another year, that I should say somewhat of my *temporal* concerns. Here I feel a reluctance to trust myself. The sum total is this — I am still with my head above water; and conclude that by next month I shall be just where I was last July, — out of debt, and a balance of a little in hand; which appears to me little short of a miracle, that ‘the barrel of meal wasteth not, and the cruse of oil doth not fail.’ And you would think so too, could I tell you all. Appearances were never so much against me as now. My school is reduced to one half, from eight pupils to four; nor have I had a new scholar for twelve months past. The total failure of the pilchards for three years hath made my cellar useless; so that the few pounds which heretofore aided me

are over. My last year's receipts only 24£ and a few shillings; and the present year looks more gloomy: I have only had one guinea for a fee for the year to the 5th of April. Now it is of the Lord's goodness alone that he enables me to hold on, and still to be silent before him, lest I should dishonour him; looking only to him who maketh the barren woman to keep house. I often think of Agrippa's words: 'This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Caesar.' But it is on the Lord's credit I keep the door open. And if a fear at any time ariseth, that I shall by any inability to pay what is due, thereby gratify the Lord's enemies; I say to the Lord with Joshua, 'And what wilt thou do unto thy great name?' I am still in the house where you last saw me."

The last letter I received from him was a short time before I heard of his death. The writing was scarcely legible, in which, in about eight or ten lines, he contrived to say, "It is many weeks since I attempted to write. I have been ill ever since I received your letter. I am now very ill. My head is so bad that my senses are nearly gone. My voice is so affected that it is painful for me to speak. I cannot read, nor think, and am nearly quite deaf. All hope is lost as to present things. My hope is firm in Christ; I am at a single anchor waiting his call. I believe this is my last letter, not expecting ever to write again. Farewell! dearest friend. Yours in the Lord."

How many, and how blessed are the instructions arising from this man's history! The Lord puts a stop to all his worldly prospects to bring him to himself. And in this

process it is not enough to strip him of all the world holds dear; but sickness and penury must be added to the catalogue of evils. High nervous affections shall confine him to his house; his fees shall diminish, his school dwindle; even the pilchard fishery failing shall stop his two or three pounds rent. Yet through all, and in all, he is enabled to stay upon the Rock of Ages. But who can fail to admire the Lord's mercifully timing his departure! When all human means ceased, divine faithfulness became conspicuous. When the brook Cherith dried, the Lord took him home to himself, an everlasting fountain!

For myself, while I rejoice in his felicity, I feel the chasm his absence hath made in the little circle the Lord hath left me here below. There were but a few lights left of those with whom I spent my youthful days, and, by his removal, one more is put out.

So that I am constrained sometimes to say, "Help, Lord! for the godly man faileth; the faithful are diminished from among the children of men." The church below is left as a cottage in a vineyard; as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers! It is our departure hence, to join the church above, which joins us to the great majority. Thither my friend is gone; and all tears are for ever wiped from his eyes. The Lord be praised in his salvation. Thither also shall I shortly follow, to see Jesus as he is, and dwell with him for ever. Hallelujah!

THE CLOSE OF ZION'S PILGRIM PAST SEVENTY

— A Fragment

Little did I conceive when this history commenced at the age of seventy, that it would have extended to this period. Nothing of materials was formed for that purpose to render it interesting; but only as events arose to mark them down, with an eye to the Lord's glory. But it is now time to close the whole, of what hath neither novelty any longer to amuse, nor any thing beyond the common sameness in an old man's life, to attract regard. And the entrance on the spring of the new year 1827; and the close of my *seventy fourth* year meeting nearly together, renders the present moment peculiarly suitable for this purpose. For can the withering circumstances of seventy five bring forth to interest the feelings of any? In taking a farewell upon this occasion, of the readers of my history, I thought the gracious words of the Lord to the patriarch Abraham might not be unsuitable, by way of leaving a divine impression from Scripture upon the minds of the Lord's aged ones, who, like myself, are now waiting for the Lord's coming; that “whether at midnight, or cock crowing, or in the morning,” when Jesus shall call we may instantly arise and hail with joy his approach. It was with those ideas, the last sermon I preached in my church,

before my *seventy fourth* year had fully ended, I brought before the Lord's people that precious proclamation the Lord himself made to Abraham:

GENESIS 17:1.

And when Abram was ninety years old and nine; the Lord appeared to Abram and said unto him, I am the Almighty God: walk before me and be thou perfect!

Surely the imagination cannot furnish an idea of more grace, and affection, and tenderness, shewn by the Lord to his people, and especially to his aged ones; than what is here given by the Lord to the old Abram. What should the Lord have said, yea, what could the Lord have said, to have made the patriarch sensible of his regard? He tells him who he was, and what he was; his own competency in himself to bless the patriarch; and his assurance that he would bless him: that all he was and all he had, if needful, should be brought forth in exercise for his chosen. The Lord had said to the patriarch upon a former occasion, "Fear not Abram! I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." (Genesis 15:1.) Not only a panoply of complete covering from all that might distress *without*; but a fulness of every thing to give blessedness *within*; yea God himself, the Almighty God, made over in covenant-engagements, "the exceeding great reward" of his people. And here again when several years had elapsed between, when the patriarch was on the verge of his *hundredth year*; the Lord not only appeared to him again, but

grounded the assurances he made on the security of his own Almightyness: "I am the Almighty God!" I am the *El-Shaddai*; that is, God all sufficient. I can and will make good all I have said. I am the Almighty God to give being to all I say, and to make good all I promise. And when the Lord adds, "walk before me, and be thou perfect;" this is not as some may have supposed, a *precept*; as if God's all sufficiency for his people, and in his people, depended upon any obedience in them. For this would be to make God's grace rest upon the merit of man. But it is the method God was pleased to take to assure Abram; and with Abram, all the chosen in Christ like Abram, that God undertakes both for them and for himself; and pledges his all-sufficiency in confirmation that He it is that worketh in them, "both to will and to do of his good pleasure." So that God's biddings are God's enablings. This is in the covenant; (Psalm 110:3.) "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Hence the Lord speaks to the same amount in another Scripture; "Be ye holy, for I am holy." (Leviticus 6:44) So again; "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48.) Could it be supposed, that upon either occasions *holiness*, or *perfection*, is expected to arise out of the obedience of the creature? The Holy Ghost very blessedly explains this doctrine in many parts of Scripture, by showing that the church's perfection is in Christ. "Perfect in Christ Jesus." (Colossians 1:28.) "Complete in Christ." (Colossians 2:10.) And the Lord Jesus in his statement of the doctrine saith, "This is the heritage of the

servants of the Lord; and their righteousness is of me saith the Lord.” (Isaiah 54:17.) The blessed words of our God to Abram, when he had finished his *ninety and nine years*, were to assure him of his unalterable love, founded on the infinite and unalterable nature of his holiness and covenant faithfulness: “I am the Almighty God! walk before me, and be thou perfect!”

And what may be supposed to be the gracious language of God, to all his redeemed ones in the present hour but the same? I am now through the sovereign goodness and long-suffering of God, entered upon the *seventy fifth* year of my pilgrimage. I have long known the Lord, or rather been known of the Lord; and would it be a violence to the words of my text, to suppose that they are equally spoken to me, or to any of Abraham's spiritual *seed*; as well as to Abraham's person? Is not the church one, in all her individual members of Christ's mystical body; one only, and essentially so? (Song 6:9.) Are not the whole, the gift of the Father to the Lord Jesus Christ, and that from everlasting? And is it not said, that “whom the Father did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son: that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified?” (Romans 8:29, 30.) Did the Lord thus call Abram? And hath the Lord thus called you or me? Is there any distinction in that call between the members of Christ's

mystical body? Are they not all equally chosen, equally called, equally justified? Are they not all equally near, equally dear, and alike beloved in Christ? Moreover, on the supposition that one member was overlooked, or forgotten; would there not be a schism in the body, and the body incomplete without that member? The church of Christ is one complete whole: and Jesus Christ the glorious Head is “the same yesterday, to day, and for ever!” (Hebrews 13:8.)

But we must not stop here. What are we to consider, of those numberless, nameless manifestations of our most glorious Lord to his chosen, in those patriarchal-days, but to testify the love he had to our nature, and how he longed for the fulness of time (agreed upon in the ancient settlements of eternity between the Holy Three in One, the Almighty Recorders in heaven) when he would openly assume our flesh and dwell among us? And in proof of this, as if to anticipate those delights of Jesus with the sons of men, did he not sometimes appear in form as a man, and sometimes in form as an angel, as might best answer his sacred purpose of grace towards his people. And was his love then so ardent: and is it less so now? The greatest and fullest of his manifestations in those early days of the church, were visional, shadowy, and not permanent. And now redemption work is finished, and the whole purport of Christ's ministry on earth hath been accomplished, will he not give his people the *substance*? Hath he not said “Riches and honour are with me, yea, durable riches and righteousness?” (Proverbs 8:18.)

And when we add to these gracious promises of the old Testament what the Lord Jesus said under the new, "I will not leave you orphans; I will come unto you." (John 14:18.)

These it may be said are strong reasonings; but they are but *reasonings*. We need more palpable proofs in confirmation of the doctrine itself: and that the gracious manifestations made to Abram, when he was *ninety years old and nine*, are equally in the lot and heritage of every regenerate and redeemed child of God. This is the great object which I have to prove on the ground of Holy Scripture, and the gracious declarations of Jehovah in his Trinity of persons to the whole church of God. In pursuit of this design: I shall *first* beg you to observe with me some of the more prominent features in the history of Abram. And *secondly*, I shall call upon you to observe with me, how infinitely more full and satisfactory *now* are the provisions in the church of Christ, for the comfort of the Lord's people in the blessed realities of communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, than in the visional manifestations of the same the patriarchs only had in shadowy representations. And I hope under the unction of the Lord the Spirit, that such will be the result of our meditations, as to teach the whole mystic body of Christ, that the Abrahams, and Isaacs, and Jacobs, in all ages possess, in our most glorious Christ, the same grace and favour alike in the Lord. And in a very especial manner that the aged of the family may look for it, whose increased years, and increased infirmities, require the tenderest love-

tokens of the Lord: agreeably to that covenant promise; “those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing, to shew that the Lord is upright: He is my rock, and there is no unrighteousness in him!” (Psalm 92:13-15.)

In following up the object which I proposed under the *first* particular, we must begin the subject of Abram's history where the Lord hath begun it, as it is related to the church; and behold the patriarch, like the whole election of grace, when first awakened from the death of sin in the Adam-fall transgression, arising to a newness of life in Christ. It is very blessedly said by the Holy Ghost, that “the gospel was preached unto Abraham.” (Galatians 3:8.) And the Lord Jesus gave testimony concerning the patriarch's knowledge of himself, when he said to the Jews “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it and was glad.” (John 8:56.) By faith, the patriarch had as clear views of the glorious person, and the incommunicable work of Christ, as those that lived in the days of Christ, and being taught of God beheld him face to face. (Hebrews 11:17.) The Lord the Holy Ghost begins the spiritual record of the life of Abram, at the opening of the 12th chapter. “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy Father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee.” etc. And wherein is this dissimilar to the first

awakenings of grace, in every sinner's heart at regeneration when savingly called of God to turn from darkness unto light; and from the power of sin and Satan to the living God? (See Psalm 45:10.) And I cannot help pausing for the moment to admire and adore the grace of God shown this man; for it is said that on the call of God to leave the idols of his father's house, and to go into the land which the Lord would show him; he departed to go forth from Haran, his native place, to go into Canaan; and "into the land of Canaan he came." There is much more folded up of a *spiritual* nature in these words than is literally expressed. Leaving Haran and his father's house, he left every thing of an earthly affection, and now fixed his heart upon Canaan, a type of the heavenly. He left the world for the land of promise: earth for heaven. Here was nothing in the patriarch's conduct but what thousands by the like faith have done: he took God's word, and depended upon God's promise; and therefore "he went out, not knowing whither he went." (Hebrews 11:8.)

But this is not all. For as we prosecute the leading points in the *spiritual* history of the patriarch's life, we shall discover the same family feature which marks the election of grace from men of the world. The Lord did then by Abraham as he doth by Abraham's seed; namely, by regeneration, having been called out of heathenism, the Lord began to open to him his covenant of grace; and thus gradually prepared his mind for a spiritual apprehension of salvation by Christ. I need not quote the several chapters where the

great outlines are drawn by the Lord. Indeed, the limits I must observe, in a little work of this kind, prevent it. But let any, yea, let every regenerated child of God, examine the several outlines, one by one, of the patriarch's advances in his spiritual life in Christ; and then make a comparative statement with his own; and he will be led to discover that there is but one and the same covenant: one and the same Almighty teacher. (Genesis 15 throughout.)

But did the patriarch enter at once into the hearty enjoyment of spiritual things, and discover his full and complete salvation in Christ? Ah, no. The Lord led him by the right way, to the city of habitation: but the Lord did by him, as the Lord doth now by Abraham's seed; carry them about, and exercise them by various exercises. The Lord had said to him: "Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward." But in the same chapter we read, "that at the going down of the sun, Abram fell under a deep sleep; and lo, an horror of great darkness!" (Genesis 15:12.) Yes! Though there was no mount Sinai of terrors from the broken law of God, opened and proclaimed in Abram's day; yet there was in his soul, and in the soul of every one convinced of sin, what was tantamount to it; even "blackness, and darkness, and tempest." For when God the Holy Ghost carries conviction to the heart, the regenerated child of God stands in himself condemned, and guilty before God: and until Christ is revealed, in all the glories of his person; and the infinite fulness and suitability of his almighty

deliverance of his people from sin, and all its tremendous consequences; the patriarch Abram, no more than the writer of these lines, or any other of the children of promise, can enter into the divine freedom of the gospel. Hence, therefore the very great sweetness of the Lord's words in my text, to Abram, when he was *ninety and nine years old*: “I am God Almighty; God all-sufficient: walk before me and be thou perfect.” Can any one suppose that at such an advanced time of life, the Lord was now, for the first time, sending Abram to Mount Sinai? Was the Lord now directing his servant to a covenant of works, when the Lord had assured him, that he was the Lord's, in a rich, full, and free covenant of grace. Having begun in the Spirit, was the patriarch to finish salvation by works? As Paul, in after ages, said to the church: “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” (Galatians 3:1, 3.)

But we must not stop here. The patriarch having passed under the condemning sentence of God's broken law, in his own heart; and having learned where alone health and salvation could be found; here, like all the regenerated church of Christ, in all ages, was led by the Spirit to make the Lord Jesus Christ, the whole; and the Alpha and Omega of his salvation. And hence those very sweet and gracious enjoyments the faithful Abraham had, in constant communion with all the persons in the Godhead. He had

what few, it is to be feared, even of the Lord's chosen ones enjoy to a great extent, by remissness and inattention; I mean the knowledge of, and daily communion with the holy Three in One, in the personal acts of grace from each in a constant fellowship. This, though but little known, is a most blessed privilege; and it is the more blessed, because the spiritual life is thereby kept up, and that inherency of sin we all have in our carnal, unrenewed nature, and shall carry it with us to the grave, doth not prevent the unceasing manifestations of grace, from Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by Jesus Christ. (Isaiah 27:2, 3.)

I must not indulge myself in what I otherwise should take great pleasure in; but could I find room in this little work to bring before the church, and especially before the Pilgrims of Zion, like myself, past *seventy*, what rich, sweet, and costly things those were (though for the most part visional) with which our father Abram and the patriarchs of his days belonging to the Lord, were daily feasted; of what the Lord said to them, and what the Lord showed them; how, in a thousand, and ten thousand instances the Lord prevented them, with the blessings of his goodness, in all the departments of nature, providence, and grace; for the Lord was always before-hand with them, and waiting to be gracious: (Isaiah 30:18.) it would be very interesting. But I must suppress my desire, and hasten to the more immediate object I have in view; namely, in proving from Abram's history, that there is nothing singular in it, but what all the

seed of our most glorious Christ may look for, for themselves. As in the instance of this man of God, so in all the faithful like him, the Lord's covenant stands sure. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them saith the Lord; that I will not turn away from them to do them good: but I will put my fear in their heart, that they shall not depart from me." (Jeremiah 32:40.) All which is in perfect harmony with the words of my text: "And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared unto Abram, and said unto him: I am God Almighty! Walk before, and be thou perfect."

I proceed now to what I proposed under the *second* branch of this discourse, in confirmation of the same doctrine; namely, to show how abundantly more full and satisfactory the provisions in the church of Christ are *now*, in blessed communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for believers, and especially ancient pilgrims, to live in the enjoyment of, than all the visional and shadowy representations made in the days of the patriarchs. And before I enter upon it, I do very earnestly beg for grace from above, that the Lord may open and unfold those mysteries of the church to our hearts; and more immediately to such, as like Abraham *then*, and others *now* are verging in their *ninety and nine years*, on the eternal world.

When we take into one collected point of view the very many gracious manifestations of the Lord to his people in those first ages of the church; we are apt to connect with them, somewhat more splendid than these latter days afford.

When we read, that “the Lord talked face to face with them, as a man talketh with his friend:” that as Abraham sat in his tent door, in the heat of the day, he looked up and saw three men stood by him, one of which was the Lord; that the Lord, twenty years after his first manifestations to the patriarch Jacob, appeared, to him, called him by his name, and reminded him who he was and what passed before, as if Jacob had forgotten him: “I am the God of Bethel where thou anointedst the pillar and where thou vowedst a vow.” As if the Lord had said, Do not you know me? Do you not recollect what passed between us then? I am the same “God of Bethel now!” We are apt I say upon those occasions, in the first face of things, when we read such transactions, to suppose, that their privileges were greater than ours: and in the affection of the moment to say: Lord! bring us back to those days, and grant us some of the same or similar enjoyments! But here we should much err; for the greatest patriarch; the highest prophet; the best taught servant of the Lord in those periods were all far inferior to the humblest child of grace when by regeneration he is brought into a capability of discerning things spiritually. All that the old Testament saints enjoyed on those sublime subjects amounted to nothing higher than the attainments of faith. And faith, the Holy Ghost himself explains to be nothing more “than the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” (Hebrews 2:11.) And in the same chapter, the Lord the Spirit having very largely dwelt upon the excellency of faith, by which he saith, “the elders obtained a

good report;” expressly adds, that though they all died in faith, as they had lived; yet they obtained not the promise: and makes this as his own divine and blessed conclusion upon it: “God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.” (See Hebrews 2 throughout.) We have therefore this better thing: namely, the *reality*, the *substance*, of which they had but the figure, the *shadow*. And our Lord himself declared that compared to this manifestation of the Holy Three in One to the spiritual faculties of his people, after his return to glory and the coming down of the Holy Ghost; all his preaching had been but as parables. “These things I have spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs: but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.” (John 16:25.)

Let us suppose then, in conformity to what the Lord hath here said, that this showing us plainly the Father; and the Father the Son; (Luke 10.) and that the Holy Ghost is unceasingly engaged in taking of the things of Christ, and showing unto us: will there not be greater, more full and blessed revelations day by day in the spiritual apprehensions of the Lord's people, than all the visional, typical, shadowy ordinances; either to patriarchs or prophets, who lived only to predict, but never to see realised one day of the Son of God with power? Surely this drawing nigh, in spiritual manifestations of the Holy Three in One, to the souls of the Lord's people very far exceeds the grace shown to Abram in

my text: and therefore gives full authority to every child of God like Abram to expect similar testimonies of the divine favour.

This sublime mystery of the gospel, is in numberless places explained by the Holy Ghost himself, but perhaps in none more express and pointed than in that divine farewell sermon of our most glorious Lord, (John 14 etc) I would affectionately recommend the daily study of it to the whole regenerated church of God; and especially to the aged like myself in the Lord's household. I blush not to say that not a day doth it pass away from my remembrance. And not infrequently in the night watches do the blessed portions of it pass and repass over my mind in the sweetest accents. I do not mean to give an enlarged comment upon it, but only a few striking particulars. *First*, the Lord Jesus commands his people not to fear; and then states the ground of their sure confidence; namely, his oneness with the Father in essence, Godhead, and all divine perfections. *Secondly*, He speaks of the presence and indwelling abiding of God the Holy Ghost in the hearts of his people. *Thirdly*, He shows why it is, and everlastingly must be, that the world cannot see him nor know him; while the Lord's people are blest with the continual revelations of his love. *Fourthly*, Jesus assures them of his unceasing presence; that this also distinguishes his people from the world; for while the world cannot see him, neither know him, they shall have daily proofs of his presence. *Fifthly*, Jesus graciously adds that their lives are

bound up in him; and he saith, "Because I live ye shall live also." *Sixthly*, To these divine assurances the Lord adds another, that sums up all in one, every blessing in time and to all eternity: "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me; and I in you!" And *lastly*, to add no more; the Lord Jesus, as if to make the cup of blessing he here puts into the hands of his chosen ones to run over; after having assured them that the Holy Ghost should abide with them for ever; declared that both the Father and himself would be always with them and in a way of manifestation. "How is it Lord, (said one of *the* disciples) that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" Jesus explained it most blessedly: "If a man love me (said Jesus) he will keep my word, and my Father will love him; and we will come and make our abode with him." Let the children of the kingdom ponder these things and then say, whether the grace shown to Abram when *ninety years old and nine* was of a singular nature, while such blessed provisions of an higher kind are or are supposed to be, in the daily enjoyment of all the Lord's chosen.

Brethren! farewell! you that are among the ancient of the Lord's pilgrims have seen and have passed through many cloudy days, and cloudy dispensations. But God's faithfulness hath been manifested through all. So hath the past; so the present; and such the ages to come. Jesus speaks to each, as to the patriarch, "I am the Almighty God!" Keep this always uppermost. Lose sight of self and all that you are

the subject and the object of, to hang wholly upon him that is *El Shaddai [All Sufficient]*. He that appeared to Abram, when he was *ninety years old and nine*, will appear to you and fulfil his own promise: “I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also.” And those are among the last and closing acts of the Lord's everlasting love, namely: His it is “to keep you from falling:” and His no less, “to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.” (Jude 24.) To the Holy Three in One be endless praise. Amen.

This sheet was printing off when the intelligence [news] of the death of the venerable author reached the publisher. He ventures to stop the press — for the purpose of occupying this small space with informing the reader, that the manuscript of this piece — “*The close of Zion's Pilgrim past seventy*” only reached him on the 9th of March, 1827 — so that as his death took place on the 8th of April, at Plymouth, only one month elapsed from the Dr.'s forwarding to the publisher his closing Manuscript of this work and his being called to his reward! And the publisher cannot close this brief note without pointing his reader's attention to the pleasing and remarkable suitability of the respected author's final literary labour!

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